

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON**

FACULTY OF SOCIAL, HUMAN AND MATHEMATICAL SCIENCE

School of Education

**Group dynamics and the construction of identities in Omani higher  
education: a case study of cultural diversity using a social identity  
approach**

by

**Amal Saleh Al Muqarshi**

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

October 2018



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

## **ABSTRACT**

FACULTY OF SOCIAL, HUMAN AND MATHEMATICAL SCIENCE

School of Education

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

### **Group dynamics and the construction of identities in Omani higher education: a case study of cultural diversity using a social identity approach**

Amal Saleh Al Muqarshi

In Oman, the organisational context of higher education is characterised by two disconnects relative to the societal context. The academic context is culturally diverse and uses English as a medium of instruction while the societal context is largely culturally homogenous and uses Arabic as the official language. The cultural diversity of staff in the academic context renders Omanis a proportional minority among other minorities. From a social identity perspective, such a composition could represent a seed for categorisation that hinders social identity construction which mediates the positive effects of diversity.

This study aims to understand how identities are constructed in such a context and how cultural diversity affects group dynamics and processes through investigating how prototype is constructed and how effective prototype-based social identity is. The study also looks at the effectiveness of leadership, as practised at the micro-group level, in managing a collective identity. It employs a qualitative case study design implemented in an English Department using sixteen interviews, eight meeting observations, document analysis and field notes.

The findings reveal that identities within this context are shaped by the intersectionality of nationality, language, mode of employment, and professional identity. The position of an individual along these trajectories decides on the extent to which they could relate to the wider organisational context that sets the group prototype. These intersectionalities create structures within the group that manifest in relation to different group processes and define advantages and disadvantages. The prototype is seen as centrally prescribed rather than based on the English Department group and Omanis are generally seen as more prototypical. Social identity at the level of the Department is hampered by curriculum centralisation and by the effects of diversity within the group. The effectiveness of leadership in managing a collective identity is restricted by the lack of authority at the micro level of leadership. Alternatively, effective leadership is seen as one that is individual oriented.

The study argues that collective identity construction is a function of all levels of leadership in the higher education hierarchical system. It highlights the need for a clear organisational perspective on managing cultural diversity in higher education; one that perceives diversity as an asset and as a means for building an intellectual capital.



# Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	iii
List of tables .....	viii
List of figures .....	ix
DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP.....	xi
Dedication .....	xii
Acknowledgements.....	xiii
Abbreviations .....	xiv
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Overview of the Omani cultural context .....	1
1.2 Leadership and organisational culture in Oman.....	3
1.3 Cultural diversity, policy and higher education .....	5
1.4 Statement of problem and research rationale .....	6
1.5 Conceptual framework.....	8
1.6 Literature gaps .....	9
1.7 Research aims and questions .....	12
1.8 Research methodology .....	13
1.9 Significance and originality .....	14
1.10 Structure of the thesis .....	16
<b>Chapter 2: Literature review .....</b>	<b>17</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	17
2.2 Conceptualising workplace diversity .....	17
2.3 The Social Identity Approach.....	19
2.3.1 Self-categorisation.....	20
2.3.2 Social identity.....	21
2.3.3 Salience of social categories .....	22
2.3.4 Depersonalisation and prototypes.....	23
2.3.5 Intergroup comparisons and social structures .....	24
2.3.6 The Social Identity perspective on leadership .....	26
2.4 Limitations of the SIA .....	27
2.4.1 Prototypes and group-distinctiveness.....	28

2.4.2	An Islamic perspective on prototype-based social identity	29
2.4.3	Prototype and cultural diversity in ELT in Oman .....	34
2.4.4	Prototypicality and effective leadership .....	39
2.4.5	Revisiting prototypicality.....	41
2.5	Effective leadership in culturally diverse contexts .....	43
2.5.1	Identity entrepreneurship (crafting a sense of us) .....	47
2.5.2	Identity advancement/group-oriented behaviour (doing it for us).....	48
2.5.3	Identity impresarioship (embedding a sense of us) .....	48
2.5.4	ELT and identity management in Omani HE: conceptual framework .....	49
2.6	Identity salience: singularity versus intersectionality .....	54
2.7	Workplace identities in the GCC context .....	59
2.8	Summary .....	61
<b>Chapter 3:</b>	<b>Research methodology .....</b>	<b>63</b>
3.1	Introduction.....	63
3.2	Ontological underpinning.....	63
3.3	Epistemological underpinning .....	65
3.4	Constructivism and researching identity .....	67
3.5	The research design.....	69
3.5.1	Case study.....	69
3.5.2	Type of the case study .....	72
3.6	Methods and instruments of data collection .....	73
3.6.1	Semi-structured interviews .....	74
3.6.2	Direct observations .....	80
3.6.3	Documents .....	84
3.7	The process of data collection.....	86
3.8	Data analysis .....	88
3.9	Ethical considerations .....	92
3.10	Maintaining quality in the research.....	96
3.11	My positionality .....	98
3.12	Summary .....	100

<b>Chapter 4: Case study findings .....</b>	<b>101</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	101
4.2 Overview of the study context.....	101
4.3 Prototype management at the ELT macro level .....	104
4.3.1 Overview .....	109
4.4 The micro level: categorisation within the group .....	110
4.4.1 Recruitment .....	110
4.4.2 Employment security .....	111
4.4.3 Perceived professionalism .....	113
4.4.4 Different HR regulations .....	115
4.4.5 Professional development.....	117
4.4.6 Involvement versus alienation.....	118
4.4.7 Overview .....	120
4.5 Implications of categorisation at the group level: dynamics and interactions .....	121
4.5.1 Inconsistent norms/perspectives .....	121
4.5.2 Unstable group composition.....	126
4.5.3 Relationship conflicts .....	133
4.5.4 Collaboration and teamwork.....	137
4.5.5 Low staff interaction.....	144
4.6 Prototype management at the micro-level .....	152
4.6.1 Leader prototypicality .....	152
4.6.2 ELT prototype management and leader effectiveness ..	155
4.6.3 Overview .....	174
<b>Chapter 5: Discussion of findings .....</b>	<b>176</b>
5.1 Introduction .....	176
5.2 Centralisation and prototype management.....	176
5.2.1 Prototype management and group size.....	176
5.2.2 Prototype and teacher autonomy .....	178
5.2.3 Prototype and influence of middle leaders .....	179

5.3	Categorisation and the group characteristics .....	180
5.3.1	Recruitment and access to the group .....	181
5.3.2	Inclusion within the CAS-1 wider community .....	183
5.4	Group identity and the influence of diversity .....	185
5.4.1	Instability, insecurity and turnover .....	185
5.4.2	Diversity, collaboration and conflict .....	188
5.4.3	Low interaction/communication .....	192
5.5	Collective identity management at the micro-level: prototypicality and leadership effectiveness .....	194
5.6	Moderating the negative effects of diversity .....	197
5.6.1	The leadership schema of the HoD .....	198
5.6.2	The role of senior leadership and leader empowerment .....	199
5.6.3	Professionalism as a higher-order collective identity ...	200
5.7	Summary .....	205
<b>Chapter 6:</b>	<b>Conclusions .....</b>	<b>207</b>
6.1	Summary of findings .....	207
6.2	Identity management for enhanced HE-market transition .....	212
6.3	Identity management for sustainable intellectual capital .....	213
6.4	Empirical implications .....	218
6.5	Theoretical implications .....	221
6.6	Limitations and recommendations for future research .....	223
6.7	Concluding overview .....	224



<b>List of References .....</b>	<b>225</b>
<b>Appendix A : Team leaders job description.....</b>	<b>259</b>
<b>Appendix B : Interview Guide V1 .....</b>	<b>260</b>
<b>Appendix C : Interview Guide V2.....</b>	<b>263</b>
<b>Appendix D : Interview Guide V3.....</b>	<b>266</b>
<b>Appendix E : Observation Guide .....</b>	<b>269</b>
<b>Appendix F : Informal Observation Guide .....</b>	<b>271</b>
<b>Appendix G : Research Ethical Approval.....</b>	<b>272</b>
<b>Appendix H : CONSENT FORM (HoD).....</b>	<b>273</b>
<b>Appendix I : CONSENT FORM (LCs).....</b>	<b>274</b>
<b>Appendix J : CONSENT FORM (Teachers).....</b>	<b>275</b>
<b>Appendix K : Participant Information Sheet (V1-HoD) .....</b>	<b>276</b>
<b>Appendix L : Participant Information Sheet (V2-Level coordinator).....</b>	<b>278</b>
<b>Appendix M : Participant Information Sheet (V3-Teachers).....</b>	<b>280</b>
<b>Appendix N : Participant Information Sheet (V4-Observation).....</b>	<b>282</b>
<b>Appendix O : CONSENT FORM (Observation) .....</b>	<b>284</b>
<b>Appendix P : Data from Observations .....</b>	<b>285</b>
<b>Appendix Q : Data from informal observations and field notes... ..</b>	<b>297</b>
<b>Appendix R : Data from Documents .....</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>Appendix S: English Department staff profile .....</b>	<b>321</b>
<b>Appendix T: Profile of interview participants .....</b>	<b>325</b>
<b>Appendix U: Extract interview transcript.....</b>	<b>328</b>

## List of tables

Table 2-1: Strategies for positive social identification .....	26
Table 2-2: Complementarity of the SIA and the intersectionality theory .....	59
Table 3-1: Case study classification .....	73
Table 3-2: Observed case study report quality criteria.....	97
Table 4-1: Brief profile of interview participants.....	103

## List of figures

Figure 1-1: Structure of Higher Education Council (Al Balushi, 2012:21) .....	4
Figure 2-1: Identity management model .....	54
Figure 3-1. Research methods and data.....	86
Figure 3-2: Data collection/analysis timeline .....	88
Figure 3-3: Example of descriptive coding .....	90
Figure 3-4: Example of code categorisation .....	90
Figure 3-5: Interview data analysis process.....	91
Figure 3-6: Analytical framework .....	92
Figure 6-1: Constellation of identities at the English Department.....	210
Figure 6-2: HE intellectual capital model.....	216



# DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, AMAL SALEH AL MUQARSHI declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

## **Group dynamics and the construction of identities in Omani higher education: a case study of cultural diversity using a social identity approach**

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

# **Dedication**

To the memory of my beloved mother who witnessed the start of this PhD journey but not its end, and to my dear father for all that he has given.

# Acknowledgements

This thesis is a brief written account of a journey of learning. I also see it as a fruit of a battle of faith. First and foremost, I thank and praise almighty Allah for endowing me with the persistence and guidance to carry the process on and keep going even during the times when I found it hard to decide towards which direction.

I am thankful to the Omani government for giving me the opportunity to pursue this scholarship and for sponsoring this academic endeavour. My thanks are also due to the British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society (BELMAS) for partially sponsoring this study. My heartfelt gratitude goes to my dear family for the unlimited support that I can never pay back. I also thank my friends in Oman and those I made at Southampton for being of great support throughout this journey.

At the academic front, I express my deep thanks to Prof. Jacky Lumby for her professional supervision during the first two years of this journey. Her guidance and expertise were of invaluable significance in setting the foundation of this work. I also thank Dr. Michaela Brockman for reading early draft chapters of this thesis and for offering valuable feedback. I extend my thanks to Prof. Bruce Macfarlane for his constructive feedback and professional supervision during the third year of my study.

I am deeply indebted to Prof. Anthony Kelly whose unique expertise and patience model the dedicated educator and academic leader whose influence is far-reaching and long lasting. He sets an example that I aspire to follow in my future academic career; I cannot thank him enough.

I similarly express my deep appreciation to Dr. Maria Kaparou whose professional expertise, positive support and guidance were invaluable. Both Prof. Anthony Kelly and Dr. Maria Kaparou left incomparable marks on every part of this thesis. Their dedicated supervision during the fourth year of this study gave this thesis its final shape and its audible voice.

# Abbreviations

Colleges of Applied Sciences (CAS)

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

Higher Education Institutions (HEI)

Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE)

Head of the Department (HoD)

English Language Teaching (ELT)

English as Foreign Language (EFL)

Native Speaker (NS)

Native English Speaking Teacher (NEST)

Non-native English Speaking Teacher (non-NEST)

Social Identity Approach (SIA)

Social Identity Theory (SIT)

Self-Categorisation Theory (SCT)

Social Identity Theory of Leadership (SITL)

Social Identity Model of Leadership (SIMOL)



## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This thesis seeks to explore cultural diversity within Omani higher education using a social identity approach. It explores how the different identities are constructed within higher education teams, how these identities shape group dynamics and the extent to which leadership is effective in establishing a collective identity. It also aims to unravel the complexity associated with the concept of 'prototype' as applied to culturally diverse natural groups. It attempts to untangle some of its fuzziness and multidimensionality in relation to the culturally diverse group context. This introductory chapter first sheds light on the wider Omani societal and organisational contexts and provides an overview about the higher education sector in relation to cultural diversity. Next, the research problem is stated followed by a brief presentation of the conceptual framework within which it is conceptualised. The chapter then presents the literature gaps that inform the research aims and questions, a description of the methodology employed and a statement of the significance of the study. The chapter ends by mapping out the structure of the thesis.

### **1.1 Overview of the Omani cultural context**

Lumby and Foskett (2015:4) define group culture as 'the patterns of values, beliefs, behaviour and symbolic artefacts, which together characterise one group as distinctive from another and underpin the usually unspoken assumptions that guide thought and action within an organisation'. Culture, then, has a surface level represented by symbolic artefacts and a deep level represented by patterns of values, beliefs and behaviour. By virtue of its deep level, culture could be the main source of group norms (Hogg, 2005b). The distinctiveness of the Omani culture could be partially attributed to the country's official religion; Islam, which is a main source of the norms and values guiding behaviour. Islam is a source of influence on both societal and organisational cultures in Oman (Al-Araimi, 2012; Albadri, 2012). As organisational cultures are largely derived from national cultures, the latter is a seminal source of values/norms in the workplace.

Omani current society is originally composed of different ethnicities: Arabs comprise 74% of the society, Pakistanis 15%, Baluchi 4%, Persians 3%, Indians 2% and Africans 2% (Al-Hamadi, Budhwar & Shipton, 2007). Relations with these

nationalities/ethnicities were established long ago due to the Omani historical political influence over the areas of Baluchistan, East Africa and the Indian sub-continent (Albadri, 2012; Al-Barwani & Albeely, 2007; Common, 2011). Thus, these originally culturally diverse groups established over time what is now known as the Omani society. While Peterson (2011) emphasises the cohesiveness of the Omani society based on the Omani cultural resources, Oman has not been away from global influence. With the advent of the current Omani government in 1970, the transformational vision of Sultan Qaboos led to a dramatic change at all levels. The establishment of the modern Omani state aimed at situating Oman within the global context after centuries of isolation. Thus, the government responded to global influences and started transforming Oman into a modern state.

At the early stage of this renaissance, Omanis composed 93% of the civil service workers in 1970. However, the number of non-Omani employees rose to 32% in 1993 (Al-Hamadi et al., 2007). Importing an expatriate workforce was necessary for establishing the new Omani state due to the dearth of trained and qualified locals. At the inception of the new Omani state, the country depended largely on a non-Omani workforce that was imported for labour and to fill consultancy and management positions (Al-Hamadi et al., 2007). Besides, the Omani renaissance largely depended on the revenues of oil exports. Realising the expected soon depletion of oil (Common, 2011), the country has aimed at transforming its economy to knowledge-based instead of oil-based. Such transformation has also been promoted by the global influence on the direction of educational policy in Oman (Al'Abri, 2011). These factors influenced the cultural composition of workforce in higher education.

At the level of higher education, the demands for coping with the global trends in programme provision and graduate employment (Al-Sadi, 2012; Donn & Issan, 2007) have led to the introduction of new programmes (Al Shmeli, 2011). Thus, the focus shifted towards providing quality education and training for Omanis. This has resulted in an expansion of higher education, technical and vocational training institutions that aim at preparing graduates for a diversifying economy (Al-Hamadi et al., 2007). Such an expansion led to importing academics to teach these programmes (Abbas, 1995) and sometimes to the appointment of less qualified staff members (Altbach, 2011b). Such transformation has only been possible through the establishment of an organisational context that functions

within the parameters of the transformational vision of the Sultan. This makes the discussion of leadership within the organisational context inseparable.

## **1.2 Leadership and organisational culture in Oman**

Common (2011) points out that describing leadership in the Omani context is a challenging task because of the controversy that prevails in the existing literature. While some researchers see the general Arab styles of leadership applicable to the Omani context (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman & Gupta, 2004; Hofstede, 2001), Common (2011) thinks that Oman has its own distinct conceptualisation of leadership which defies current western leadership models and differs from the neighbouring Arab countries. In fact, the Omani conceptualisation of leadership has undergone shifts over years (Al-Barwani & Albeely, 2007). Two main factors that have influenced leadership in the Omani context are the political context and the cultural context (Albadri, 2012) underlying the current organisational behaviour.

The religious leadership (based on the Islamic Ibadhism school followed by about 75% of Omani Muslim population) that was governing the interior parts of Oman before 1970 was based on consultative decision-making and election-based leader selection (Al-Barwani & Albeely, 2007; Almoharby, 2010). Peterson (2011) emphasises that despite the consultative merit-based election of leaders in the Islamic religion, Oman now has a patriarchal system of governance. Leadership shifted to monarchical system with the advent of the Sultanate period (Common, 2011). This shift has contributed to the existence of different styles of leadership promoted by the religion of the country and the leadership ideology of the ruling regime. At the level of legislation, current Oman is not only guided by the Sharia-based law (Islamic legislation) but also by secular law (Al-Hamadi et al., 2007). The Omani Basic Constitution emphasises that political leaders should be of the current royal family and should be of Omani origins. Such leadership ideology has been sustained through hierarchy-based system of governance where the authority of decision-making is restricted to the 'political-economic elite' (Peterson, 2011:100).

Oman is politically uniform with no contending parties (Katzman, 2018). Public participation in decision-making has been relatively encouraged through the establishment of a series of consultative councils that communicate public

opinion to the top level of the hierarchy (Common, 2011). The country has various levels of consultative councils starting from Municipal Councils and up to the Council of Ministers chaired by the Sultan. Almoharby (2010) argues that the Shura Council<sup>1</sup> in Oman is empowered to revise ministerial decisions and propose ideas for development. These councils consultatively contribute to preparing recommendations for strategic and developmental plans and could also review existing decisions (Almoharby, 2010). Nonetheless, decisions in light of which the government functions need to be approved by the Sultan so that they could be implemented (Katzman, 2018). Such political ideology has influenced organisational culture in the public sector in terms of the centralisation of governance and decision-making (Al-Hamadi et al., 2007). Higher education in Oman is also influenced by such leadership philosophy. The jurisdiction of higher education institution (HEIs) is centred at the Higher Education Council under which comes the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) as Figure 1.1 illustrates. This organisational hierarchy influences the way management is practised in the affiliating higher education institutions.

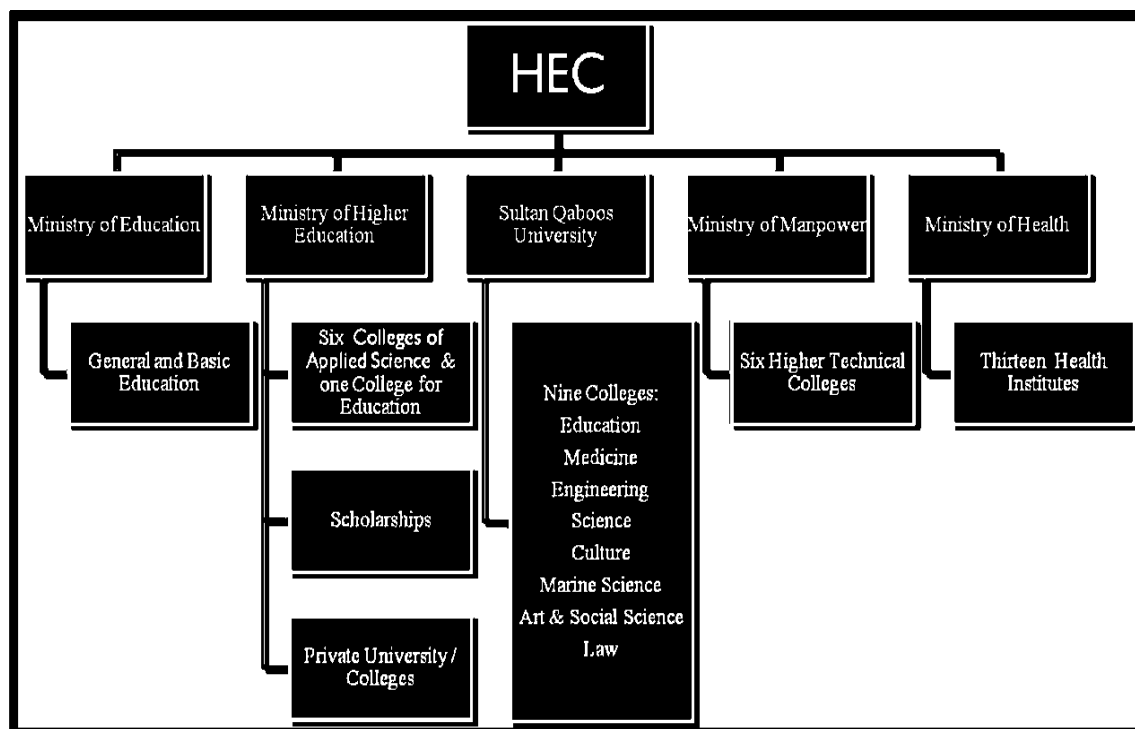


Figure 1-1: Structure of Higher Education Council (Al Balushi, 2012:21)

<sup>1</sup> A Consultative Council of representatives elected from the different Omani cities and towns.

### **1.3 Cultural diversity, policy and higher education**

Workplace diversity has generally become a global fact in increasing organisational workplaces because of the boom in knowledge and technology, business globalisation and world population mobility (Litvin, 1997; Milliken & Martins, 1996; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Employing international academics in Omani higher education has been necessary for accommodating the increasing student admission rates, meeting the global standards, and dealing with the shortage in the number of local Omani academics (Kirk & Napier, 2009; Neal, 2010; Oman Academic Accreditation Authority, 2010). On the other hand, Oman embarked in a process of nationalising its workforce officially known as 'Omanisation' in 1988 to face the challenge of increased unemployment among the nationals (Peterson, 2011; Zerovec & Bontenbal, 2011). The policy aims at increasing the participation of locals whose skills and qualifications were inadequate to join the workforce and to push the development wheel at the conception of the modern state (Al-Lamki, 1998). Hence, the policy of Omanisation is set with a view to replace the migrant workforce with qualified and trained local workforce so that Omanis will constitute 95% of the employees in the public sector and 75% in the private sector by 2020 (Donn & Issan, 2007). Efforts to meet these targets led to increased emphasis on local human resources development through providing better education and better service training (Al Balushi, 2012).

Nonetheless, resorting to diversifying economy in the Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC) generally resulted in another wave of imported workforce (Al Fahdi & Swailes, 2009; Al-Hamadi, Budhwar & Shipton, 2007; Ennis & Al-Jamali, 2014; Randeree, 2012). This increased the number of non-local employees in various areas. Besides, the new era witnessed an increasing rate of foreign investment in higher education provision, which further increased the numbers of non-Omani teaching staff (Baporikar & Ali Shah, 2012). Peterson (2011) highlights that such openness to the global world made Oman influenced by the influx of the multicultural workforce which, among the previous factors, seems to slow down the process of Omanisation and question its effectiveness (Al Fahdi & Swailes, 2009; Ennis & Al-Jamali, 2014). While Omanisation might have achieved higher rates in many government sectors, it is much slower within academics in the expanding higher education institutions.

The distribution of locals relative to non-locals is still disproportional with Omani academic staff representing only 28% of the total academic staff population during the academic year 2015/16 (NCFSI, 2017). Omanisation also varies in success depending on whether the HEI in question is public or private (Al-Lamki, 1998). The Omani National Centre for Statistics and Information points out that the general Omanisation indicators in 2016 pointed out to success rates at 84% in the government sector and 12% in the private sector, which is way below the target especially for the private sector. The Centre indicates that expatriate workforce generally constituted 45.5% of the total Omani population until October 2017. This means that non-Omani workforce is thriving despite the Omanisation policy.

Regardless of the limited success Oman has achieved with respect to workforce nationalisation in comparison to the other GCC countries (Randeree, 2012), the fast spread of higher education is outpacing the speed of Omanisation in the academic sector that is still not self-sufficient when it comes to intellectual human capital (Baporikar & Ali Shah, 2012). To keep practical ratios of student/teacher, dependence on imported academics came as a ready solution (Austin, Chapman, Farah, Wilson & Ridge, 2014). Thus, locals are seen as a minority in the workplace (Al-Barwani, Chapman & Ameen, 2009). With the emphasis on localising workforce and the parallel expansion of higher education, the number of Omanis joining academia is increasing and so seems the number of international academics. The 2016 Statistical Year Book shows that the number of academics in higher education rose from 6047 in the academic year 2012/13 to 7883 in 2015/16 with an increase of only 2% (from 26% of the total number to 28%) in the number of Omani academics (NCFSI, 2017). This creates a dynamic multicultural environment that makes studying the resulting diverse workplace of greater importance (Forstenlechner, 2010; Naithani & Jha, 2009; Neal, 2010)

#### **1.4 Statement of problem and research rationale**

In HEIs in Oman, Omanisation of administrative positions is high in comparison to academic departments that are highly multicultural (Neal, 2010). In fact, Brandt and Dixon (2010) argue that expatriate academics are still occupying not only academic but also administrative and supervisory positions in the GCC countries. Altbach (2011) points out that still 50% of the academic staff members are non-Omani at Sultan Qaboos University; the only state-owned university. Hence,

Omani faculty members are minority in the academic context working with colleagues from different nationalities such as Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, other Arab and western countries (Neal, 2010). In a similar vein, with the expansion of higher education provision and the diversification of economy, new programmes have been introduced and the focus on sciences and applied sciences has increased to cope with the requirements of the diversifying global market (Romani, 2009). Being the language of science and knowledge, English has achieved an international prominence in higher education. Omani higher education is no exception.

Omani higher education institutions adopt English as the language of instruction especially in relation to non-social disciplines (Al-Issa, 2005a). Hence, as students move to higher education, the status of English in relation to their studies shifts from being a compulsory course at school level to being the main language of instruction in higher education (Al'Abri, 2011). Besides, they move from school and social community largely composed of Omanis to a higher education context with culturally diverse staff body that provides instruction in a foreign language. Within the workplace and especially in the private sector, English is also the lingua franca that is used as a communication bridge between the multicultural workforces (Al-Harthi & Al-Harthi, 2012). This is contrary to the social context where Arabic is the language of the country and the language of the Quran.

The interaction of the above-mentioned factors in the Omani higher education organisational context relative to the societal one led to creating a gap between the societal context and that of the workplace (Al-Harthi & Al-Harthi, 2012). The national culture is characterised by the adoption of Arabic as the official language, Islam as the major source of values and the official religion that is embraced by at least 95% of the nationals, and Arab as the major ethnicity. On the other hand, the workplace is characterised by English as the main language (especially in private sector), prominence of non-Omani values<sup>2</sup> and staff cultural diversity (Al-Harthi & Al-Harthi, 2012). This led to the presence of different cultural categories mainly at the levels of nationality and language. While cultural diversity could vary in intensity from one sector to another, it is obvious in higher education. The international supremacy of English in economic and educational fields and the constantly increasing number of international English teaching staff

---

<sup>2</sup> Mainly Western or Indian values resulting from the cultural diversity characterising the post 1970 workplace (Al-Harthi & Al-Harthi, 2012).

globally and in Oman is likely to result in a low vitality<sup>3</sup> of the Omani ethnolinguistic identity in the Omani academic context. Podsiadlowski, Gröschke, Kogler, Springer and van der Zee (2013) argue that in such a diverse workplace, studying social identity is crucial for understanding intergroup relations. This is especially so as the presence of diversity along various dimensions might ‘not only result in perceptions of difference between humans, but [...] can also meet a response in others which may advantage or disadvantage the individual in question’ (Lumby & Coleman, 2007:1).

## 1.5 Conceptual framework

This research adopts a social psychological perspective to study team diversity using the Social Identity Approach (SIA) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) explicated in section 2.3 in the following chapter. This influential approach has two main branches, which are the Social Identity Theory (SIT) concerned more with intergroup relations and the Self Categorisation Theory (SCT) concerned more with intragroup processes. According to this perspective, a group mediates various social psychological phenomena and thus group context is key to understand behaviour (Hornsey, 2008). A group functions cohesively when its members perceive of themselves as similar along an aspect that provides a basis for groupness and social identity. People tend to identify with and favour those who are similar to them (in-group) and make negative judgments about those who are different from them (out-group) (Spears, 2011). Hence, when the group is culturally diverse, chances are that intergroup relations could emerge as members’ bias towards their cultural backgrounds might affect intragroup processes (Hogg, Van Knippenberg & Rast, 2012).

Individuals within a group mentally represent the group in terms of a prototype that guides their behaviours and attitudes (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). Individuals become more representative or more prototypical of the group to the extent that they identify with the group’s prototype and advocate it to inform their behaviours and attitudes within the group. This provides a basis for explaining influence and leadership within groups, which is the focus of the

---

<sup>3</sup>Ethnolinguistic vitality is a term coined by Giles et al. in 1977 to refer to ‘the degree to which an ethnolinguistic group acts as a collective entity and thrives as a distinct social group, and it is dependent on the specific socio-structural complexion of the intergroup context’ (Hogg & Abrams, 1998:197).



Social Identity Theory of Leadership (SITL) that represents a relatively recent development in the SIA.

Based on the SIA approach, the presence of different cultural categories within a group is likely to result in inconsistent prototypes guiding their behaviours based on their cultural identities. This might hinder their perception of the culturally diverse group as a basis for social identity and thus as a source for a group prototype. Thus, the SIA provides a theoretical basis for explaining and understanding how belonging to a certain cultural group functions in culturally diverse context. Milliken and Martins (1996:404) maintain that the challenges posed by diversity lie in the ‘complex, and often implicit, differences in perspectives, assumptions, and causal beliefs with which the more superficial or observable differences are correlated’. At the level of organisations, diversity could lead to a lack of cooperation and communication, which affects performance (DiTomaso & Hooijberg, 1996; Khan, 2010).

When the group is culturally diverse, the influence of diversity on group processes could affect leadership because of the inconsistency of group prototypes. The SIA considers leadership emergence and effectiveness a function of high group prototypicality. In prototype-based social identity, leadership effectiveness depends on the extent to which leaders are able to manage the group members towards a social identity that is represented by the group’s prototype (Steffens et al., 2014). This framework is not without limitations especially when applied to diverse contexts. Thus, the following chapter includes a more critical presentation of this framework and supplements its use with the intersectionality theory that, in a nutshell, suggests that identities function in an intersectional manner rather than independently and it is the trajectories created by such intersectionalities that create the effect of diversity in a specific context.

## **1.6 Literature gaps**

Cultural diversity is an important characteristic of staff in Omani higher education mainly because the literature suggests that it has an underlying value level that relates to functional diversity; the influential type of diversity in relation to organisational performance (Schneider & Northcraft, 1999). Diversity in the western workplace literature has been studied from different perspectives inspired by different disciplines of literature (DiTomaso & Hooijberg, 1996). In

relation to the workplace, Tatli and Özbilgin (2012) maintain that it has been conceptualised in terms of demographic categories (e.g. race, gender, ethnicity, disability), organisational aspects (such as age, belief, nationality) or functional aspects (e.g. role, seniority). However, Milliken and Martins (1996) argue that the effect of diversity is context-specific as it matters more when the context is originally homogenous than when it is heterogeneous.

The aforementioned inconsistencies characterising the Omani societal and higher education organisational contexts call for a contextualised study of cultural diversity that is focused on the Omani context. Workplace diversity has received very limited attention in the Omani workplace literature (Common, 2011; Selmer & Fenner 2009; Al-Hamadi et al., 2007) and, in fact, in the Middle East workplace literature overall (Aycan, Al-Hamadi, Davis & Budhwar, 2007). Few studies look at the local diversity within the Omani society and its effect on organisational behaviour like employment and perceptions of organisational justice (Albadri, 2012; Al Ghailani, 2005). Besides, other studies emphasise the role of gender in the Omani workplace in relation to different issues like equal employment and leadership (Al-Lamky, 2007; Donn & Issan, 2007).

Neal (2010) outlines that much of the GCC research on diversity focuses either on issues related to the influence of the national culture on the organisational culture, expatriate workforce experiences in the GCC or on comparing locals to expatriates; but very few studies looked at the work dynamics when these categories work together. Only such dynamics could reveal how this mix of staff operates and how diversity functions in workgroups. In relation to national diversity, the studies that look at it in the Omani workplace tend to assimilate diverse groups into two broad categories: Omanis and expatriates without considering the differences between the subgroups (Al-Barwani et al., 2009). As indicated above, the SIA predicts that the presence of more than one cultural category could lead to different constructions of the prototype that could create behaviour inconsistency. Thus, exploring how prototype is constructed within such a diverse context is important to understand behaviour within diverse academic teams/groups. Hogg (2001:195) stresses that in most of the SIA research that aims at testing the principles of the theory, prototype has been defined as 'unidimensional construct, whereas in fact prototypes are complex multidimensional fuzzy sets'. Thus, unravelling such complexity in relation to the study context is important.

To the best of my knowledge, the observation-based ethnographic case study conducted by Neal (2010) is the only study that considers cultural diversity within the Omani academic context. It investigates the way culturally diverse colleagues at a state university in Oman worked together while the researcher was working as a head of the Department of Management there. Neal (2010) reports that cross-cultural issues were present at all levels and across tasks and relations. He observes that at some points, these cultural differences led to discontent among non-Omanis. However, his study suggests that overall there were some cohesion factors that attenuated the negative effects of cultural diversity such as the Omani cultural tolerance, Omani staff academic qualification, common sense of mission, Omani's sense of humour, and the common perception of the bureaucratic administration as an enemy.

Despite the importance of this study on which the current research builds, it falls in the trap of homogenising the expatriate workforce indicated by Al-Barwani et al. (2009). Thus, it does not focus on how identities are perceived in such a context by the actors within the group and how such constructions are related to group climate and dynamics within a specific academic discipline. Besides, it does not shed light on how leadership is practised in such a context as opposed to culturally homogenous groups. Literature points out that reaping the fruit of diversity within organisations requires constructing a collective identity through which diversity could be utilised (van Knippenberg & Haslam, 2003). The extent to which this is effective in the Omani academic context has not been addressed. Research on leadership in the diverse higher education in Oman is extremely scarce (Common, 2011; Selmer & Fenner 2009). In diversity research generally, there is paucity of research in relation to leadership and leader-follower relations especially at the lower levels of organisational hierarchies (DiTomaso & Hooijberg, 1996).

Thus, this research aims to fill in these gaps through investigating cultural diversity in an academic context in relation to English language teaching (ELT) discipline. It uses the concept of prototype-based social identity to focus on the group level of analysis and understand group dynamics. Studying social identity in relation to ELT discipline is particularly important in the Omani higher education context because (a) the language of instruction is English, which is not the local language, (b) because English language teaching has been delivered disproportionately by non-Omanis (as will be elaborated on more in section 2.4.3

in the following chapter). Thus, the way identity is constructed in such a context is key for understanding the resulting workplace atmosphere. Zhang (2017:229) argues that 'learning a foreign language is no longer about knowing how to use language for the purpose of speaking and reading, but about knowing how to communicate with people who have different cultural identities'. Zhang's assertion holds true not only for students but also for associate academic staff members and leaders in higher education in the Omani context. This is an important area for research not only because staff cultural diversity might continue due to the shortage in the local qualified academics but also because an increasing body of international research suggests that diversity could be beneficial in the workplace (Cox & Blake, 1991; Hentschel, Shemla, Wegge & Kearney, 2013; Muhtada, 2012).

## **1.7 Research aims and questions**

The current study aims to use principles of the SIA to explore and understand how cultural diversity works in Omani higher education and how it affects group processes and dynamics. It also aims to explore the perceived effectiveness of leadership as practised in such contexts and how it affects/is affected by the group diversity. In specific, the study aims to:

- explore how diverse identities are constructed at the research site,
- explore how prototype (the cognitive representation of a group as seen by the Social Identity Approach) is constructed,
- explore the extent to which prototype-based social identity is effective in the researched context,
- explore the effectiveness of leadership (as practised at the research site) in managing collective identity,
- identify ways for enhancing practices and making diverse team leadership more effective.

In light of such objectives, the research aims to answer the following main questions:

1. How is identity constructed in the English Language Teaching (ELT) context in Oman?
2. How is prototype constructed in the ELT context and to what extent is prototype-based social identity effective in such a context?

3. How-if at all- is leadership as practised in the research context effective at managing a collective/group identity?

## 1.8 Research methodology

Both leadership and diversity are phenomena that are shaped and conceptualised by the context. Especially at the early stage of the approach development, research following the SIA mainly employed a positivistic approach to study group diversity (Jackson & Sherriff, 2013). Researchers within such an approach manipulate the prototype usually by operationalising it in terms of very specific feedback or leader description that emphasise the similarity between a prototypical leader and a group or the dissimilarity between non-prototypical leader and a group (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). Later, another stream of research employing post-positivist designs started to operationalise prototypicality in terms of the extent to which the leader is perceived to be representative or an exemplar of a natural group or unit characteristics within an organisation and uses designed scales to measure this concept (e.g. Koivisto & Rice, 2016). However, 'prototype' as the representation of a group is seen as complex, multidimensional and fuzzy (Hogg, 2001). Thus, these designs seem not to capture much of this concept as a representation of the group identity and effective leadership. Besides, in their systematic review of previous research on workplace diversity, Williams and O'Reilly (1998) point out that controlled designs usually yield positive effects for diversity in workgroups while natural approaches could reveal more depth about how it actually works in practice especially in relation to its potential disadvantages.

Zanoni, Janssens, Benschop and Nkomo (2010) argue that a positivistic ontology is unable to account for the fact that identities are socially constructed as it conceptualises them as fixed, distinct, and objective. An increasing body of research emphasises the need to bear the context in mind in studying diversity (Allen, Dawson, Wheatley & White, 2007) and leadership (Bush, 2017). Thus, Jackson and Sherriff (2013:259) argue that 'qualitative data can add considerable richness to understandings of intergroup relations and draw attention to inconsistencies and contradictions that otherwise may go unnoticed'. Besides, research following intersectionality perspective calls for accounting for the intersectional functioning of the multiplicity of identities that individuals could

have and the effect of the context and power relations governing the functioning of these identities (Crenshaw, 1991; Tatli & Özbilgin, 2012).

As this research aims at establishing the effect of team diversity on social identity formation, exploring team processes to see whether and how social identity is enacted by both team leaders and team members is important. Thus, an exploratory constructivist case study that takes account of the natural context where cultural diversity is functioning is adopted for this investigation. As a researcher, I was inspired by my positionality as an Omani English language teacher who is non-native English speaker to understand how different identities work (or do not work) together within the research context. Being an insider to the particular research context I investigated, this research enables me to see the picture of diversity wearing non-Omani spectacles through the picture constructed by the voices of the culturally diverse research participants<sup>4</sup>. The research is conducted in an English language department at a higher education institution in Oman. The research generates data from 16 interviews, 8 meeting observations, field notes and document analysis. The data generated is analysed thematically to answer the research questions. Detailed explanation of the methodological choices made is provided in sections 3.5 and 3.6 in the third chapter of this thesis.

## **1.9 Significance and originality**

As a country, Oman is becoming an increasingly popular destination for foreign tourism (Khan, 2011) despite its location in a politically highly tense context (Katzman, 2018). It is known for its mediatory role in resolving conflicts and maintaining peaceful and stable relations with and among countries (Al-Maamari, 2014). Oman is widely known for its tolerant population that Neal (2010:256) describes as 'well-suited to dealing with diversity, and sustaining positive local-expatriate organisational relations'. However, the composition in the culturally diverse higher education ELT context is not only made up of Omanis. As work tasks require an interdependence between the group members (van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007) to be accomplished within the educational vision, diversity effects could manifest themselves more clearly through the interactions and

---

<sup>4</sup> More about my positionality in relation to the study is presented in section 3.9 in the third chapter of the thesis.

group dynamics. Leadership and management research aiming to understand practices within organisations has largely viewed individuals within organisations in terms of the tasks they tackle or the roles they occupy. This holds true for the Omani literature too. Nonetheless, who people are and how they are perceived within their workplaces is key for how they approach these tasks and roles especially that in an academic setting, academics are the main asset that facilitates learning which is the mission of higher education. This study is original in that it fills in the aforementioned gaps within the emerging and dynamic Omani higher education context where the effect of cultural diversity in relation to the organisational context is extremely under-researched.

In the established field of diversity research, diversity has frequently been conceptualised in terms of the proportional representation of certain social categories where there are a majority and minority in relation to certain context. The distinctiveness of the Omani context is that Omanis are only a minority among other minorities within the academic context. Thus, a critical examination of how these identities function together and how power relations are defined in the academic context is seminal especially given the nature of leadership within the organisational context described above. Thus, this study is a critical investigation that aims to uncover how advantage and disadvantage in the academic workplace could be shaped by the intersectionality of multiple identities in the context of higher education. The study gives voice to the various identities present within the context to construct a nuanced picture of diversity as it is perceived to operate by the actual participants. To my knowledge, this is the first in-depth research study that employs a social identity approach to closely examine identity construction in relation to leadership in the Omani academic context. The identity lens employed in this study gives depth to such an understanding in that it encompasses not only people but also the context with all the factors influencing it that could affect group functioning in the HE context.

Furthermore, the significance of this study lies in its interdisciplinary nature that uses a social psychological perspective to understand leadership and group dynamics in a higher education context and in relation to a specific discipline. While language could be a level of identity that forms a potential social identity basis in light of the SIA, the complexity related to the specific field of ELT (as will be explained in section 2.4.3 in the next chapter) makes this field rather unique in comparison to other academic disciplines because of the power differentials

associated with the national and linguistic identities shaping the group context. The study is also of significance at the policy level. It draws attention to the particular nature of culturally diverse academic context and the need to adjust some leadership and management practices to best manage cultural diversity for enhanced workplace climate and educational outcomes.

## **1.10 Structure of the thesis**

This thesis starts with the introductory chapter, which sets out the overall context of the research. It introduces the Omani social context and the organisational context of higher education with a view to painting a picture of the gap created by the cultural diversity characterising the academic context. The chapter moves then to establish the research problem, literature gaps, research question, research significance and the methodology followed to generate answers to these questions. In the second chapter of the thesis, I explore the main tenets of the Social Identity Approach relevant to this study. I specifically focus on the concept of prototype emphasising the inconsistencies and vagueness characterising this concept especially in relation to leadership in ELT context. I also explore the intersectionality theory that offers another perspective for conceptualising identity and prototypicality; one that takes into account not only the social labels but also the context endowing meaning to these labels. The third chapter delineates the ontological, epistemological, and methodological rationales underpinning this research. It presents a detailed description of the research design and the methods employed for the data collection. It also includes sections on the recruitment of participants, the data analysis, the quality maintenance procedures followed and further account of my positionality as a researcher. The fourth chapter presents the findings resulting from the data collection in a thematic design. The fifth chapter discusses the main findings in relation to the wider body of theory and research. The concluding chapter pulls the different parts of this thesis together, provides answers to the research questions, highlights the research contribution, limitations, implication and lays out ways forward.



## Chapter 2: Literature review

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter situates the research within the relevant body of theory and literature. It reviews aspects of the Social Identity Approach with a view to examining the applicability of prototype-based social identity to the Omani context. The chapter presents a critical examination of the principle of prototypicality being a central aspect of social identity construction and leadership in light of this approach. The concept of prototypicality as a basis for social identity and perceived effective leadership is discussed in relation to ELT context in higher education where the language of instruction is different to the native language and where the instructors are culturally diverse. In light of this discussion, a conceptual framework is developed.

In reviewing relevant literature for this interdisciplinary study, I aim to weave a picture of the existing body of knowledge using threads from the international and local research and literature on diversity, organisational management, social identity, ELT and higher education. As a social identity perspective has not been employed in the Omani context before, the review makes use of mainly western literature. In addition to reviewing published book chapters and peer-reviewed journal articles, the review makes use of context-specific documents<sup>5</sup> and locally produced research and literature that contribute to setting a contextualised scene of diversity in higher education in Oman based on which the study is designed. In addition, the review includes literature produced in other Arab and GCC contexts that is seen to bear relevance to the Omani case.

### 2.2 Conceptualising workplace diversity

Semantically, Pearsall (1999:417) defines the word ‘diversity’ in The Concise Oxford Dictionary as ‘variety’ within a range. The word ‘variety’ in the same dictionary is defined as ‘a number of things of the same general class that are distinct in character or quality’ (p.1586). Thus, the definition of the word

---

<sup>5</sup> Example of such documents and reports are the Statistical Book, the audit report produced by the Omani Academic Accreditation Authority and the Omani Educational Philosophy.

‘diversity’ entails the existence of more than one element and the distinctiveness of each of these elements. Being distinct from others is also one meaning The Concise Oxford Dictionary offers for the word ‘different’. Hence, ‘difference’ is at the essence of ‘diversity’. In management literature, however, this similarity in meaning is contested. A rather evaluative meaning has been associated with the word ‘difference’ under the assumption that it implies a comparison to a norm. However, comparison could be bi-directional or multi-directional. As such, the word ‘norm’ could relatively be assigned to more than one category at the same time depending on the varied perceptions. Thus, the semantic denotations of both ‘diversity’ and ‘difference’ could imply neutral meanings.

Historically, however, the term ‘diversity’ has become less neutral as it became a currency of various fields. Originating in biology, the word was still being used largely neutrally to refer to the classifications of non-human species according to their essential similarities or differences (Litvin, 1997). As biology moved towards genetically classifying humans, the word ‘diversity’ started to become loaded with different connotations. To this extent, the term diversity became ‘chameleon-like’ (Lumby & Coleman, 2007:1). Williams and O’Reilly III (1998) contend that diversity has been a subject of study for many fields. Hence, when the term reached the fields of organisation and leadership, it was already ‘pregnant with meanings’ (Litvin, 1997:187). Instead of being associated with the notion of horizontal classification, diversity research started to focus on the effects of diversity such as vertical ranks, power distribution, equality, social justice, and inclusion (Lumby & Coleman, 2007; Lumby & Morrison, 2010).

The current research adopts the Social Identity Approach (SIA) established by Tajfel and Turner (1979) as its overarching conceptual framework to understand the cultural diversity of staff in the Omani higher education context. The SIA generally contends that establishing a social identity based on a group prototype results in increased cohesion within groups (Hornsey, 2008). For a social identity to be established, group members should perceive a level of commonality between them that forms a shared prototype (Andersen & Moynihan, 2016). In light of this approach, diversity could be broadly seen as variety in any aspect that could otherwise provide a basis for social identity establishment. The following section explicates the social identity perspective in more depth.

### 2.3 The Social Identity Approach

The origins of the Social Identity Approach can be found in the work of Henri Tajfel in the 1970s. It was inspired by the Realistic Group Conflict Theory founded by Muzafer Sherif to explain intergroup conflict, hostility and competition. According to this theory, 'real conflicts of group interests not only create antagonistic intergroup relations but also heighten identification with, and positive attachment to, the in-group' (Tajfel & Turner, 1979:33). Thus, Tajfel elaborated on this notion of in-group identification in his research, which resulted in the Social Identity Theory (SIT). The SIT aims at understanding the role of the social context in intergroup behaviour. It forms the first pillar of the SIA and the first theory to address the group level of identity (Spears, 2011).

At the early stage of the approach development, it was mainly interested in the intergroup interactions with not much interest in the intragroup processes (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Through a series of experiments with minimal groups that aimed to understand how behaviours like prejudice could happen, Tajfel and Turner (1979) concluded that social behaviour is determined by the nature of interaction that takes place between people. Such an interaction falls within a continuum ranging from interpersonal (determined by individual characteristics) to intergroup (determined by the membership of certain group). The two ends of the continuum where purely interpersonal or intergroup interactions take place are unlikely to exist in reality according to Tajfel and Turner (1979). This means that the two poles disproportionally contribute to social interaction at the same time. An individual's position on this continuum is decided by social factors (the characteristics of a situation) and psychological factors (individual's perspective and belief system in relation to the situation) (Haslam, 2004). The notion of the interaction continuum became the essence of the SIT (also known as the social identity theory of intergroup behaviour) (Hogg, 2005; Hogg & Reid, 2006).

Hornsey (2008) points out that while the early notions of this paradigm were based on minimal laboratory experiments, many of these principles have been verified through subsequent research in various fields even outside social psychology. The results of the minimal paradigm experiments indicated that the individual's cognitive awareness that they belong to certain category while others belong to another category makes individuals favour their own group even when they achieve no personal gain as a result of such a behaviour. This notion of

categorisation forms the nucleus of the second branch of the approach. Turner established the Self-Categorisation Theory (SCT) (also called the social identity theory of the group) (Hornsey, 2008; Spears, 2011). This theory is considered another main pillar of the SIA. The SCT was developed to address the limitations of the SIT to answer questions like

*‘[w]hat is the relationship between personal and social identity? What makes people define themselves in terms of one group membership rather than another? How exactly is a person’s psychology transformed by his or her group ties? How does social identification produce in-group consensus and coordinated social action’ (Haslam, 2004:28).*

The SIT and the SCT overlap in many aspects and thus they together form the Social Identity Approach which provides a new lenses for understanding intergroup and intragroup processes such as ‘group polarization’, ‘group solidarity’, ‘cohesiveness’, stereotyping’, and ‘violence’ (Hornsey, 2008:209-10). Below is a presentation of the main tenets of this approach.

### 2.3.1 Self-categorisation

Categorisation is considered the core element of this approach based on which social identity is established. Tajfel and Turner (1979:40) define the process of social categorisation as the ‘cognitive tools that segment, classify, and order the social environment, and thus enable the individual to undertake many forms of social action’. In addition to enabling an individual to understand the social environment, Ashforth and Mael (1989) point out that the aim of categorisation is to establish order within the social structure and to define self in relation to others. Hence, categorisation happens at the level of self and others. When a person categorises themselves as a member of a certain group, they simultaneously categorise others as members of other groups. When this distinction is salient, people tend to perceive of members within their groups as similar to them and to each other but different from the members of the other group (who in turn are perceived to be similar to each other) (Hornsey, 2008). Categorisation, thus, results in creating stereotypes about one’s group and other groups besides other effects like favouritism and prejudice.

The notion of the different levels of interaction in the SIT was reconceptualised in the SCT to establish the levels of self-concept/identity. People interact based on their personal characteristics (e.g. I like teaching) when they see themselves as unique individuals (personal identity). In this case, they compare themselves to other individuals. On the other hand, they conceive of themselves in terms of their social identity when their interaction is based on their membership in certain group (e.g. We are teachers) (Hornsey, 2008). 'It is the "relative" salience of different levels of self-categorisation which determines the degree to which [...] behaviour expresses individual differences or collective similarities' (Turner, 1999:11). According to Haslam (2004) the salience of the individual or the collective levels of identity is governed by a functional antagonism principle such that the two cannot be equally salient at the same time. However, subsequent research found that both levels of identity could be salient at the same time (Treviño, 2006) and that there is a mutual influence between the groups and the individuals constituting them (Hornsey, 2008).

### 2.3.2 Social identity

The SIT focuses on the level of self-concept that is defined in terms of the group one identifies with. Tajfel and Turner (1979:40) define group as 'a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and their membership of it'. Thus, social identity is a function of belonging to a group and the value associated with such belonging (Treviño, 2006). Hornsey (2008) suggests that people aim to achieve a positive self-concept by identifying with a certain group and thus they want their group to be positively distinct from other groups. The results of the minimal group paradigm show that the existence of an out-group category was sufficient to trigger in-group favouritism without the existence of perception of similarity between the group members (Haslam, 2004). However, Billig (1976) argues that members' awareness of their common identity is an integral component. In fact, Haslam (2004) summarises that there is a cognitive (perception of self in terms of group membership) and motivational bases for group identification and intergroup differentiation. Despite the disagreement between theorists about the type of motivation that could result in such an identity-level-conversion (Spears, 2011), Hogg (2005) contends that the

process of identification with a certain group is motivated by three main factors. These factors are self-esteem enhancement, uncertainty reduction, and optimal group distinctiveness. The SIA acknowledges that people could have as many social identities as there are groups they cognitively identify with (Hogg & Reid, 2006; Hogg, 2005). This makes categorisation a dynamic process that depends on the situation (Patton, 2010). Which identity is active to inform behaviour within a specific situation is a function of the identity salience principle.

### 2.3.3 Salience of social categories

According to the SIA, a social category needs to be perceived as salient so that it could form a basis for social identity. A category can be seen as psychologically real (salient) when the two conditions of accessibility and fit are met (Hogg, 2005; Hornsey, 2008). Accessibility is 'determined by the relative centrality or importance of a group membership and by its current emotional or value significance to a person' (Trentham, 2006:258). A social category needs to be seen as important in the immediate situation (situationally accessible) and used frequently within the group because of its existence in people's minds (chronically accessible) (Hornsey, 2008). On the other hand, fit is 'the extent to which the social categories are perceived to reflect social reality [intergroup differences or in-group similarities]' (Hornsey, 2008:208). A social category should highlight the difference between the groups and the similarity within the group (comparative fit) based on the meta-contrast principle (Haslam, 2004). Such a principle suggests that group members perceive themselves and are perceived by others as members of the same group when the average differences between them are less than those between them and other comparative group (Turner, 1999). Hence, by categorising themselves as one entity, they see themselves as similar to each other and at the same time, they perceive members of other groups as similar to each other but as a group, very different from their own group.

In addition to its comparative fit, the social category prototype should explain the behaviour in question based on the group's norms (normative fit) (Hogg & Reid, 2006). Fit and accessibility have been emphasised as the main criteria for a category salience. Nonetheless, Haslam (2004) outlines that the prior expectations individuals have based on their previous group memberships also

contribute to deciding on what category becomes salient. Hence, salience could be a function of both social context characteristics and individual's prior expectations. Haslam and Platow (2001) provide four main reasons why salience is key for social identity formation. First, it leads individuals to perceive themselves as representatives of the group and thus share its norms and goals. Moreover, salience leads individuals to perceive reality through the same perspective and it motivates them to align their behaviours with the group norms. Salience also motivates members to work collaboratively according to shared objectives. When an attribute is perceived as salient, it becomes able to instigate normative behaviour based on the group's shared identity. Nonetheless, when an attribute fails to pass these thresholds, identification based on this attribute fails and a need for identifying another more salient category arises. When a salient category for social identity is identified, members cease to see themselves as distinct individuals and embark on a process of depersonalising themselves and other in-group members.

#### **2.3.4 Depersonalisation and prototypes**

Individuals perceive of the salient social category that forms social identity as a prototypical cognitive image of the social group. Hogg (2001:187) defines prototypes as 'context-specific, multidimensional fuzzy sets of attributes that define and prescribe attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that characterise one group and distinguish it from other groups'. Hogg and Reid (2006:10) point out that prototypes are context specific as they are 'a function of the social comparative frame (situation, goals, and people physically or cognitively present)'. A group's prototype contains information that results from the immediate comparison situation, the history of the in-group, and in-group and intergroup memories (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003).

The process by which individuals perceive themselves and other group members in terms of this prototypical image and not in terms of personal characteristics is called depersonalisation (Hornsey, 2008). As one depersonalises his/her identity, they identify with a social group and thus the group's prototype describes and prescribes the appropriate behaviour and attitudes in relation to certain context or situation. Billig (1976) defines social identification as the process by which a member perceives of themselves in terms of a group membership that represents

the concept of self. Hogg and Reid (2006) stresses that when prototypes are shared between the group members by virtue of consensus and not idiosyncratic representation, they become identical to group norms. Group norms are the 'shared cognitive representations that, within a particular context, characterise the behaviour of members of relevant out-groups and describe and prescribe the behaviour of in-group members including ourselves' (Hogg & Reid, 2006:10). In principle, however, norms and prototypes are different as 'a prototype is an individual's cognitive representation of what he or she believes to be the normative properties of the group' (Hogg, van Knippenberg, & Rast, 2012:262). The stronger an individual perceives himself or herself on the basis of the shared group prototype, the more prototypical they become. Prototypicality is considered focal to various group processes such as leadership, influence within a group, cohesion and conformity (Hornsey, 2008). The existence of various degrees of prototypicality within a group explains certain group behaviours such as sub-groups, deviance, and leader-follower status (Hogg, 2001). Moreover, during social conflict, members of a group tend to act more in terms of the group's prototype and see the other group as a cohesive uniform (Haslam, 2004).

### 2.3.5 Intergroup comparisons and social structures

The SIA contends that a social group becomes real only in comparison to other out-groups and thus assigning value to groups is an integral part of social identification (Trentham, 2006). Intergroup comparison requires that the comparison groups share certain higher order similarity or dimension of comparison (Haslam, 2004). To illustrate, comparison between two divisions within an organisation becomes meaningful because they share a wider organisational context. Intergroup comparison is essential for determining a group's social status. The results of the minimal group paradigm experiments and further research suggest that comparison leads to in-group favouritism. In relation to this, Haslam (2004) stresses that in-group favouritism is not a universal result of categorisation but it depends on the situation as favouritism for the outgroup is also possible. In-group favouritism depends on the extent of individual identification with the in-group, the salience of a comparison context, and the relevance of an out-group to the comparison (Haslam, 2004). In other words, in-group favouritism is a function of both the levels of group identification and the salience of a group category.



Hornsey (2008) points out that when individuals do not perceive identification with the in-group to result in positive self-concept due to the low status of the group in the social structure, they follow one of a number of strategies to promote their self-concept. The type of strategy to be adopted links to the belief structure adopted by a group (Trentham, 2006). According to Haslam (2004), belief structures lie on a continuum with social mobility at one end and social change at the other end. Social mobility belief structure conceives of the boundaries between groups as flexible and thus an individual could take an action by perhaps leaving their group to join a higher status group. On the other hand, social change belief structure is based on the premise that boundaries between groups are fixed and thus leaving a group is socially impossible. The perceived legitimacy and security of the status difference between the two groups are also other determinants of the strategy to be followed. Tajfel and Turner (1979) highlight that both high status and low status groups follow different strategies in relation to changing or maintaining a certain status hierarchy. Haslam (2004:25-26) summarises these strategies as depicted in the table 2.1 below.

Group	Perceived permeability of group boundaries	Perceived security of group relations (legitimacy and stability)	Strategy for achieving positive social identity	Action	Implications for out-group and status quo	Form of behaviour
Low status-group	Permeable		Individual mobility	Joining high-status group	Accepting out-group's superiority	Individual
	Impermeable	Secure relations	Social creativity	Changing comparison dimension, changing the value assigned to the group status in the dimension, or changing comparison group (usually selecting a lower status group)	Redefines status without challenging out-group superiority	Collective

		Insecure relations	Social competition	Conflict, hostility, antagonism	Directly challenging out-group superiority	
High status group	Permeable		Individual mobility	Maintaining status quo	Accepting out-group's inferiority	Individual
	Impermeable	Secure relations	Social creativity	Magnanimity (particularly in irrelevant dimension), latent discrimination, covert repression	Indirectly reinforces out-group's inferiority	Collective
		Insecure relations	Social creativity	Supremacist ideologising	Directly promotes out-group inferiority	
			Social competition	Conflict, open hostility, antagonism		

Table 2-1: Strategies for positive social identification

### 2.3.6 The Social Identity perspective on leadership

Social psychology considers leadership a basic and natural group process (Rast, 2015). The SIA stresses that shared group membership between the leader and the followers is key for perceptions of leadership and leader effectiveness (Van Knippenberg, 2011). Achieving social identity within a group requires practising an influence over individuals to define their identities in terms of a social group. Studying influence within groups attracted interest among theorists at a later stage of the SIA development. Hogg (2001) points out that leadership within a group is decided by three interrelated processes, which are prototypicality, social attraction and attribution, and information processing. When a group is salient and when people identify with their groups, the embodiment of the group prototype (prototypicality) creates a distinct charisma for the most prototypical member which results in making a person socially attractive and liked by the group members (Hogg, van Knippenberg, et al., 2012). Prototypical members are seen as best potentials for leadership because they behave in a group-oriented

manner, they gain more trust and attention and they become a reference for information about the group's prototype (Hogg & Reid, 2006). They gradually gain greater legitimacy and charismatic leadership personality that enable them to influence others (Hogg, 2001). According to Hogg and Reid (2006), such qualities make leaders able to manipulate group prototype because of their high influence which makes them entrepreneurs of prototypicality.

Due to the importance of a group prototype in relation to social influence within a group, it forms a seed for another theory, which for the purpose of this thesis will be considered as a third branch of the SIA. This third branch is concerned with understanding how leaders influence group members towards social identity. Hogg (2001) stresses that under conditions of high group salience and high group identification, prototypicality that leads to in-group favouritism becomes more important than other leadership-schema characteristics like fairness. van Knippenberg and Hogg (2003) stress that prototypical leaders with prototypical charisma are more effective in introducing change than non-or-less- prototypical leaders. The effectiveness of a prototypical leader as a change agent is mediated by their being perceived as an 'agent[s] of continuity' (Hogg et al., 2012:276). Thus, while prototypical leaders could be more empowered to lead the group towards change than non-prototypical leaders, they need to maintain the distinct identity and the defining characteristics of the group. Further elaboration on leadership and leadership effectiveness in light of the SIA is presented in sections 2.4.4 and 2.5 of this chapter.

## **2.4 Limitations of the SIA**

The SIA has been used in expanding fields like organisations, health psychology, linguistics, political sciences, and theology (Haslam, 2004). Haslam (2004) attributes the wide use of this theory to three main reasons:

- its high explanatory capacity in relation to various fields,
- its ability to provide a new perspective on understanding behaviour in terms of group membership, and
- its integration of political aspects that could explain behaviour in terms of power relation and social hierarchy.

This wide use of the theory and the further expansions in its principles made it very elastic and hard to challenge (Hornsey, 2008). However, this has also made the SIA approach open to a wide range of interpretations that could generate critique directed either to the SIT or the SIA as a whole.

#### 2.4.1 Prototypes and group-distinctiveness

Hogg (2001:187) states that prototypes are 'contextually responsive, and the principle governing this contextual sensitivity is metacontrast'. Comparison to an out-group is necessary for establishing a group prototype because of the lack of objective standards for comparison and hence for deriving meaning (Trepte, 2006). Constant comparison and adjustment of the group prototype so that differentiation from the out-group is maintained means that group identity is not based on a fixed set of norms (Kreindler, Dowd, Dana Star & Gottschalk, 2012). Thus, 'the prototype is not an objective reality, but rather a subjective sense of the defining attributes of a social category that fluctuates according to the context' (Hornsey, 2008: 208-9). Hence, the question for the SIA is which group member could be described as the most prototypical if the prototype is subjective and could constantly be revised? Besides, if prototypes are constantly revisited then group distinctiveness is not defined based on a stable base. The idea of distinct prototype-based social groups as advocated by the SIA might lack precision on two grounds. First, even within the same group, there are no two members with the same cognitive prototypes. Because prototypes are based on cognitive perceptions of consensus-based norms, they cannot be fully shared because cognition is individual. Besides, if prototypes are based on facts then they should be fixed but the SIA suggests that they are based on shared group norms which are collectively discussed and agreed. Thus, the change in individual cognition could be related to the change of the group prototype that is based on consensus-based social cognition. Haslam (2004) contends that the integration of inputs during a group discussion could change personal opinions (through consensus) into social facts. Thus, the premise that a group prototype is consensual and should be regularly adapted (Hogg & Reid, 2006) suggests that a group's identity is emergent and could constantly be reconfigured.

Consequently, it might be impractical to perceive of individuals as compliers with a pre-defined group-based prototype ignoring the agency of the individuals

involved within the group (Zanoni et al., 2010). Hogg and Reid (2006:10) point out that 'group prototypes submerge variability and diversity in a single representation that characterises an entire human group'. However, by emphasising distinctiveness based on group-specific prototypes, the SIA assumes that there is no intergroup overlap in norms such that intergroup differences could be easily polarised. In reality, however, despite the existence of a set of norms characterising one group in particular, there are norms that are shared between groups due to the fact that they all contain human beings. According to the SCT, self-concept falls along a gradation of levels from subordinate (personal identity), through intermediate (social identity), to superordinate (human identity) (Hornsey, 2008). While the SIA acknowledges the existence of the human level of identity (Spears, 2011), it placed less emphasis on this higher order level of self.

#### **2.4.2 An Islamic perspective on prototype-based social identity**

Eliciting an Islamic perspective on the SIA requires an understanding of the Islamic philosophy. The discussion in this section draws on an interpretation of Islamic texts and relevant literature to explore the applicability of the principle of prototype and prototype-based social identity to the Omani context from the Islamic perspective. The discussion highlights that the notions of the SIA could generally be applicable to the Omani context but there are two interrelated differences between the Islamic perspective and the SIA. First, the Islamic perspective emphasises the human identity that accommodates differences and yet establishes a higher-order shared identity based on shared human values. Second, the norms underlying identity prototype are not based on social consensus between the group members but on a fixed system of values and norms that is interpreted collectively.

The Quran states that Islam is a universal religion and Allah is the creator and Lord of the whole universe. The message revealed to Prophet Mohammed is thus a universal one. Thus, favouritism and loyalty are to the one and unifying God (Almoharby & Neal, 2013). The norms based on which Islam—as a religious identity—is established are not socially or collectively established. Rather, they are revealed from God to His last messenger through the Quran. Muhtada (2012) stresses that Islam is a religion of pluralism and diversity. Allah has created humans into diverse categories (nations, tribes, languages, etc..) so that they

compete in virtue. Almoharby and Neal (2013:149) emphasise that the control of social tribe-based groupings that was prevalent before Islam is opposed by Islam in favour of unified 'world community' based on the Islamic sources of norms. Thus, Allah instructs Prophet Muhammad (in the Quran) to use the norms of the Quran as a reference for ruling a religiously diverse nation. The Quran explains that one main objective for diversity within people is encouraging virtue-based competition.

*'And We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, verifying what is before it of the Book and a guardian over it, therefore judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their low desires (to turn away) from the truth that has come to you; for everyone of you did We appoint a law and a way, and if Allah had pleased He would have made you (all) a single people, but that He might try you in what He gave you, therefore strive with one another to hasten to virtuous deeds; to Allah is your return, of all (of you), so He will let you know that in which you differed.'* (Quran 5:48)

In another verse, the Quran emphasises unity again by stating that Allah has created humans of the same father (Adam) and mother (Eve). It states that another purpose of diversity is to enable groups to learn from each other affirming that piety is the only basis of differentiation.

*'O you men! Surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the most honorable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful (of his duty); surely Allah is Knowing, Aware.'* (Quran 49:13)

Therefore, prejudice based on categories like language, colour, race, gender, social status or ethnicity are seen irrelevant according to Islam, as the only rationale for preference is piety. Addressing Muslims, prophet Mohammed said in his last sermon:

*'All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black nor a black has any superiority over white except by piety and good action... Remember, one day you will appear before God (The Creator) and you will answer for your deeds.'* (Masnad Al Imam Ahmed, Vol. 5: No. 23536)

The prophet here emphasises aspects of similarity that all humans share: uniformity of origin, uniformity of differentiation criteria, and uniformity of reference (God). While Prophet Mohammed is an Arab, he claims no superiority

for Arab over others. He establishes the norm that piety and observance of Lord's prototype as the gauge for measuring superiority. The Quran similarly highlights the unity of humanity through the emphasis on the one God and the message of his messenger to all people. While acknowledging the diversity and distinctiveness of faith-based groups, Allah instructed Prophet Muhammad to communicate with believers in other faiths and to establish a common understanding between them.

*'Say: O followers of the Book (Christians and Jews)! Come to an equitable proposition between us and you that we shall not serve any but Allah and (that) we shall not associate aught with Him, and (that) some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allah; but if they turn back, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims.'* (Quran 3:64)

Hence, communication for a shared understanding here is based on emphasising a higher order norm that is shared between the three faith groups; the unity of God. Islam, thus, respects faith-based diversity. It does not force those who have learned about it and understood its teachings to embrace it if they do not wish to.

*'There is no compulsion in religion'* (Quran 2:256)

Muhtada (2012) relates that when Prophet Muhammad established the Islamic State in Al Medina, he issued the Al Medina Charter which governed the equal rights of Muslims and Jews who were dwelling Al Medina then. Thus, justice is to be observed even if it meant that one stands in opposition of his kinship as the Islamic norms become more powerful than social ties. The Quran instructs followers to practise justice with Muslims and non-Muslims, friends or enemies.

*'O you who believe! Be upright for Allah, bearers of witness with justice, and let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably; act equitably, that is nearer to piety, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is Aware of what you do.'* (Quran 5:8)

In translating this into action, Prophet Mohammed replied once to a person who interceded against applying the punishment of theft (cutting off hand) against a woman:

*'Do you try to intercede for somebody in a case connected with Allah's prescribed punishment?... What destroyed the nations preceding you was that if a noble amongst them stole, they would forgive him, and if a poor person amongst them stole, they would inflict Allah's legal punishment on*

*him. By Allah, if Fatima, the daughter of Mohammad, stole, I would cut off her hand.'* (Bukhari, Vol. 4: No. 681)

In relation to context-specific matters, the Quran does not prescribe specific manners for implementing norms. The purpose of this is that practice remains flexible according to time and context. Almoharby (2010) states an example of this by the decision-making process in Islam. As long as decision-making is based on participation in light of the sources of Islamic legislations, the specific way it is applied is a function of time and situation. According to the Quran, decision-making should be based on consultation among those with the best knowledge of the norms so that a maximal effect is achieved. Consultation-based decision-making is considered a sign of true believers.

*'And those who respond to their Lord and keep up prayer, and their rule is to take counsel among themselves, and who spend out of what We have given them.'* (Quran 43:38)

This also entails that resolution in relation to any disputes about interpreting Islamic norms should be made in reference to the Quran, the Sunna [Prophet's sayings and way of life], and the people in command in relation to the specific area under question.

*'O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those in authority from among you; then if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allah and the Apostle, if you believe in Allah and the last day; this is better and very good in the end.'* (Quran 4:59)

In relation to leadership, Islam looks at leadership as a position that both guards the Islamic norms and observes the wellbeing of people. A leader needs to be nominated by the community based on criteria like 'justice, wisdom, braveness, honesty, integrity, equity, ability to maintain and safeguard the affairs of the nation and above all must rule according to the Quran and Sunna' (Almoharby, 2010:11). Almoharby and Neal (2013:148) argue that

*'Islamic leadership does not rely for its legitimacy upon traditional authority, but rather on rational-legal systems based on unity of purpose, acknowledgment of the one God, and the foundational example of Prophet Muhammad, whose referent and charismatic authority lives on in discussions of sunna [Prophet's way of life] and hadith [Prophet's sayings]'.*

Almoharby and Neal (2013) stress that leaders in Islam are emergent based on their adherence to the authority sources and thus they work as servants of the



community without distancing themselves from their followers. The Quran refers to kingdoms based on absolute king authority as a sign of corruption.

*‘Surely the kings, when they enter a town, ruin it and make the noblest of its people to be low, and thus they (always) do.’ (Quran 27:34)*

Hence, norm-based consultation among the most knowledgeable individuals does not only concern taking decisions about regular matters but even the nomination and legitimacy of the leader (Almoharby, 2010; Turner, 2010). Almoharby and Neal (2013:153) stress that the process of translating norms into action in Islam should be based on ‘a common seeking of ruling on the particular from precedent and universal principles, and [...] striving to clarify universals through argumentation about prior particulars and agreed-upon universals’. Such an argumentation to decide on best practices should follow the principle of consultation among those well versed in the Islamic norms and the specific area in question. Hence, leader’s legitimacy is also decided by the situation. To illustrate, Almoharby (2010) explains that the criteria for the nomination of the leader differs depending on whether it is wartime or a time of political stability. Scholar leaders are more likely to be nominated during peacetime but they might not always be the best option during wartime when military competence becomes more relevant. After all, decisions concerning community are not individually made but a group function.

Abbas (1995) stresses that Islamic values have the potential for providing a basis for a solid management theory but are not adequately understood by leaders. This might explain why Muslim societies import models and practices that contextually might be irrelevant. In relation to diversity contexts, Muhtada (2012) emphasises that Muslim scholars who are well versed in Islam teachings and modern management theory should work with managers and emphasise values such as tolerance, (mutual) understanding, and fairness as to manage diverse workforce. Towards such an effect, Muhtada (2012) argues that beliefs about diversity that are not in line with genuine Islamic perspective should be revised and corrected. In fact, current practices in organisational contexts in Muslim countries reflect a challenge related to “doublethink” which concerns the inconsistency between values and practices (Almoharby, 2010). Such inconsistency could be attributed to the mismatch between the ideologies embraced by the modern states that are influenced by the global context and

those of the Islamic value system (Kirk & Napier, 2009). Ashforth and Mael (1989:31) argue that when an individual assumes more than one identity, failure to integrate the values associated with these identities creates value conflict that is manifested in practices such as 'double-standards' and 'selective forgetting'.

#### 2.4.3 **Prototype and cultural diversity in ELT in Oman**

Cox (1994:6) defines cultural diversity as 'the representation, in one social system, of people with distinctly different group affiliations of cultural significance'. Cultural diversity has frequently been conceptualised as diversity in nationality or ethnicity. However, diversity in language also provides a strong basis for competing social identities (Sachdev & Bourhis, 1990). The SIA considers perceived similarity as a basis for positive group functioning and perceived differences as possible reasons for inter-group effects because they lead to categorising those who are different as out-group members. Lumby and Coleman (2007) thus stress that it is not the perception of difference per se that influences inter-group relations but the resulting advantages or disadvantages associated with these differences.

The Omani educational philosophy acknowledges the need for responding to global changes with yet an emphasis on preserving the local cultural resources as drivers for its educational vision (Philosophy of education in the Sultanate of Oman, 2017). Nevertheless, Abbas (1995) argues that many management practices and policies in the Arab world are imported from other contexts and implemented in the Arab contexts sometimes without the necessary adaptation. This is also applicable to higher education in Oman (Donn & Issan, 2007). Al'Abri (2011) maintains that educational policy in the Omani modern state has been directly and indirectly affected by the global and international context Oman has become a part of. A clear manifestation of such cultural and economic influences is the adoption of English as the language of higher education (Al-Issa, 2006b). Kumaravadivelu (2016) contends that the superiority of the native English speaking countries in education is manifested in the materials and methods of teaching they promote through ELT industry.

Many Omani higher education institutions imported programmes that are designed by non-Omanis in non-Omani contexts (Abbas, 1995; Al Shmeli, 2011) and this applies to ELT (Al-Issa, 2006b). In their efforts to promote quality of

provision, many HEIs in Oman have established partnerships with accredited international universities that sometime prescribed the curriculums and the methods of teaching (Al'Abri, 2016). Such a form of internationalising higher education provision entails that the curriculums used in education might not be conducive towards preserving the Omani cultural distinctiveness as the Omani educational philosophy hopes. Educational ELT programmes do not only communicate knowledge but they are also infused with the cultures and values of the origin and demonstrate a form of imperialism (Al-Issa, 2006b; Phillipson, 2016). Scrutinising the Omani school curriculum, Al-Issa (2005) concludes that part of ELT ideology is strengthening the prominence of the cultural values of the native English cultures especially the UK and the US. Al-Issa (2005) argues that the National English Language Policy in Oman stresses the importance of the cultural aspects associated with English for improved English language learning and enhanced communication between students and the global world. Such policy is underlying school curriculum and was designed by Australian, English, and Canadian authors (Al-Issa, 2005b).

If such dominance of non-local ideologies is evident in locally designed syllabus; chances are that they are more evident in imported programmes especially when teachers are largely international as is the case with most ELT programmes in the Omani HEIs (Al-Issa, 2006b). Thus, the adoption of English as the language of instruction in Oman raises the question as to what extent is preserving Oman's cultural distinctiveness a realistic objective for higher education. This is especially so that English is also seen as a tool for Omanisation as it contributes to qualifying nationals to replace international workforce (Al-Issa, 2006a). Al'Abri (2011) stresses that the traditional emphasis on the role of education as a tool for preserving the Omani national identity cannot be sustained under the global influence on local policy.

With specific focus on the language aspect, the field of ELT has been dominated by native English speaking teachers (NESTs) who are considered an economic resource for countries such as the UK and the USA (Al-Issa, 2006b; Phillipson, 2016). Perceived as an ideal linguistic asset and an indicator of quality in ELT provision (Yarahmadi & Magd, 2016), being a NEST sometimes overrides academic qualification in staff recruitment in many countries where ELT thrives (Huang, 2014; Watson & Pojanapunya, 2009). This is obviously not the case in the

native countries of the NESTs where qualification is more valued (Phillipson, 2016). NESTs have been privileged in the ELT industry despite lacking the cultural and sociolinguistic competences necessary in international ELT contexts (Phillipson, 2016).

Nevertheless, the status of the elite English is increasingly changing towards global English(es) promoted by the global spread of the language. Besides, the increase in the number of non-NESTs internationally relative to the NESTs seems to also affect such prototypical image (Hayes, 2009; Selvi, 2016). Thus, recruitment of other nationalities where the status of English could be a second or a foreign language became an alternative albeit sometimes less desirable (Alghofaili & Elyas, 2017). Kumaravadivelu (2016) maintains that discrimination against the non-NESTs and their marginalisation in recruitment, pay, and professional recognition is still prevalent even in the non-NESTs' own countries. Such a dichotomy creates a Native Speaker (NS) qualification that devalues professional and academic qualifications with respect to the NESTs and affects the confidence and self-esteem of the non-NESTs (Selvi, 2016). Besides, the strengths of the non-NESTs have usually been overlooked because their perceived lack of command over English in terms of pronunciation, accent, and selection of expressions in relation to jargon and context (Song & Castillo, 2015).

Such a global status of English led to increased cultural diversity within the ELT sector in Oman widening the discourse from the traditional linguistic dichotomy to the (now) cultural diversity. Al-Issa (2005) points out that over 50% of English language teachers in Oman are non-Omanis and come from various Arab, Asian, African, and European countries. Al-Mahrooqi and Tuzlukova (2014) point out that the Language Centre in Sultan Qaboos University in Oman comprised teachers belonging to 30 nationalities. Thus, the Omani society that is largely culturally homogenous and whose prototypical language is Arabic is not reflected in HEIs characterised by staff cultural diversity and use of English as the medium of instruction. As culture is a main source of societal and organisational norms, it forms a strong basis for categorisation and thus social identity. Diverse cultural backgrounds within a group produce a mixture of values, thoughts, and attitudes that form bases for diverse cultural prototypes. This poses the question to the SIA as to who could be prototypical in such a context and how could prototype be defined?

The status of ELT in Oman where Omanis whose mother language is Arabic work with non-Omanis belonging to diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds could represent a basis for multiple prototypes to exist simultaneously. Social identities could be established based on readily detectable categories such as cultural/national backgrounds. Besides, literature suggests that identity in academia is discipline-based and it is influenced by the nature of the discipline (Blackwell, Snyder & Mavriplis, 2009; Clarke, Hyde & Drennan, 2013; Schmalings, Trevino, Lind, Blume & Baker, 2014). Hence, English as the language of instruction creates another category for promoting certain prototype especially because language is a very powerful cultural identity aspect (Abbas, 1995; Hogg & Abrams, 1998).

Based on the notion of prototypicality, the SIA predicts negative effects for diverse ELT teamwork because of the lack of similarity salience that leads to prototypical behaviour (Mitchell et al., 2015). Being a potential basis for categorisation, cultural diversity in a workplace is likely to give rise to power differentials which could lead to perceived discrimination, lack of job satisfaction, low integration, and perceived difference in performance (Richardson & McKenna, 2002; Turner, González & Wood, 2008). In addition, since observable attributes of diversity stand as markers for the less apparent sets of norms, values and beliefs, diversity of values could have longer standing effects on workgroups (Meeussen, Schaafsma & Phalet, 2014; Chuang et al., 2004). Norms are the core of prototypes that form the basis of social identity. As a result, academic staff members might fail to identify a salient shared category that could form a cohesive social group in ELT.

In that case, staff members might tend to identify with their nationals or culturally close colleagues leading to subgroups (Richardson & McKenna, 2002). Besides, the underlying differences in norms and values have been found to be positively associated with task and relationship conflict as this could lead to role-related ambiguity (Hobman, Bordia & Gallois, 2012). The SIA holds that the power of values and norms lies in their being the essence of the prototypes that distinguish social groups. This means that in culturally diverse groups where norms are diverse and thus input might not be consistent, communication for making a decision might be challenging despite the fact that it could bring wider perspectives (Hogg & Reid, 2006).

The SIA predicts that in the process of decision-making, group members whose input is consistent with the group's norms are more favourable as efficiency is maintained through the shared understanding (Hogg & Reid, 2006). This also suggests that members belonging to minority groups might not be willing to take part in the decision making process because of lacking the necessary level of prototypicality that makes their arguments favoured. When non-prototypical members are in a prototype-based social group, they could represent a threat to the bigger group because of their different views and perspectives that are not in line with the group's prototype. Hogg and Reid (2006) emphasise that less-or-non-prototypical members could be viewed as deviant members or subgroups. Moreover, the ELT field comprises a range of nationalities that could be culturally rather distant from each other (Chinh, 2013). Van Vianen, De Pater, Kristof-Brown and Johnson (2004) point out that cultural distance affects employees' ability to adjust to the host workplace, which is likely to affect their identification with the group.

Despite such drawbacks, an increasing body of research suggests that diversity could be positive to workgroups. Research suggests that the effects of cultural diversity on group processes and performance could be moderated by different factors like time, organisational context, type of task, leadership style, and the difficulty of task (Christian, Porter & Moffitt, 2006; Kearney & Gebert, 2009). The SIA's inability to explain such positive effects for cultural diversity led to the development of other conceptual perspectives that aim at explaining the positive effects of diversity in a workgroup. In their Information Processing and Decision-making perspective, Cox and Blake (1991) consider the way diversity is managed in certain organisational context as a major moderating factor that decides on how diversity could affect group processes. Flexible management could represent a chance for creativity and innovation (Cheng, Fielding, Hogg & Terry, 2009). Besides, Cox and Blake (1991) argue that when managed well, diversity in organisations could lead to advantages related to cost effectiveness, retention of good staff, wider marketing potentials, increased team creativity, better decisions and solutions to problems and system flexibility and decreased standardisation.

#### 2.4.4 Prototypicality and effective leadership

According to the SIA, a prototypical member is one who reflects the average characteristics of a group prototype while a prototypical leader is the best embodiment of the group prototype (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). Hogg (2001) stresses that high prototypicality distinguishes highly prototypical members from the less prototypical ones, underlies the emergence of leaders, and over time increases attribution of prototypical behaviour to leader's individual disposition. As prototypes and norms become identical with increased prototypicality according to the SIA, a prototypical leader could become the source of group norms. Thus, the basis for comparison with an outgroup is no longer based on the group nature but on the most prototypical members within the group (Zanoni et al., 2010). In such a case, how could a leader demonstrate being 'one of us' when they alone could set and stand for group norms and prototype? Leadership in this sense is no longer a group process but rather an individual-enacted one.

The attribution process in the SIA where a highly prototypical leader is contrasted with group members and high prototypicality becomes a personal characteristic could be seen as a form of trait-ism. It suggests that a leader as a group exemplar could reach a stage where he/she alone represents the group and stands for it. By identifying with a prototypical leader as the best representation of the group, individuals would not actually be identifying with the group with the varied levels of prototypicality characterising it, but with an individual. This turns the so-called social identification (a member to a group) to a classical relational identification (a member to a member) (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). On such a ground, the SIA could be seen as close to the transformational model of leadership that attributes leadership to individual charisma and disposition and not that derived based on a group prototype<sup>6</sup>. Hogg et al., (2012:267) stress the in principle, causes of charisma differ in these two theories; it is based on 'social identity-related social cognitive and group processes' in the SIA while it is caused by 'static personality attributes' in the transformational leadership model.

---

<sup>6</sup> The link between the SIA and transformational leadership is developed in more depth in section 2.5.4 in this chapter.

Hogg (2005a) highlights that this dispositional attribution of leader's charisma reflects an essentialist stance. It considers the leader's prototypicality as a credential for leadership and perceived leadership effectiveness rather than the requirements of the specific situation or context (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). Thus, it is who the leader is rather than what they do that makes them stand out as effective leaders. The SIA here becomes traitist in the sense that prototypicality is not actually defined in terms of transferrable values and skills that could guide leadership regardless of the specific social group context. Rather, it is very much embedded in the characteristics and attributes of that particular social group; or in fact the prototypical leader (Rast, 2015). In other words, leadership in this sense does not account for the variability of situations/contexts which is a characteristic of trait-based models of leadership (Zaccaro, 2007).

Along similar lines, the power attributed to the leader by virtue of prototypicality might gradually create distance between the leader and the group, which could instigate inter-group effects such as antagonism and could encourage destructive use of power (Hogg, 2001). Prototypicality in such a case becomes a tool for protecting the status of the leader. In line with that, Platow and van Knippenberg (2001) report that when group identification is high, in-group prototypical leaders are endorsed notwithstanding their distributive behaviour. In addition, they find that high identifiers strongly endorse the in-group favouring leader whereas fair leaders are strongly endorsed by low identifiers. Hence, high group identification hinders favouring non-prototypical leaders. Less prototypical members according to the SIA are less trusted and less liked which could make them viewed as marginal deviants who are unable to influence others (Hogg & Reid, 2006). Hogg et al. (2012) explain that reduced prototypicality leads to considering the less-or-non-prototypical leader as an out-group. In such a case, change introduced by such a leader would be seen as a threat to the group's identity. This leads one to wonder, if high prototypicality empowers a leader to the extent that they alone are able to define group prototype, then why is change initiated by non-prototypical leaders viewed as a threat and how could leadership be seen as a group process? This highlights the prejudiced nature of social identity as defined based on a specific group consensual prototype.



#### 2.4.5 Revisiting prototypicality

Further development in the SIA as it started to be applied in organisational contexts expanded the conceptualisation of leadership and leadership effectiveness to include more than just prototypicality. The SIA's analysis of leadership was comprehensively developed in 2003 (Hogg et al., 2012). van Knippenberg and Hogg (2003) developed the Social Identity Model of Organisational Leadership (SIMOL) with a view to understanding leadership in organisational contexts in light of the SIA. The model emphasises the conceptualisation of leadership as a group process and focuses on the role of the leader as a group member and the moderating and mediating roles of social identification and group salience in perceptions of leadership effectiveness (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). The SIMOL is based on the following main principles:

- leadership effectiveness is defined in terms of leader prototypicality and group-oriented-behavior and these two could be (but are not necessarily) interrelated. A prototypical leader could work in a group-oriented manner but could deviate from the group norms empowered by the trust engendered by their prototypicality. For a non-prototypical leader, group oriented behaviour is necessary for gaining trust and thus generating perception of effectiveness.
- salience of a social group and members' identification with such a group moderate the perceptions of leadership effectiveness such that the more salient a social identity is and the higher people identify with it, the more they endorse a prototypical leader and one that acts in a group-oriented manner.
- salience of a social group and members' identification with such a group mediate the perceptions of leadership effectiveness such that an established leader could manipulate what the group stands for (group prototype) and engage in strategies that enhance members' identification with the redefined group prototype. Hence, leaders function as entrepreneurs of identity in this case.

The SIMOL, however, places focal importance on the salience of the group and the identification with a prototype-based social identity as both moderators and mediators for leadership effectiveness. The SIMOL considers trust as key to

leadership effectiveness. Trust could only be engendered by demonstrating group-oriented behaviour in the case of non-prototypical leader. This implies that only when their behaviour is in line with what the group sees as group-serving could they be endorsed. Thus, redefining the group prototype becomes only possible for prototypical leaders who are trusted despite their behaviour orientation. This suggests that the extent to which non-prototypical leaders could function as identity entrepreneurs might actually be limited in comparison to prototypical leaders who have such agency endowed by their prototypicality. Hence, the role of non-prototypical leaders as change-agents could become harder in prototype-based social groups where the group is salient and where members highly identify with it. Non-prototypical leaders need to establish themselves as competent leaders who understand the group's prototype and adhere to it and thus they might need to constantly practise self-censorship which van Knippenberg and Haslam (2003) link with dysfunctionality in an organisation.

Besides, by considering high group salience and high group identification as moderators and mediators, the SIMOL assumes that the group is homogenous in that it could be represented by one prototype that the leader could manipulate to enhance leadership effectiveness. However, a social identity that is based on such homogeneity cannot be assumed as a given in a culturally diverse context like the Omani ELT context with the disconnects introduced in the previous chapter and with the dynamic nature of higher education that could influence the nature of group composition. When group members are diverse, there could exist more than one social category that could function as a basis for group prototype and social identity. In culturally diverse groups where there is no shared prototype or where the prototype is that of a dominant group, prototypical leaders might not be supported by all the group members and, in fact, so might the non-prototypical leaders. This could especially be the case in organisational groups where the group prototypes cannot be negotiated between the group members.

In such contexts prototypical leaders might tend to focus more on providing the group with the information that helps solving problems (Chemers, 2001) instead of seeking the achievement of a social identity based on prototype similarity. Hogg (2001:191) states that 'in groups with less consensual prototypes, there is less consensus of perceptions of and feelings for the leader, and thus the leader may have less power and may occupy a less stable position'. On the other hand,

Hogg and Reid (2006) point out that low salience of social identity is an advantage for non-prototypical leaders because that means they could be less challenged on the ground of lacking prototypicality.

## **2.5 Effective leadership in culturally diverse contexts**

Chemers (2001) defines leadership effectiveness as leader's ability to influence followers to achieve group objectives. According to the SIA, these group objectives aim at influencing members towards prototypical behaviour that is in line with the group norms (Hogg & Reid, 2006). As discussed above, group prototypicality is an important indicator of a leader's effectiveness to the extent that members highly identify with the group and the group is a salient aspect of their self-concept (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). Prototypicality, however, could be seen as an impractical criterion for effectiveness in diversity contexts where the likelihood of uniform group identity salience is low.

van Knippenberg and Haslam (2003) stress that diversity has mixed effects relative to the way it is conceptualised. At the functional level (perspectives and opinions), diversity is advantageous because it leads to task-related conflicts that encourage elaboration and information processing towards resolution. However, diversity in values and social categories (such as nationality) could be detrimental to group functioning because of the relation-based conflicts that hinder interaction and communication. Nonetheless, van Knippenberg and Haslam (2003) argue that a level of homogeneity on certain aspect that could define a category is a prerequisite for making use of informational diversity. Van Der Zee, Atsma and Brodbeck (2004) find that stronger team identity (as a superordinate identity) is positively associated with well-being and commitment in culturally diverse teams and this effect is stronger with higher cultural diversity. Thus, to reap the advantages of cultural diversity and avoid its disadvantages within organisational groups, a superordinate identity could be made salient; one that is based on a superordinate commonality within the whole group but which also acknowledges the distinctiveness of the individuals' cultural identities.

Based on the SIMOL logic, an effective leaders could function as an identity entrepreneur who defines the group prototype. To make use of cultural diversity advantages, a group identity would need to be defined based on a superordinate inclusive identity that values difference rather than conformity. This higher order

identity should not undermine the smaller social identities but reengineer the collective identity through reconstructing the prototype in a way that cultural diversity is appreciated. This requires instating cultural diversity as a prototypical feature of the high-order group by influencing members' beliefs about the defining characteristics of the group. Pro-diversity beliefs<sup>7</sup>(or diversity mind-sets) should constitute part of the norms that underlie the new collective identity because of their moderating role in the effects of diversity (van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). Emphasising a superordinate identity could encourage individuals to retain their individual identities while at the same time view themselves and others as members of a larger groups. Such an intermediate ground, Brewer (1991) argues, is possible and in fact needed.

In the context of organisations, Ashforth and Mael (1989) point out that social identity could be conceptualised at several levels: 'holographic' level where the overall organisation is the level of identification and 'ideographic' where the department or unit is the level of identification. Simons and Rowland (2011) maintain that it could be the organisation itself that forms a basis for a social group to be established despite the heterogeneity of individuals within the workgroup. Nonetheless, the organisational level could be more abstract than the direct group/unit level to which an employee belongs. Horton, McClelland and Griffin (2014) maintain that employees usually identify with less abstract levels (e.g. workgroup) more than more abstract levels (e.g. organisation). On the other hand, Van Der Zee et al.(2004) argue that a balance between these two levels needs to be reached so that cross-team work within an organisation is enabled.

While in the early work of the SIA, categorisation was seen as adequate for group identification, it might not be so in diverse organisational groups because of the plethora of categories present within. The organisation itself (represented by its leadership) would need to make the desired superordinate identity salient to the diverse employees, as the cognitive, motivational and contextual factors might be insufficient towards collective identity construction. According to van Knippenberg and Hogg (2003:249) 'social identification and the salience of the social identity [...] mutually affect each other (i.e. people are more likely to

---

<sup>7</sup> In such a case, van Knippenberg and Haslam (2003) stress that intergroup bias should not be confused with group diversity/composition beliefs as the former concerns the belief of the superiority of one social group over another while the latter concerns whether diversity is believed to be good or not.

identify with a salient group, and high identification is more likely to render group membership salient)'. Thus, bringing the aspects shared between the diverse staff to the surface so that the readily accessible categories like nationality, colour, or gender do not become paramount bases for identity is important. For such an identity to be salient, certain conditions should be observed within the group members such as equal status, cooperative interaction, interpersonal interaction, and supportive norms (Gaertner, Rust, Dovidio, Bachman & Anastasio, 1994). As leadership is a group process, other group members should adapt their personal prototypes towards a cohesive one that appreciates difference. van Knippenberg and Hogg (2003) stress that both the leader's ability to influence followers to embrace group prototype and the motivation among followers to embrace this prototype decide on leadership effectiveness. In other words, 'being one of us' in this case requires not only reconfiguring the 'one' but also the 'us' so that cohesion is established. According to Haslam (2004:36), for organisational teams to establish a collective prototype,

*'they will [...need to] attempt to sound out and refine their ideas in collaboration with other team members[...]. Group members also exert influence over each other by suggesting appropriate forms of behaviour and, if necessary, acting to enforce group norms'.*

While Haslam discusses superordinate identity in relation to organisational groups, such strategy is also relevant to culturally diverse individuals within one group where individuals could stand for diverse social categories. This suggests that an organisational prototype should be negotiated and established between the group members. Without such negotiation, organisation-based identity is likely to become only a superficial category. In addition, this superordinate level should acknowledge individual distinctiveness. In fact, individual and group levels of identity are important because they both shape behaviour (Brewer, 1991).

For a superordinate identity to be established between culturally diverse group members in organisations, the time spent within the group is key due to the effect of time on value cohesion. In their study to measure identification level amongst alumni in a religious school, Meeussen, Schaafsma and Phalet (2014) conducted a longitudinal study over six months on real field groups of engineering students to measure the effect of the level of cultural diversity on

relational value convergence. The researchers find that after some time (week 7 and week 21), there appears a difference in the value fit of the low diversity groups, which indicates that there has been an influence towards convergence over time. This implies that value congruence within a diverse group is possible over time. This highlights the importance of longevity within organisational groups. Besides, Fielding and Hogg (1997) conducted a naturalistic study where 13 groups (each composed of 11 mixed-sex participants on average) spent three weeks together. The researchers report that over time, social identification, perceived leadership effectiveness, and social attraction increased and they explain that by the increase in the group cohesion over time. The time spent within a group is also an important factor that decides on how much the leader will be supported by the group members. Haslam and Platow (2001) conducted an experiment to test whether participants (N=96) would support the same leader in future plans and whether they are ready to exert additional effort in support of the leader. The results show that when the leader's action is identity affirming (favouring in-group), they receive support in their plan and participants express willingness to exert extra effort to support them. This experiment was preceded by a video show that summarised the history of the leader. The results of this study suggest that only after followers have had some earlier knowledge and exposure to the leader that they would support him/her possibly because they develop trust in the leader over time. The implication of these studies for work groups is that the time spent within a group is important for leader support and group cohesion in diverse groups. Until such time when new group members have adapted their identities to a new common social identity, they might continue to use their previous behavioural scripts and values to guide their behaviours and judgments (Thomas, 1999).

In fact, in higher education contexts where the overall premise is that academics are largely autonomous (Power, 2013), the relevance of a collective identity might depend on the nature of the task or situation staff members are involved in. van Knippenberg and Haslam (2003) report the results of an experiment that they conducted. In their experiment, they manipulate the group composition and the nature of the task to test the effect of composition beliefs on group identification (group could be homogenous or heterogenous). The researchers conclude that subjects identify more with the homogenous group when the task outcome requires shared ideas. On the other hand, when generating unique ideas is the

condition for the task achievement, participants identify more with the heterogeneous group. Knippenberg and Haslam (2003) explain this by the fact that subjects have a belief system that makes them decide on what group composition is conducive to the achievement of the different tasks. It also implies that involving diverse group members in tasks that capitalise on their diversity could create a group that favours heterogeneity. According to Hogg (2001), leader effectiveness in a diverse group is decided by how competent they are perceived by the group members given the nature of the tasks of the group. Collective (superordinate) identity might be more relevant when similar tasks are expected to be carried out at similar standards or in a consistent manner.

Hence, Steffens et al. (2014) elaborate on what constitutes an effective leader within the social identity approach. They argue that for social identity management, there is more than just prototypicality for a leader to consider in order to achieve effectiveness. Steffens et al. (2014) endorse the need for a leader to demonstrate being an identity entrepreneur and one who works in a group-oriented manner (identity advancement or doing it for us) as argued in the SIMOL. Besides, they introduce the criteria of identity impresarioship (embedding a sense of us). Below, the criteria for effective leadership as a social identity management are presented in more depth.

### **2.5.1 Identity entrepreneurship (crafting a sense of us)**

Steffens et al. (2014:1004) define identity entrepreneurship in terms of the leader's ability in relation to:

- 'bringing people together by creating a shared sense of 'we' and 'us' within the group,
- making different people all feel that they are part of the same group and increasing cohesion and inclusiveness within the group,
- clarifying people's understanding of what the group stands for (and what it does not stand for) by defining core values, norms, and ideals'.

As identity entrepreneurs, leaders should define, revise and, if necessary, reconstruct the group's prototype (Hogg, van Knippenberg, et al., 2012).

### 2.5.2 Identity advancement/group-oriented behaviour (doing it for us)

Group-oriented behaviour is an additional merit for the prototypical leader (van Knippenberg et al., 2004; van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003; Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001). However, Platow and van Knippenberg (2001) point out that group-oriented behaviour is a condition for non-prototypical members to qualify for both group membership and leadership. It enables them to engender the trust they require to function effectively within a group (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). Group-oriented behaviour could take different forms like commitment to the group, in-group favouritism, sacrifice on behalf of the group, and fairness and justice toward the group (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003; Hogg, 2001). In their inventory of effective leadership, Steffens et al. (2014:1004) operationalise identity advancement as:

- ‘advancing and promoting core interests of the group,
- standing up for, and if threatened,
- defending group interest (and not personal interests or those of other groups),
- championing concerns and ambitions that are key to the group as a whole,
- contributing to the realisation of group goals,
- acting to prevent group failures and to overcome obstacles to the achievement of group objectives’.

As discussed earlier, being an indicator of non-prototypical leader’s effectiveness, group-oriented behaviour could place more demands on non-prototypical leaders. Hogg et al. (2012) stress that when leaders are prototypical, their failure is more accepted—due to the trust they enjoy— than when leaders are non-prototypical. This suggests that the feeling of accountability for the group’s outcomes might hold back non-prototypical members from aspiring for leadership roles in organisational diverse groups.

### 2.5.3 Identity impresarioship (embedding a sense of us)

This aspect of effective leadership is concerned with the tangible outcomes that a leader needs to help the group to achieve in a way that enhances its collective identity. Steffens et al. (2014:1005) maintain that this could include:



- ‘developing structures, events, and activities that give weight to the group’s existence and allow group members to live out their membership.
- promoting structures that facilitate and embed shared understanding, coordination, and success (and not structures that divide and undermine the group).
- providing a physical reality for the group by creating group-related material and delivering tangible group outcomes.
- making the group matter by making it visible not only to group members but also to people outside the group’.

Meeting these criteria requires the leader to have a level of organisational agency and organisational support so that they are able to engage their teams in such steps that could create a common sense of the group. Depending on their position in an organisational system, established leaders might only variably be able to meet such criteria depending on their authorities.

#### **2.5.4 ELT and identity management in Omani HE: conceptual framework**

In the expanding higher education context in Oman, leaders could be faced with the challenge that two different levels of identity might be simultaneously experienced due to the differences in tenure between the group members linked to cultural diversity and the process of localising the workforce. In such a case, whether leadership could be viewed in terms of leader qualities or in terms of group processes resulting from salient group membership would depend on the extent to which individuals identify with a salient group as a representation of self (Ellemers, De Gilder, & Haslam, 2004). Conceptualised as the ability to simultaneously manage different identities construed at different levels, effective leadership in the Omani HE context could be understood with the aid of transformational leadership theory (TLT) developed by Burns in 1978. Lumby (2005) argues that diverse educational teams could be successfully managed by transformational leaders due to the centrality of values and people to this approach. Transformational leadership could prevent the negative effects of diversity and promote its advantages through creating a superordinate social identity (Kearney & Gebert, 2009). Transformational leadership model defines a leader as one who redefines what a group stands for and it is usually contrasted with transactional leadership which is concerned with maintaining the status quo

through contingent reward and management-by-exception behaviours (Bass & Avolio, 1993).

Transformational leaders function as change agents through practising idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration. The TLT cherishes the role of the leader as one who influences the group members towards collective values and outcomes recognising their personal selves (Givens, 2008). Thus, it values personal distinctiveness, creativity, and individual empowerment (Bass & Avolio, 1993). The role of the leader as an influence agent becomes central when the group composition is unstable. Thus, unlike the SIA in which the group prototype begets leaders, the leader in the TLT influences the members of the group towards collective identity (in this case a higher-order identity). This is what the authors of the Identity Leadership Inventory advocate too (Steffens et al., 2014). Leaders become entrepreneurs of identity who reconstruct the group's identity according to the organisational objectives. Both the SIA and the TLT consider collective identity, shared goals, and shared outcomes focal premises.

According to Tse and Chiu (2014), transformational leadership model contains two distinct forms of leadership which are individual-identity-focused components (which conceptualises effective leadership in terms of dealing with followers as unique individuals) and collective-identity-focused components (which considers effective leadership as achieving a social identity based on shared values) and these distinct forms have differential impacts on the behaviours and attitudes among employees. Tse and Chiu (2014) used a cross-sectional study with a Chinese sample to investigate the mediating role of individual differentiation (conception of self at personal level) and group identification (conception of self at collective level) on the effect of leadership style on group outcomes. Their results confirm that the effect of individual-focused leadership on group outcomes is mediated by the definition of self at the individual level (individual differentiation) and the effect of group-focused leadership behaviour is mediated by the definition of self at the group level (group identification). This entails that leaders need to adjust their leadership orientation depending on members' level of self-concept.

As collective identity is only possible over time, group members' self-concept level could differ depending on their longevity/tenure within the group. The effect

of time (as discussed in section 2.5) is supported by the findings of another study conducted by Hogg et al. (2005). The study aims to investigate the role of diversity (conceptualised as group size, age, ethnicity, organisational tenure, and departmental tenure) on leadership style preferences. The researchers find that the group age is significant in explaining the variance in employees' preferences of the leader's style (collective versus individualistic). In relation to the Omani HE context, this could mean that members newly joining a group might perceive leadership effectiveness based on individual-oriented leadership aspects while established team members who have spent some time within the group might have the propensity to perceive leadership effectiveness based on the group-oriented aspects. Similarly, Van Knippenberg (2011) argues that perception of leader effectiveness could be based on the dyadic relation between the leader and the member where identification is established with the leader. However, when the leader is group prototypical, identification shifts over time to be with the group of which the leader is seen as a best embodiment. Whereas the contention of Van Knippenberg (2011) is based on the fact that the leader is prototypical, identification in the TLT is classically relational between the leader and the follower (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). It is, then, the role of the leader to influence followers towards embracing the higher order collective identity.

In light of the previous discussion of transformational leadership model, and building on the principles of the SIMOL, the study adopts the Identity Management Model depicted in Figure 2.1 to understand the role of leadership in the process of identity construction in the English language teaching context in Oman. The study asks the following research questions:

1. How is identity constructed in the English Language Teaching (ELT) context in Oman?
2. How is prototype constructed in the ELT context and to what extent is prototype-based social identity effective in such a context?
3. How-if at all- is leadership as practised in the research context effective at managing a collective/group identity?

The model suggests that in the dynamic higher education context in Oman, prototypicality cannot be assumed as a given in the culturally diverse work groups. Thus, the group identity needs to be constructed in a way that makes diversity welcomed and retain a level of groupness (collective identity constructed

at a higher order similarity). Such a middle ground where full conformity is not expected is important for the functional benefits of cultural diversity to be retained (Van Der Zee, Atsma & Brodbeck, 2004). In this case, diversity becomes part of the group's prototype (van Knippenberg & Haslam, 2003). The model has two parts based on the group members' levels of self-concept. The upper part of the model depicts the situation when self-concept is based on personal level. This is likely to be the case when group composition is not stable and where newcomers join the group. In such a case (as the upper route of Figure 2.1 illustrates), members do not spend enough time within the group for their personal identity to be aligned with the group's identity. Members continue seeing themselves as distinct from the group or the other members based on personal identity or sub-group identity. In such a case, a leader cannot assume the existence of similarity between group members and under low group salience and low group identification, leader-member relations follow the dyadic interpersonal pattern in which individual differentiation is assumed and the leader practises individualised consideration by focusing on individual's personal identity (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003).

In a context in which identity could be salient at the individual level for some members and at the group level for others, leader's effectiveness might be perceived differently. Leadership effectiveness could also be judged based on leadership schemas that define effectiveness in relation to leader's ability to handle the different group tasks and situation requirements (Hogg, van Knippenberg, et al., 2012). Hogg (2001) defines leadership schema as mental prototypes/images of what characteristics of a leader are effective in which situations. Leadership schemas are cognitive theories of effective leaders and thus they are not based on physical presence (Fielding & Hogg, 1997) nor are derived from the group (Hogg, 2001). However, transformational leaders should work on establishing a sense of the overarching group identity because that is how the functional and informational advantages of cultural diversity could be utilised. van Knippenberg and Haslam (2003) stress that this higher order identity (that includes both the individual and the group levels) should be based on relational values such as fairness, equality, and respect of difference. With specific reference to ELT, the view of van Knippenberg and Haslam (2003) is also asserted by Selvi (2016: 54) who stresses that the creation of a collective identity

that welcomes both the NEST and the non-NEST in ELT requires the promotion of qualities such as ‘democracy, justice, collaboration, equity, and professionalism’.

In order to use the diverse staff perspectives for the good of the group, the leader would need to influence individuals to a level of collective identification over time. The second route (at the bottom part of Figure 2.1) is predicted based on the SIA logic. When a group (constructed based on the higher order level) is salient and social identification is high, leadership effectiveness is constructed in terms of this collective prototype. Group members build a shared cognition that results in a group prototype. In this case, the group prototype is one that is diversity affirming. Individuals perceive themselves based on their personal characteristics and attributes (personal identity/self) and yet as they join the group and spend time within the group, they are likely to perceive a salient identity that is shared between themselves and the other group members based on the salience of work-related affiliation. Brewer (1991) argues that when balance is achieved between these two identities, motivation towards optimal distinctiveness is met. In such a case, a level of cohesion develops between the group members such that they identify with the higher order group and define themselves based on that group membership. The salience of the collective group and the group identification enables the leader to practise a group-focused leadership in that they see the group as a cohesive entity (at the higher order level). As group members spend more time together, they could develop stronger identification with the group (defined now at superordinate level) in which case leadership effectiveness could be conceptualised in terms of the criteria explained by Steffens et al. (2014). As figure 2.1 illustrates through the dotted lines, such identity conversion is only possible through the mediators of team longevity and increased collective identity salience. This means that absence of these mediators hinders this conversion.

Thus, understanding the level of self-concept is essential for leaders’ effectiveness. van Knippenberg and Hogg (2003) stress that the level of self-concept decides on which form of leadership would be perceived as more effective. With high group salience and high group identification, individual-oriented component of transformational leadership (e.g. individualised consideration and support) becomes less relevant than the group-oriented component (e.g. emphasising collective identity and group vision).

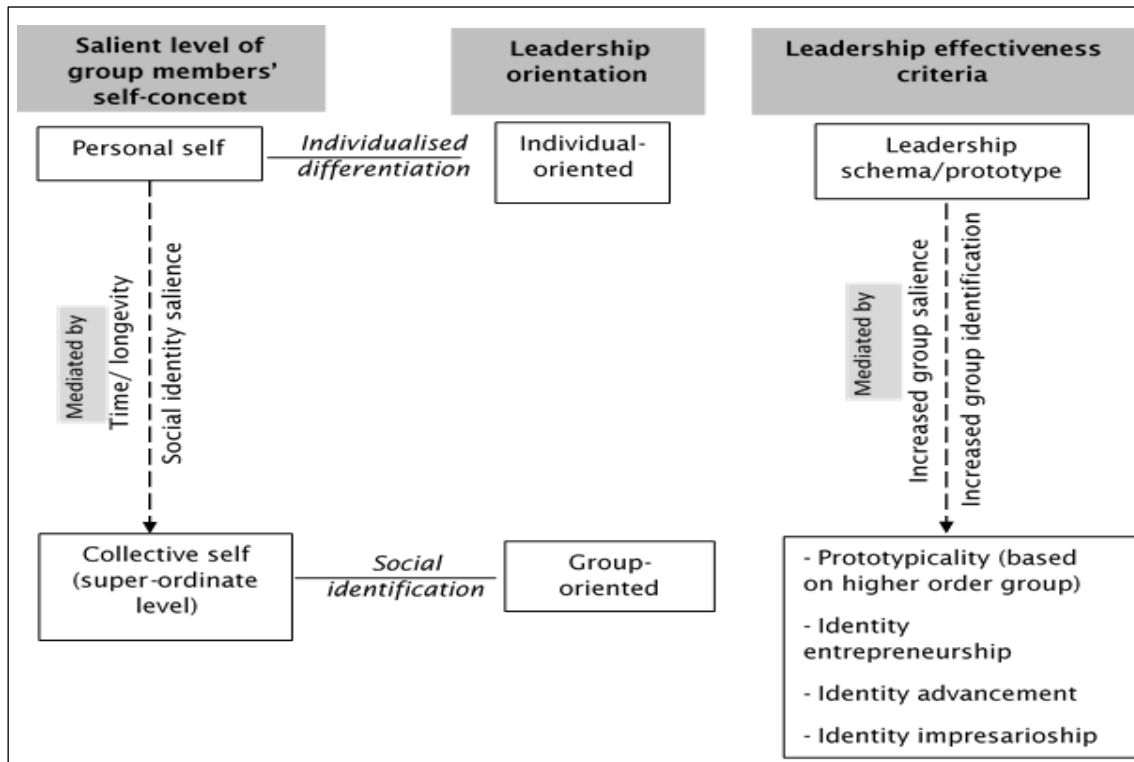


Figure 2-1: Identity management model

## 2.6 Identity salience: singularity versus intersectionality

While the SIA states that identities could be multiple and based on group or individual levels, it does not provide for the fact that multiple identities could function simultaneously and collectively to shape behaviour. The salience principle underlying the process of category salience holds that members polarise the differences between groups and the similarities within a group which suggests that social categories could be seen as ‘mutually exclusive’ with an ‘inalterable essence’ (Rothbart & Taylor, 1992). The SIA assumes that salience works as a switch, which dims one social category and starts the function of another one that in turn inspire individuals’ attitudes and behaviours (Koivisto & Rice, 2016).

Parent, DeBlaere and Moradi (2013) lay out three perspectives for conceptualising the effect of identity multiplicity: additive, interactionist and intersectionality. The additive perspective suggests that identities affect one’s life independently while the interactionist perspective holds that identities interact to strengthen the effect of one another. On the other hand, Lumby and Morrison (2010) classify the different perspectives research followed in defining identity into two categories:

essentialist and intersectional. The essentialist approach is based on the notion that humans could be defined in terms of distinct categories which seems to be the stance of the SIA. Although the SIA separates itself from natural sciences by referring to the social category homogeneity as ‘entitativity’<sup>8</sup> rather than essence, naturalness and entitativity are identified as two dimensions of essentialist beliefs (Haslam et al., 2000).

Thus, the SIA has oversimplified the definition of identity by conceptualising it in terms of essential categories ignoring that identities are emergent, embedded within a social context, dynamic, and interrelated (Anderson, 1996; Powell, Jayasinghe, & Taksa, 2015). Identities cannot be viewed to exist independently of each other; instead, they ‘interact with each other to create specific manifestations that cannot be explained by each alone’ (Warner, 2008:454). This view has been propagated by research following the intersectionality perspective (Azmitia, Syed & Radmacher, 2008). Intersectionality can generally be defined as the interconnection of different identities that influence people’s behaviour and are underlined by differential power (Parent, DeBlaere, & Moradi, 2013; Oleksy, 2011; Valentine, 2007). Originating in feminist research, intersectionality theory has become a vibrant perspective for diversity research not least because it defines identity as emergent and complex (Oleksy, 2011; Valentine, 2007). Intersectionality theory aimed in its early stage to understand the way gender intersects with identities such as race and/or ethnicity to shape the disadvantage experienced by women. Based on this perspective, explaining disadvantage (e.g. violence) experienced by women in terms of gender only is inadequate because such effects are not a function of gender only but also other aspects such as race and class (Crenshaw, 1991).

Tatli and Özbilgin (2012) argue that intersectionality theory is a powerful framework for workforce diversity research because it deals with the limitations of single or multiple approaches to diversity and the fixed conceptualisation of identity. Besides, Levon (2015:298) maintains that intersectionality theory looks at the relationship between identities in terms of ‘mutual constitution’ rather than mutual exclusivity; identities contribute to constructing each other. Intersectionality perspective suggests that the interconnection of identities does

---

<sup>8</sup> ‘The extent to which a social aggregate is perceived to be a coherent, unified and meaningful entity’ (Haslam, Rothschild & Ernst, 2000:115).

not exasperate the effect of each one alone but results in a completely new experience (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008; Valentine, 2007). Hence, intersectionality theory defines salience in terms of simultaneous identities that function collectively to create certain effects (Powell et al., 2015). It views identities more like processes rather than fixed labels (Anderson, 1996).

The theory of intersectionality has benefited from the prototypicality notion emphasised in the SIT (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach's (2008) 'intersectional invisibility' model predicts that when identity is constructed along two or more intersectional subordinate identities (e.g. black and female), individuals experience the effect resulting from non-prototypicality more than others who are defined in terms of one subordinate identity (e.g. white female). Thus, black women experience marginalisation even within the 'women' social group already perceived as marginalised in comparison to the dominant group; men. The assimilation of members within categories ignores how the intersection of the different identities a member belongs to could advantage or disadvantage them (Crenshaw, 1991). Lumby (2014) stresses that identities could be means for progression or oppression. The intersectionality of the different identities could advantage certain social groups while at the same time disadvantage others (Warner, 2008). Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach (2008: 328) highlight that 'people who are more prototypical subordinate-group members will be more direct targets of oppression compared to people who are less prototypical subordinate-group members'. In line with this, Crenshaw (1991) reports how the domestic violence women of colour experienced in migration shelters in the US was shaped not only by their gender or colour but also by other structural aspects such as their being of Asian origins or being non-speakers of English. This confirms that the effect of increased prototypicality is moderated by the social status of the multiple social categories one belongs to and not only by one.

Notwithstanding, intersectionality research aimed to unpack the experiences of marginalised categories suggesting that marginalisation is static and connected with predefined stigmatised categories (Gee, 2000; Tatli & Özbilgin, 2012). By remaining a lens for researching a specific set of social identities, the intersectionality theory contributes to the already established literature on disadvantaged identities but remains rather closed to the fact that identity



construction and identity intersectionality effects are context dependent (Tatli & Özbilgin, 2012). Thus, its use has been limited to certain categories that intersect mainly with gender. To illustrate, ethnicity, class and gender have been vibrant identities in relation to the Anglo-Saxon workplace (Tatli & Özbilgin, 2012) because of the demands for being representative of the array of identities constituting the population. However, identity salience is context-specific and understanding what identities are perceived as salient by individuals within a specific context and how power could shift within groups is important to understand relations (Jackson & Sherriff, 2013). The meanings associated with certain category in the Western context might be different from those in an Asian context and certain social categories exist only in specific contexts (Mor Barak, 2008).

Levon (2015:298) holds that identity intersections are dynamic in nature such that 'we must attend to the ways in which different social histories, interpersonal motivations, and local ideological expectations shape the imbrication of categories of experience in real-world empirical encounters'. Such complexity is key for understanding multiple identities in the workplace. Diversity in the Omani higher education context and with the previously mentioned disjoints is likely to forefront other categories of identity within work teams. Various advantages and disadvantages have historically been linked to the proportional distributions of an identity in a workplace. However, the intersectionality perspective encourages us to look at the intersections of identities as a potential source for advantages or disadvantages instead of proportional distribution. Museus and Griffin (2011) argues that the use of intersectionality approach in higher education helps capturing a wider range of diversity, giving voice to marginalised identities, enabling the understanding of the disadvantage created by the convergence of multiple identities, and avoiding sustaining inequality by focusing on a single dimension of identity. Using intersectionality perspective as a lens for interpreting identity construction 'allows us to challenge how we interpret multiple variables interacting with one another, as opposed to assuming that they are interacting in a specific way' (Romero, 2017:326). While Romero (2017) uses the concept 'interacting' to express how identities function from this perspective, Levon (2015) cautions against mixing between identity interaction and identity intersectionality as the former implies that identities are independent of each other.

Besides, intersectionality theory analyses identity in relation to power and ‘describes[s] power dynamics generated at the macro societal level but experienced and enacted at both the micro relational level and within the meso organisational level’ (Powell et al., 2015:520). Despite its wide capacity in terms of accounting for the work of identity within the wider context of society, organisation, and power relations, intersectionality theory has been less used in organisational contexts (Zanoni et al., 2010). Such a lens is of specific value for the nature of organisational context in Oman where the hierarchy-based leadership ideology could be of seminal effect on organisational practices. With a specific link to the Omani higher education context where the social context is dominantly Omanis but the workplace context is culturally diverse and where the national language is Arabic but the education language is English, how is advantage or disadvantage perceived? How are minority and majority defined? And how are the underlying power differentials distributed and experienced?

This research looks at identity and the effect of identity intersectionality as a dynamic process that could be constructed differently considering the various group processes in organisational groups. Thus, it combines the use of both the SIA and the intersectionality theory to understand identity construction in relation to group processes and the effectiveness of leadership as a moderating factor for the functioning of workplace diversity. While the intersectionality theory will help understanding the effect of the intersecting identities on individuals or sub-groups within the organisational structure, the SIA helps us understand the perceptual and cognitive processes involved in group identity formation (Powell et al., 2015). Table 2.2 below summarises how the intersectionality theory complements the SIA for the purpose of this research.

<b>SIA limitations</b>	<b>Intersectionality theory redress</b>
Salience of a context-specific category	Salience of intersectionality of categories
Essential identity construction	Identity as emergent and socially constructed
Graded prototypicality based on identification with a salient category	Graded prototypicality based on identity intersections

Similarity based homogeneity of group	Intra-group differences based on individuals' positions across the intersecting identities
---------------------------------------	--

Table 2-2: Complementarity of the SIA and the intersectionality theory

## 2.7 Workplace identities in the GCC context

As indicated earlier, the SIA suggests that individuals identify with groups under motivations such as enhancing self-esteem, enhancing distinctiveness, and reducing uncertainty (Hogg, 2005b). Organisational failure to meet such expectations might reduce the possibility of gaining the identification of employees and increase turnover among employees in search for best fit to their expectations. Trepte (2006) maintains that group membership could be formal or subjective. While category membership could be imposed (in this sense because organisational groups are established formally by the organisation), cognitive identification with these established categories could not be imposed (Brewer, 1991). In the Omani context where localisation/Omanisation policy is advocated, chances are that organisational identification among non-Omanis might be farfetched due to the institutionalised policy that aims at employing locals.

Through interviewing twenty expatriate professors in Qatar (a GCC country following a workforce localisation policy like Oman), Romanowski and Nasser (2015) find that participants felt that they needed to negotiate their identities in order to adjust to work environment in their universities. The study also reports that expatriate staff experienced lack of job security, perceived injustice, control over their academic freedom in teaching and research, alienation resulting from lack of cultural knowledge of the host country, and a need for elasticity for job protection. In relation to the effect of group diversity on local managers (in non-academic context), Al Ariss (2014) conducted 28 interviews with Emirati managers exploring their perceptions and experiences with expatriate employees. The study indicates that the relations of locals with expatriates are characterised by challenges with socialisation and interaction, resistance on the part of expatriates to share knowledge with locals, privilege of locals over expatriates, locked progression opportunities for expatriates, locals experiencing minoritiness due to their small number, stratification of expatriates based on

language and expertise, lack of clear recruitment policy, and nationality-based stereotyping.

These two studies highlight that the negative effects of diversity seem to be more prevalent than the positive ones in the GCC context. Despite the perceived privileges locals might enjoy, both locals and expatriates are likely to suffer the effect of lack of group cohesion. These two studies however seem to focus more on the effects of diversity at the individual level. Neal (2010) outlines that work dynamics have rarely been an interest for research in the GCC. In relation to the specific Omani context, the non-Omani workforce is largely temporary due to the Omanisation policy. Thus, terms of employment differ depending on being Omani or not. Altbach (2011) states that due to the Omanisation policy in Sultan Qaboos University, Omanis are employed on permanent contracts while non-Omanis are employed on three-year temporary terms. Mor Barak (2008) stresses that conceptualisations of workplace diversity should not ignore aspects of difference related to staff employment. In their study of expatriate academics in the United Arab Emirates, Austin, Chapman, Farah, Wilson and Ridg (2014) reveal that such employment policies affect the level of security faculty members have. This in turn affects commitment to work and perception of equity due to different management practices that are dependent on employee nationality. Omanisation, thus, seems to be a possible factor that could hinder collective identity establishment in the culturally diverse higher education context due to the unequal status it ascribes to academic staff members based on their being Omanis or not. This is likely to give precedence to national identity over intellectual capital that higher education institutions internationally seek to possess.

Hornsey (2008) highlights that group favouritism in the SIA's minimal group paradigm is not actually a result of categorisation but because participants expected the out-group to treat them unfairly. This suggests that equitable treatment to employees in the different groups or teams might reduce the possible reasons for sub-categorisation and enhance organisational identification. Hogg (2001) emphasises that procedural justice within a group results in increased commitment and satisfaction. In fact, when members perceive their outcomes as a function of the out-group distribution, they show favouritism towards the out-group (Rabbie, Schot, & Visser, 1989). This suggests that

instrumental rather than group identification-related factors are likely to govern the behaviour of non-Omanis with increased emphasis on Omanisation.

While staff recruited on a non-tenure basis (renewable contracts or fixed-term contracts) are becoming a majority in some disciplines, they could be assigned a narrow range of duties, have higher teaching loads, low job security, lower salaries, low engagement with institution's community and limited professional development prospects (Gappa, 2008). Such differences in employment policies within the same group are likely to affect relations and create sub-groups. According to the SIA, members will tend to identify with staff members who are similar to them in terms of employment condition, which could affect identification within the department/organisation.

## 2.8 Summary

Adopting the Social Identity Approach as a framework, the discussion above highlights that prototype-based collective identity and prototype based leadership advocated by the SIA cannot be assumed as givens in the ELT context. Prototype in this context is very fuzzy and complex. While the Omani government context that is currently guided by the Omanisation policy could support the Omani nationality as a source of prototype, the gap between the organisational context and the national context indicates inconsistency. Furthermore, in relation to the specific nature of the ELT field, the nature of the discipline and the nature of the staff composition characterised by cultural diversity give rise to other possible sources of influence over the prototype. As identities could be multiple and intersect and as they could be defined at the personal and collective levels of self, the vagueness associated with the prototype might not promote one salient identity as the basis for a collective identity. The study thus adopts the Identity Management Model to suggest that in such a context, a higher order identity should be made salient by the organisation where the leaders become entrepreneurs of an identity that both aims at establishing cohesion and valuing individual distinctiveness. The discussion raises three main questions for exploration in relation to the Omani context of ELT:

1. How is identity constructed in the English Language Teaching (ELT) context in Oman?

2. How is prototype constructed in the ELT context and to what extent is prototype-based social identity effective in such a context?
3. How-if at all- is leadership as practised in the research context effective at managing a collective/group identity?

The following chapter explicates the methodology followed to answer these questions.

## Chapter 3: Research methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter delineates the methodology adopted for this research. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009:21) define research methodology as ‘a broad approach to scientific inquiry...[that] includes worldview considerations, general preferences for designs, sampling logic, data collection and analytical strategies, guidelines for making inferences, and criteria for assessing and improving quality’. The chapter starts by explaining the ontology underlying this research followed by my epistemological stance. Next, the chapter presents a description of the research design including the data collection methods, participant recruitment strategies, and research instruments. This is followed by a description of the data collection and the analysis processes used. After that, sub-sections on the ethical considerations and the quality measures I observed during the conduct of the research are laid out followed by my positionality.

### 3.2 Ontological underpinning

Despite the calls for avoiding simplistic polar views in looking at educational research aspects (Alexander, 2006), discussions about research philosophy in education have largely focused on two main paradigms: positivism and constructivism (Feilzer, 2010). Positivism and constructivism view reality as either external that humans can objectively observe or ‘lodged in the mind’ (Creswell, 2014:11) and constructed through language and individual perceptions. Positivism advocates that the researcher can be objective in that they do not interact with the phenomenon under study. According to this perspective, studying a certain phenomenon entails reducing it into verifiable categories that could help explaining relationships between variables through statistical analysis (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Where the research is interested in less tangible, more complex, and socially constructed meanings, positivism becomes an inadequate framework (Gillham, 2000; Rowbottom & Aiston, 2007). In relation to this research, the complexity associated with identity construction and functioning within diverse work teams slides the discussion towards the other end of the continuum: constructivism.

Constructivism is frequently combined with social constructivism and interpretivism as there are fine differences between these three approaches (Creswell, 2007, 2014; Schwandt, 1994). This research resonates with the constructivist view that reality is multiple and constructed in the minds of individuals. Thus, understanding reality requires exploring the views of those individuals (Flick, 2007; Schwandt, 1994). Being individually constructed, reality is relative and cannot be fully understood (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Understanding of the subjective meanings that the research participants mentally construct could result in multiple views about how identity within the research context is constructed and how subjects perceive the research phenomena (Creswell, 2014; Bassy, 1999). The literature review highlights that group prototype is a fuzzy term that is cognitively constructed and socially shared. Thus, individual perceptions and understandings of the prototype are key for revealing these cognitive constructions. Besides, individual understandings are important for exploring both the effect of diversity on group identity (van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007) and how leadership as a group process functions (Herbst & Conradie, 2011).

In addition to valuing individual meanings, constructivism acknowledges the influence of the social and cultural context on how reality is perceived and how knowledge could be generated, which makes reality relative and context-specific (Creswell, 2014; Schwandt, 1994; Stephens, 2012; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Such centrality of the research context is a fundamental reason for the need to generate a local picture of identity in the ELT field as influenced by the context and the actors. The cultural and contextual factors that nurture individual meanings could only be understood in relation to the natural context of the phenomena (Milliken & Martins, 1996; Williams & O'Reilly III, 1998). This means that ultimate reality can only be approximated through a context-specific picture, but not fully understood (Stake, 1995). Accordingly, evidence is generated inductively through exploring the context, the individual meanings, and the dynamics involving these individuals within the social group context. The researcher's role in this case is to produce a coherent interpretation of reality based on the different meanings generated which then leads to an understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Thus, the acknowledged plurality of reality and the acknowledged bearing of the context on



how reality is perceived and experienced are two major reasons why this research embraces a constructivist viewpoint.

### **3.3 Epistemological underpinning**

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that concerns what knowledge is and how it can be obtained in addition to the relationship between the researcher and the researched (Oppong, 2014; Scotland, 2012). This study seeks to understand the reality of prototype-based social identity in the Omani higher education with specific focus on the ELT context. The premise underlying the research is that there is an inconsistency between the Omani social identity characterised by cultural homogeneity and Arabic as the native language and that in higher education characterised by cultural diversity and the use of English as the language of instruction. Such inconsistency could create discrepancies in how prototype is constructed and hence affects social identity construction and leadership practices.

The literature review has shown that conceptualising identity has been contentious as arguments have been persistent over its being observable or socially-constructed. The multiplicity of identities and their intersectionality in influencing group identity, process, and outcomes requires unravelling the complexity in relation to the context. The effect of diversity on how prototype and social identity are constructed and perceived within the research context further adds to this complexity. Besides, understanding the role of leaders in the process of identity construction is important. While the SIA associates leadership with the charisma gained through group membership and enacted through the leader's influence over followers, the situation could be more complicated in organisations where the nature and the direction of the influence are affected by the nature of the organisational context. Thus, the interaction of these context-dependent constructs requires not only generating knowledge about reality from different participants but also seeking different forms of data (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

Knowledge about such complex reality can be obtained through analysing what people say about the phenomenon, what they write about it, or how they do it or practise it in reality (Gillham, 2000). Because constructivism views reality as multiple, generating knowledge about this research topic can be done through

tapping multiple sources of knowledge. People's thoughts and mental meanings about reality are dependent on the ways they experience it (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Hence, a major source of knowledge about reality is that which resides in the minds of those involved in this reality which could be revealed through language (Brundrett & Rhodes, 2014). Language is a powerful cultural tool through which identity is expressed (Hogg & Abrams, 1998). Miller and Glassner (2004) highlight that although language is a tool for expressing mental meanings, it is also a means for emphasising subjectivity through the choices speakers make. Hence, observing actions is important for establishing an authentic picture based on actual happenings that either corroborate such mental meanings, refute them, or add more depth to them. In line with the constructivist epistemology, knowledge about the reality of prototype-based social identity in the diverse group context and the role of leadership in the identity construction process could be also achieved through observing the group context. As prototype, salient identity, and leadership are all context-specific constructs, seeking knowledge about the context is vital for establishing a comprehensive picture.

These different sources of knowledge contribute to constructing a picture of the phenomenon which represents the best version of truth in light of the resources available for the research (Schwandt, 1994; Williams & May, 1996). However, as both the values of the participants and those of the researcher could be brought to surface during the fieldwork interactions (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011), making use of other sources of data that are neither influenced by the researcher nor by the participants could be helpful for better understanding of the research phenomena. Such knowledge could be generated from sources that are not specifically produced for this particular research like documents (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

The overall picture of reality generated jointly using the various sources of knowledge represents one version of many possible others. It could be influenced by both the meanings constructed by the participants and the interpretation of these meanings by the researcher. To generate such qualitative knowledge, the researcher needs to be personally immersed in the natural context as a main research tool and to construct this knowledge through interaction with the participants to reveal their individual meanings (Creswell, 2007, 2014; Willis, 2007). According to Gillham (2000:11-12) 'how people behave, feel and think can

only be understood if you get to know their world and what they try to do in it'. The knowledge that the researcher-participant interaction reveals is socially constructed under the specific contextual boundaries of the research (Hennink et al., 2011). In fact, it is very likely that even within the same research context, realities as revealed by the participants are different due to their different backgrounds (Brundrett & Rhodes, 2014). Such different individual constructions will be de-constructed by the researcher to generate a collective picture (Schwandt, 1994).

### **3.4 Constructivism and researching identity**

The literature uncovers an on-going debate about the best methodology to unravel the complexity associated with researching identity (Lumby, 2014). Much of the identity literature could be criticised for not providing for the complexity associated with the intersectionality of the different identities and the influence of that on understanding group outcomes (such as social identity). In their systematic review of the literature on workplace diversity, Tatli and Özbilgin (2012) conclude that researchers approach the study of diversity with pre-established social categories rather than remaining open to context-specific constructions, they do not value the role of context in shaping diversity effects and thus limiting the generalisability of results, and they essentialise difference by viewing categories as objective realities that are not influenced by power relations. As for the stream of research that acknowledges the intersectionality of identities, the two views prominent in literature have approached intersectionality as either additive/multiplicative predictors in a quantitative type of research or through the phenomenological exploration of the experiences of specific social groups (Parent et al., 2013).

Employing quantitative approaches based on factorial designs to study intersectionality has been criticised for reducing social identities to categories that could be studied independently or additively. Such an approach does not capture the complexity of social identities whose interaction could result in completely new meanings (Lumby, 2011; Parent et al., 2013; Warner, 2008). Statistically, factorial designs pose certain challenges. Employing a quantitative design requires the researcher to approach the research with a predetermined set of categories rather than accounting for the emerging status of identity based on perceptions of salience in the research context. Similarly, the outcomes

associated with such an intersectionality of identities—such as experiencing disadvantage— cannot be quantified (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). As the range of identities present in a certain context expands, the analysis becomes hard due to the inadequacy of factorial designs to provide for such level of complexity even with the use of hierarchical designs (McCall, 2005; Parent et al., 2013). This is augmented by the increasing level of difficulty of interpretation as the number of identities increases (Greenwood, 2008; McCall, 2005).

Due to the emerging nature of identity, the cultural and linguistic identities in the ELT context in Oman could be associated with other aspects of diversity nurtured by the researched context; for example, those related to employment (Mor Barak, 2008). The wide range of identities that could be associated with cultural and linguistic diversity is essential for understanding the prototype as perceived in the ELT field. Warner (2008) points out that identities should not be viewed as linear but rather as processes of interactions that are influenced by the social, cultural, and historical context. As identities and prototype influence each other in principle (Hogg & Reid, 2006) and as they both are related to the group context, reductionist approaches become limited because they lack the necessary flexibility and comprehensiveness (McCall, 2005). Thus, there is a need for a design that remains able to provide for the wholeness and multiplicity of these identities.

Hence, researchers opt for using qualitative approach to capture these individual experiences and meanings (Hennink et al., 2011). Despite the obvious merits of qualitative approach, Lumby (2011) emphasises that they pose certain challenges such as the intricacy of pulling the intersectionality threads out of the rich qualitative data during the analysis stage and the tendency among individuals to give biased accounts of how the intersectionality of identities affects their lives. As qualitative research is subjective by default and as it aims at reconstructing reality based on the constructions of the participants (Hennink et al., 2011), value-laden experiences and accounts are valuable. In fact, it is through unravelling this subjectivity that the influence of the multiple identities of the participants could be understood. While Parent et al. (2013) point out that the phenomenological approach is most commonly associated with intersectionality research, this research employs a qualitative case study for a number of reasons explained in the following sub-section.

### 3.5 The research design

This subsection presents the design adopted for this research. It explains the methodological approach to data collection followed by the specific methods and instruments used. The research is underlined by the premise that similarity-based prototype might not be easy to establish in the Omani higher education context because there are disconnects between this context and the social context in that: (A) the Omani social context is characterised by high cultural homogeneity while higher education is characterised by cultural diversity and (B) the language of instruction in higher education is English while the national language in Oman is Arabic. To investigate the influence of these disconnects, the research explores the ELT context in Oman with the aim to answer the following questions:

1. How is identity constructed in the English Language Teaching (ELT) context in Oman?
2. How is prototype constructed in the ELT context and to what extent is prototype-based social identity effective in such a context?
3. How-if at all- is leadership as practised in the research context effective at managing a collective/group identity?

These questions are kept rather broad because such level of generality helps the research participants to construct complex meanings that are led by the interaction that takes place between the researcher and the researched (Creswell, 2007, 2014). Furthermore, these questions are guiding ones that provide room for emerging meanings and questions that the fieldwork might emphasise (Simons, 2009). This research employs a case study design to answer these questions.

#### 3.5.1 Case study

Bassey (2012:156) defines educational case study as a ‘critical inquiry aimed at informing educational judgment and decisions in order to improve educational action’. The dynamic status of staff composition in Omani higher education explained in the literature review brings the SIA assumptions into question when applied to the Omani HE context. The gaps in language and cultural composition between the social context and the higher education context necessitate exploring the applicability of prototype-based social identity within workgroups and the defining nature of prototypes. Haslam (2004:27) argues that ‘the application of

social identity to organisational settings clearly needs to be sensitive to features of social psychological context'. Besides, the steering role of leadership in the process of social identity management and the context specific nature of this process are key consideration in this inquiry.

The SIA considers leadership as a process that influences group members towards prototype-based social identity and prototype-guided behaviour. When the process is central to the research topic, case study is a better design (Merriam, 1998). In relation to this, the research aims to understand the role leadership is perceived to play towards social identity construction in the Omani HE context. Cultural diversity as a contextual element in HE might interact with other contextual elements to inform prototype construction which increases the importance of the case study context (Pearson, Albon & Hubball, 2015). According to Gillham (2000), the context largely shapes how people behave, think and feel and thus understanding the context where they function is key for understanding them.

In relation to prototypicality as a central construct for leadership and social identity, much of the SIA-based research that employed experimental designs focused on understanding how prototype affects social identity and group processes and tended to study prototype through manipulating an aspect that shows the extent of similarity or difference between the group and the leader. Besides, groups in these experiments are situational and created for the experiment purpose thus ignoring the group's history which constitutes part of the group prototype (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). On the other hand, naturalistic studies that attempt to study leader prototypicality use scales that either explore the extent of a leader's prototypicality or elicit a description of the prototypical leader from the participants (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003).

van Knippenberg and Hogg (2003:247) stress, however, that group prototypes, and leader prototypicality are constructs that depend on the context. Both experimental designs and questionnaire-based designs do not account for the fuzziness and complexity associated with prototypes within groups. Being context-dependent, prototypes cannot be studied away from their context, as groups do not function in isolation from the surrounding social and organisational contexts. Besides, groups are not composed of identical individuals but of diverse ones who have agency to influence how behaviour

within a group is defined. Hence, the claim of the SIA to account for the social context does not justify such a reductionist and simplistic approach for understanding prototypicality and its effect on social identity. Unlike the positivist designs (such as experimental research and survey research) that do not value the role of the context in their search for knowledge (Hennink et al., 2011; Warrwn, 2001), case study provides a venue for generating contextualised knowledge about the phenomenon (Taylor, 2013; Stake, 2008).

According to Warner (2008), considering the historical and cultural contexts of a case facilitates the research that aims at understanding identities because it provides a ground for comparing the intersections of identities, it provides richer chance for observing instances where these intersections come to the surface, and it enables the researcher to explore identity as a dynamic process rather than a string of traits. Conceptualising identity as a dynamic construct enables the researcher to see group membership as a dynamic process rather than a static one that is linked to a single social category or social group. Therefore, the adoption of case study design for this research helps the researcher employ a variety of methods to investigate the case of the Omani HE through deeply exploring a bounded case especially that the context is an integral element for understanding the phenomena (Baxter & Jack, 2008). While a variety of methods could be employed in a case study, case studies are largely qualitative in nature (Bassey, 2012) especially as they provide answers when the research questions are about 'how' or 'why' (Yin, 2014) and help establishing theory in contexts less researched (Ponelis, 2015).

Despite its above-mentioned merits, case study as a research design has been criticised on many grounds but chiefly on its weak potential to reveal findings that could be generalisable to a larger population (Pearson et al., 2015). Nonetheless, judging case study according to the same criteria used to judge other methodologies could be misleading as the power of case study lies in the quest for particularisation rather than generalisation (Thomas, 2016; Stake, 1995). Case study design is powerful for this research because it enables deep exploration specific to an Omani HE context with a view to exploring the applicability of prototype-based social identity. While it is true that such context-specific knowledge provides bounded findings, the power of these findings lies in providing an indication of the extent of applicability of certain theories (Flyvbjerg, 2004; Simons, 2009; Stake, 1995, 2008) and could open a door for wider

investigations at the level of the Omani HE context and similar educational contexts.

### **3.5.2 Type of the case study**

The different types of case study overlap and could be classified in terms of subject, purpose, approach, and process (Thomas, 2016). Merriam (1998) points out that a case study in education could use a combination of types depending on the research questions. In fact, case study design is not a distinct research design with specific research methods but is rather a focus in terms of what to study (Stake, 2008; Thomas, 2016). The emergent and context-specific natures of both identity (Oleksy, 2011) and the process of leadership (Tse & Chiu, 2014) require bounding the phenomenon to enable deep investigation. Case study design by definition provides for such boundaries to be established and considers this step essential in the process of designing case study (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Important consideration for bounding a case are the number, space, time and participants. As the case is considered the unit of study in case study research, bounding the research and the selection of the participants are interrelated processes (Poulis, Poulis & Plakoyiannaki, 2013).

This case study looks specifically at the ELT context in higher education. The selection of ELT as a context for the study as opposed to other academic departments is motivated by the prominence of cultural diversity and the wider range of cultural and linguistic identities characterising this discipline. As English language is the main focus of these departments, cultural diversity is likely to remain a characteristic of these departments as opposed to the other academic disciplines where Omanisation is gradually manifesting itself. The wider cultural and linguistic diversity in the English departments allows unique intersections of identities to operate. These intersections might relate not only to the individual identities of the participants but also the organisational context where ELT takes place.

The research employs a single case study. Yin (2014) and Taylor (2013) suggest that more cases could help avoiding issues related to intense particularity and potential design-related weaknesses and could enable the researcher to produce strong evidence. However, Creswell (2007:76) suggests that selecting more than one case 'dilutes the overall analysis'. A single case study enables deep



investigation (Gerring, 2007). It allows for the investigation to consider elements particular to the single case and to seek explanations relevant to the case specific context and participants. It also allows the investigation to be free from the restrictions of comparison aspects in cross-case designs. This is especially true that the characteristics of the participants and their identities are important elements that shape the understanding of the phenomenon. The unique subjective meanings created by the unique mix of participants involved in the case is what interests the research more than wider cross-case comparisons.

As for the time of the case study, Savin-Baden and Major (2013) maintain that the time spent on conducting the study influences the type of data collected. This study was conducted during Autumn 2016/2017, which is the academic semester that started on September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and finished on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The research took part in an English Department at a College of Applied Sciences (CAS) in Oman. I was present at the case site for the two months of November and December. This period was the second half of the autumn semester at the research context. It was selected because it was expected that by then the selected Department would have stabilised in terms of staff composition and teaching load distribution. As for the selection of the participants, it is explained in the following sections in relation to the different methods employed. Table 3.1 summarises the description of this case in light of the case study taxonomy in Thomas (2016).

<b>Subject</b>	Local knowledge case
<b>Purpose</b>	Instrumental
<b>Approach</b>	Exploratory
<b>Process</b>	Single case, snapshot

Table 3-1: Case study classification

### 3.6 Methods and instruments of data collection

This research employs three main complementary methods that are considered the most common methods used in qualitative case study; these are interviews, observation, and document analysis (Simons, 2009). This methodological triangulation serves the purposes of clarifying meanings through capturing

different perspectives on the research issue using different sources and forms of data (Stake, 2008). It also enables looking at the phenomenon from more than one angle (Thomas, 2016). Brannen (2005) warns against misconceptualising triangulation to mean the corroboration of evidence towards achieving a unified reality. Baxter and Jack (2008) stresses that the data generated from multiple methods in case study should supplement each other to create the comprehensive picture the research aims to create. Hence, triangulation strengthens the dependability of the data generated and provides more breadth. Adopting constructivism as the philosophical perspective, this research acknowledges that there is no single reality out there and thus aims to produce an integrative case report based on the data from the three main methods. As individuals are a focal point in this research being the group actors and the bearers of the diverse identities at the English Department, this integrative construction of reality draws on understanding the participants' mental models of reality (Woodside, 2010).

### **3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews**

As the premise of the research suggests that the cultural diversity in ELT could inhibit the establishment of social identity, cultural diversity is a focal construct in this research. Diversity could be considered a potentially sensitive area of research as it explores identities, relations and power differences and could involve stigmatisation of certain groups. Dickson-Swift, James and Liamputtong (2008:2) maintain that a research topic could be considered sensitive if it involves 'intrusive threat', 'threat of sanction', or 'political threat'. In relation to diversity in the Omani context, Zerovec and Bontenbal (2011) report that the dynamics of localising the workforce in the Omani diverse workplace could lead to tensions between Omanis and those from other cultural backgrounds. Moreover, potential disadvantages are likely to be concealed which has been an issue facing diversity research (Lumby & Morrison, 2010). Furthermore, participants could deliberately tend to hide the aspects of their identities that could result in their/or others' perception of them as members of a subordinate group (Lumby, 2014). This research topic could be considered sensitive in the Omani organisational context because of the potential association between cultural diversity and employment security indicated in the literature.

Interviewing participants is considered the main generator of data in this research as in qualitative research generally (Merriam, 1998; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). In-depth interviews are an effective method for studying potentially sensitive topics (Elmir, Schmied, Jakson & Wilkes, 2011). The perceptions of participants and their experiences in relation to this focus are best explored through their own expressions during interviews (Coleman, 2012). To avoid any effect of topic sensitivity linked to cultural diversity during interviews, I brought the constructs of leadership and team context to the fore during the investigation. I also opted for this strategy to refrain from essential conceptualisations of identity and to remain open for the emergence of other social identities that the participants could see as more relevant to the dynamics and processes of the English Department team; emic construction of identity (Tatli & Özbilgin, 2012). Thus, no direct reference was made to diversity, allowing it to emerge in the accounts of the participants as they reflect on the leadership process and subject team dynamics at the English Department. The interviews generated descriptions of the different aspects of the topic that I used to paint a clear picture of the case through the opinions, feelings, attitudes and understandings of the participants (Holstein & Gubrium, 2004; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). During these conversations, a context-specific picture was constructed through the interaction that took place between the interviewees and me (Miller & Glassner, 2004).

To avoid the restriction imposed by the use of fully structured interviews on the generation of data (Coleman, 2012; Schwandt, 1994) and the incomparable answers that do not feed into establishing a collective picture that could be produced by the use of unstructured interviews (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013), this research makes use of semi-structured interviews to generate data. Semi-structured interviews as a method utilises the research parameters set by the questions, the theoretical, and the conceptual frameworks and also provides room for emerging data (Brundrett & Rhodes, 2014; Doody & Noonan, 2013). Furthermore, Hawamdeh and Raigangar (2013) report that this type of interviews was more effective to stimulate participants to speak about their experiences in their research. Thus, combining both flexibility and standardisation in the approach to data collection is the main merit for selecting semi-structured interviews as the type of interviews adopted for this research (Gillham, 2000).

The questions constructed in the interview schedules (appendixes B, C & D) are rather broad so as to allow for the relevant aspects to emerge especially in

relation to the cultural diversity at the English Department. This is important to enable the generation of a context-specific construction that is not restricted by the existing theory. Besides, while I considered team diversity as a key phenomenon, I remained open to other aspects that shed light to the contextual and organisational aspects that could highlight how the intersectionality of the different identities function. Sixteen semi-structured interviews were conducted in English in the mode of one-to-one conversations. One-to-one semi-structured interviews, however, were likely to impose power differentials between me as the interviewer and the interviewees (Coleman, 2012; Lee, 1993). In addition, participants' awareness of my identity as Omani was likely to create power differentials that could affect the interaction (Moore, 2012), the level of security among the participants and the trust between me and them (Miller & Glassner, 2004; Willis, 2007). This could affect the credibility of the accounts reported.

To gain the trust of the participants, I tried to converse with participants on different occasions before the actual interview and I introduced myself to the staff in a department meeting. Dickson-Swift et al. (2008) stress the importance of establishing a prior relation with the participants when researching what could be perceived as a sensitive topic. I also tried to establish positive rapport at the start of the interviews by getting to know more about the participants and then moving step by step to the topic. I started the conversation by asking participants about their work, how they felt at that stage of the semester, and similar topics that could set them at ease. Elmir et al. (2011) consider such a strategy important for establishing rapport in this kind of research. Such one-to-one interviews are considered advantageous because they provided a chance for individual identities to appear in this research through participants' reflections on their individualised perceptions and experiences at the English Department. One-to-one interviews are also thought of as more likely to provide secure platforms for the participants to open up about their own perspectives without feeling dominated by the presence or voice of other participants.

On the other hand, one-to-one interviews had the potential to result in producing socially desirable answers especially when participants knew that I had worked at the same English Department before<sup>9</sup>. Coleman (2012) highlights that when the researcher is researching their institutions; it is likely that their background

---

<sup>9</sup> More about my positionality in this research is presented in section 3.11 of this chapter.

knowledge might influence the interview. Besides, I was juggling my different identities during the data collection and trying not to influence the conversation as a result of any aspect of my identity. This motivated me to be careful not to openly share my own views with the participants and not to try to influence the flow of the conversation so that interviewees could freely express their own views (Willis, 2007). In many cases, this resulted in lengthy interviews that did not fully feed into the main topic but that was necessary to generate unrestricted accounts.

Despite observing such a level of caution, interview data and analysis are never value-free as they could reflect both the views of the participants and the bias of the researcher (Brundrett & Rhodes, 2014). In fact, the subjective perceptions of the participants reflect what they perceive as salient diversity. Hentschel et al. (2013:35) defines perceived diversity as ‘members’ beliefs about diversity within their team’. Perceived diversity determines how diversity could affect certain contexts (such as the ELT context in this study) along with other factors such as organisational diversity perspective and the other possible moderating factors (Allen et al., 2007).

#### **3.6.1.1 Recruitment of interview participants**

The knowledge the interviews aimed to obtain is that related to the perceptions and experiences of participants that are shaped by their identities. Selecting the research participants for a case study entails selecting the groups of individuals who could provide knowledge about the research issue (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Creswell (2007) suggests that it could be preferable for the researcher to select cases that show different perspective and reflect maximum variation. Such strategy is important for eliciting the diverse perspectives present within the population (Lofland, Snow, Anderson & Lofland, 2006). While this research is based on a single case, these different perspectives were captured by purposefully selecting participants belonging to different cultural backgrounds and different roles. Besides, the researched English Department included three level/subject teams so I took into consideration recruiting participants belonging to these three teams. This was important because these teams were led by culturally diverse leaders, which I saw as a potential for richer input as it could reflect cultural aspects about leadership practices.

The study recruited 16 interview participants belonging to different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Out of the nine nationalities present at the English Department, I recruited participants belonging to eight nationalities: Omani, Indian, British, Canadian, American, South African, Filipino, and Tunisian. This cultural mix includes participants who are native speakers of Arabic, English, Malayalam, Bengali, and Filipino. Such criteria are important to enable the participants to be the best sources of data (Stake, 1995). In terms of the roles of the participants and as the aim of qualitative research is to understand a socially constructed and context-specific issue, the participants in this case study comprised two main segments: the leadership team (level coordinators and the HoD) and the team members (teachers).

I recruited the three team leaders available at the English Department during the research period to report on their experiences in leading diverse teams. I aimed to see if and how the identities of the leaders affect the way they experience leadership as an identity management process. After going to the field, I found that one team was led by two coordinators because of the larger number of teachers and the different sub-levels it included. I managed to interview one of the coordinators (the other one was in maternity leave) and another teacher who was shadowing the coordinator and who took over coordination as the second coordinator went on maternity leave. I also interviewed a teacher who practised team coordination some time ago and who was now back to full-time teaching. Hence, I interviewed five teachers who had undertaken the role of team leader/coordinator at some point during their experience at the English Department. This was important to capture a wider spectrum of perspectives especially that some of these coordinators could reflect on their experiences as both team leaders and team members. In addition to the team leaders, I interviewed the Head of the English Department (HoD). The HoD was seen as a valuable source of information in relation to the different case aspects but particularly in relation to the leadership aspect and the wider organisational context. Stake (1995) highlights the importance of the context description in case study research. Thus, the group of leaders included six participants in total.

Moreover, I interviewed ten teachers (including one teacher interviewed in the instrument piloting stage) belonging to the three different teams. Besides the aforementioned participant selection criteria, I tried to account for the distribution of teachers' length of experience at the college. The experiences of

the participants ranged from two months to 13.5 years. Such a range enabled this snapshot case study to have a historical scope as the participants' accounts reflected comparisons and flashbacks that enriched the data.

### 3.6.1.2 Interview schedules

To successfully use interviews as a means for eliciting the individual meanings and the experiences of the research participants, I developed interview schedules for the three segments of participants involved. The interview schedules for this research have a variety of questions that pertain to the main topics that I covered during the course of the interviews (Merriam, 1998). As introduced above, due to the sensitivity of the diversity topic, I focused chiefly on teams and leadership in constructing the questions in order to find out, through the strategy of probing, the extent to which diversity is perceived as relevant and along what aspects. In other words, I tried to construct questions that are open-ended followed by probes that encouraged elaboration (Doody & Noonan, 2013). Such abstractness was as seen important in order to allow for perceived diversity to be revealed (Hentschel et al., 2013).

Three largely similar versions of the schedule were developed to interview the HoD, the team leaders, and the teachers. The first version of the schedule is the HoD's version (Appendix B). This version aimed at getting a wider view about the CAS network as the wide context within which the English Department is situated. It aimed at generating a wider view about the prototype underlying perceptions and practices at the English Department. Hence, it focused on understanding the possible effect of CAS culture on the perceptions about diversity within the English Department through understanding pertinent processes like recruitment and continuity in relation to both the team leaders and the team members. Furthermore, this version aimed at eliciting the HoD's perspective on how the different identities functioned at the English Department and the role of the leadership team in managing identity at the English Department. This was captured by exploring the perceived effectiveness of team leaders at the English Department.

The second version of the schedule is the team leaders' version (Appendix C), which aimed at understanding how leaders defined themselves and their team members within such a context and how these identities affected work from their own points of view. It also aimed at exploring leaders' own perceptions about

their leadership roles within their teams and the effect of team composition on how they practised leadership. In addition, it aimed at eliciting any perceived challenges that leaders could attribute to diversity and the ways they thought these could be addressed. The third version of the schedule is the team members' version (Appendix D). The schedule aimed at exploring the perceptions of the participants about the composition within their teams and the relevance of the identities present in their work tasks and relations. It sought to understand the way participants viewed the team composition to function in relation to the different processes. In addition, the schedule aimed at probing the perceptions of team members about the effectiveness of leadership as practised at the English Department. While the schedules list a number of questions and probes, these were used to stimulate conversation but not to restrict elaborations that could bring to the surface other areas. In fact, the interviews were more like conversations where many spontaneous questions emerged out of the answers participants gave to previous questions.

Piloting of the instrument is an important quality measure that improves the quality of the data and the conduct procedure (Yin, 2014; Turner, 2010; Merriam, 1998). I managed to pilot two versions of the interview schedules. I piloted the team leader's version of the guide through interviewing two previous team coordinators who formerly worked in these positions in another CAS campus. As for the team member version of the guide, I piloted it through one face-to-face interview with one of the teachers in the researched English Department while in the field. Piloting the HoD's version was not possible because there was only one HoD at the research site. However, some of the questions were common across the schedules and the HoD was available for further elaborations before and after the interview. In addition to the schedule questions, participants were also asked about their feedback on the schedule questions and whether they felt that they covered the areas they thought of as relevant to the topic. I also improved the drafts of the guides before going to the field based on my supervisor's feedback and comments.

### **3.6.2 Direct observations**

As context is key for understanding meanings in qualitative studies, observation is an effective method for exploring it especially in case-study research (Baillie, 2013). Observation is commonly used to complement the data collected through



interviews (Mulhall, 2003) and it is used for this purpose in this research as it provides a means for shedding light on both the overall research context and the group interactions and dynamics. Literature increasingly emphasises the need for going beyond the mere investigation of the effects of individual differences to uncover how diversity affects identity within a group (Worthington, 2012; Konrad, 2003). Moreover, Hogg and Reid (2006:14) argue that

*‘information about the prototype and who is most prototypical can be gleaned by simply observing how people behave—what they do, how they dress, what they say, and so forth. Such information can also be intentionally communicated nonverbally through gestures and expressions [...] or verbally by actually talking about what is and what is not normative of the group’.*

Group interactions and dynamics could present a good source for data about how prototype is constructed and the extent to which cultural diversity influences this construction process. Besides, generating wider knowledge about the group context through observation helps interpreting the data obtained through interviews, learning about the values of the English Department, learning more about the stances of the participants who could be less articulate during the interviews, and triangulating the data obtained through interviews (Merriam, 1998; Mulhall, 2003; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013; Simons, 2009). Furthermore, observations enable the researcher to collect data about aspects that interviewees might choose to conceal during the interviews (Merriam, 1998) and to detect any inconsistencies in the data generated through interviews (Creswell, 2007; Gillham, 2008). In relation to diversity and leadership in diversity context, Lumby and Morrison (2010:12) stress that observation as a tool has been underused by researchers despite its potential to reveal ‘how different aspects of our visible and non-visible identities might be highlighted or ignored as the basis of power and influence in educational workplace’.

Occupying a non-participant stance, I observed team meetings and general department meetings to see how different identities interact in the group context and how leadership is enacted. Only those involved in the teams were present in the team meetings observed. Stake (1995) stresses that in qualitative observations, the researcher is usually interested to record everything that could bear relevance to the research topic and that could unpack some of the complexity involved. Whereas team meetings included only the teachers involved

in each team, the general English Department meetings involved all the English Department English Department staff; 27 teachers in total.

Observations generally could be classified in terms of observer-observed relationship and in terms of structure. As for the observer-observed relationship dimension, Gillham (2000) mentions two types of observations: participant observation where the researcher is part of the context they research and detached observation where the researcher does not get involved in the research context. Such a dichotomy, however, was not easy to discern in relation to this research because of my positionality. While I had worked at the researched English Department, I was on a study leave for over two years when I went again to the English Department for the data collection process. Thus, I passively observed the formal meetings in a way that did not involve any intrusion in the flow of the events. In observing the meetings, I played the role of a researcher observer. Opting for this positionality, I gave my identity as a researcher priority over my identity as a teacher which entailed that my interaction with the participants during the observation was very limited (Merriam, 1998). However, with one team of which I was a member in the past, I was (to a very minimal level) invited sometimes to contribute to the discussions but these were by no means related to the research topic.

These observations of the Department and team meetings were semi-structured observations in which predetermined aspects were observed while providing for emerging relevant aspects to be recorded. Such a middle ground enabled me to make use of the strengths of both the systematic approach of structured observation and the rather grounded one of unstructured observation (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Because team and Department meetings were generally called for as the need arose, there was no prior plan ready for me to use to decide on the number of meetings to observe. I aimed at observing two meetings for each of the three teams and two general Department meetings. In effect, I observed three Department meetings, three team B (pseudonym) meetings, and two team C (pseudonym) meetings. No team A (pseudonym) meetings took place while I was present in the research field. As interactions are important for building cohesive mental models of the different aspects (Badke-Schaub, Neumann & Lauche, 2011), I observed interaction dynamics to figure out how these dynamics reflect the diversity within the group and the extent to which such diversity influences the discussions and the meeting's outcomes.

I also took notes through indirect observations and informal conversations. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) maintain that informal conversations could be a valid source of data about how people behave and interact in a certain context. Such context knowledge could also highlight certain areas that the researcher could further investigate during interviews (*ibid*) especially that data collection through these different methods was done simultaneously. These notes included observations of the different interactions, relevant day-to-day happenings and overall impressions of the atmosphere within the English Department, which informed the research about the nature of prototype as constructed within the English Department. Field notes also included more information about the staff of the English Department, which was not included in the documents collected such as the types of employment. The data generated was used to triangulate certain aspects mainly in relation to themes like interactions between staff and overall atmosphere. Besides, field notes included reflections on how my positionality might have influenced the process of the data collection.

For the informal observations, I occupied the role of participant observer where I observed daily practices and interactions in an unstructured way to get to understand the context and the atmosphere. I recorded relevant observations (such as the overall atmosphere in the department, indications of leadership practices, the nature of interactions, indications of sup-groups, indications of members overall involvement in the college and relations with other units/departments within the college) (see appendix F) that could reflect the overall atmosphere in the form of field notes that I incorporated to the discussion and analysis of data in a later stage.

#### 3.6.2.1 Observation schedule

To collect data related to the aspects mentioned above about team and department meetings observations, I used an observation schedule to guide the process of data collection (Appendix E). In deciding on what to observe as indicators of the aspects mentioned above, I adapted some of the categories used by Morrison and Lumby (2009) in their observation of how middle leadership is practised in five further education sites characterised by diversity in the UK. The observation schedule I used included the following elements:

- The topics of discussion during the meeting
- Who speaks

- Contribution of speakers
- Manners of interaction (collective interactions vs. individual speech)
- Decisions taken, decision makers, content of decisions
- What responsibilities are assigned, to whom
- Indications of the overall atmosphere (agreements, disagreements, fights, anger, friendly chats, etc.)
- Indications of subgroups

The observation schedule was piloted through observing one videotaped meeting from the research site prior to the actual data collection process and one actual meeting while in the field. As data generated from observations alone might be difficult to interpret, interviews help making sense of observation data (Baillie, 2013). Similar to interviews, observation data cannot be bias-free. While the main source of bias in interviews is that they investigate perceptions and opinions, observation data are interpreted based on the researcher's understanding. Hence, observations could yield subjective data notwithstanding the researcher's role (Brundrett & Rhodes, 2014) as the researcher's interpretation of the data could be influenced by her previous experiences (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Thus, I interpreted observations within the integrative report in relation to data from the other sources which helps minimising the bias.

### 3.6.3 Documents

Documents are another source of data that is often used in case studies and could be used alongside interviews and observations (Fitzgerald, 2012). Brundrett and Rhodes (2014:105) define documents as 'recordings of events and perceptions at a particular time that are set within and produced against a backdrop of the prevailing cultural, socio-economic, political and policy environment'. Defined as such, documents are used in this research for the purpose of learning about the values, policies and beliefs of the organisation (Brundrett & Rhodes, 2014; Simons, 2009). In addition, Savin-Baden and Major (2013) stress that the very fact that documents are not created for the purpose of the research increases their face validity which makes them a good method for triangulating data. Documents could also provide evidence about aspects of the phenomenon that the researcher cannot directly observe (Stake, 1995) such as relevant previous events.

The research aims at understanding the prototype as constructed in the research context and exploring the applicability of prototype-based leadership and

prototype-based social identity. Whereas the research focuses at the organisational group level (the English Department), different macro and micro level documents were collected to generate a wider view especially that CAS is a centralised system. As one main rationale for using documents is the triangulation of data (Punch & Oancea, 2014), I collected the minutes of the meetings I observed. Copies of the minutes/reports of six out of the eight meetings observed were obtained with the aim of triangulating the content of the meetings and understanding the nature of interactions that took place. I also collected participants' CVs to better understand their diverse identities and backgrounds that were elicited in the interviews and to construct a profile for the English Department composition (Appendix S).

Not all teachers agreed to send me copies of their CVs and thus I managed to get only 18 CVs out of a possible 27. English Department staff's refusal to send their CV could be interpreted based on the data collected as lack of security especially that there was a perception that not all the staff might be qualified English teachers. While in the field, I came to know that the new HoD had introduced an Employee Handbook that regulates staff affairs within the Department so, I obtained a copy of this handbook. Such a document was seen as a good source for knowledge about the values and principles based on which the English Department is managed. Another document produced by the HoD was the new teacher assessment form of which I also obtained a copy.

At the macro level, I collected copies of the different recruitment contracts and the job descriptions of the participants to examine what they reflect about the organisational stance towards diversity. I also collected some policy documents that help establish the organisational aspect of the prototype. These documents were CAS Bylaw, Civil Service Law and CAS strategic plan. Figure 3.1 below illustrates the way data generated from the three methods were used in a complementary manner to establish the case report about team leadership in the diverse English Department context.

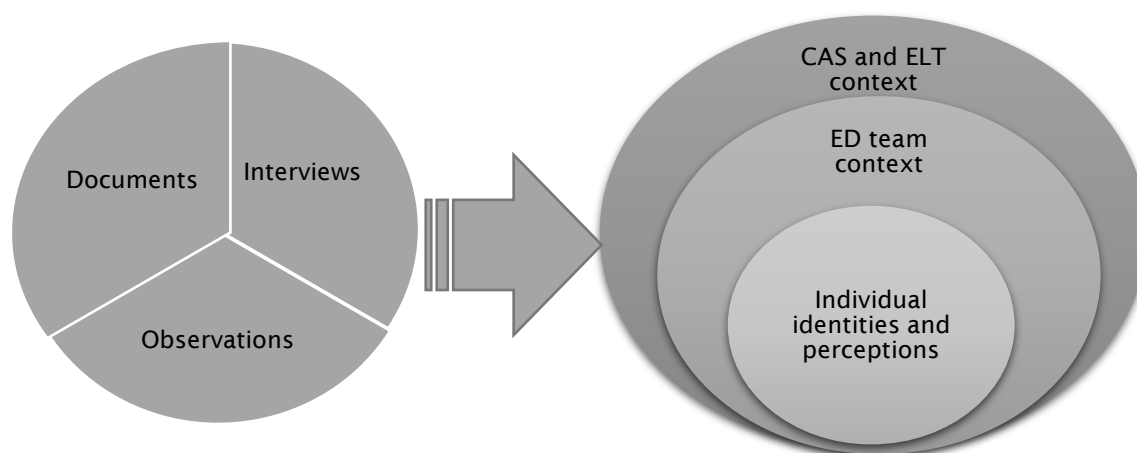


Figure 3-1. Research methods and data

### 3.7 The process of data collection

The data collection process started by obtaining the consent of the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman being the gatekeeper for the selected case setting. This was done after obtaining the ethical approval for conducting this research from the University of Southampton (Appendix G). Then, I sought the consent of the interview participants using three consent forms for the interview participants (Appendixes H-J). Creswell (2007) advises that participants should be made aware of aspects such as participant withdrawal right, objective of the research, procedure for collecting data, researcher's plan to protect the confidentiality of the participants, a statement about the risks participation in the study could entail, and the possible benefits to the participants. This was achieved through the participant information sheets (Appendixes K-M) and the consent forms participants were requested to sign.

Data collection using the three methods took place simultaneously. While each method was planned to look at a specific aspect of the topic (e.g. participants' individual views, group interactions and research setting, context perspective, etc.), they also aimed at triangulating and supplementing each other. In terms of the interviews, I followed the recommendations of Simons (2009) in being mindful of certain elements such as the necessity of establishing rapport, being a good and careful listener, maintaining an open questioning style, being proactive and using probes, and using focused questions to fill in certain gaps in the data. In this research, interviews were guided by the interview schedules and data was recorded mainly using audio recording.

As for the observations, which involved a wider spectrum of people, I gave an overview about the research in a general Department meeting. In the overview, I emphasised that I will be attending meetings as an observer and I distributed participant information sheets (Appendix N) with information about what such observations involved and consent forms (Appendix O) to get the consent of the teachers for such observations. Merriam (1998) points out that observation data is usually recorded using note taking and after-observation-researcher-recount. I used observation schedules to take notes and audio-recorded the meetings to enable further reference (if needed). In terms of the documents, I asked the leadership team members for copies of the minutes of the meeting they held. I also asked for every teacher's consent to use their CVs for the research purpose and got these CVs sent to me by email. I obtained the other documents related to recruitment and contracts from the Human Resources Department. I also obtained copies of the Employee Handbook and the teacher evaluation form from the HoD. The macro level documents were either published online (e.g. Civil Law) or obtained from the research site (e.g. CAS bylaw and CAS strategic plan).

The data collection process took roughly two months. I started the data collection two months into the semester to allow time for teams to be formed and load distribution to be settled. I considered that as an ideal timing because it allowed for the new teachers to settle and experience working in the context and interacting with the whole team. The literature highlights that the time spent within a group plays an important role in shaping team identity (e.g. Mael & Ashforth, 1992). After finishing the data collection process, I transformed the different forms of data into textual data for analysis. I also made sure all the data collected in the different forms, my field notes and the case study schedules were all saved in retrievable formats for any future reference. These different steps for collecting, recording, and storing data are illustrated in Figure 3.2. While for the purpose of illustration the Figure depicts the steps as sequential, the different steps actually overlapped. However, the intensity of focus on each step followed the timeline shown in the Figure.

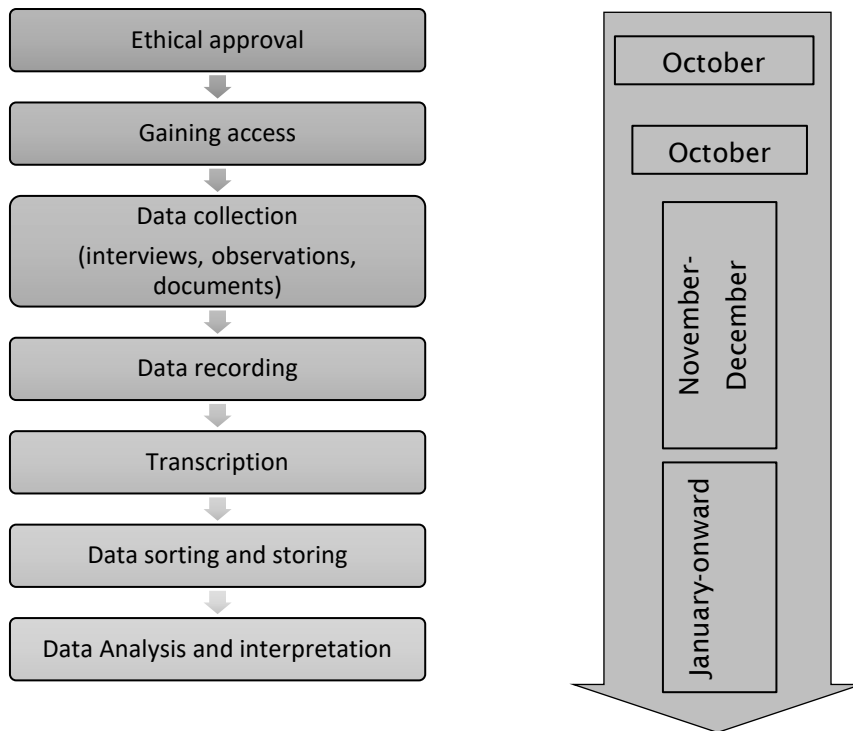


Figure 3-2: Data collection/analysis timeline

### 3.8 Data analysis

Simons (2009:117) defines data analysis as ‘a formal inductive process of breaking down data into segments or data sets which can then be categorised, ordered and examined for connections, patterns, and propositions that seek to explain the data’. This research derives data from 16 interviews, eight meeting observations, field notes based on informal observations, and documentary analysis. Interviews were conducted in English with three groups: the HoD, five team leaders, and ten team members. The average interview duration was 75 minutes.

Before each interview, I made sure the participants understood the information in the participant information sheet and asked them to sign the consent form. I audio recorded the interviews using two devices (with the consent of the participants) and as the interviews were in progress, I took some notes mainly to generate new questions that helps probing certain aspects mentioned by the participants. As I was conducting the interviews, I started to think about the different themes, took notes of them and used these to further guide the process of data collection. For example, when reference was made to certain documents that I saw as relevant, I took note of that and collected copies of these documents



(e.g. Employee Handbook and Teacher Evaluation Form). Besides, I used the interview schedule to collect some self-reported biodata about the participants at the end of the interview. Such data is used along with data from other documents to construct the profiles of the participants.

As for the observations, I took detailed notes during the meetings using the observation schedule and guided by the themes in the schedule but also remained open for emerging aspects. I also informally observed the researched department during the research to get a feel of the nature of interactions and work atmosphere and took notes of that. In relation to the documents, I collected the documents mentioned earlier at the same time as I was collecting the other data. All the written transcripts, recordings, handwritten notes, and copies of documents are kept safely for any future reference.

The analysis of the data started by first analysing the interviews as the main source of data being a reflection of the individual understandings and interpretations of the research phenomenon. Brundrett and Rhodes (2014) mention four main steps of qualitative data analysis: becoming familiar with the data, coding and categorising, identifying connections, and interpreting data. To prepare the data for analysis, I transcribed the interviews verbatim to keep the transcripts alive. I used a template to transcribe the interviews so that I could use that for the manual coding process. The left side of the template was for the text whereas the right side was for the codes. I also separated my input from that of the interviewees. After reading the interviews more than once to get familiar with them, I started the first round of coding in which I coded each transcript individually and comprehensively (*see Appendix U for an extract of a coded interview*). I adopted a descriptive coding-technique which focused on the topic or idea expressed (Saldana, 2016). Figure 3.3 presents a transcript excerpt that illustrates the process of coding.

<p>So, that is something to <u>be looked into</u> when we—since your research is on this sort of, you know, who deals with power? <u>And</u> what is the rationale behind; I mean if a <u>coordinationship</u> is a sort of promotion, what is the guideline for that? Is it sort of, you know, <b>promoting people whom you find difficult to manage [laugh] or promoting people you find capable or</b> .. I think there is a lot of clarity that needs to come in, and again <b>whether these positions should be now reserved to Omani colleagues, you know, that is something to be done.</b></p>	<p>Who deals with <b>power</b>?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relations?</li> <li>- Ability or merit?</li> <li>- Omanis?</li> </ul>
--	--

Figure 3-3: Example of descriptive coding

After finishing the first round of coding and having had a sense of the recurrent patterns, I carried out a second round of coding. In this round, the irrelevant codes were excluded. In fact, data reduction effectively happened at every stage as audiotaping, transcribing, and coding were all forms of reducing the data content (Riessman, 2002). After I completed the second round of coding, I compiled a list of the codes for each interview and then clustered them in categories depending on how relevant the ideas were to each other as illustrated by Figure 3.4.

Codes- (T15)	
<p><b>1. Instability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ministry contract safer</li> <li>- Teachers on the move</li> <li>- Security</li> <li>- Company vs. ministry contract effect</li> <li>- Differences in pay</li> <li>- The Ministry at loss</li> <li>- Native speakers</li> <li>- Fastidious Ministry procedure</li> <li>- Company staff credentials</li> <li>- Mental block-nationality</li> <li>- Contract type and motivation</li> <li>- Continuity and contracts</li> <li>- Company change &amp; security</li> </ul>	<p><b>5. Team leadership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coordination and delegation</li> <li>- Need for meeting in FY</li> <li>- Teachers' pressure for change</li> <li>- People skills for effective LC</li> <li>- LC attractive for trying new things</li> </ul>

Figure 3-4: Example of code categorisation

Because coding and categorising are two processes of two different levels of abstraction (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013), they could be seen as two separate steps. After categorisation was done, I grouped the resulting categories under sub-themes that were derived following the constant comparative logic defined as ‘going through data again and again [...] comparing each element- phrase, sentence, or paragraph- with all the other elements’ (Thomas, 2016:204). In using evidence from the interviews in the case report, the names of the participants are anonymised using the codes T1-T16. In addition, I replace every reference to other individuals or organisation within the text with other non-identifying references to maintain anonymity of the participants and prevent any possible harm. The overall process of analysing the interviews I followed has six major iterative stages as illustrated in Figure 3.5.

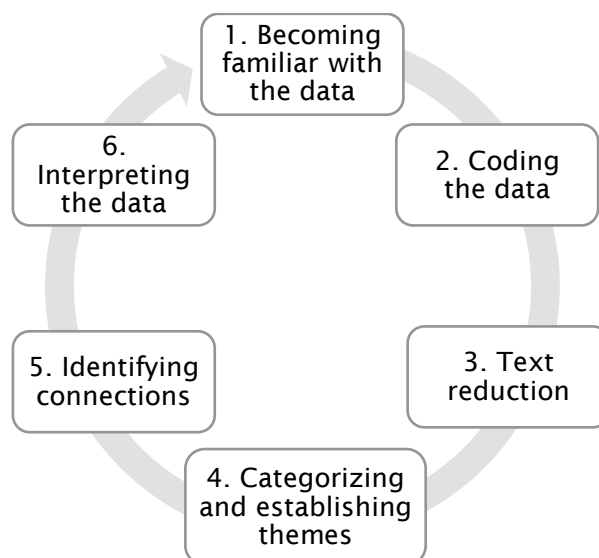


Figure 3-5: Interview data analysis process

After interviews were analysed and major themes were identified, a draft of the case report was produced. Next, the notes from the observations, the field notes and the documents were scrutinised for relevant content. The relevance of the content of the documents and the observation notes was decided based on the themes of the interviews as the reports of the participants were used as a guide to establish a picture of ‘perceived’ diversity. The content identified as relevant was organised in terms of themes and headings (Appendixes P-T). Excerpts and references related to the various themes were incorporated throughout the case report to triangulate evidence and add depth to the arguments.

These four stages of the whole process of data analysis were done iteratively. Figure 3.6 below summarises the analytical framework followed in the thematic data analysis of this case study.

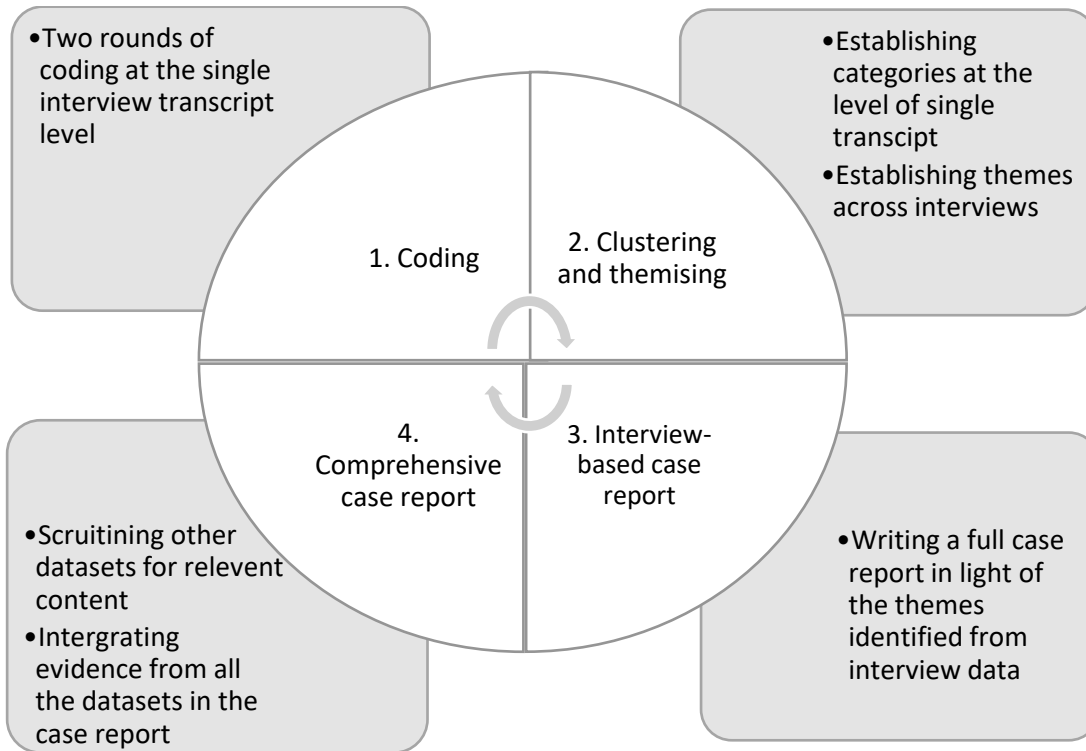


Figure 3-6: Analytical framework

In structuring the report of the findings, I was guided by the conceptual framework of the study which Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013:138) suggest could 'add substantially to an understanding of the people or processes [the researcher is] interested in'. As the SIA is the main conceptual frameworks within which the research questions are conceptualised and the data is interpreted, it largely guided the phrasing of the umbrella themes within which the sub-themes are connected and presented in the report and discussion of the findings. In the report of findings and to shed light on the identities of the participants, I use the scheme [code-role-nationality-employment type] following the quotes in the text. These aspects of identity were decided based on the relevant identities the holistic report indicated.

### 3.9 Ethical considerations

Simons (2009) defines research ethics as the procedures that regulate the way researchers behave in relation to the participants during the research. As case

study is a type of qualitative research that is subject to different emerging changes, it was challenging for me to define the issues that could raise ethical concerns prior to the actual conduct of the research. As recommended by Willis (2007), however, I observed general ethical guidelines throughout the research process. An important consideration in relation to respecting participants is to understand their right to conceal whatever data they prefer not to disclose. In relation to this, it is worth reiterating that case study research does not claim to reveal ultimate truth but one that is limited by different factors including the openness of participants and the researcher's ability to probe the deep meanings and perceptions. Notwithstanding, the strength of case study research lies largely in generating data from a number of sources that could compensate for the limitations of each source alone.

Another manifestation of respecting participants is preventing any harm that could result from the research (Busher & James, 2012; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Kelly (2009) emphasises that every effort should be exerted to maintain anonymity when identification of identities could cause harm. Thus, preventing such harm was observed in this research through adhering to the rubric of anonymity where the names of the participants and the site of the research are concealed through the use of pseudonyms. Notwithstanding, fully concealing participants' identities was challenging because of the specific scope of case study research (Christians, 2008). The focus of this research is cultural diversity, which necessitates bringing aspects of the identities of the participants to the fore in reporting the case study. Such specificity could lead to the identification of respondents by those who know them personally as their contributions will reflect their individualised views (Lee, 1993).

To avoid any sensitivities or harm that could result from the identification of participants to their colleagues or their superiors in the workplace, I tried to avoid eliciting any judgments from participants about specific people that could lead to such harm (Walford, 2005). This was not always possible, however, as many participants felt that interviews gave them open space to freely express themselves and their views about different practices especially in relation to leadership and the different identities within the English Department. I also sought the informed consent of participants beforehand and offered to use pseudonyms to refer to them and to the college in the report of the findings (Hennink et al., 2011). In addition, I stated clearly to the participants that only I

would listen to the recordings of the interviews and would transcribe them personally (Hennink et al., 2011).

Particularly in case study research where the context is an important element that enables writing a comprehensive report, intense description of context could compromise such promised anonymity. Kelly (2009:10) stresses that ‘anonymised research imposes a burden of care on the researcher-writer to maintain a balance between anonymity and illumination; to give only enough circumstantial specifics as are required to decipher the meaning (but not the identity) of the site and its characters’. To eliminate such a possibility, I followed the advice of Creswell (2007) which suggests that the researcher should report the full picture rather than report individual pictures separately. In this particular research, I established a collective picture out of the data generated from the different sources and the different participants. I strived to remain vigilant to balance the focus between identities and group dynamics in the context of the English Department and to avoid intense description that could easily identify participants or the specific CAS campus. Thus, findings in the report of the case are presented in a thematic structure rather than individual narratives. Furthermore, I notified participants that they could use their right to withdraw at any point if they felt they did not want to continue the interview. While observing such a precautionary procedure could have affected the number of the participants accessible for the study, maintaining the wellbeing of the participants was a priority.

Ensuring the ethical conduct of the research also required me, as a researcher, to reduce the likely bias. Savin-Baden and Major (2013:70) define bias as a ‘preconception or preference that limits one’s ability to consider alternatives’. Bias could take place at different stages including the data collection and data reporting stages. As the researcher is an instrument for data collection in qualitative case study, the quality of the research largely depends on the integrity and ability of the researcher (Merriam, 1998). I observed integrity during the data collection process through minimising my influence on the interviews and observations. I adopted an open style of interviewing where the flow of participants’ accounts was rarely, if ever, interrupted as to reduce any restriction or bias resulting from my own influence over the conversation. As mentioned earlier, while this resulted in prolonged interactions that exceeded 120 minutes with some interviews, it provided thoroughness and enabled tapping areas that participants identified as relevant.

As completely refraining from bias is almost impossible in case study research because of the positionality of the researcher, Willis (2007) suggests that being reflexive during the process of collecting and interpreting the data is one way of being upfront about the different decisions that shape the route of the study. The researcher's propositions that formulated the researcher's interest in the research topic early on could appear in the interpretation stage which again places value on the researcher's reflections and hunches (Brundrett & Rhodes, 2014). I kept a journal during the data collection period in which I noted my hunches and reflections during the process of collecting and analysing the research data. I also noted where I thought my positionality and values influenced the research and I incorporated these notes into the research report. Such reflective behaviour has the potential to improve learning from practice which improves outcomes (Regmi & Naidoo, 2012).

Another ethical threat to integrity that case study researchers should not ignore is pursuing evidence that confirms their preconceived proposition and neglecting contradictory evidence (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2014). In reporting and interpreting the findings, I used both the principles of the SIA but also the accounts of the participants and the data from the different sources to unpack meaning. Qualitative data is distinctive from other sorts of data in that it speaks for itself. Thus, I tried to report lengthy and expressive quotations and excerpts from the different data sources and I based the composition of the text on the various data sources to establish the substantiality of the findings. I also remained vigilant to the possible contradictions and inconsistencies in views during the reporting stage. Hennink et al. (2011) stresses that observing justice requires the researcher to report all findings whether they consider them positive or negative, which I felt obliged to do in this research. In fact, reporting the full range of findings is a translation of the constructivist ontology that acknowledges the multiplicity of realities (Flick, 2007). As the research is interested in the effect of diversity on how practices are perceived, diverse and contradictory views are part of the research findings.

In addition, Busher and James (2012) emphasise that ethical research needs to bring benefits to the researcher, the participants, and the society. The findings from this research are expected to benefit the way ELT is managed in Oman and internationally. While as a teacher and a researcher, I was not in a position to promise any direct benefits to the participants, the research I report in this thesis

should contribute to enhancing the practices of managing staff cultural diversity in higher education contexts in the long run. Awareness about these aspects will not only benefit the team leaders and members at the researched Department but will contribute to suggest ways for establishing an educational context at the CAS that is aware of the requisites of staff diversity especially in relation to programme leadership.

### **3.10 Maintaining quality in the research**

Quality in case study research is associated with both the process and the product (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013; Stake, 1995). This section aims to pull these different procedures scattered in different places in this chapter together to provide an account of how quality is maintained in this research. Stephens (2012) maintains that the main criteria for quality in qualitative research is “trustworthiness” which concerns the techniques employed by qualitative researchers to reduce bias introduced by the position of the researcher in relation to the researched. Taylor (2013:5) points to a number of strategies for ensuring rigour and reducing bias in qualitative case study research such as ‘prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, member checking, audit trail, reflexivity, and thick description’.

Triangulation in this case study is implemented to gain such credibility at the stages of data collection and interpretation as Stake (2008) advises. During the process of the research, I observed quality in the participant recruitment process using participant triangulation. Brundrett and Rhodes (2014) point out that respondent triangulation through collecting data that represent more than one point of view on the topic has the potential to increase trustworthiness. I employed three categories<sup>10</sup> that could provide three perspectives: the HoD, team leaders, and team members. Thus, I opted for maximum variation-based method for the selection of participants who could have diverse perspectives. I also purposefully selected participants who vary in terms of cultural background, nationality, gender, and years of experience. Such strategy is important to ensure

---

<sup>10</sup> The HoD and the team leaders all comprise the leadership team at the researched English Department but the HoD is considered here a separate category because of the wider and more comprehensive scope she could provide about the topic.



that the research represents the diversity of views associated with the different identities and groups in the research.

I also use methodological triangulation to maintain trustworthiness through collecting different datasets using a number of methods: interviews, observations (formal and informal), documents and field notes. As for the research instruments, I piloted the instruments as a means for increasing their trustworthiness (Brundrett & Rhodes, 2014). During the piloting process, I obtained feedback on the quality of the instrument from the participants and I also improved the schedules throughout as I observed their effectiveness while collecting the data. Expert opinions were also obtained from my supervisors during supervision sessions. Merriam (1998) highlights that fieldwork journal could contribute to the full picture the researcher aims to construct by the end of the research. Thus, I remained reflexive and kept diaries of how things went during the research and how I thought my positionality affected the research, which I incorporate in the different sections in this chapter and in section 3.11 on positionality.

In relation to the product which is the case report, Lincoln and Guba (2002) state that it should be evaluated in terms of four main criteria as included in Table 3 below.

Resonance	'the degree of fit, overlap, or reinforcement between the case study as written and the basic belief system underlying that alternative paradigm which the inquirer has chosen to follow' (p.206-7)
Rhetoric	'[criteria] relevant to assessing the form, structure, and presentational characteristics of the case study' (p.207)
Empowerment	'assessing the ability of the case study to evoke and facilitate action on the part of the reader' (p.211)
Applicability	'the extent to which the case study facilitates the drawing of inferences by the reader that may have applicability to his or her own context or situation' (p.211)

Table 3-2: Observed case study report quality criteria

I demonstrate resonance in this case report by presenting the different views and the multiple ways participants see reality, which is the essence of constructivism.

I also reflect on my positionality and how it influenced the choices I made. As for rhetoric, the construction of the report is guided by the themes generated from the research data and those derived from the conceptual framework adopted. I tried to make the report read easily by using a first person style. I tried to avoid high technicality in the language I used except where the conceptual framework uses such jargon. In such case, the terminology is explained in the literature review. I produced multiple drafts of the case report trying to make it as reader-accessible as possible.

In relation to empowerment, this case study aims at illuminating the community of readers about the contextual determinants that could impede theory applicability in varied educational contexts. Thus, it includes recommendations that emphasise the necessity for grounding educational leadership practices in context-specific evidence so that they are conducive towards better educational outcomes. Concerning applicability, this study reveals findings specific to the research context but it also explores the applicability of the prototypicality notion of the SIA to the Omani higher education context as it relates to social identity construction and effective leadership. The choices made during the design and analysis of the data are explained clearly in this chapter in order to enable the reader understand how the findings are reached so that the applicability of the same route is possible to the reader.

### 3.11 My positionality

Positionality concerns the position a researcher occupies when doing the research (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Merriam (1998) points out that unlike quantitative research where the researcher is expected to be detached from the research to maintain a level of objectivity, the researcher's involvement and interaction with participants are some of the features characterising qualitative research.

Positionality is central to case study research because:

*'[t]here is no attempt to be 'objective' when working interpretively, but rather an acceptance of the importance of researchers themselves- their likes and dislikes, their backgrounds and their pastimes, their vested interests and expectations in making interpretations. It is subjectivity, in other words, rather than objectivity, that comes to the fore' (Thomas, 2016:68).*

Creswell (2014:8) highlights that according to constructivist traditions, 'researchers recognize that their own backgrounds shape their interpretation, and they position themselves in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their personal, cultural, and historical experiences'. Prior to conducting this research, I worked for over four years in the research site interacting with culturally diverse colleagues. Being an Omani Muslim female lecturer who is a non-native speaker of English contributed to my interest in understanding the way staff cultural diversity influences leadership practices in the educational context. I worked for a while as a team leader in the Department where I conducted this study and I found the experience of leading culturally diverse teams rather challenging. Despite the extant debate in literature about the possible drawback of insider-research, Mercer (2007) cautions against viewing insiderness and outsidersness as dichotomies and urges that they instead should be viewed as ends of a continuum because the position of the researcher could vary depending on the aspect of identity in question.

I had known some of the participants due to my previous experience in the research context but many of them were new to me. Being a tool for generating data for this research, I strived to minimise my influence over the flow of interactions and events in the research context to allow for the participants' own meanings to be constructed. I assured the participants that this research abides by the ethical guidelines of the University of Southampton and that I am investigating the topic as a researcher not as a colleague. This, however, is not a guarantee that my previous acquaintance with some of the participants did not influence their choices on what to reveal. Nonetheless, constructivist research does not cast away possible subjectivity as it considers reality as subjective and socially constructed. However, I tried to minimise the bias that could result from my positionality. In the observations, I occupied a passive role so that I would not influence how meetings were conducted or how group interactions were handled. It might have been the case that some participants agreed to take part in this research because they knew me before the research. However, there were others who declined my invitation to participate and one who initiated the participation herself. I respected the decisions of the candidates and did not take the liberty to influence their choices on the ground of previous acquaintance. In fact, during the participant recruitment process, I provided the participants with the contact details of the Head of Research Governance at that University of Southampton to

report any ethical breach I could intentionally or unintentionally commit using my positionality. During the interpretation and as the thesis reflects, I integrate evidence from the different data sources in light of the theory adopted to interpret the data minimising the influence of my own explanations. As much as possible, I construct meaning using the views of the different participant groups bearing in mind the possible differences associated with the different social categories. Besides, I triangulate relevant evidence from the different data sources to construct the presentation of the different themes.

### **3.12 Summary**

This chapter provides a blueprint I followed to generate data that could answer the research questions and report the findings. Underpinned by the constructivist paradigm that values the role of individual meanings in shaping reality, I opted for collecting qualitative data through employing a qualitative case study design. Data was generated through multi-method-based process. Semi-structured interviews based on an interview schedule were conducted to extract the mental models participants have about the research topic. The data from these interviews was supplemented and triangulated with data from semi-structured observations, informal observations, field notes and document analysis. These sources of data helped providing insights about the group interactions and research context and culture. The data generated from these three methods was thematically analysed to construct the case report. Throughout the process, I observed quality through reducing the bias resulting from my positionality, observing ethical guidelines, and applying quality maintenance strategies. The findings of the study are presented in the following chapter.

## Chapter 4: Case study findings

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the research that resulted from the analysis of 16 interviews, 8 meeting observations, macro and micro documents and field notes. It presents a collective report constructed through the themes established and interpreted in light of the Social Identity Approach employing an intersectionality lens. This report provides answers to the three research questions:

1. How is identity constructed in the English Language Teaching (ELT) context in Oman?
2. How is prototype constructed in the ELT context and to what extent is prototype-based social identity effective in such a context?
3. How-if at all- is leadership as practised in the research context effective at managing a collective/group identity?

### 4.2 Overview of the study context

The study is conducted at a College of Applied Sciences in Oman (henceforth CAS-1). The Colleges of Applied Sciences in Oman are five colleges<sup>11</sup> governed by the Directorate General of the Colleges of Applied Sciences, which is under the jurisdiction of the MoHE. Strategic decisions concerning CAS colleges are made at the Ministry of Higher Education which is under the Higher Education Council but each College has an internal structure that tackles the different administrative and operational aspects. Academic leadership is also central and managed by the programme directors of each of the programmes offered.

CAS colleges are characterised by flexibility in programme provision as their vision states that they are meant to be ‘providing practical and innovative solutions for the ever-changing local and national needs’ (Ministry of Higher Education, 2015b). These colleges were initially established as Colleges of

---

<sup>11</sup> There were six CAS campuses when CAS first started. However, one campus was converted back to a College of Education during the research because of the need to train more local teachers due to the shortage in the number of schoolteachers. Thus, that particular campus was in a transitional stage. Hence, reference is sometimes made to six CAS campuses and sometimes to five campuses in this thesis.

Education that train teachers in different fields. They were converted in a later stage into Colleges of Applied Sciences in accordance with the Royal Degree 62/2007 to supply the market with the workforce required to meet the needs of the globalising market (Oman Academic Accreditation Authority, 2010). They now offer bachelor degrees in different majors such as Information Technology, International Business Administration, Communication Studies, Design, Engineering, and Biotechnology. Each College is considered a centre of at least one of these programs (Ministry of Higher Education, 2015a). English is the medium of instruction at the CAS colleges. Thus, they have Departments of English that teach English for general, academic and specific purposes. These departments aim at enhancing students' linguistic competences to tackle their studies in the applied sciences fields and prepare them for the workplace where English is a main employment criterion.

This case study is conducted at the English Department at CAS-1. Based on the field notes, the English Department is composed of 27 teachers including the Head of the Department. These teachers belong to nine different nationalities. 30% of those are recruited through MoHE permanent contracts, 26% are recruited through MoHE fixed contracts and 44% are outsourced through agency contracts (see Appendix S for a full profile of the English Department staff). All teachers including the HoD are involved in teaching to varying levels, which depends on whether they are part of the management team or not (see section 4, Appendix R).

According to the Employee Handbook (section 4, Appendix R) scrutinised as one of the documents analysed for this research, the leadership team at the English Department comprises the Head of the Department (HoD), team leaders, assessment coordinator, diploma course coordinator, and e-learning coordinator. To generate answers to the research questions, I interviewed five participants who had experienced team leadership at certain point during their experiences at the English Department. In addition, I interviewed the HoD who was overseeing the English Department. Except for one acting team leader whose experience in leadership was only two weeks when interviewed, the other participants in this sub-group had been at CAS-1 for at least 4 years and had practised leadership of teams for at least a year (data from interviews). Being new to the post, many of the acting leader's perceptions are based on her experience as a teacher. The group of team members is composed of ten teachers.

Table 4.1 below presents the profiles of the interview participants based on the demographic data collected through the interview schedule. A more thorough profile supported by data from the interview narratives is presented in appendix T.

Code	Role within team	Gender	Nationality	Native language	Recruitment type
T1	Leader	M	Indian	Malayalam	MoHE-fixed
T2	Leader	F	Omani	Arabic	MoHE-permanent
T3	Leader	F	Omani	Arabic	MoHE-permanent
T4	Leader	F	Omani	Arabic	MoHE-permanent
T5	Leader	F	Canadian	English	Agency-outsourced
T6	HoD	F	Omani	Arabic	MoHE-permanent
T7	Member	M	American	English	Agency-outsourced
T8	Member	M	British	English	Agency-outsourced
T9	Member	M	South African	English	Agency-outsourced
T10	Member	F	British	English	Agency-outsourced
T11	Member	M	American	English	Agency-outsourced
T12	Member	M	South African	English	Agency-outsourced
T13	Member	F	South African	English	Agency-outsourced
T14	Member	M	Filipino	Filipino	MoHE-fixed
T15	Member	M	Indian	Bengali	MoHE-fixed
T16	Member	M	Tunisian	Arabic & French	MoHE-fixed

Table 4-1: Brief profile of interview participants

### 4.3 Prototype management at the ELT macro level

In relation to this professional department, it would appear that the ELT curriculum at CAS constitutes a major part of the group prototype that the SIA suggests should distinguish the English Department from other disciplines at CAS-1. The curriculum here includes the leadership (academic and administrative), the actors (teachers and leaders), and the materials. In addition, as the English Department is embedded in a larger organisational context, behaviour appears to be also affected by the administrative/operational aspects of CAS. The ELT system at CAS is centralised. The Programme Director (PD), who was a non-Omani native English speaker when this research was done, is based at the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) in Muscat. The system is administered at the CAS campuses through the English Departments. The system has three main programs: Foundation Year, Year One, and Year Two. Within each of these programs, there is more than one course. At each college, there is a coordinator for each of the programmes who leads the team of teachers teaching the programme in coordination with the HoD at the level of the specific English Department. While the SIA suggests that the prototype is context-specific (Hogg, 2001), the six CAS English Departments are officially espoused to function similarly according to a centrally mandated prototype. Within the system, the HoDs of the six English Departments meet to discuss matters related to the system and with the approval of the PD, they take final decisions.

At the level of practice, the leaders within the researched English Department perceive such an overarching prototype as restrictive; they feel unable to adapt it to the specific context of the English Department.

*...we have this centralised system. So, submission should be in the same week across colleges, exam is the same exact exam. So even if I don't like the Language Knowledge [a section of the exam], for example, or I feel it is really not testing the students' grammar or vocabulary, I cannot change it.*  
[T3, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]

While one advantage of having culturally diverse staff body is making use of the different perspectives and experiences (Cox & Blake, 1991; Hentschel et al., 2013; Muhtada, 2012), one team leader thinks that assimilating CAS under one prototype hinders the ability of the English Department to benefit from the different expertise of teachers or from other higher education institutions in Oman.



*... let's learn from the [a state university in Oman], let's learn from other figures from our members who are coming from different universities ... let's really re-form some of things we have here... we do have people who have experience, we do have experts who can help us... it is so difficult to lead six colleges under the same umbrella, under the same rules, under the same dates, under the same exams....* [T3, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]

Uniformity based on one prototype according to the SIA enhances influence within a group (Hornsey, 2008). However, such influence towards conformity is perceived negatively at the English Department. The findings suggest that there is a perception especially among the non-Omani teachers that the ELT and the CAS organisational cultures are rigid which causes dissatisfaction among teachers. This is seen as one reason for the perceived high turnover among teachers at the English Department.

*I think it is very rigid what we are expected to do. Not in terms of what we expose [students] to or how we teach them but in terms of forms and deadlines, and sometimes it is a bit overwhelming and I think sometimes they lose the focus of what is the main reason we are here; to teach.* [T11, member, American, outsourced]

*...here at CAS, there is quite a high turnover among teachers ... it could be maybe the system but Oman is a very friendly country and the Omani people are very friendly... It could be working with other teachers, not Omani teachers, the other teachers. It could be the stress and strain of working and—it is probably a combination of things.* [T8, member, British, outsourced]

Interestingly here, T8 draws a distinction between the Omani social context and the CAS organisational context, which reiterates the argument underpinning the rationale for this study<sup>12</sup>. It appears that the organisational system causes dissatisfaction among the non-Omani participants. Turnover appears to be partially caused by the leadership practices at CAS, which some non-Omani teachers think are a reason for turnover. In one of the meetings I observed during this research, there was a proposal by one teacher for moderating exam answer keys. He suggested that at the level of the English Department, teachers should meet, discuss, and decide locally on the moderated exam answer keys before marking starts. After a long discussion, this proposal received opposition by the leadership team on various grounds of which one was that any changes to the

---

<sup>12</sup> As also reported in studies conducted by Khan (2011) and Neal (2010), Omanis are seen as friendly but they were differentiated from the organisation that is seen as bureaucratic.

answer key as a result of such moderation could not be acted upon without an agreement between the CAS campuses (see section 3, Appendix P and section 1.3, Appendix R).

A network of coordinators is expected to ensure the cross-CAS consistency in the curriculum administration. These coordinators function as guardians of the central prototype. At the level of practice, however, such prototype-based management of the ELT system seems not to be working as expected. Efforts towards aligning practices based on the central vision are seen as inconsistent due to persistent disagreements between the six English Departments.

*...two years ago there was this platform created based on CAS-2 campus... The aim was to standardise<sup>13</sup> and get things [aligned] across the colleges ... we discovered that in terms of assessment timing etcetera, three of the colleges wanted to do it in one particular way, three of the colleges wanted to do it in another way. So, this difference was reported and we tried to negotiate and finally we left it like that. [T1, leader, Indian, MoHE- fixed]*

It appears that cross-CAS conformity in implementing the ELT prototype is hindered by the variations resulting from the views held at the different English Departments. During the research, there was a decision concerning cutting government expenditure due to the drop of oil prices. This resulted in a lack of communication between the six English Departments and with the centre due to the reduction (or absence) of meetings. Communication is key for ensuring proper understanding of group prototype according to the SIA (Hogg & Reid, 2006). The lack of communication reported by some team leaders seems to have affected the enactment of a uniform prototype.

*...of course now with this financial crunch even Muscat meetings are no longer there. So, you can see that each one is left to find for himself or herself what they think is best, which locally is OK but when we think of it as an across college system, it could be questioned. [T1, leader, Indian, MoHE- fixed]*

*...there were regular meetings with the Programme Director in Muscat but then we ended up having no meetings whatsoever and no kind of regular feedback to be given to us. To an extent, we ended up not having any communication even with the other coordinators in the other colleges and with the Programme Director. So, it means that we ended up doing things*

---

<sup>13</sup> It appears that standardisation here means establishing uniformity of practices in aspects such as exam content, exam times, course content, etc.

*according to what we believe we should do.* [T4, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]

As the PD is perceived to have the final say on how things should run, there is a perception that the way the ELT programme has been run depends largely on the leadership style of the PD. This makes the enactment of the prototype appears to be, at least partially, a representation of the leader rather than the actual work of the ELT. T4 is the most experienced in leadership among this group of participants. She experienced working with two different PDs. She feels that the implementation of the prototype was maintained by close follow up with the previous PD while the laissez faire style of the current PD seems to threaten the uniformity of the ELT prototype.

*... the previous Programme Director was following one-to-one, which means there are instructions. We have as coordinators to follow those instructions and implement them in our colleges... Now the shift started once we had a different Programme Director. This Programme Director gives a lot of freedom, which is good and bad at the same time because a lot of freedom may really get us into a risk since we are a centralised system.* [T4, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]

Hogg (2001:195) warns that when a leader embodies the prototype, they might not 'prescribe optimal decision-making procedure'. The laissez faire style of leadership followed by the PD seems to result in slow decision-making and lack of prototype clarity as experienced by two team leaders.

*... decision-making is very slow and even if everyone feels that this is the desired change that should come into the system, it looks like there is no real power<sup>14</sup> vested even in the Programme Director to make the changes.* [T1, leader, Indian, MoHE- fixed]

*Every time they [team leaders] will ask questions, every time they will ask for confirmation or consensus or general agreement, they will end up having the Programme Director delegating this thing again back to them. ... if we'd have meetings, in these meetings we wouldn't really end up having a final say... which would cause these people to believe that 'there is no use of such kind of meetings...' [T4, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

---

<sup>14</sup>While the words authority (influence enacted as a result of the position one occupies in certain system or organisation) and power (influence one exercises as a result of personal abilities and charisma) denote different meanings, participants sometimes used them interchangeably. This might just be a generalisation or could be a result of the nature of the centralised governance in Oman where the scope of authority of leaders depends largely on their position in the hierarchy which governs the nature of decisions they could make as introduced in the introductory chapter of this thesis.

It appears that it is not clear for the participants here who takes decisions in relation to the ELT. Prototypical leaders function as a referential point about the group's prototype (Hogg & Reid, 2006). Surprisingly, however, the PD here is not seen as a referential point that provides clarity about how behaviour should be directed. Two leaders perceive the laissez faire style of the current PD to affect consistency in the perceived value of the prototype-related discussions.

*... during the meeting when we go for the programme review, she [the PD] would allow people to argue whether we should have that type of font or that type of bullet point; that formatting issues that they forget the content. [T6, HoD, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

*People were very motivated, very eager; they come with different proposals...but then they were demotivated ...once they discovered that all these proposals, would not be taken seriously... 'so, what is the use?' [T4, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

This reflects a tension between the premise and the practice at the ELT leadership level. While practices are expected to be consistent based on a central prototype that is chiefly represented and controlled by the PD, the leadership style of the PD did not seem to be conducive towards maintaining that level of conformity. When leader's behaviour is not in line with the group's norms and interests, group members' perceptions of the leader's trust and commitment are affected (Hogg & Reid, 2006). The findings indicate that there is an emerging tendency towards some autonomy at the level of the researched English Department where local decisions are taken without cross-college coordination or approval from the PD. The system is still centralised in principle but there is a perceived limited, 'unofficial' shift towards local decision-making.

*... over the years I found both the trends happening; on the one side there is this tendency to centralise further and on the other side people who really face the ground realities they get fed up with this centralisation or lack of decision and then they do things that are suitable to them. Which again, sometimes could put us into question by our assessment system itself and even the validity of the course. [T1, leader, Indian, MoHE- fixed]*

It would appear that the leader here is not seen as functioning in a group-serving manner. The perceived lack of coordination and lack of decision-making seem also to demotivate the different English Departments to put forward proposals for discussion and joint agreement.

*... there is a lot of talent and people are sincere and eager to do something but although the number of colleges are only six, this proper coordination is not taking place... and instead of being a cross-college thing I think people are slowly getting into their own colleges and doing what they want. [T1, leader, Indian, MoHE- fixed]*

Hogg and Reid (2006) argue that one main reason for people to turn to groups is the communication that takes place in order to decide on the group norms that guide behaviour. Due to the perceived lack of communication between the six English Departments and with the PD, this overarching group does not seem to fulfil this purpose according to the leaders interviewed. During the fieldwork, there was a discussion between the HoD and the assistant HoD about amending the assessment system at the level of the English Department. While the English Department is trying to maintain the overall framework of work, there are changes being introduced gradually.

*Until now no touches or no changes have occurred when it comes to the final exam... but the process of the continuous assessment I could say that because of this too much freedom and no negotiation going around the Colleges, you'd find that the level coordinators in each college would come up with their own way. [T4, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

An example of such changes is reported by one team leader who worked in collaboration with her team members to change some aspects of certain course.

*...we have changed a lot in (one course)... we haven't shared our experience with CAS colleges. We heard from different CAS colleges what they are doing and we have adapted things from what they are doing and we have changed this. [T2, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

#### 4.3.1 Overview

The findings suggest that the hierarchical system of management at CAS influences the conceptualisation of the prototype. The PD who is based at the MoHE runs the ELT programme through a network of HoDs and coordinators (team leaders) and controls the decision-making process. Thus, the position of the PD appears to be the main controller of this centrally managed prototype. By having such a level of control over the prototype, the PD's style of leadership is embodied on how the prototype is enacted. Thus, the PD's style of leadership is seen as a moderator for how effectively this central prototype is implemented at the level of the English Departments. The central prototype leadership during this research was characterised by: restricted changes, persistent disagreements and

lack of consistency, lack of communication, slow decision-making, undervalued contributions towards amendments, emerging tension between centralisation and autonomy, and lack of motivation for further cross-college coordination. These factors are perceived to hinder the effectiveness of this prototype enactment at the English Department level and to cause dissatisfaction and turnover among the participants. They also result in a drift towards creating local versions of the prototype at the micro-level.

#### **4.4 The micro level: categorisation within the group**

The more group members perceive of themselves and other group members as similar, the higher they identify with the group (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). Hogg (2001) argues that prototypicality based on salient category membership becomes the basis of differentiation within a prototype-based social group. The findings of this study suggest that staff members within the English Department are different along a number of dimensions that appear to set them into categories. These differences are either a result of organisational practices or individual diverse identities. The categorisation manifests in relation to recruitment, employment security, perceived professionalism, HR regulations, professional development, and involvement within the CAS-1 community.

##### **4.4.1 Recruitment**

Staff members at the English Department are recruited either through the Ministry of Higher Education or outsourced through recruitment companies/agencies. During the time of the research, the English Department was composed of 27 teachers. All the Omanis (8 in total) are recruited permanently through the MoHE. Almost 70% (19 teachers) of the English Department staff members are non-Omanis of whom almost 63% (12 teachers) are outsourced recruitments. Thus, outsourced staff members represent a majority in comparison to others and the outsourced category includes all the native speakers<sup>15</sup> of English in addition to other teachers. There are seven native English speakers at the English Department. Based on the bio data of the interview participants, the South Africans participants (three interviewed out of five South African teachers) also

---

<sup>15</sup> This classification is made following Phillipson (2016) in considering the nationals of the USA, the UK, Canada, and Australia as the native English speakers.

consider English as their mother language, which means that native English speakers could be 10-12 in total. The rest of the teachers are either Arabic native speakers (10 teachers) or speakers of other languages (nationals of India or the Philippines; 5 teachers totally). Hence, most recruitments are outsourced and targeting non-Omanis. There appears to exist no clarity about the recruitment policy followed in recruiting the English Department teachers. Recruitment is a central process that the English Department has no say in. There is a perception that native English speaking teachers (NESTs) are considered the best option for recruitment.

*... there is nothing that is written but this is maybe what we could notice or feel because every company would only recruit... either native speakers or second language learners but not Omanis. [T4, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

This seems not to be in line with what is stated in article 69 of the CAS Bylaw (see section 3.3, Appendix R) that priority in employment should be for Omanis. It appears that the fact that English is not a prototypical language in the Omani context where Arabic is the official language results in the attractiveness of the native English speakers for recruitment at the English Department which sets it apart from other public sector contexts where Omanisation guides recruitment. The SIA suggests that the more prototypical an individual is perceived at the group level, the more attractive they become (Hogg, 2001). This suggests that nationality and language are two main identities influencing recruitment.

#### 4.4.2 Employment security

In relation to employment security, Omanis appear to be the most secure (relative to the different contracts) being employed permanently. Article 12 of the Civil Law states that permanent contracts are only for Omanis except when there is a pressing need for recruiting non-Omanis (see section 3.2, Appendix R). Non-Omanis who are employed through the MoHE are also seen to enjoy a considerable level of employment security in comparison to the outsourced staff who are perceived as the least secure.

*...the Ministry contract is a safer contract and the Ministry takes care of you way better than what the companies do... [the ministry contract] is like an understanding that until and unless you have done something professionally grievously wrong, your contract will get renewed... company*

*contracts would basically mean one or, in very good days, probably two years. [T15, member, Indian, MoHE-fixed]*

The agency contract analysed indicates that the contract term of the teacher with the agency is one year<sup>16</sup> and its renewal is subject to the agreement of both parties (section 3.5, Appendix R). As for the MoHE employees recruited on contract-basis, their contract states that the contract is for two years after which it becomes yearly renewable upon mutual agreement (section 3.1, Appendix R). The HoD also confirms that the contracts of teachers employed through the MoHE are yearly renewable except in infrequent situations.

*Normally it is renewable unless there is an issue. For example, every Ministry contract Omani or non-Omani [teachers] they do have to have the equivalency for their certificates... If for some reason the equivalency failed, then the services of that teacher need to be ended. [T6, HoD, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

Despite that, however, another MoHE contract-based participant feels that the yearly renewable contract is not secure enough, which appears to affect stability in the lives of teachers.

*I've met teachers who love Oman, who are just happy here ... They might be paying for their loans. Some other teachers— their kids go to school here and they don't want them to go elsewhere... Some other teachers their wives work here and they know if they lose their contracts, their wives will lose the contracts as well... they just wanna stay. March, April come and they are just worried about the contract. [T16, member, Tunisian, MoHE-fixed]*

The existence of different levels of employment security at the English Department is seen to result in different levels of motivation and accountability among staff. T15 emphasises that because of the low longevity of most teachers, some of them do not see much value in investing much in teaching as they are more occupied by employment security concerns.

*... a lot of teachers from January onward... are worried whether their contracts are going to be renewed or not and I think it affects how they teach, how they approach the classes immensely because I think there is far more for me to give to the class because I have a vested interest. I know that I am going to be here for two years... it goes both ways, one is that I am doing this because I am secure but also because I know that the*

---

<sup>16</sup> According to some of the outsourced participants interviewed, the term of the current contract (of which I could not obtain a copy) is for three years, which is different from the sample contract term obtained for this research and suggests dependability on the agency contracted.



*next semester my HoD can actually question me about it, like there is an accountability.* [T15, member, Indian, MoHE-fixed]

Overall, it appears that at the level of contracts, the extent to which members are in-group follows a structure based on their employment type. Omanis are full members due to their permanent contracts but the membership of the non-Omanis is contingent as it is temporary and likely to be ended because of various reasons. While the SIA suggests that one reason for social identification with a group is achieving certainty (Hogg, 2005a), such certainty appear to be affected by this contract-based structure that governs group membership. This lack of certainty seems to affect practices at the English Department level by reducing accountability and group-oriented behaviour among teachers as will be further discussed in section 4.5 of this chapter.

#### 4.4.3 Perceived professionalism

In another vein, CAS Strategic Plan emphasises professionalism as one of its leading values that could be achieved through ‘combin[ing] knowledge and skills with competency, honesty, accountability, responsibility, and ethical behaviour’ (Ministry of Higher Education, 2015b:1). It also emphasises, among its goals, achieving quality teaching and learning through focusing on the quality of the staff members and enhancing their morale and retention. For two Omani team leaders, knowledge of the culture is part of being professional. T4 defines professional teachers in this context as *‘[teachers who] have real teaching background, one. Second, they know exactly the background that they are working in, I mean the culture’*. T3 comments that many of the teachers recruited through agencies lack the necessary level of professionalism.

*... They don't really respect the culture. They don't really have the strategies of teaching, even the simple strategies. Let's be honest, some of them are just native speakers...* [T3, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]

There is a perception that in reality, the two employers (the MoHE and the recruiting agency) observe inconsistent criteria in recruiting the English Department staff. The two criteria that appear to govern the process of recruitment are professional qualification that is seen as more relevant to the MoHE recruitments and being a NEST that is perceived to be more valued by the recruiting agency (despite the fact that not all outsourced staff members were actually NESTs when the study was conducted). This leads to the existence of

teachers belonging to different levels of education, different specialisations, and different experiences in tertiary education (see *appendix 5*). As introduced earlier, the HoD mentions that the qualifications of the MoHE's employees undergo scrutiny<sup>17</sup> for ensuring quality standards. However, lack of professionalism is associated more with the outsourced staff category.

*... sometimes we would get teachers who totally cannot handle the teaching responsibilities; teachers who cannot do teaching.* [T6, HoD, Omani, MoHE-permanent]

*... probably none of these teachers [recruited through agencies] have a masters... not all of them have a degree in English. That is because they are considered to be native speakers... when it comes to the Ministry contract, the Ministry is quite fastidious...in the sense that the teacher has to have ... a master in English. Then the teacher has to be somebody who has taught for a number of years and especially at the College level...* [T15, member, Indian, MoHE-fixed]

Hence, these different standards and practices are perceived to create diversity in the perceived professionalism levels among teachers. The observed lack of professionalism associated with outsourced staff members seems to have resulted in many unprofessional practices in the workplace (as will be elaborated on more in section 4.5.3).

*...there is a difference; one is a stock of teachers in the Western world who are extremely well trained and very motivated... I don't think we are able to get that stream. What we are getting here are—at least a few of them... there was somebody who threw up a cup of hot water on another teacher, or there were...people having a problem because somebody is sceptical, or somebody doesn't like somebody else's way of life. It can be as simple as that because many things are very personal in the professional place ...* [T15, member, Indian, MoHE-fixed]

The varied levels of professionalism appear to invite personal selves based on personal characteristics and objectives to come to the surface and to affect the climate at the English Department (further elaboration is presented in section 4.5.3). The HoD reports that in comparison to the company-recruited staff, the MoHE-recruited staff members are better qualified. In addition to their academic qualifications, part of the perceived professionalism of the MoHE staff is attributed to their knowledge about the CAS culture and context, which they

---

<sup>17</sup> There is an exception for this perception, however. During the research, a MoHE teacher was charged for having fraudulent qualifications and was in his way out.

seem to have developed over time due to their higher longevity within the English Department.

*The Ministry contract [teachers] have been here for a while now... Most of the Ministry contract teachers because they are experienced here, they knew the system, they knew everything, they had no such issues...[T6, HoD, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

The documents analysed in relation to both routes of employment state that as minimal requirements, language teachers should have Bachelor degree and a minimum of four years of experience for MoHE staff (CAS Bylaw: section 3.3, Appendix R) or a bachelor degree with a minimum of three years of experience (MoHE- recruiting agency contract: section 3.4, Appendix R). However, the 19<sup>18</sup> CVs analysed for the staff of the English Department during the research show that all the MoHE teachers have a Master degree or a PhD degree in a field related to ELT. On the other hand, three agency teachers have Bachelor degrees, one agency teacher is specialised in Primary Education, one in Social Work, and one in Communication and Journalism with CELTA<sup>19</sup> (see section 2, Appendix R). As various standards appear to be observed in recruiting the English Department staff, it became the responsibility of the HoD to evaluate the fitness of the recruited teachers during the probation period to decide on their continuation at the English Department.

*I have no say in recruiting people ... the only say that I have is whether this teacher is continuing with me under my team or not... The three months under probation is my say. [T6, HoD, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

#### 4.4.4 Different HR regulations

In addition to the resulting differences in qualifications, the different methods of the English Department staff employment seem to translate into different HR regulations for the sub-groups depending on the employer. For the staff employed through the MoHE (either permanently or on fixed terms), the HoD emphasises that they have generally similar provisions with minor differences.

---

<sup>18</sup> Not all teachers at the English Department agreed to share their CVs with me. Thus, out of 27 possible CVs, I managed to scrutinise 19 CVs only.

<sup>19</sup> Certificate of English Language Teaching to Adults.

*Ministry contract [teachers] have the same rights to everything except the financial things. Omanis do not get the ticket allowance and they do not get the furniture allowance ... [T6, HoD, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

CAS-1 HR Department seems to have minimal management over the outsourced staff whose different affairs are the responsibility of their recruiting agency.

*... at the beginning of the year, we have to take a form to them [the HRD] to say we are commencing work... But basically most of the time we don't deal with them. [T10, member, British, outsourced]*

The salaries of the outsourced staff seem to be a matter of negotiation that could differ from one recruiting agency to another (see Employee Handbook section 4, Appendix R). One teacher also confirms such difference based on his interaction with some outsourced colleagues.

*... (Company 1), they were probably paying better than what (Company 2) was paying and now what (Company 3), and there was (Company 4) in between....sometimes I have a feeling that the Ministry is at a loss when the Ministry is actually hiring from the company...[T15, member, Indian, MoHE-fixed]*

Besides, there seems to exist different provisions in terms of leave policies for the different categories depending on the type of contract as stated in the Employee Handbook.

*During the first calendar year of employment at CAS, employees will be eligible for vacation in the same calendar year after completing six months of service. [The recruiting agency during the time of the research] staff should contact [the company] regarding the number of paid day vacation that they are entitled to have. [MoHE- recruiting agency contract: Section 4, Appendix R].*

The sample MoHE-agency contract mentions only three types of leaves for outsourced staff (60 days annual leave, 5 days emergency leave, and 30 days sick leave per calendar year). On the other hand, the CAS bylaw mentions a range of leaves MoHE employees could be entitled to have. These include annual leave, emergency leave, sick leave, research leave, sabbatical leave, conference leave, Viva leave, study leave, exam leave, Hajj leave, maternity leave, demised husband leave, accompanying sick leave, accompanying husband leave, international representation of the Sultanate leave, and special leave. For each of these leaves, there are various specifications depending on the cases. Despite these differences

at policy level, the HoD perceives treatment within the English Department to be equal.

*... there are differences between HR policies and regulations regarding each type of contract... But, having said that, I haven't treated my Ministry contract teachers and my company contract teachers differently... So, everyone is welcome to participate in any of our activities or anything related to the Department. [T6, HoD, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

#### 4.4.5 Professional development

Outsourced staff members also express concerns about professional development programs. T10 reports not being clear about the procedure for making use of such opportunities while T13 thinks that they are only involved in what she perceives as low-quality in-house professional development program.

*...we haven't really had any professional development and I think that is a thing across the whole Middle East... There are things that are regularly emailed to us about workshops or conferences in different places in Oman but I am always very unsure how that works... [T10, member, British, outsourced]*

*It was just like people were forced to just present on something that they are doing in the classroom whereas there are so many organisations that run really good workshops. [T13, member, South African, outsourced]*

For a non-Omani teacher who is employed through a MoHE contract, however, the picture seems to be clearer in relation to professional development activities.

*...they have given me many opportunities like attending seminars, conferences, going out attending meetings at the Ministry... last year I was really focused on giving presentations outside the College and inside the College... they are really also supportive especially if I ask for leave ...[T14, member, Filipino, MoHE-fixed]*

It would appear from the documents scrutinised in relation to professional development that only members employed through a non-contract basis could receive paid training (Article 54 of the Omani Civil Service Law, section 3.2, Appendix R). This means that only Omanis are entitled to paid training. Non-Omani staff members are entitled to five-day paid leave to participate in professional development activities but they incur all the financial expenses (see section 3.3, Appendix R). On the other hand, the sample contracts examined for this research include no reference to professional development for the outsourced staff category.

#### 4.4.6 Involvement versus alienation

Moreover, there seems to exist differences in the nature of duties teachers could be assigned at the level of CAS-1. T2, T3, and T4 who are Omani team leaders report that in addition to their duties at the English Department, they are involved in non-teaching activities and committees at the level of CAS-1.

*... We have committees in the College: Quality Assurance Committee, Graduation Committee, we have many other activities and committees and they [expats] don't know about these. As Omanis and as Arabic and English speakers, we work at those committees and we translate, and we attend meetings and we contribute to these committees. [T3, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

On the other hand, a non-Omani team leader reports that he had been assigned an additional duty that was reassigned later to an Omani colleague.

*I was representing Quality Assurance for some time and ...there was a meeting to be attended in Muscat and then when the administration contacted the Department, they very clearly said that an expatriate cannot go... and then [an Omani teacher] went to that meeting and then slowly [the Omani teacher] took up that position. [T1, leader, Indian, MoHE- fixed]*

It looks that as Omanis share more cultural resources with the administration (mainly in terms of nationality and language), they act like a channel of communication between the CAS-1 senior management or administration and the English Department teachers. An Omani team leader frustratingly comments

*... Even if they [HR] needs sometimes at some points, certain papers like their [teachers'] IDs or any other papers...they will right away contact the coordinator to contact the teachers. The Dean— if he has any concerns or anything about any student or anything again the coordinator...we are trying to put in their minds that we could give this job to someone else. It is not necessarily to be an Omani or not necessarily to be me as a coordinator because you trust me and you know my work... [T3, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

T3 explains focusing on Omanis as a sign of trust that is not engendered in relation to non-Omanis because of the lack of knowledge about their potentials in the part of the administration. Trust is an outcome of the perception that group members share a group membership that they identify with (Mitchell et al., 2015). Such involvement of Omanis in non-curricular activities could also be attributed to being speakers of both Arabic and English. A non-Omani Arabic-speaking teacher interviewed for this research also reports being involved in translation duties at

the level of CAS-1. On the other hand, there is a perception that outsourced staff (44.4% of the whole English Department staff) are less engaged with the CAS-1 larger community. For an English speaking outsourced staff member, not speaking Arabic results in her feeling of alienation as Arabic is the official language of administration.

*... almost 50% or maybe 40% of the emails we receive are in Arabic and so I just delete them [laugh] because I presume they are not relevant to me ...I think there is a whole part of what is going on in this College that isn't accessible to those of us who don't speak Arabic...* [T10, member, British, outsourced]

While at the level of language, English is the prototypical language within the English Department, Arabic is the official language of management at the CAS-1 level. As non-Arabic speakers are non-prototypical at the level of the administration language, they appear to experience being alienated. Being on an outsourced contract seems to have affected the feeling of belonging to CAS-1 among the outsourced teachers in comparison to their MoHE counterparts. One outsourced teacher holds the perception that their role at CAS is limited to teaching.

*... I've heard so many people and colleagues say 'I am on a private contract; all what I have to do is come to College, teach my classes, and then go home. I do not need to come and join cultural activities in the evening after hours, I do not need to join any committees or anything'...* [T9, member, South African, outsourced]

The MoHE-agency contract seems to reinforce this understanding. It states that teachers recruited through agency could be assigned up to 20 teaching hours, which could be reduced in the event of additional assignments (see section 3.4, Appendix R). On the other hand, the CAS Bylaw, which regulates the work of all the MoHE-recruited employees, lists various types of responsibilities expected from staff members such as teaching, research, community service, academic advising, participation in committees, and supervising students' projects (see section 3.3, Appendix R). An outsourced staff member views the specific nature of what is expected from the agency staff as an advantage for this type of contract, which seems to make his relation with CAS-1 more of transactional than governed by social identification demands. It enables teachers to retain a level of agency and express their personal selves.

*I sometimes feel that being on a private contract has its benefits as well because sometimes I can say 'NO'... if I am asked to come in after hours... Company contract says 'I have to be at the College from eight to four and that is it' [laugh]. [T9, member, South African, outsourced]*

Such level of identification seems to also be affected by the instability and job insecurity (as elaborated on more in section 4.5.2) associated with their type of contract. This appears to affect the willingness of outsourced staff to be involved in the CAS-1 community.

*Perhaps people who are employed by the Ministry feel more of a duty to be involved in those things... With us [agency-contract teachers]...everything always feels a little bit uncertain. So, I guess that will hold some of the agency staff back from getting very involved in the College. [T10, member, British, outsourced]*

*...[with] the previous [company], everybody has to sit and wait 'am I going to be renewed, am I not?' and that just made people think 'why? Why should I do extra than is required from my contract?' Whereas if you are on a Ministry contract, you get longer periods and people feel more part of the community. [T9, member, South African, outsourced]*

Instead of getting involved in group-oriented matters, learning about the prototype is a priority for an outsourced teacher.

*I think the first term, I was new. So I didn't want to [be involved in other activities]. I mean I was just learning the system and I think this year,...it seems there has not been much...[T7, member, American, outsourced]*

#### 4.4.7 Overview

The findings suggest that the intersectionality of nationality, language and mode of employment interact with the professional identity of the staff members at the English Department to create a complex picture. Advantage and disadvantage appear to be defined by a teacher's position along these trajectories. In relation to recruitment that governs entry to the group, NESTs are perceived to be advantaged over others including locals. This is perceived to be the case sometimes even when the NESTs do not fulfil the professional standards of recruitment. This seems to be reversed in relation to employment security where the employment mode that is defined by the nationality governs the effect. In this regard, Omanis enjoy higher security than others do. Omanis also enjoy better HR management procedures in relation to leaves and professional development. Non-Omanis seem to vary within, depending on their contract type but none appears



to be entitled to paid training except for in-house programs. Besides, language and contract type appear to govern the extent to which staff members are involved within the wider college community. Speakers of Arabic are more involved both as participants in non-curricular activities and as facilitators of communication with the non-Arabs who feel alienated because of having no equal access to information and because of their contract types that limits their duties to teaching mainly.

The SIA considers perceived salient similarity as a requisite for collective identity (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). The salience of different categories defined by the national, linguistic, contractual and professional status of staff members seems to create differentials within the English Department. While professional identity, emphasised by CAS, could be developed as the shared organisational identity through continuous learning and staff involvement at CAS-1, these resources do not seem to be available for all the categories. The SIA predicts that this salience of different categories could lead to a prevalence of inter-group relations at the English Department because of the different values associated with the different category memberships.

#### **4.5 Implications of categorisation at the group level: dynamics and interactions**

The simultaneous salience of various categories based on nationality, language, mode of employment and professionalism as indicated above seems to have resulted in various effects at the practical group level.

##### **4.5.1 Inconsistent norms/perspectives**

The SIA suggests that group norms are the ‘shared cognitive representations that, within a particular context, characterise the behaviour of members of relevant out-groups and describe and prescribe the behaviour of in-group members including ourselves’ (Hogg & Reid, 2006:10). Norms, thus, are the essence of identities (Kreindler et al., 2012) that underlie the prototype guiding behaviour. At the English Department level, diversity in ideologies and norms that underlies the cultural diversity of the staff appears to influence the attitudes of teachers towards the ELT prototype functioning at the English Department. Frustration and

dissatisfaction as mentioned earlier are not uncommon especially among non-Omani teachers.

*... a lot of teachers come with the idea of 'this structure is not good because I come from South Africa, I come from Australia, I come from wherever and let's change it a bit'...I think that is what frustrates teachers...they just get so angry and they just leave. [T12, member, South African, outsourced]*

*... you have Omanis and then you have foreigners... so you will feel that when you deal with them that some of them will have different educational backgrounds... [the] British educational way of handling the projects is different from the American way... you feel that they see things in different ways. [T2, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

As T2 mentions, these differences manifest in how teachers approach teaching at the English Department. In their reports, a number of the non-Omani participants express that they are not satisfied with some practices at the English Department. By means of illustration, the formal classroom-based style of teaching at CAS-1 seems to upset an American teacher.

*... in America, in the colleges, teachers would have connections with the other teachers where 'everybody, lets go to the park and we will have a class in the park' and that built a rapport with the teacher... I am saying we need to change the system. We can't just have 'here is the book go teach it'. [T7, member, American, outsourced]*

Such a view is inconsistent with the Omani norms where formality in education is necessary for regulating relations especially between genders. This appears to restrict the American teacher's choices in the Omani context. Moreover, the nature of courses that some view as 'lacking focus' is seen as another factor that frustrates teachers.

*...we always find issues regarding assessment...what I mean is [that] the objectives, assessment, the materials are not properly aligned...during the test for example in an exam, what is tested is a different thing than what is being taught in class. [T14, member, Filipino, MoHE-fixed]*

While such an observation is clearly based on the professional judgment of teachers rather than their cultural views, the inability to introduce change appears to be a cause of frustration. Similarly, while some teachers do not like the textbooks used, they feel obliged to teach using them because of the unified final exams across the six campuses.

*I don't like the [text-]books, I despise them, I hate them [laugh]... really, sometimes I want to shoot myself; it is just boring... we can't change the topics because...I think they use the topics in the final exams. [T11, member, American, outsourced]*

This particular black American teacher refuses to teach one topic, which he perceives as stigmatising, despite the provisions of the ELT prototype that all themes should be covered.

*...there was a subject in one of the books. Oh! It was talking about "terrorism" ...but I skipped it of course. I didn't feel comfortable talking to an Arab student body about terrorism, especially being an American...It would be like me sitting in America looking at a professor or a teacher telling me about a black American... [T11, member, American, outsourced]*

According to the SIT, perception of belonging to one group that forms a basis for social identity results in consensus on the evaluations members have for the group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). At the English Department level, however, differences in norms about staff autonomy versus homogenous group functioning seem to affect how teachers respond to the practices of team leaders within their teams.

*... I think with [one team] situation where it might be more free and they don't check up on you, teachers might feel 'oh they don't care'. However, they could also feel like 'oh! They know that I am doing a good job; they are not worried about me, they know that I can get the job done'. [T7, member, American, outsourced]*

*... I prefer there to be an outline yes, but not so micromanage like everything... I don't really want that 'do it this way, this way', that rigid system, to give you that creativity when you go to class you feel like you are just free, you are following what you should do with the aim of achieving the task... [T12, member, South African, outsourced]*

It appears that roles take part in categorisation too. As explained earlier, team leaders are in charge of ensuring alignment of practices within their teams which could set them as 'another' group in relation to the teachers. Haslam (2004) points out that in intragroup context, members could perceive themselves based on their distinct personal identity and in such case, they refuse to accept other group members telling them what to do. Teachers seem to accept the role of team leaders to the extent that they help them learn the overall group prototype.

In a similar vein, one American teacher expresses that the involvement of teachers in decision making through consultation in meeting is not attractive to

him despite the fact that it is encouraged by the CAS Bylaw (see section 3.3, Appendix R) and is seen by others as a practice that should be adopted at the English Department generally (as will follow in another section in this chapter).

*I think in the West we are looking for a manager or a coordinator to just say 'I am the manager, this is the way it is'... Whereas the Omani culture seems to be 'lets talk about it, what do you guys think?' ... which is good because it gives you input but sometimes it just slows the decision; I don't care which way it goes [laugh]' [T7, member, American, outsourced]*

While teacher involvement in decision-making within the teams could be adopted to enhance the feeling of groupness and agreement, it seems not to be seen as such by this teacher who forefronts his cultural identity as a point of comparison.

Based on the views of some participants, the previous experiences of teachers in international contexts could sometimes mitigate strong dissatisfaction with the CAS prototype and ease their adaptation. It seems that previous experiences provide a mental repository of various comparison contexts that could facilitate interpretation of behaviour for those with wider international experiences. Clarke et al. (2013) argue that previous experiences or knowledge form an integral part of academic identity that can be revisited during the socialisation process in the organisational context. With the exception of one, all the team members interviewed for this research have worked previously in some Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC). Some of them also worked in other international contexts (see section 2, Appendix S).

*...because I've worked outside South Africa for so long, I think that it is easy for me to adjust to cultures I think because I worked in Asia as well. I worked in Taiwan for seven years...So, in terms of adjusting I think that for me it was quite easy... [T12, member, South African, outsourced]*

*I came from Cambodia, which is a Buddhist culture. So, that was a big change for me. But, I think that helped me when I came to the Middle East... I thought I adapted much easier in Oman than I adapted in Cambodia. [T9, member, South African, outsourced]*

However, these previous experiences could also lead teachers to approach the Omani context with stereotypical understandings and generalisations that inform their attitudes about how things should work. This emphasises the developmental and emergent nature of teacher professional identity and the role of team leaders in this context to ensure aligning these identities with the CAS context.

*...that used to be the meetings in Saudi; the meeting is scheduled for ten o'clock ... have coffee, eat dates and it will go on and on until eleven ... But I think here it is... too efficient; [one teacher] and I were saying 'we don't know what is wrong but the Omanis, they must learn from the Saudis [laugh] how to come to meetings not so on time, it is a problem' [laugh].* [T12, member, South African, outsourced]

*... some of them will say 'when we were teaching in Saudi Arabia, we were doing this and that', so you have to show them that 'this is a different context; your experience is really appreciated and it is good to apply some of the things you've learned but again you have to watch this and this is your application'.* [T3, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]

The use of previous experiences to inform practices could be a result of the perceived uncertainty characterising the ELT prototype and causing dissatisfaction. Reducing uncertainty is one reason for adopting certain group identity and the prototype's inability to promote such effect could hinder identification (Rast, Hogg, & Tomory, 2015).

#### 4.5.1.1 Overview

Norms underlie prototype and shape them according to the SIA. The data suggests that the norms on which the ELT prototype is constructed are not always in line with those of the staff coming from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Norms related to educational practices (e.g. formal classroom-based teaching as mentioned in section 4.4.1) are sometimes inconsistent with those of the culturally diverse staff. This seems to result in dissatisfaction expressed by the participants who feel that the system is too rigid and restrictive. While teams seem to be created so that a shared understanding is constructed based on the subjects according to the CAS vision, there is a perception that autonomy works better. The different and inconsistent norms teachers appeal to seem to result from their diverse cultural backgrounds or the stereotypes they develop as they work in different international contexts. This again highlights the fact that difference in norms is salient and is affecting how teachers evaluate practices and respond to them in the English Department. As the ELT prototype is not decided and discussed at the level of the English Department or its underlying teams, cohesion and shared understanding seem to be hindered especially with the short team life as further supported in the following sub-section.

### 4.5.2 Unstable group composition

As indicated in section 4.4.1, most of the English Department staff members are outsourced. Recruiting most of the English Department staff through agencies seems to have resulted in fluctuating team stability due to the frequent terminations/turnovers and frequent recruitments.

*When I first came to CAS, we lost a lot of people and from the newest person to the older people there were only a couple of weeks. I mean they brought in six new teachers or seven new teachers to the Department... I was the new person and then all of a sudden we had a whole group of new people. [T7, member, American, outsourced]*

As a majority of the English Department staff is outsourced, the change of the contract from one agency to another could mean a termination of the contracts of all the outsourced staff. T10 reports her experience with high uncertainty due to such a change.

*... [Agency 1] seemed to be fairly confident that they'll get the contract and we would just continue on but it didn't get it... I suppose what they had to do to cover themselves was that they sent us all an email saying 'sorry we have to terminate your employment' and a lot of teachers had actually left for the summer when I was still here because I didn't have as much holidays. Several other teachers were on the beach in Thailand or with their families in South Africa. It must have been quite stressful for them. So, everybody was looking for different jobs. I didn't know whether I should be packing all my things to leave Oman or whether I will be able to stay here in September...[T10, member, British, outsourced]*

This change in companies coincided with the appointment of the new HoD and with the directives for downsizing the English Department at CAS-1. That period is seen as a peak point where the effects of instability and insecurity were more noticeable. It would appear that this insecure period clearly emphasised the categories within the English Department. The intergroup relations between the outsourced staff (especially the native English speakers) and the MoHE staff (especially the Omanis) became clear. The downsizing process led by the HoD involved performance evaluation based on classroom visits. This procedure seems to have emphasised the divisions at the English Department where outsourced staff members appear to be most affected.

*...a lot of teachers were very defensive about [classroom observation] and I think last year there was a talk of I think [the HoD] and [an Omani team leader] just or any coordinator just walking into a classroom without*

*notification and none of the teachers liked that idea. [T8, member, British, outsourced]*

*I came to know that, especially from many native speakers, that they are unhappy and two of them told me that if people came to visit them unannounced they will ask them to leave the classroom even if it cost them their jobs. [T1, leader, Indian, MoHE- fixed]*

Whereas the perception is that performance of teachers was the criterion for cutting the number of teachers (as T14 highlights), T1 thinks that the criteria was not clear and only a few members of the English Department leadership team were involved in the decision.

*...last semester there was a reshuffling... There were people who resigned, there were people who stayed, there were people who were terminated and so on... there are good reasons for that too; first, the economic reason, second the administration needs to look at the performance of teachers. ...[T14, member, Filipino, MoHE-fixed]*

*... I think the HoD and maybe only one or two were involved in selecting who should be in and who should be out...we came to know that it is going to be on the company's chaps. But, then again what was the criteria...honestly I had no clues... [T1, leader, Indian, MoHE- fixed]*

The frequent changes in the recruiting agencies that contribute to such uncertainty warrant other changes according to the participants. One of these changes is in the outsourced staff management especially in relation to recruitment standards.

*...the first company was very helpful... they would keep me in the picture... They would send me updates, they would send me CVs of the teachers before their arrival... This year's company is a bit slow... whenever I phone them, they would spend some time to get me a response or to direct me to the right person and sometimes they would tell me lies...They keep giving promises but they don't send CVs. [T6, HoD, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

With these frequent changes in the recruiting agencies, there is a general perception that getting professional teachers at the English Department is a matter of 'luck' as expressed by T4 due to the different standards observed by the different recruiting agencies. As a result, many teachers join the English Department and leave it during the probation period because of observed inadequacy as illustrated below from the HoD's experience. Perceived professionalism appears to be the criteria for joining the group from the HoD's perspective.

*She [one terminated teacher] spent one week with her students and we got feedback from the students that this teacher is not doing anything.... she would waste time to talk about totally off-topic [aspects] and sometimes she would do something culturally inappropriate though she has spent some time in Arabia or in the Gulf and she knew the culture ... this teacher has been fired six times before she came to this College ...and she also lied about her CV. [T6, HoD, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

High turnover also results from the persistent feeling of insecurity among these teachers. This seems to hinder the retention of professional teachers (especially native speakers) sometimes. It appears that employment insecurity makes the membership of contract-employed staff members rather contingent, which increases the feeling of uncertainty.

*... we lost some good teachers because they are always unconfident about whether they will get the next contract or not. So, they start looking and sometimes they might get an offer which is better than here. [T15, member, Indian, MoHE-fixed]*

*... Now with this economic crises in the country or this feeling of crises, I think especially with the native speakers not many will have long-term plans here. [T1, leader, Indian, MoHE- fixed]*

A high rate of turnover translates into an analogous rate of new staff recruitments in some semesters. Reflecting on their own experiences, T9 and T7 express that the number of teachers joining the English Department could be so large that it could outpace the ability of team leaders to provide adequate induction to the courses.

*When we joined, it was a special situation because I think about twelve or fifteen new teachers came at one time... There was one coordinator and all these new teachers. So, it was a question of casual briefing, go and do it, come and ask questions. [T9, member, South African, outsourced]*

*I came. I landed in Muscat. They dropped me at school, they handed me books: 'teach this'. There was no orientation, there was no introduction, there was no watching of a class, there was no—there was just like kind of 'here is what you are doing, here is your books, good luck'. [T7, member, American, outsourced]*

Lack of induction is especially the case when teachers join during the semester to replace a teacher who left some time into the semester.

*Sometimes what happens is that somebody has flown 5000 miles, still suffering from jet lag, has come to the College, the very next day have been given a class which has already been falling behind because the*



*previous teacher has left and has probably not done five units ...[T15, member, Indian, MoHE-fixed]*

Induction is emphasised because it is seen as a requirement that could enable teachers to learn the prototype of ELT. Lack of induction appears to limit the information teachers have about the culture and how things are done at the English Department. T16 thinks that proper induction is key for improved performance especially with the existing instability and inconsistency.

*...we have new teachers every year and sometimes every semester... they come here and of course it is a new experience for them, it is a new country, it is a new culture, it is a different way of giving marks, of assessing students. And it is their first teaching experience ever or their first teaching experience at tertiary level. So, of course, they definitely need induction and serious one, systematic induction... [T16, member, Tunisian, MoHE-fixed]*

Staff instability is also attributed to the intentions of outsourced teacher as they join CAS. There is a perception that some teachers come to Oman for the purpose of tourism not teaching, which creates differences in objectives and makes personal objectives more salient than professional ones.

*...some of the teachers, when they come here, it will not be their priority to teach. Sometimes...they spend a year off; away from their countries... So, if your whole team has the same ideas like 'we are here to teach'... I mean they are being all professionals, maybe this will be helpful. [T2, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

T15 associates the intention for short-term employment with 'Western' teachers who are seen to enjoy better prospects for employment internationally due to being NESTs.

*...a lot of Western teachers who have come here are travelling. It is a cultural thing... when it comes to Arab and Indian or brown teachers, there is a sense of permanence...take an example of a non-native, like brown teachers; for me, to get a job, it would be very difficult... When we look at Western teachers, obviously they have more opportunities in this case ...[T15, member, Indian, MoHE-fixed]*

The different objectives teachers could have as they join the English Department are perceived to translate into various effects at the academic practice level. The salience of personal objectives affects performance at the professional level.

*If you are planning to have a career there, then you are planning long-term, then you care about self-development. You care about the*

*improvement of you work, the prospects are more or less wider and clear in your mind and you've got plans and you are ready to compromise, you are ready to learn...but if 30% to 40% of the people you are working with know that they are here for one or two years, then the problem is deeper and worse than just teamwork. [T16, member, Tunisian, MoHE-fixed]*

Interestingly, staff instability at the English Department is also attributed to the location of CAS-1 which, for some categories of teachers, is problematic. While the MoHE-agency contract emphasises that the agency is responsible for making potential teachers aware of the nature and condition of employment at CAS (see section 3.4, Appendix S), evidence suggests that this might not be happening. CAS-1 is located in a town far from the capital and in comparison, it could be seen as underdeveloped. This is seen as a reason for the difficulty in the adaptation and retention of some western teachers.

*... [CAS-1] is difficult to recruit for whereas [another CAS campus] is a much more desirable city... I mean we are in the middle of kind of nowhere. Maybe in the English world, I think people want to live of course in the bigger cities. [T7, member, American, outsourced]*

*I think, especially younger people that come and work here, for them it might be too quiet, I mean [the town]. And I think that can influence how people work and whether they enjoy it or not. [T9, member, South African, outsourced]*

*I have actually heard teachers say this, that '[the town] doesn't even have a swimming pool, what do we do?' So, culturally probably that is a big difference... we don't have the infrastructure of Western countries where probably every community has a swimming pool... Probably that is also one of the reasons why they don't want to stay on. [T15, member, Indian, MoHE-fixed]*

This appears to be opposite to a finding in Khan (2011) who reports that non-Omani staff members enjoy life on campus. In Khan's study, however, the campus was provided with facilities such as 'a swimming pool' that help staff adapt.

Staff instability affects how team leaders experience their roles from one semester to another. This is because of the unstable team composition especially in relation to perceived professionalism. Instability is perceived to lead to pressure on both team leader and the students who might need to adjust to more than one teacher during the same semester.

*... sometimes as a coordinator you will take over your shoulder to cover classes ... as a coordinator you have to take the responsibility of ensuring*

*that everything related to the students...[is] documented and then transferred to the substitute teacher. And that substitute teacher will be going to the class about which he doesn't have any background... and the students themselves will get again into another phase. Maybe within a semester...one class could end up having three teachers... [T4, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

Based on his experience, T12 feels that such instability affects his relation with students.

*[students] were looking at me like 'Oh!' They have to adjust now to me... They asked me 'are you the teacher or...?' I am like 'I am not sure maybe I am just standing here for someone [laugh]. I don't know what is happening'. And— because they don't actually want to build that relationship unless they know that 'no this is the teacher'. [T12, member, South African, outsourced]*

Staff instability is perceived to hinder teachers' ability to understand the prototype governing behaviour at the English Department. It hinders the ability of teachers to build a shared understanding which in turn hinders the establishment of social identity based on teachers' membership of the English Department.

*... you can't build new teams every year with teachers who know the work and who are already in the system and others, some of them don't know the work and some of them are resistant to the new academic culture. It is new to them... that is one obstacle to successful teamwork, the fact that there is always new colleagues and good proportion of them don't speak the same language with you. [T16, member, Tunisian, MoHE-fixed]*

One perceived demonstration of the inconsistent understandings about the academic culture is the different ways of assessing the performance of students. There is a perception that non-Omani teachers tend to assign high scores to students as to prove that they are professional teachers so that they could retain their employment. While this difference is attributed in part to the lack of employment security, it is also attributed to the different academic cultures teachers could come from.

*...teachers find it difficult to be objective when they are assessing their own classes... it is general among the expatriate population because they worry about their positions... teachers want to keep their jobs and they feel that if you are not popular with the students, you might get the boot. [T1, leader, Indian, MoHE- fixed]*

*I think at the beginning it was catastrophic and the reason is because I came from a totally different academic culture where 65% was a very good*

*mark and here 65% is under probation, I think. So, it is a totally different thing.* [T16, member, Tunisian, MoHE-fixed]

Thus, a level of stability is seen as necessary for such a cohesive academic culture to exist.

*...it is unsettling in the academic sense because for me anyway, I found it took a while to understand. The semester is quite long and so you need one full semester to kind of understand the way things work here.* [T10, member, British, outsourced]

Employing teachers through the MoHE and retaining professional teachers are seen as a possible ways to achieve a level of settlement and professionalism at the English Department so that differences are reduced.

*... if the Ministry hires the teachers... probably this whole thing about moving from one [contract] to the other can be saved; there is continuity. The Department will function much better [...] I think it is very important that those teachers who do practise like professional behaviour be retained because it is not going to be very useful if you ask them to come for a year contract and leaves in two weeks or four weeks or something.* [T15, member, Indian, MoHE-fixed]

#### 4.5.2.1 Overview

Membership of a certain group is motivated by individual's quest for clarity, distinctiveness, and high self-esteem (Hogg, 2005a). When these motivations are not satisfied by the membership of one group, individuals follow different strategies depending on intergroup permeability and security of relations between groups to achieve them (Haslam, 2004). At the English Department context, employment categories exist due to an institutionalised policy that staff members have no control over. Thus, mobility between employment categories is not possible. Within the context of the CAS colleges, outsourced staff or MoHE contract-based staff cannot be employed permanently because such category is only reserved for Omanis. The MoHE's standards for staff employment is different from those of agencies, which again means that staff recruited through agencies cannot get MoHE contracts. Such category impermeability creates different effects. Turnover, antagonism, and tense relations are seen as characteristics of the English Department. The SIA suggests that when individuals cannot act as a group to change the situation, they tend (as individuals) to leave the group in search of another group that could fulfil their motivations (Haslam, 2004).

The unstable English Department composition hinders staff from fully adopting a consistent understanding of the ELT prototype because of the time factor (longevity) that moderates this effect (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Most of the outsourced staff members, who are a majority in number, do not spend a long time at the English Department. Hence, different understandings are seen to exist. As guardians of the ELT prototype at the micro level, team leaders face the effect of prototype inconsistency every semester. It would appear that they are unable to provide an adequate induction that could help new teachers understand the culture and adapt to it. They also need to tackle additional responsibilities to reduce the effect of frequent turnover on the academic outcomes.

The perceived inability to identify with the ELT prototype among the outsourced staff is also due to the cultural differences that hinder the assimilation under one cohesive prototype. One example is the differences in understandings about how marks should be assigned to students. Cultural distance seems to be another factor that influences the ability of teachers to identify with the CAS context based on the CAS prototype. Western teachers seem to find adaptation more difficult than other teachers of closer cultures (e.g. Indians or other Arabs).

#### 4.5.3 Relationship conflicts

Perspectives about the nature of relations between staff members vary between the participants. Relation conflicts seem to be a key characteristic of staff at the English Department that varies in intensity from one year/semester to another depending largely on the nature of staff composition. Conflicts are attributed to the salience of differences in norms and personal selves that sometimes results in public clashes.

*I think EFL (English as a Foreign Language) has a lot of problems because you are dealing with many teachers from different countries, different cultures, different ways of living; so, different viewpoints... [T11, member, American, outsourced]*

*I just heard about it second hand or witnessed in meetings; people who don't speak to each other in a very friendly way... I think it is not work-related; it is more of outside or personality clashes. I think it is a group of personalities that just disliked each other [laugh]. [T10, member, British, outsourced]*

When personal identity is more salient than group identity, individuals compare themselves to other individuals based on personal attributes (Hornsey, 2008), which emphasises differentiation within the English department. The HoD relates some incidents of the non-work-related conflicts that she needed to deal with.

*...one of the teachers wrote a very long complaint letter against another teacher saying that this teacher is peering at him in a strange way and that he is afraid that his life is threatened... [T6, HoD, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

*One of the teachers was bullying another teacher... he came to her and asked her for example 'what are you doing?' and she said 'I am preparing for my class' and he said: 'No, you are not doing anything. I have job for you, go and wash my car'. [T6, HoD, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

Based on her experience in resolving relation conflicts between teachers, the HoD observes that cultural and academic differences could be among the reasons for such conflict.

*... Sometimes it is because of the different cultural backgrounds ... and sometimes it is the qualification because that teacher [one teacher referred to in the interview] ...is very famous for saying 'I am a PhD holder, why would I need such a thing?' [T6, HoD, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

Team leaders also agree with the HoD, T11 and T10 that many of the conflicts between teachers happen because of interpersonal clashes. In addition to the diverse cultural backgrounds, conflicts could be attributed to other reasons such as personality differences, racism, or mixing personal problems with work.

*I think the problem was because they are bringing their personal problems into the work. So, this is the major issue. Maybe they don't have problems in the workplace but their problems are outside the workplace... and this is not healthy at all. [T2, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

*I think it has nothing to do with the place and the academics. It is their own personal issues and temperaments. Sometimes maybe their own personal background or it could be racist feelings... especially that we are an international team; differences are more. [T1, leader, Indian, MoHE-fixed]*

Teachers also hold a similar view to the HoD and the team leaders. T7 and T11 report that at certain points, such uneven relations lead to subgroups that affect the morale of teachers at the English Department.

*...there was a kind of group that was led by a certain woman and they seemed to have some other issues with other teachers but not related to*

*teaching...However, when it carried on into meetings, and interactions in the hallways and things—I watched people will say hello to me and will not say it to the person standing next to me because they are not in their group... what happened was that the morale of the team sank. [T7, member, American, outsourced]*

*last couple of semesters, not this semester but the last couple; I think it was really miserable to come to work because you have a lot of unnecessary conflicts between teachers. [T11, member, American, outsourced]*

Tension between teachers could also relate to being a native speaker of English or not. It appears that the existence of NESTs and non-NESTs at the English Department could emphasise the divide sometimes.

*... I think there is a little bit of pride that needs to kind of let go of. I proofread a paper last year and the women came and said that she didn't make any mistakes... So, she took it to [the HoD] and [the HoD] ...said 'why did you make that mistake?' ... as a native speaker I know I make mistakes so why would you think you are perfect? [T7, member, American, outsourced]*

T11 thinks that cultural stereotypes sometimes affect how people see each other in such a context. Such stereotypes according to the SIA are a function of the mental pictures people create about the comparative context in order to differentiate them from their own context.

*I can be in places and meet someone who knows I am from the US and automatically they think negative things like I want to control the world or I might think I am from the best country. [T11, member, American, outsourced]*

One team leader feels that teachers tend to have conflicts with some teachers as a means of emphasising their personal distinctiveness relative to others. Accentuation of difference becomes a strategy for retaining distinctiveness from others.

*...there were some points where some teachers will come complaining about each other... we have people from different countries and... I feel that the most [likely] reason behind these problems is that these ones are trying to show off that 'I am a good teacher'; kind of survival techniques maybe... [T3, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

The prevalence of relation conflicts is attributed to the fact that not all teachers recruited are professional. This gives rise to personal reasons and allows conflicts to come to the fore and to shape the diversity climate.

*... there were a lot of unprofessional instructors who were worried about very immature things like who is friends with who and why such and such likes someone? ...just creating unnecessary divisions. Not putting personal feelings aside for professionalism first... [T11, member, American, outsourced]*

*...I think it is not just about cultures because I think it is more about people slipping into the system whom we probably might not want in the team, ... somebody like [a previous teacher] who came drunk to the exam and went to sleep in another invigilation... [T15, member, Indian, MoHE-fixed]*

The frequent changes in the staff composition mentioned above is also seen as a main reason for the lack of cohesion at the English Department due to the anxiety it creates which affects tolerance among teachers and their behaviour in the English Department.

*... you have half the people who are working for the Ministry and half the people who are working for a private company and when you have half the people who were probably going to lose the job or don't know and have families to support, that is not going to be conducive to work environment... [It] seemed to make this un-positive work environment to work in the last few months. [T7, member, American, outsourced]*

*... I can actually tell you the dates, from March 1st to June 15<sup>th</sup>... all of us who have been here long enough, we just keep to our offices because we know that that is the period when everybody is on their edge. They don't know whether they have a job or not... [T15, member, Indian, MoHE-fixed]*

*... lets say that you are on a private company contract for one year renewable, and you are supporting your family and you'd like to send your salary to your daughter in a university ... So, all the year you are stressed ... Insecurity in your position plays a big role in how you interact with colleagues, with students, and what you are willing to do. [T9, member, South African, outsourced]*

#### 4.5.3.1 Overview

Staff relations seem to be characterised by fluctuating levels of conflicts. Conflict seems to be mostly related to personal factors such as differences in cultural and educational backgrounds, lack of professionalism, being a native speaker of English or not, cultural stereotypes, seeking personal distinctiveness, or stress resulting from lack of employment security. The prevalence of relation conflicts that are mostly attributed to personal reasons suggests that at the English Department, it is the personal self that is more salient than collective self. The SIA suggests that the salience of the personal level of identity leads individuals to see



themselves in terms of their personal attributes and characteristics (e.g. PhD holder) (Hornsey, 2008). It thus makes personal tensions and disagreements more salient than any collective identity that could bring teachers together. Salience of personal identities or in fact other sub-identities that are not related to the professional atmosphere (e.g. westerners, native speakers, women, company staff, Ministry staff) undermines what participants think of as the ought-to-be salient identity; professionalism (more elaboration on this aspect is presented in section 4.6.2.3). Participants mention that the differences in contracts and employment security levels create an unhealthy climate where the outsourced staff members are stressed and uncertain about their contracts, which again affects relations because it emphasises sub-categories and divisions.

#### 4.5.4 Collaboration and teamwork

When members of a group identify with the group and perceive it as salient to their self-concept, they exert their efforts to work to achieve the collective objectives of the group (Hogg & Reid, 2006). At the English Department, the HoD emphasises the 'team' identity in relation to the whole English Department.

*I think we established that kind of environment that we are all a team. [T6, HoD, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

However, and with special reference to the leadership team at the English Department, there are varied opinions among participants concerning the extent to which it functions cohesively. T4, T5, and T10 thought that actual teamwork and consistency are clear at the leadership team level especially with the appointment of the new HoD.

*...in some parts there are team works that I've seen and this is why I mainly work with them; the coordinators. Even though each person is in charge of their own level, but I do see them get together and help each other. [T5, leader, Canadian, outsourced]*

*...with the current HoD, things started to be much ...easier than before in which the HoD has a say on everything; its not only the coordinator to take over everything. [T4, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

*[The roles of the HoD and the team leaders are] very complementary, I don't think their jobs overlap at all and they seem to work together quite well. [T10, member, British, outsourced]*

One example of such collaboration was demonstrated in one of the meetings I observed where the teacher absence procedure initiated by one team leader was adopted by the HoD to be used at the level of the whole English Department (see section 3, Appendix P). This appears to be an illustration that some practices are shared between the leadership team members. However, T1 mentions that being non-Omani, he feels that he was excluded from the leadership team at a certain stage. Nonetheless, he reports that he gradually gained more trust and support from the new HoD.

*...last year at a certain stage I felt that even though I was a coordinator, I was out of the picture, because I was the only [non-Omani] one holding the position...they had opportunities to meet when at lunch... So, information was shared... there were moments when I felt that I am not consulted and everything was just dumped down. But, it has changed; now I feel that I enjoy the trust... So, I think basically if you feel that you are part of the team, then dealing with difficult situations is not a problem. [T1, leader, Indian, MoHE- fixed]*

It appears that the trust this non-Omani team leader has gained over time enables him to be perceived as an effective team leader and gradually strengthened his membership of the leadership team composed mainly of Omanis. van Knippenberg and Hogg (2003) emphasise the role of trust in their SIMOL model as a moderator for perceptions of leader effectiveness. T1, however, still thinks that there is a need for more collaboration and more standardisation of practices between the members of the leadership team at the English Department so that the English Department team becomes more salient than the sub teams that are based on the courses.

*... I have not really attended many meetings of coordinators at the College level; its rare... I think we need a bit more of discussion; planning within the College... If we can have a sort of a standardised thing then it will create a better performance in the Department itself. [T1, leader, Indian, MoHE- fixed]*

T4 and T10 also agree that more consistency in practices within the leadership team and across the level teams at in the English Department could ease teachers' work.

*...if the HoD is having a different direction than the direction of the coordinator, then the dilemma will start ...because they [teachers] will discover a gap in the channel or in the leadership of the whole Department*

*that somebody is lenient but the others are strict.* [T4, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]

*I think one thing that would make life a lot easier for me and possibly for [team leaders] as well is if there is more consistency between the levels. So, obviously the marking rubrics and some things are gonna be different ... but the documents that we submit things on could be kind of standardised...* [T10, member, British, outsourced]

This suggests that while teachers express dissatisfaction with the uniformity and rigidity of the ELT system that is implemented across the different English Departments at CAS, they appreciate a level of cohesion at the level of the English Department where practices are drawn closer between subject teams. This could be due to the less abstractness of the English Department level as a basis for potential collective identity in comparison to the wide CAS context.

The differences in perception between participants on whether there should be consistency in practices or not is also emphasised in section 4.5.1 above could indicate that varied levels of self-concept are active within the group where uniformity and distinctiveness are both supported by the different teachers. While some teachers feel that autonomy is important, others think that consistency in practices is as important.

At the level of teachers within teams, there is a perception that the three level teams led by the team leaders within the English Department work separately without much interaction.

*I think most of the teams here work a little bit separately especially compared to the other departments I've worked in over other places where I think there is a lot more interaction.* [T7, member, American, outsourced]

*...there is a very little discussion and I have almost zero idea about how the other teams teach; what their style is and what kind of activities they do in their classes.* [T10, member, British, outsourced]

While teachers belong to teams based on the levels they are involved in and they could cross over teams, there is a perception that there is no actual groupness within the teams. Teachers are assigned different groups of students to teach. It seems that most of the teaching work at the English Department is done individually.

*... due to the nature of our work, teachers cannot meet very often because the work itself does not necessitate that...* [T16, member, Tunisian, MoHE-fixed]

*I don't know if I would use the word "team" because we don't meet that often. Sometimes I forget who else is on the team.* [T10, member, British, outsourced]

*...here it's kind of separate. There is no group togetherness or an interaction forum. So, you call it 'group' but I think it's much more of individuals doing their classes.* [T7, member, American, outsourced]

T10 thinks that collaboration or teamwork is in fact a style of work not favoured in the English Department. She attributes that to the uneasy relations between the different teachers.

*...teachers don't really get on here so I think if we do that [teamwork], it might be a disaster [laugh]... most teachers do not like each other very much...* [T10, member, British, outsourced]

There are occasions, however, where teachers are expected to collaborate mostly in pairs to teach certain shared classes, for co-assessment, or co-marking.

*I know the person who is sharing my class obviously but you don't necessarily liaise with all people.* [T10, member, British, outsourced]

*...we only share when it comes to the tests; when it comes to the presentation and we share the marking for the final draft... We have meetings... but we don't come together really to share ideas about our own individual classes.* [T8, member, British, outsourced]

The English Department follows double-assessor procedures to deal with the issue of subjectivity in marking indicated earlier. This entails that exams and marking are done in pairs. Teamwork necessitated by the assessment procedures at the English Department is seen as an occasion for conflict between teachers.

*We tried to prevent this sort of anomalies [of teacher's subjectivity in marking] by pairing teachers who are too relaxed with teachers who are more organised and systematic but the other side of the coin is that when we pair such people they end up disagreeing and we are getting into personal issues... disagreements crop up when they do the presentation assessment* [T1, leader, Indian, MoHE-fixed]

Teachers seem to have a perception that the effect of diversity on teamwork depends on whether the task requires a joint decision or not. The occasions

where teachers were expected to reach an agreement are seen as a source of anxiety and conflict.

*People are always worried about the other teacher they are going to mark with... Because some teachers will give twenty for an essay and some teachers will give fourteen... you have the rubric to work from and it is like anything else. There are always clashes and personalities and some teachers are 'no, I am not changing my mark' and it causes stress and anxiety. I mean some teachers... like to be a bit more domineering over other teachers... [T8, member, British, outsourced]*

*... there is the teaching itself and there is the assessment. The teaching itself; whenever I worked with people outside the Arab world, I've learned from them ... the assessment is another story...the tendency is to give high marks... It will be very difficult and embarrassing and daunting to try to convince your partner to give... marks below average... I met teachers from different countries and cultures especially from the West who couldn't understand that 70% or 75% is regarded as a low mark. [T16, member, Tunisian, MoHE-fixed]*

Because of such conflicts, there is a perception among some teachers that teamwork at the English Department should be based on sameness or should be according to teachers' own choice of their partners so that tasks are achieved effectively.

*For that [;teamwork] to work better, more effective and more efficient, I think try to tap people who have the same—what I mean is who share the same values, who share the same perspectives, who share the same ideologies. [T14, member, Filipino, MoHE-fixed]*

*... the speaking for example, if you are with a teacher whom you are comfortable with, then it will have an impact on the way you talk to the students... The assessment process in general will be affected. I remember sometimes it reached really high level of argument between the two teachers and they didn't agree about marks and coordinators had to intervene. [T16, member, Tunisian, MoHE-fixed]*

This, however, contradicts the professional rationale for teamwork as seen by the leadership team, which is reducing the perceived subjectivity in mark assignment. The uneasy type of relations between teachers seems to have made the task of team leaders challenging in relation to pairing teachers for conducting the assessment tasks.

*... we had to think about which teacher will be working with which teacher because some teachers are not willing to work with each other. This was a very serious time; you have difficulty pairing teachers together because*

*basically they don't speak to each other or they don't work with each other.*  
[T2, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]

*... For example, in my team I have [one teacher]. [Another teacher] has told me he doesn't say hello to her for no reason. So, naturally when I allocate duties I make sure that I don't put them in a situation of embarrassment...*[T1, leader, Indian, MoHE- fixed]

This concern was expressed in one of the meetings observed where a teacher inquired about how to act in the event of disagreement because he knew beforehand that he was not going to agree with the teacher he was paired with for assessment (section 1, Appendix P). It is generally perceived that the difficulty of working with other teachers sometimes lies in the absence of a shared understanding partially because of the instability at the English Department, which makes pairing a new teacher with an experienced one a possible reason for conflict.

*In my first year here, I had more than one argument with other teachers because teachers even though there is marking criteria, teachers have different views of how to use those criteria and different philosophies of interpreting the criteria, giving marks and everything.* [T16, member, Tunisian, MoHE-fixed]

*Sometimes in double marking what happens is that it is either one says that 'no, this is how I interpret the rubric' and the other one said that 'no, but..' because sometimes the rubrics are also a bit flexible in how you interpret them so that is there... they might get like 'No, this is our way' there is no discussion... sometimes it becomes very difficult with some teachers.* [T15, member, Indian, MoHE-fixed]

The English Department has shared folders in the CAS-1 network, which are intended to work as collaboration zones between teachers within the same teams. However, unwillingness to share experiences with others is seen as a common behaviour.

*... sometimes you have teachers we have them for a long time here in the Department and when you ask them to share, they are hesitant. So, I am not sure what is the reason actually...* [T2, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]

*...we don't have that many contributions, I don't know why. Is it because the teachers would like to keep their own materials to themselves or because they are lazy to send it, or they don't like sharing?* [T3, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]

T7 thinks that the instability is one reason for the hesitation to collaborate among teachers.

*... I think that it is sometimes helpful to have that stability. People don't like when teachers come and go. Why would I invest my time helping this teacher if he is going to be gone in a week?* [T7, member, American, outsourced]

#### 4.5.4.1 Overview

In brief, while the English Department functions through level-based teams within the English Department's larger team, there does not seem to exist many indicators of collective identity. The perceived lack of consistency within the leadership team seems to make the three sub-teams function separately. This seems to be less of an issue within the leadership team, which seems to gradually develop a level of collaboration. The SIA suggests that when members of a group perceive themselves in terms of a group collective identity, they like each other not based on personal attraction but due to belonging to the same collective group (Turner, 1999), which creates a unity of purpose. Due to the inconsistent prototypes at the English Department, such liking does not seem to be prevalent so collaboration and teamwork are seen as problematic.

Within the teams, teachers think that much of their work is actually done individually and they only occasionally perform interdependent tasks. When teachers operate as dyads during assessment and marking, disagreement and conflict become visible and preference for using sameness as criterion for selecting teams is indicated. Besides, absence of collective identity is demonstrated in the lack of collaboration and sharing of experiences where teachers seem not to see themselves as working as one group for collective and shared objectives. This comes as a natural result when members of a group do not appeal to similar norms that inspire a shared understanding and a collective effort towards unity and agreement. The result is anxiety, inconsistent behaviors, unwillingness to share experiences and fear of teamwork as expressed by the participants. As team leaders are expected to ensure that the organisational prototype guides behavior, they seem to carefully select teachers for teamwork so that the rate of conflict is reduced.

#### 4.5.5 Low staff interaction

Low interaction between staff members is one characteristic of the English Department I observed during the research. Participants also confirm this observation pointing out that there is not enough space for informal interactions or socialisation between teachers. The SIA considers communication and interaction as a way of sharing knowledge about the prototype and creating a level of cohesion (Hogg & Reid, 2006). In the English Department, two or three teachers share an office and there is no communal space apart from the meeting hall where they convene for some team or Department meetings. Comparing the experience at the English Department with their previous experiences in other places, two teachers feel that the style of housing and office allocation at CAS-1 affect establishing interaction among teachers.

*I think actually the offices don't help because a lot of people hide away in their office... here it is far more closed and yeah you don't see [teachers] necessarily unless you knock on somebody's office. [T10, member, British, outsourced]*

*...for all the other places I worked, the teams were a lot closer... whereas here everybody has a separate house, a separate family that keep them completely separate... [T7, member, American, outsourced]*

Another reason for the lack of interaction between teachers within the English Department is the high teaching load and the way timetables are designed.

*... before, teachers got time to mingle with each other to share sometimes work and personal experiences but now, oh! We rarely find time to do that... [T14, member, Filipino, MoHE-fixed]*

*... we have different schedules... So, my officemate I might not see him on Wednesday or Tuesday because of our schedules just not matching. [T7, member, American, outsourced]*

Unstable English Department staff composition is also seen as a reason for low interaction and cohort-based sub-groups. Teachers tend to connect more with others who are closer in terms of sharing an office or maybe tenure which makes their advice networks and friendship networks limited to those perceived as similar.

*You see so many people enter and leave with the tenure of teachers and so you are not sure even like 'shall I interact with this person? How long are*



*they gonna be here?’ ... Some people are like ‘oh we’ve been here the same time let’s stick together’ ...[T12, member, South African, outsourced]*

*...if I faced a problem with the class here, I would speak to my officemate but possibly not the other teachers because I wouldn’t feel—some yes, but there is not so much of an open forum [T10, member, British, outsourced]*

This lack of communication and interaction between teachers is seen to contribute to sustaining conflicts.

*... last time it was an instructor who has complained twice, I didn’t even know. It wasn’t even brought to my attention... I am sure they [the leadership team] would deal with conflicts between teachers a lot less if teachers would just go to their peers, their colleagues, even if it is someone they don’t like him, voice their opinions about something that happened and they are happy. [T11, member, American, outsourced]*

General Department meetings or team meetings are seen as the main occasions where teachers meet as a group but these are seen as insufficient platforms for mingling between teachers.

*You get an email, here is the agenda, we follow the points, there is a discussion and then that is done. I think that is what a meeting should be for me personally... I don’t think it is a good ground for getting to know each other. [T12, member, South African, outsourced]*

*Meeting are not enough and the layout of the room itself for the meeting where the teachers are sitting down and the coordinator is standing and giving instructions or getting feedback and trying to give answers to problems; that is not enough. [T16, member, Tunisian, MoHE-fixed]*

Teachers meet variably within the teams they belong to. At the level of team members, participants seem to have two different views. There is a perception that meetings are important for raising challenges and getting direction on how to deal with them based on the experiences of others.

*... when one goes to the meetings, one discusses. One also realises that ‘OK I am facing this problem, somebody else is also facing this problem and then there is an attempt to address that. [T15, member, Indian, MoHE-fixed]*

Meetings are also seen as important for emphasising team identity between teachers belonging to the team.

*...the way that meetings are held with all the [one team] teachers and everybody just gives a progress report; that makes you feel part of a team... you go to the meetings and you hear what others are doing and*

*going through the same; so, definitely part of a team.* [T9, member, South African, outsourced]

Such emphasis on team identity is demonstrated in the meetings I observed through presenting team outcomes (e.g, results of assessment) or through the emphasis on standardised practices through detailed explanations, standardised documents, emphasis on standardised milestones and deadlines, and eliciting feedback and opinions regarding operational matters (see sections 1&2, Appendix Q).

For many teachers, however, these meetings do not seem to be too attractive. There is a perception that meetings within the English Department could become annoying for teachers because they provide room for domination or because some teachers raise points for discussion that do not concern all the other teachers.

*... people get annoyed when one person hijacks the meeting about their specific needs...I mean when someone takes control of the meeting and says 'this is my agenda and I don't care you all listen to it even if you are not involved in it'. I think that is where we could get into troubles.* [T7, member, American, outsourced]

*... [there are] certain people who are here and always have something to say...I think they are just too much; 'be quiet and let us go'. I think they will get—if at any time they want some input from us, I think they [team leaders] will get more feedback if they get it by email.* [T11, member, American, outsourced]

The awareness of leadership team of these views resulted in short and focused meetings. The meetings I observed were brief and sometimes highly structured and the content with one team was even emailed to teachers beforehand. In one post-meeting conversations I had with the HoD and one team leader, they pointed out that lengthy interactions are deliberately avoided in such meetings to avoid tensions between teachers and due to high teaching loads (see Appendix P). This is also confirmed by one teacher.

*....teachers are very busy here... you don't have so many hours but there is a lot to do. If you have a class you have to think about your lesson, you have to think about the essays, presentations, and maybe to be perfectly honest, I think teachers don't want to get together.* [T8, member, British, outsourced]

There are also varied views about the source of the agenda that are brought to discussion during meetings. While T11 says he does not know if he could contribute to the agenda as a teacher, T13 thinks that is possible.

*... I have always just taken it to mean something maybe that is not on the papers or [leadership team] forgot about it or something that the coordinators bring up or the Head of the Department; something they might think about while we are there. I've never thought that as something from us. [T11, member, American, outsourced]*

*...if you approach your coordinators or the HoD with a good proposal and a good plan, they will consider it, they will table it in the meeting and will discuss it. [T13, member, South African, outsourced]*

In a general Department meeting I observed, there was an element in the agenda suggested by one teacher. The point was opened for discussion and teachers were invited to give their opinions so that a decision could be made (see section 3, Appendix P). After deliberations between teachers, the HoD suggested that further opinions on the topic could be sent to her by email. In a post meeting conversation, the HoD commented that not all teachers give their opinions in meetings so she wanted to give them a chance to give their feedback by email. However, in the meetings observed, it was clear that most of the time was spent on explaining procedures and deadlines either in the form of PowerPoint presentations, oral explanations, or hand-outs. Some teachers also share the perception that meetings would largely focus on regulations and administrative aspects.

*I think the meetings are just really about administration, about scheduling, 'do this by a certain time... it is not really about 'do you think this will be a good idea?' or 'should we do this?'... we don't really get together to share ideas about teaching. It is just 'how many units have you done in the book?' [T8, member, British, outsourced]*

Lack of trust between teachers is seen as another reason why meetings are not seen as an interaction space.

*People don't trust each other; so, I don't think people want to be that open like I said I feel that a lot of teachers don't necessarily like each other here very much [laugh]. I think that is the reason why people don't want to be that open about their classes. [T10, member, British, outsourced]*

In relation to the element of trust, it is seen as an important criterion that could qualify teachers for involvement in the leadership team according to the HoD.

*[Coordinators] fit their job very well and actually, there is no one in the Department that I could entrust as coordinators except these people. [T6, HoD, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

Trust is linked to organisational identification and is also seen as important for consultation in making decisions at the team level according to one team leader.

*...making a decision for me was a process... I would discuss it with the trusted figures in my team... people who like working for the good and the benefit of the institution and for the ultimate goal which we would like to achieve. [T3, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

Trust, then, appears to be shared with those who shared the same organisational objectives. T14 consider getting his opinion in a matter related to his team as a sign of trust but T11, (agreeing with T8 above), thinks that asking teachers about their opinions in meetings happens infrequently.

*... It doesn't come up too often. Maybe any new decisions or any new policies concerning teaching or related to that; I would say maybe 10-15% of the time they show it just in our meetings. This might be another reason why many people don't say anything. [T11, member, American, outsourced]*

These views seem to be largely in line with some meeting observations I made and the records of their minutes. I observed only two occasions (one in a team C meeting and one in a GDM) where opinions were elicited in order for a decision to be made (see section 2 and section 3, Appendix P). Nonetheless, I also observed occasions where decisions were not made during the meeting either because the decision was already made beforehand (e.g. pairing teachers for assessment) or they were beyond the capacity of the English Department (e.g. reducing the size of a group or moderating the exam answer keys) (see Appendix P for details).

In one of the meetings observed for this research, there was a discussion about the results of an underperforming group (see section 3, Appendix P). Some teachers seemed to be keen to suggest ways of improving the performance of that particular group in the future and different solutions were suggested based on the experiences of teachers. One teacher who was interviewed after that meeting commented that such discussions are not common in the English Department meetings and that such a topic should have been discussed in another meeting.

*I have not experienced that in the meetings before, here. I think it is good although a lot of people here would say that is not the place to have that kind of discussion and maybe they are right because the coordinators have a limited amount of time. They have to get through the agenda... [T10, member, British, outsourced]*

Instead of focusing on instructions and procedures, T16 comments that meetings should focus more on substantial matters such as reviewing aspects relevant to the courses they teach and recommendations should be communicated to decision makers accordingly.

*I wish it were more systematic and structured thing ... where we assess the work that has been done throughout the semester and where we can put suggestions, the way we think the system could be improved... that is what the system needs. That is what decision makers need; they need to listen to people who are in the field... [T16, member, Tunisian, MoHE-fixed]*

T8 also agrees with T16 that meetings in reality do not tackle the actual concerns of teachers and what they see as important like teaching load, class size, or assessment.

*... I've never gone to one meeting where anything has interested me at all... if there was a meeting where someone says 'OK we are going to reduce the [teaching] hours' or 'we are going to reduce the students to a manageable number'... we also have to review what the students are tested on. [T8, member, British, outsourced]*

These aspects, however, are generally not decided locally, which indicates the restricted ability of the English Department leaders to manage the prototype. For example, reducing class size was discussed in one of the meetings I observed in relation to one particular group of low achievers. The HoD's response to the suggestion of teachers was that despite her agreement with the view of teachers, it is beyond her power to change the class size because that is decided by senior or central regulations. As for teaching load, the HoD also indicates that teaching loads are decided by central mandates.

*There is a formal letter coming from the Ministry itself stating the number of hours per HoD or per coordinator and the average hours of regular teachers... [T6, HoD, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

Being focused mostly with operational matters and not with the main concerns of teachers, the discussions that take place during meetings are seen as 'pointless' by one teacher.

*...we don't need to have this kind of pointless discussions about something we can't change anyway. This is stuff that goes to Muscat. They know how the system works, but yet they every single meeting seem to do this. They bring in subjects that we don't have in the agenda. [T7, member, American, outsourced]*

Generally and based on my observations, the input of teachers in team meetings was limited to questions for clarifications or reports on progress (section 1, Appendix P) or in some occasions feedback on practises (section 2, Appendix P) or to a lesser extent opinions for a decision (section 2, Appendix P and section 3, Appendix P). In most of the meetings observed, only a limited number of teachers contributed to the discussion, when there was one. In addition to the reasons explained above, one participant explains such passiveness during meetings with the low level of employment security teachers experience.

*... they are just worried about the contract. You tell them go right, they go right. You tell them go left, they go left... they just listen to them. They just do what they are asked. They are even afraid to put up suggestions. [T16, member, Tunisian, MoHE-fixed]*

Instead of using team meetings for communication, there is a perspective among team members that one-to-one interaction between teachers and with team leaders could work more effectively.

*...the meetings are fairly formal and there is sort of formal business to get through. If it is relevant to one of the points or you think it is super important then sure; but otherwise I think a lot of people might go indirectly to the coordinators to [raise additional concerns]. [T10, member, British, outsourced]*

*Coordinators need to work more closely with teachers. That means talking individually with each teacher and quite frequently. Having small meetings of two or three teachers... individual meetings with teachers beforehand, working on specific tasks with teachers... [T16, member, Tunisian, MoHE-fixed]*

T2, T1, and T4 point out that occasionally individualised support works better than group-oriented one.

*... you need basically to listen to them and to explain things to them... It is not like a regular meeting with all teachers; sometimes you need to sit with each teacher alone. [T2, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

These one-to-one interactions are also encouraged by a team leader during one team meetings as a route for discussing the individual concerns of teachers

(section1, Appendix P). Meetings are also seen as not a good place for raising aspects for interaction due to individual differences as suggested by one teacher who described himself as ‘introvert’ and ‘anti-social’.

*Sometimes I think ‘no, they could think it is stupid’ or ‘I don’t wanna waste people’s time, they wanna leave’ or ‘more important things are in mind at the moment and I don’t care’... I think I don’t say anything but if they deal with email or a drop box where we can be silent about it then I will do...*  
[T11, member, American, outsourced]

#### 4.5.5.1 Overview

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the ELT prototype that guides the academic work at the English Department is decided centrally and expected to be implemented across CAS. The SIA, on the other hand, suggests that team members need to negotiate and agree the content of the prototype and they need to communicate frequently in relation to the prototype so that influence towards a collective identity based on a shared understanding of the prototype and shared similarities is achieved. At the level of the English Department, the reality seems to be different. There does not seem to exist much interaction between the culturally diverse teachers because of structural reasons related to the way facilities or houses are allocated, high teaching loads, or conflicts (as mentioned above). Formal meetings present a limited chance for teachers to get together but this is generally not seen as very effective because of the formal nature of meetings, the focus on administrative and procedural matters, the perception that there are no common concerns, fear of conflicts, and the busy schedules of teachers.

As team leaders in this context are in charge of communicating the ELT prototype and ensuring it is followed, they seem to be the source of most of the information and the input in meetings. The inability of the team members and the team leaders to negotiate the content of the prototype so that they reach an agreement or give their opinions about matters that they see as important seem to encourage teachers to be passive during meetings. In addition, the inability of team leaders to make decisions about many aspects that teachers raise makes such discussions perceived as pointless and time consuming. Moreover, participants indicate that the lack of trust between teachers could be a reason for the limited interactions. Trust as seen by the SIA builds up as members of a group perceive others as similar to them in relation to a shared understanding of

the group prototype and shared goals (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). As instability and salient differences are seen as characteristics of the English Department, such a level of similarity and hence trust is not achieved. This leads some participants to believe that it would be more effective if leader-member interaction is done one-to-one through individual meetings or by email instead of meetings due to the perception that there is not much that is shared between teachers. This comes in opposition to the team intentions of team leaders to use meetings as an occasion for emphasising shared identity.

## 4.6 Prototype management at the micro-level

The Employee Handbook mentions that the leadership team at the English Department consists of the Head of the Department under whom comes the team leaders as the second level of structure. Whereas the HoD is the only official position that exists in the structure of the CAS colleges, the Employee Handbook (compiled by the HoD) refers to the level coordinators as ‘immediate supervisors’ (see section 4, Appendix R). The categories indicated earlier in this chapter seem to emerge again in relation to leadership in the English Department. There seems to exist a lack of consistency concerning who should become a leader in such a context and the role of the team leaders (as opposed to the HoD) at the English Department.

### 4.6.1 Leader prototypicality

Participants seem to disagree about who could become a leader at the English Department. The HoD considers trust an important criterion as indicated in section 4.5.5. On the other hand, T1 and T16 think that the criterion is not clear and *‘there is a lot of calculation involved’* (T16).

*...who deals with power? If a coordinationship is a sort of promotion, what is the guideline for that? Is it sort of promoting people whom you find difficult to manage [laugh] or promoting people you find capable or ... I think there is a lot of clarity that needs to come in, and again whether these positions should be now reserved to Omani colleagues, that is something to be done. [T1, leader, Indian, MoHE- fixed]*

Thus, the criteria for selecting the members of the leadership team seem not to be transparent and there is a view that they could be based on relations rather than capability and skills. The team leaders interviewed (T1, T2, T3, T4)



emphasise that part of their roles is familiarising teachers with the CAS context and culture; thus functioning as a reference for knowledge about the prototype. Generally, four non-Omani participants (T1, T10, T13, T14) think that Omanis emerge as a first choice either because of the Omanisation policy or because they perceive them to be more familiar with the CAS context. T13 and T14 think that not speaking Arabic (at CAS-1 where the official language is Arabic but the teaching language is English) does not enable them to take these positions.

*I think in reality as expats, we know these positions are reserved for Omanis... maybe it is like an unspoken thing; we know that this is the way Oman is going. [T13, member, South African, outsourced]*

*...I think the Omanis need to be the people occupying these positions because they know more about the culture and I think they will be more effective... I might be an effective leader for some aspects but not in terms of the totality... I don't really know Arabic language and it is a crucial consideration especially in administration. [T14, member, Filipino, MoHE-fixed]*

In relation to non-Omanis, T1 points out that the nature of short tenures non-Omani teachers makes Omanis stand out for such positions.

*... People think of 2020 as a cut-off stage where many people are going to loose their jobs and this fear is there everywhere so naturally people may not be looking for promotions or positions of power. [T1, leader, Indian, MoHE- fixed]*

Thus, in judging leader prototypicality at the CAS system, the English Department is not the only factor that decides. Leader prototypicality and effectiveness appear to be judged in relation to the wider context. An Omani team leader who feels that contextual knowledge is key at CAS also confirms the view that contextual knowledge is a main criterion.

*...if we will start to employ our own people... we will end up not in need even for coordination because these people who would be recruited, they are from the country itself ; Omani people. At least they know the culture, the background of the students, what exactly the students need... [T4, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

However, another Omani team leader opposes this view suggesting that sincerity and competence should be the criteria for team leader selection.

*We have coordinators who are not Omanis and they are doing it in a very good way; maybe even better than the way we are doing it and we are*

*Omanis. So, yeah; it depends on the teacher and... being sincere for the things they are doing.* [T2, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]

For this Omani team leader, motivation to enact change at the English Department drove her to take such position.

*... what you are hoping actually from being a coordinator [is] that you see a change within your Department and within the students and within the College and you are hoping the change that you are making is helping...* [T2, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]

It seems that as Omanis enjoy high employment security, they feel more like in-group members and thus identify more with the English Department and the wider CAS-1 context. Hence, they see organisational objectives more salient than personal ones while the opposite appears to be true for non-Omanis. T16 thinks that getting such position might be attractive for non-Omanis as it could entail renewing their contracts.

*... for the teachers who wanna have a career here or who wanna spend as much time as possible ...they think being a coordinator is a guarantee for their contracts to be renewed.* [T16, member, Tunisian, MoHE-fixed]

Such personal interests in getting leadership role at the English Department are also perceived as present by other participants who think that money or reduced teaching load become objectives of leadership.

*... I think without having a salary increase, you are putting more responsibilities and more hours... We are here for one reason: a job and money. I mean that's why most people are here at least especially the Westerners.* [T7, member, American, outsourced]

*...maybe when they see the timetable, 'oh ten hours, eleven hours, I could do that... But once they understand that it is bigger than this... I don't think they will like to do it.* [T3, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]

Thus, the various categories at the English Department that are mentioned earlier again present a picture of competing prototypes where identities based on nationality or contract could be seen as more relevant than capabilities or competence at the wider CAS context. While at the English Department, being a professional English teacher might be the sought after criterion for team leadership, the large-scale prototype where knowledge of the wider CAS context and speaking Arabic are important aspects seem to focus the light on Omanis despite the different context at the micro level. To this extent, Omanis are depersonalised and seen in terms of their national identity rather than their

competences. Depersonalisation enables people to see themselves in terms of the group rather than the individual attribute (Hornsey, 2008). Nationality, contract, and language appear to also distance non-Omanis from the organisational identity. For some non-Omanis, self is perceived more at the personal level which makes them see leadership at the Department as a tool for achieving personal interests.

#### 4.6.2 ELT prototype management and leader effectiveness

Omanis appear to be perceived as prototypical as far as the wider CAS context is concerned. At the level of the English Department itself, those who occupy leadership will need to deal with a culturally diverse staff body at the micro level. This implies that speaking Arabic and knowing about the Omani culture are not enough as effectiveness criteria. Based on their experiences, Omani team leaders think that the cultural diversity that results in diverse perspectives in the English Department has the potential to improve practices and learning from different teachers.

*... we have people coming from Britain, South America, South Africa, India, we have Omanis; locals... I think it is a healthy thing to have within your team and this will help to share experiences; you see different people, how do they do things differently... [T2, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

*... being in the place or in the position [of team leader] will get you to encounter different types of people, different types of mentalities—different types of people coming from different parts of the world and that will add a lot to yourself. [T4, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

Nonetheless, T1, T3, and T14 agree that cultural diversity could present a challenge for team leaders who might require different skills for dealing with culturally diverse teams as elaborated on more in section 4.6.2.2. This suggests that knowledge of the context is not enough.

*... I got my Masters and my Bachelors here in Oman. So, I was always surrounded by the Omani gathering and I know how to deal with people and I've been considering myself social. But once I got to this point and being involved with these people, I understood that there are certain skills I have to develop and certain strategies I have really to follow. [T3, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

*...the case with our Department is that we don't have majority of the staff from one country or from one race. We have such an eclectic community,*

*that you have to be a very adjustable, accommodative character in order to deal with this sort of talents.* [T1, leader, Indian, MoHE- fixed]

*...it is really quite challenging for the coordinators because I was once a coordinator too and handling people from different cultures, from different places, from different backgrounds and upbringings is really quite challenging... you need to understand not only the situation but also the people involved.* [T14, member, Filipino, MoHE-fixed]

In fact, T2 and T3 feel that their identities as Omanis affect their professional interactions with teachers within their teams. This could be due to the salient perception that team leaders belong to a different category, which makes team members perceive them as less similar and maybe trust them less than those seen as similar to them. To this extent, the intersection of professional role and nationality appears to set Omanis as another category within the English Department and differentiate them from the rest of the teachers.

*... they respect you more or they don't tell you things the way they tell it to other people... Maybe they feel that because its our country; the College is in our country and we have to do with the recruitment. Maybe because we are Omanis, [they think that] the administration will listen to us more than them* [T2, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]

*...at some point they were just like listening to you and showing you that we are listening... some of them would really tell you that 'I don't think this teacher believes that but we believe that this is your country and this is the way you have to do it'; although it is teaching and teaching a language and this is a worldwide thing...' [T3, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

Thus, the cultural diversity characterising the English Department appears to pose different demands on leaders. Within the English Department context, the findings suggest that the role of the leadership team in relation to the English Department group identity advancement/group-oriented behaviour, identity entrepreneurship, and identity impresarioship (Steffens et al., 2014) (explored under section 2.5 of the literature review) is rather restricted. While the HoD is seen as '*the official boss*' (T16), the findings above suggest that her authority is restricted as the English Department represents the lower unit within a larger hierarchy that governs practices and decision-making.

Besides, there seems to exist a lack of clarity about the role of team leaders in the English Department context. The position of team leader appears to be critical as they directly interact with culturally diverse teams of teachers. Nonetheless, there is a view that their role is mainly managerial that is concerned with organising,

scheduling, communicating feedback from teachers to senior leadership, and contributing to resolving problems between teachers or those between teachers and students as expressed by T16, T13, T7, T10, and T11.

*...there has been a little confusion regarding the coordinator's work... The very definition of a coordinator is to coordinate work, to make the work works smoothly but other sides of the work like the academic sides as I said earlier it was a big mistake to me, it was a big mistake assigning those responsibilities to coordinators. [T16, member, Tunisian, MoHE-fixed]*

*I think probably a large part of their job is creating, organising, managing, storing, all of that kind of stuff. [T10, member, British, outsourced]*

*They teach part time relative to other teachers and hold meetings and deal with conflicts between teachers, conflicts between teachers and students and also deal with top-down; communicate things to us coming from the Dean or anyone else above them. [T11, member, American, outsourced]*

T2 reports that her role as a team leader involves ensuring that teachers follow the CAS ELT prototype.

*... basically it is your job to know what teachers are doing and if they are doing things in the correct way we are doing here... that they are following the academic calendar; they are following the steps of the project, for example... [T2, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

#### 4.6.2.1 Leader-member/team interaction

To do their jobs, team leaders interact with teachers through team meetings, individual meetings, or emails. The SIA considers group context is important for emphasising the group prototype through the communication that takes place (Hogg, van Knippenberg, et al., 2012). Meetings are the occasions where prototypical information is communicated to the group members and where the leader, as the most prototypical group member, manages the group identity based on the consensual prototype. At the English Department, teachers express varied views about the effectiveness of the channels of communication between the leaders and the group members. The findings in section 4.5.5 indicate that there is an attempt to use meetings as a chance for emphasising collective identity through presenting content that concerns the group such as providing clarifications and presenting outcomes. However, generally group meetings as a means for communication between the leader and the group are not favoured because leaders deliberately avoid lengthy interactions to minimise the chances for conflict, the limited ability to make decisions at the level of the group, and the

focus on instructions and procedures rather than the actual concerns of teachers. Thus, there is a view that the style of communication with teachers should be customised depending on the needs of the different teachers.

*... This team might be different than this team. This individual might be different than this individual.... if I know that this team needs more information, I have to provide the information. If they are asking me more questions, I have to provide those answers. If this team wants to be more independent, maybe I need to give them more independence. [T7, member, American, outsourced]*

This suggests that due to the low salience of social identity, it is seen that leader/follower relations work more effectively with personalised interactions. It appears that team leaders varied in the level to which they practiced individual-oriented or group-oriented interaction with team members. As also elaborated on in section 4.5.5 above, I observed frequent meetings with two teams. One of these teams had more meetings than the other two and there was a view that there should be fewer meetings. However, the third team, which was the biggest, did not have any meetings. Aspects related to this team were discussed in the general department meetings mainly because this team involved most teachers. However, there is still a view that this particular team should have meetings on its own and there should generally be a reasonable number of meetings across teams.

Team members generally classify leader-member interactions in the English Department into two styles of communication ‘you are on your own’ (T7, T12) where the teachers are working with minimal follow up from the team leader and ‘micro-managing’ (T9, T11) where teachers feel that the leader is involved in everything they do. Team leaders are seen to follow these styles variably in doing their jobs. T9 thinks that the teacher’s length of experience at CAS is one factor that decides on which style of leader-member communication could be effective.

*... I noticed that if you’ve been here for a while, they give you the book and they say ‘please by the end these are your goals, this is what you need to do first in this class’ and they leave you alone. They micromanage—not micromanage, I think a bit more management with the new teachers but that is needed because our syllabuses could be rather complicated. [T9, member, South African, outsourced]*

With some of the team meetings I observed, there seemed to exist some instances of micromanaging as teachers mentioned. With one team, the

coordinator was in the front while teachers were in rows facing her. She did most of the speaking during the meeting. The contributions of teachers were minimal, largely in terms of progress reports. She and her team members appeared to prefer one-to-one interaction. During her meetings, the team leader emphasised the need for documentation, keeping her in the picture and notifying her even about small details such as the questions asked to students for the speaking assessment, and the need to follow instructions and meet deadlines. She frequently used phrases such as 'have to' and 'must' (see more details in section 1.1, Appendix Q and section 1, Appendix R). It is worth mentioning that this is the smallest team and the team leader said in the interview that the teachers within the team are all experienced teachers at the English Department.

It appears that the role of the team leader as one who is in charge of maintaining the ELT prototype enactment at the English Department inspires such leadership practices. A similar but slightly less managerialist style is also followed by another team leader. Based on my observation of the meetings held by this team leader, it seems that he exercise a lower level of control. He sat with his team around a table (not in the meeting's president's chair). There was more discussion in this team's meeting and more contributions from teachers through opinions, reports, or questions. There was evidence of disagreements, which he moderated towards a collective decision. However, he placed a lot of emphasis on detailed procedures, documentation and deadlines (see section 2, Appendix R and section 1.2, Appendix Q).

Among the teachers, there is a view that team leaders could be authoritarian and use authoritative language, which teachers dislike. T16 thinks that '*some coordinators slip into the temptation of being bossy*'. Some teachers attribute this to the fact that most team leaders are not native speakers of English.

*... there is an understanding of English on their part but not understanding sometimes of how we would phrase it. So, if you say 'you must do something' instead of 'we need this because of this', I think people were angry about some of the emails that were coming because they seem like threats and teachers will not respond to threats... [T7, member, American, outsourced]*

*You can dictate to somebody and you can request somebody. I think request works better ... There is a lot of difference between 'I want you to do this' and 'do you think you can do this?'... There are quite a few things*

*that we may say which probably is not acceptable in the native speaker's [language].* [T15, member, Indian, MoHE-fixed]

When this research was conducted, all but one team leaders were non-NESTs. The evaluations of the linguistic choices of the team leaders here could be a result of inter-group feelings where being a NEST could be more prototypical within the English Department considering the nature of the discipline. In light of the ethnolinguistic identity theory established within the framework of the SIA, Giles and Johnson (1987:72) maintain that the perceived vitality of English in a context (such as the Omani higher education) could lead a group (the NESTs in this context) 'to accentuate group speech markers in order to establish favourable psycholinguistic distinctiveness'. On the part of the team leaders, their role to ensure the compliance with the prototype could be driving such authoritative attitudes. Clegg (2008) suggests that language choices could mark class-related identities within an academic staff group. This could explain the use of the English sociolinguistic competence as a point of comparison by some participants.

#### 4.6.2.2 Negotiating the prototype

The SIA presents the leaders as managers of the group prototype (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). Nevertheless, (as introduced earlier in this chapter) the ELT prototype is so large-scale that is espoused to guide behaviour across the six CAS colleges despite cultural or contextual differences. It would appear that leadership as constructed by the CAS system is a challenging role in the diverse context of the English Department where in reality there are various prototypes. The stressful nature of the role of leaders of the English Department, having to deal with conflicts between teachers and fear of accountability are seen as relevant factors that make the position of team leader appear unattractive to teachers.

*...[teachers] see all the challenges, all the problems, all the disagreements and all the quarrels that might exist between teachers... they prefer to be within their domains which is just to be a teacher but not a coordinator. Sometimes it is the fear of being questioned, fear of dealing with others, fear of being in a position where you'll have opponents and proponents ...* [T4, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]

*[team leaders] are being pressured from both sides: teachers' problems, Dean, and people above you problems and you are stuck in the middle. No, I will never take that job... I am sure sometimes they feel bad because they*



*think that all of us are doing this or doing that because of decision making; it is probably not their decision at all. [T11, member, American, outsourced]*

Team leaders need to negotiate the group prototype with the teachers as the central vision of uniformity is seen as challenging in the diverse context of the English Department. T2 states that expecting teachers to adhere to one prototype is a source of tension between her and teachers within her team.

*When you become firm and you tell teachers 'you shouldn't do this in this way and you should be doing this in that way', they get angry and they even tell you —especially let's talk about expats—'this is why so many people are leaving your college ' ...[T2, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

Such a view is also expressed by T1 who thinks that enforcing similar rules is problematic in the English Department context.

*... if you are in a purely Omani setting or purely an Indian setting maybe the personality might not count much because you are dealing with basically one category of people and you might be able to enforce the rules a bit more. But I think here, not so much... [T1, leader, Indian, MoHE-fixed]*

T2 agrees with T1 that flexibility is an important characteristic of effective leadership at the English Department context.

*...you need to understand that not all people will be working the same way; so, this understanding will help you not to expect the same thing from all the teachers. I think sometimes it needs also a lot of patience. [T2, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

People and communication skills are seen as essential for leader effectiveness because of the need to 'justify' and 'negotiate'.

*...you have to have good communication skills [laugh] maybe this thing goes to my colleague, my co-coordinator, she is good at giving reasons, she is good at negotiating with people; so, this is something that you have to have as a coordinator as well. [T2, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

*...you have to have good communication skills... So you know how to deal with whom and you know what to say, when to say it and how to say it because people are different. [T4, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

I obtained a copy of the team leader's job description (Appendix A). In addition to the roles mentioned earlier, the job description indicates that part of the role of team leader is 'encouraging as strong a sense of team membership and

collegiality as possible'. However, the extent to which this is possible given the characteristics of the system and the group explained in section 4.4 appears to be questionable. For T4, the characteristics of the ELT system and staff composition in the English Department make it an 'impossible' task for the team leader to establish a team based on homogeneity. The challenge here is linked to the diversity of teachers along national, contractual, and professional lines.

*...if I would bring a very effective coordinator, a very professional coordinator and you'll be encountering people coming from different backgrounds, no stability, some people having no teaching background, believe me [...] its very difficult to get them to have the identity of team to work together; that's impossible. [T4, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

Besides, T2 and T3 associate the challenging nature of their roles with the centralised system that restricts the ability of team leaders to respond to the calls of teachers for change.

*... sometimes you will not be able to accommodate all the things that the teachers say. Sometimes when you feel that more than one teacher is telling you 'OK, we need to do this'. So, you feel there should be a change happening in that area... you can't basically change a lot of things because of the system. [T2, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

*...sometimes that the decision is not yours to be honest, it is the administration level; it is already lined up there from the Ministry or from the administration here. Sometimes, actually you have to mingle these all; you have to take into consideration the Ministry, the administration, the Department, teachers and students. [T3, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

Notwithstanding the high centralisation, T2 mentions that she and her co-coordinator have changed aspects of the courses based on the feedback from teachers and their diverse experiences.

*... we have improved the (course) project based on teachers' feedback...teachers say 'we think this is not the best way to do it, how about if we change it in this way?'... Like maybe you don't see a lot of things but because you are seeing different people coming from different places, I think it is a good thing for the system. [T2, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

Thus, in the culturally diverse context of the English Department, it would appear that the leadership team and teachers share the view that the English Department should be able to introduce changes to the ELT prototype based on the feedback

and observations of teachers. However, such practice is restricted by how the macro-level perceives things should work.

*...there are certain things I would like to change in the curriculum ...So, even though it is out of our hands, the [HoD and team leader] will still say 'let us work on it, let's see what we can come up with' ... I don't think the programmes lend themselves to making other big changes... So, I think the systemic things will limit the amount of change. [T13, member, South African, outsourced]*

Thus, there is a perception that there is a need for empowering team leaders to introduce change at the local level maintaining the overall central framework of the ELT.

*... I think if you give coordinators the ability to make those kinds of changes, [occupying these positions] could be tempting for us. [T7, member, American, outsourced]*

*... we should not really be within that routine, or accepting whatever is stated to us... the change [we should introduce] would not really affect the content of what is being agreed upon by the Ministry or by the six Colleges but at least to modify things in a way that it will be for the good of the teachers and for the good of the students. [T4, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

One team leader is frequently commended by teachers for challenging the status quo and working on the feedback of teachers to introduce changes. This appears to make teachers feel more satisfied.

*...one thing I really like about the [one team] is that they are taking chances ... they have identified that there are some problems... they are piloting things which are very important and hopefully the PD is democratic enough that if they suggest that 'OK this is what we have found' that they will incorporate it. [T15, member, Indian, MoHE-fixed]*

The nature of the ELT system that emphasises adhering to one prototype and the case at the English Department where team leaders and teachers see a need for discussing things and changing certain aspects appear to result in a state of ambivalence in relation to the role of team leaders. It would appear that the Omani team leaders feel more confident to challenge the system and introduce changes possibly because of their higher employment security that makes them more able to take risks.

*...sometimes I've tried to come up with new decisions even if it was like a little bit a change in the regulation as far as it really achieved the ultimate*

*goal; to show that 'OK I am trying to be flexible here, I've changed this for your good or under your own request'. [T3, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

*[The HoD] just told me that [an Omani team leader] is making some changes and then why don't you also fall in line? Then I said 'these are major changes affecting marks and these could be questioned... the idea was to help students to be more focused and all that; I don't question the sincerity of the people. My only worry is that so our college is doing like this, maybe another college is doing something else... [T1, leader, Indian, MoHE- fixed]*

Being permanent staff seems to render Omanis more prototypical than the non-Omani leader who seems to be reluctant to accept or introduce change. van Knippenberg and Hogg (2003) argue in support of the SIMOL model that non-prototypical leader could be less effective as a change agent because they are not perceived as agents of continuity and thus not trusted adequately to preserve the group identity. Notwithstanding, and due to the inconsistent definitions of the prototype, T2, T3 and T4 (team leaders) think that for team leaders to function effectively, they need the support of superiors through understanding their critical position and enabling them to negotiate the prototype at the level of the English Department teams.

*...for this job I think you need to have a supportive HoD who will support you all the time... you need the help of the administration and the Ministry and the College as well so they will support you for any change or even they give you the chance to change. [T2, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

*...having support from people who are seniors or who are in a higher position than you by supporting you with whatever you think, whatever you need. [T4, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

*...coordinators should be listened to; the administration or the programme director really have to listen to coordinators and have to apply some important changes. [T3, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

#### 4.6.2.3 Making professionalism salient

Besides negotiating the prototype, there is a view that personal differences should not be brought to surface in the workplace and 'professionalism' should be reinforced. Professionalism is defined in terms of being qualified in ELT and having cultural knowledge about the context, which are seen as prerequisites for team establishment.

*An ideal team to work with is that team who is first of all very professional which means we have to look to the selection of people recruited... "Professional" means that they have real teaching background, one. Second, they know exactly the background that they are working in, I mean like the culture, the context, what is supposed to be done... what is acceptable, what is not really acceptable.. [T4, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

Professionalism is also associated with certain personal qualities that teachers should generally have. T4 thinks that being cooperative, friendly, helpful and with clear professional objectives are key characteristics of a professional teacher. This suggests that personal identity (based on personal characteristics) and collective identity (based on profession) could in reality be interrelated.

*...sometimes you will have a very peaceful semester because you have a good team; good group of people who are very professional and they know exactly what they have to do, very cooperative, very friendly, very helpful. They have a clear mission that they want to achieve by the end of the semester. [T4, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

Professionalism is seen as an overarching identity that reduces the negative effects of diversity. It is perceived as a commonality whose observance could bring teachers together, moderate personal conflicts, play down differences and create commonality of purpose.

*I think it is part of being professional is working with people who you don't like, who you don't get along with... To allow a teacher to not have to work with someone simply because they don't like them... It is just gonna create more problems and we are not gonna get where we can't work together because so many people want to be immature... [T11, member, American, outsourced]*

*I always say 'you can't be friends with anybody; you can be polite and courteous with everybody'. I don't consider everybody as friends but they are my colleagues and as such I treat them with respect and courtesy. [T9, member, South African, outsourced]*

*...in the Department basically all of us are teachers; maybe there are one or two PhD holders but everybody is maybe an MA holder or a Bachelor degree holder... I deal with them like 'OK we are working in the same department and that is it'. We respect each other; this is very important but you shouldn't look down on people... [T2, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

*...of course you feel some tension sometimes but if you are professional, you know how to deal with these situations. You are here to do your jobs*

*and we have to put feelings aside; so, that is it.* [T5, leader, Canadian, outsourced]

There is a general perception among the participants that staff members were more professional during the semester when this research was conducted. As teachers' qualifications in ELT is seen as a main indicator of professionalism, participants commented that there has been a change in quality standards at the English Department with the new HoD in comparison to the previous one. T1 and T3 agree that in the past, performance was not emphasised adequately.

*[The previous HoD] did not really contribute to the selection of teachers or even in his reports, he was like 'all teachers are good let's give them a chance' no matter what they do no matter what they have.* [T3, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]

The focus on professionalism and performance increased with the arrival of the new HoD as indicated by T3, T4, T1, and T13. There is a perception that she considers the performance of teachers as a priority and as an indicator for continued employment at the English Department.

*Lately we had this Head of the Department ... when she writes the report, [she] really shows that this teacher is not doing this and that and he/she has this and that.* [T3, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]

The HoD introduced classroom observations, which as indicated earlier was not well received by some teachers. She also adapted new performance assessment criteria for evaluating the performance of teachers. The assessment form evaluates the performance of teachers during probation based on five main criteria: scholarship, methods of presentation, communication and interaction, learning, and approachability and each of these criteria has various descriptors (see section 5, Appendix R).

As knowledge of CAS culture is seen as part of a teacher's perceived professionalism in the English Department, the time spent within the English Department is seen an important factor that helps creating cohesion through establishing this cultural understanding that enhance the salience of professional identity.

*...in order to work together in the same team, with other people of course, you need to have a minimum level of understanding, a shared language.... But in light of the specific character of the system here, it might cause problems and then the whole energy and time is geared towards solving*

*problems, the personal problems between people rather than doing the work [T16, member, Tunisian, MoHE-fixed]*

With the recurrent changes of the recruiting agencies and inconsistent recruitment standards, the English Department might have limited control over this aspect. T16 who had spent thirteen years and a half at the English Department when interviewed reflects on the role of the length of experience at the English Department in making teachers fit within a common English Department culture.

*I learned ways to reach compromises and to persuade my partner about my point of view and also I learned how to accept my partner's point of view as well. I am very happy to have reached that level...and I think I can take it with me elsewhere ... I think at the beginning it was really catastrophic and the reason why I think it was catastrophic is because I came from a totally different academic culture. [T16, member, Tunisian, MoHE-fixed]*

Interestingly, however, there is a minority view that teachers with longer experience at the English Department could be a reason for tension especially in relation to the role of the team leader and that getting new teachers could be a good dynamic for improving relations.

*I think people who have been here quite a long time held grudges against each other whereas there are a lot of new people now who don't necessarily know about Oman... Most of the new teachers are getting on well with each other, I think. [T10, member, British, outsourced]*

*...the more new teachers that come, it is better for the coordinators in a way because some of the teachers who have been here for too long they believe they know really everything...[T13, member, South African, outsourced]*

Such a view appears to be expressed in reflection on the previous years at the English Department with which most of the diversity negative effects are linked.

Besides, knowledge of CAS culture is enhanced by the HoD through the Employee Handbook that seems to bring together the aspects that concern all teachers with their different modes of employment. From her perspective, the HoD mentioned that the Employee Handbook is a compilation of the regulations of CAS and those of the recruiting agencies and it was distributed to all the teachers.

*I tried to familiarise myself with the rules of the Department, HR rules and everything related to the types of the contracts we have here. I familiarised*

*myself with the guidelines and the rules of the Department and also the rules of the Colleges of Applied Sciences. I read the academic regulations many times so that I know if I face something and there is a legal action that should be taken I know where to go...and then after I produced that document, the first meeting—I had a first meeting with my team. I distributed that document and I asked them to read it and if they have any questions they can come back to me. [T6, HoD, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

The Handbook emphasises the vision of the English Department to be ‘one of the best institutes in the Sultanate of Oman in the development of standards of excellence in innovation in the implementation of teaching, professional development and understanding between cultures’. Thus, the Handbook considers cultural diversity a norm at the English Department.

#### 4.6.2.4 Managing relations

Participants report that in comparison to the previous semesters, the situation during the semester when this research was conducted seemed to be better in terms of relationships between teachers. In relation to this aspect, participants mention the HoD’s leadership style as a mediating factor for how relations are managed at the English Department. Participants compared the two HoDs (past and current) emphasising two approaches towards conflict management. The previous HoD is seen to have a passive attitude towards problems/conflicts within the English Department.

*... his tendency or his style of functioning [was] to keep everything under the carpet and not to solve the problems. He appeared to be a very people man; very approachable but although we were good friends, I personally realised he was not the man for that position. [T1, leader, Indian, MoHE-fixed]*

In comparison, the Employee Handbook that has been introduced by the new HoD emphasises cultural awareness, respecting colleagues, and avoidance of reasons of conflicts (see section 6, Appendix R). According to the HoD, the handbook clarifies the procedure for dealing with conflict, which she thinks has contributed to reducing relation conflicts between teachers.

*... in that handbook I have written the steps... if they have complaints or grievance; what to do... I haven’t had any serious complains against another teacher this semester... I think it is because they knew that there is a procedure to follow and everything is kept recorded and these records can be used to judge whether this person is continuing in our Department or not. [T6, HoD, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*



The handbook also states a detailed procedure for Reporting Concerns about Employee Conduct (see section 6, Appendix R). T2 and T4 agree that they experience improvement in the relations between teachers now.

*... last semester we had problems but these problems weren't dealt with in a professional way... The Head of the Department has changed; so... she will face the two teachers 'OK if you have any problems you deal with them in a professional way'. [T2, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

#### 4.6.2.5 Managing group size

Despite the increase in teaching load due to the cut in the numbers of teachers, reducing the English Department size is seen as a factor that has contributed to improving relations at the English Department.

*...I think that was probably a good dynamic here because the end of last term there seemed to be infighting in meetings and things like that that should never happen. Unprofessional behaviour we saw and I was not expecting that. [T7, member, American, outsourced]*

*...working with colleagues in our Department is nice especially now this semester it was good. Now the Department got smaller, now you get to know people and it is nice. [T9, member, South African, outsourced]*

It would appear that smaller groups are more successful in maintaining a cohesive prototype that informs cohesive behaviour. Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt and Jonsen (2010) confirm that the bigger the team size, the more likely are the negative effects of diversity to manifest in relation to communication and satisfaction. This might have implications at the level of the centrally mandated prototype that is expected to inform consistent behaviours at six different CAS colleges. The bigger CAS network as indicated earlier could hinder prototype-based consistency.

#### 4.6.2.6 Enhancing interaction and communication

Creating informal opportunities for interaction between the staff members in the English Department was seen as a way for improving relations. Such a view was emphasised by T14, T5 and T7.

*...maybe some socialising activities even outside of work... it could be a barbeque, just a kind of event outside of work. [T5, leader, Canadian, outsourced]*

*... maybe some informal stuff like lunching and stuff like that where other teachers can get together to just talk about what their classes are like and what could they learn from other teachers... Having these totally separate courses, totally separate teachers;...I don't think it works effectively to make a group. [T7, member, American, outsourced]*

While I was in the field, one teacher organised a trip to which he invited the CAS-1 staff. T10 and T12 (outsourced staff members) point at that as an example for practices that could build better relations in the English Department and with the CAS-1 community.

*...we all went in this desert trip arranged by [one teacher at the ED] and it was a lovely trip to meet with someone from a different level and when you come to work now you see different people you have not met before ... I think lots of conflicts come from being outed I think because they don't feel that belonging maybe. So, I think one thing was good with what (the teacher) did with the social group and that created a lot of cohesion I think. [T12, member, South African, outsourced]*

#### 4.6.2.7 Fairness in duty distribution

As indicated earlier, the HoD perceives herself to be fair in dealing with the teachers at the English Department despite their differences.

*... I haven't treated my Ministry contract teachers and my company contract teachers differently... So, everyone is welcome to participate in any of our activities or anything related to the Department. [T6, HoD, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

'Leader's distributive and procedural fairness affect responses to leadership, and therefore leadership effectiveness' (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003:280). Equal involvement in different activities could emphasise sameness within the English Department. T13 and T9 agree with the HoD that '*duties are really equal*' (T13) and that '*the same rule applies to you, doesn't matter who you are*'. (T9). T9 who is an outsourced staff member feels that such fairness means increased employment security for him.

*... the agency contract depends on the feedback from the HoD. The Dean will make no decision on it, the Ministry will make no decision on it without input from the HoD and that is why you need a fair person that treats people fairly... [T9, member, South African, outsourced]*

Teaching load distribution, according to the CAS Bylaw, should be agreed at the level of the English Department council as decisions should be based on the

majority's opinions (see section 3.3, Appendix R). The HoD indicates that she distributes teaching loads in consultation with the team leaders, which is also confirmed by T1.

*I am involved in preparation of the course load and who is in which team etcetera. [T1, leader, Indian, MoHE- fixed]*

Fairness in teaching load distribution, however, seems to be relatively controversial among the interview participants. T15 points out that in the past teachers were more involved in course selection.

*I remember [a previous coordinator] will go around with a sheet of paper asking people about what they would like to teach next semester, not that everybody got what they wanted to teach but then there is a sense of democracy also... there is not like "my word goes". [T15, member, Indian, MoHE-fixed]*

The HoD, however, points out that she could not always take teacher preferences into consideration as overall fairness rather than personal satisfaction is seen as a priority.

*... many teachers would come and ask me to do certain course. Sometimes it is impossible to accommodate all people ... sometimes I don't listen to all of what people prefer as I try to accommodate preferences according to the needs of the Department. [T6, HoD, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

However, a non-Omani leader highlights that at certain point there was a perception that Omani team leaders gave themselves preferential considerations when they distributed teaching loads.

*... that particular semester, other than (one Omani teacher) and (another Omani teacher), the others, the [Omani] coordinators they all got much lower or they all did things in such a way that the Omani teachers ended up teaching six hours, five hours... this feeling started in the Department 'now they are going to enjoy life and they have power and we have to do the work'. [T1, leader, Indian, MoHE- fixed]*

The view of the HoD is different, however, as she points out that teaching load ratios are usually decided centrally but she sometimes considers special cases such as maternity and child care for Omani and non-Omani females whether they were coordinators or not.

*... from a humanistic approach I have allowed it that these two coordinators share the same course...I have been doing this with many other teaches.... for example one of the teachers, she is on a Ministry*

*contract and she is not an Omani and she had delivered her baby...so...I allowed her to take leave... till the summer. [T6, HoD, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

The HoD stresses that such special considerations are actually discussed with the team leaders to figure out if they could be accommodated.

*...even if the work is affected I am just trying to see whether we can just accommodate, even if we take more loads, if it is not too much on us... I am discussing these things with the coordinators especially. So, we discuss all possibilities that we can have and then make decisions. [T6, HoD, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

It appears that the salience of categorisation along national lines that is augmented by the tendency to appoint Omanis in leadership roles creates inconsistent evaluations of fairness in reality. There seems to exist a lack of trust between the Omanis in the leadership team and the other teachers. T3 comments that some teachers tend to repeatedly question the process of duty distribution at the English Department which creates a tendency among some team leaders to document everything in order to have evidence.

*...Sometimes I have to even show them the papers and the kind of scratches from our meetings as coordinators and how we distribute duties and 'we are taking in consideration this and that and maybe you are missing this... and, to be honest, some of their claims will be—there is no point, its just like they don't see the full picture. . [T3, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

This implies that more transparency is required in such a context. The HoD also mentioned equal delegation of non-teaching duties to teachers as an illustration of fairness.

*... I try to be fair with the delegations. For example, the coming creativity competition, I try to give it to people who haven't participated in the past or who have the literary skills to assess students' writings. So, they knew that we are working like a team—one team. [T6, HoD, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

While most teachers indicate that their main roles at the English Department have been concerned with teaching, T7, T8, T9, T10, T13 and T14 point out that they have been involved in different non-teaching tasks in the English Department such as proofreading (with native speakers), preparing additional materials, writing and reviewing exams, audio recording for listening test, creativity competition, representing the English Department in curriculum development

committees (cross college), and managing the shared drive<sup>20</sup>. T10 and T14 feel that such additional delegations demonstrate trust in teachers.

*...[one teacher] has written an exam this semester and [another teacher] does a lot of work with the exams, [a third teacher] has done something for the poetry competition or creativity competition. So yeah... delegation is definitely the way to go because it makes other teachers feel more trusted, more valued, and if we've contributed or created materials ourselves, we can't complain [laugh] .... [T10, member, British, outsourced]*

*...they might add some responsibilities or work but this is evidence that there is trust... if you are tapped to do something, it means that they trust you... [T14, member, Filipino, MoHE-fixed]*

Team leaders (T3 and T4), however, feel that the inconsistency in professionalism among teachers could fluctuate from one semester to another which sometimes compromises trust. It increases the work of team leaders and reduces the possibility for distributing duties among teachers.

*They are not teachers at all so how would you really depend on them and rely on them... You are not gonna to be coordinator anymore; you will be a policeman/woman, you will be like running after them every now and then, you will be teaching their classes at some points, you will be copying some papers for their classes or their students to catch up with things they missed with that teacher, you will be like a judge having meetings with students on one side and teachers on the other side to judge who is really mistaken and what is really going on with that class. [T3, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

*...you'll find yourself not anymore a coordinator but you are trainer ...training these people ... to have the concept of teaching.... you end up to the conclusion that you are doing many things that even if there is a job description given to you, you think that you are doing over what is written there in that job description... [T4, leader, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

*... one of the things that I have also realised is that here coordinators seem to now have increasing over the years in taking on more responsibility thinking that 'we will do everything'. You cannot do everything; that is not good coordination. Good coordination would be something like delegating work... Because then what happens is that when you have too much on your plate, then you leave things out. [T15, member, Indian, MoHE-fixed]*

---

<sup>20</sup> A network platform where documents and materials for sharing were saved.

The HoD cites two instances where there is some concentration of duties especially with Omanis some of whom seem to be operating under more than one capacity.

*Normally I take eight hours unless I do another job; for example, this year I am doing four hours of teaching and also I am the e-learning coordinator which is official in the Ministry of Higher Education. [T6, HoD, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

*...the Assistant HoD is the [team B] coordinator and she has lots of experiences in the Department; she knows a lot and I relied on her in many cases... [T6, HoD, Omani, MoHE-permanent]*

There is a view that lack of teachers and high teaching loads hinder wider distribution of duties at the English Department.

*...in my team I suggested that (a teacher in the team) could be [assistant coordinator... but then she [the HoD] told me 'now since we have a shortage of staff, there won't be any more assistant coordinators'. [T1, leader, Indian, MoHE- fixed]*

#### 4.6.3 Overview

Two constructions of the prototype appear to influence behaviour and perceptions within the English Department. The centrally imposed prototype in terms of the ELT curriculum appears to encourage managerialist practices (e.g. documentation, standardisation and meeting deadline) that aim at ensuring the central prototype is guiding behaviour within the group. On the other hand, the characteristics of the English Department's culturally diverse group (inconsistent norms, relation conflicts, instability, lack of collaboration, and low communication) seem to make leaders in the English Department sense the need for negotiating the prototype with teachers and introducing amendments despite the central vision.

As the ELT prototype is in principle set centrally and its enactment is influenced by the nested nature of the hierarchy managing CAS, Omanis are viewed as the most prototypical individuals who could emerge as leaders because they share the language (Arabic) with the wider CAS context and they understand the context better because of their being Omani, speaking Arabic, and being on permanent contracts. This view is also influenced by the Omanisation process. At the level of the ED, however, Omanis do not seem to enjoy much trust from other

teachers, they do not gain compliance in relation to administering the ELT prototype, and they are sometimes seen to enjoy preferential treatment. Given the salience of individual identities as the findings suggest, leader effectiveness in the English Department appears to be a function of certain capabilities or schema that participants view as more relevant to the English Department context. These schema are: flexibility that leads to accommodating different views and expecting different outcomes, introducing change, providing personalised support to teachers, customising interaction to meet the individual needs of teachers, ability to deal with conflict, ability to reach an equilibrium between the requirements of the senior and junior levels of the hierarchy, communication or people skills, and demonstrating fairness.

The findings suggest that there is an attempt towards establishing a collective identity in the English Department through the introduction of the Handbook that sets the standards for behaviour based on the cultural diversity, distribution of duties among teachers, the introduction of some changes at the level of the English Department that are agreed with teachers and emphasising professionalism as a common identity. However, establishing this higher order identity seems to be limited by the limited authority the HoD as the main leader in the English Department has. The effectiveness of the leadership team towards managing a collective identity appears to be strongly linked to the support leader get from the seniors at the upper levels of the structure because of the nature of the system.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion of findings**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the findings of this research. It draws on the main themes derived from the data and situates them in relation to the study's conceptual and theoretical frameworks and the relevant research.

### **5.2 Centralisation and prototype management**

The findings show that the prototype believed to guide behaviour in the English Department is centrally decided. Centralisation concerns the extent to which decisions are made by fewer people within an organisation (Anderson & Brown, 2010). Decision-making at the six English Departments is controlled by the Programme Director (PD). Hierarchy-based leadership that is based on central decision-making is generally a characteristic of leadership ideology in Oman (Al-Hamadi et al., 2007). The prototype is believed to be followed by the six English Departments that conform to each other in terms of the programme content, objectives, deadlines, and assessment. Centralised higher education governance could be effective for maintaining identity (Lo, 2010), which is one objective for education in Oman (Al'Abri, 2011). Such identity maintenance seems to be enacted by maintaining top-down influence which is perceived negatively among the participants in this study as it does not value the variability of perspectives and needs at the micro level.

#### **5.2.1 Prototype management and group size**

It appears that the network of the six colleges is considered as one big group in this context rather than as six distinct groups considering the particularities of each English Department. Group size mediates the negative effects of diversity such that with a larger group size, dilemmas at the level of the organisation, management, and individuals are more likely to manifest (Schneider & Northcraft, 1999). On the other hand, a larger group size requires more autocratic leadership (Szu-Fang, 2013), which appears to be the case in the English Departments based on this study. The central prototype governing the ELT does not take into account the context of each English Department that is influenced, among other things,



by the nature of the people involved within the group. Hogg and Reid (2006:10) argue that group prototype should be context-sensitive as it is affected by the situation, the goals and the people involved. This suggests that given the English Department's diverse context, the prototype should provide for the diversity of perspectives as the advantage of diversity in relation to group performance lies in the 'added value in the form of nonredundant experience, knowledge, perspectives, and social network ties' (Kearney & Gebert, 2009:81). The findings show that the overarching ELT prototype assimilates people composition across the six English Departments such that the distinctiveness of the individual perspectives and identities dissolves. In his optimal distinctiveness theory, Brewer (1991) explains that a smaller group size could better fulfil the need for social inclusion and social differentiation that individuals aspire to by joining a group.

The inconsistency in perspectives about the prototype between the macro level (represented by the PD) and the micro level (represented by the English Department teachers) could be a result of the different levels of identification in relation to the organisation. Horton, McClelland and Griffin (2014) contend that there is a relation between the position of an employee in the hierarchy and their level of identification. The more abstract the organisational level based on which the group is defined, the less employees identify with it because of the weak optimal distinctiveness they achieve (Horton et al., 2014). Hence, those at the top levels of a hierarchy develop organisational identification based on the larger group; the organisation represented by CAS in this context, while employees at the micro level identify more with their workgroups that could secure them a level of distinctiveness. This suggests that when the leader is positioned at a hierarchy level that is distanced from the group level (as is the case with the ELT academic leadership), they set the group prototype at the wider context which creates a gap between the wider context and the micro-level group. In such a hierarchical structure, Hogg (2001) argues that the leader is seen as an outgroup member who is not representative of the group prototype.

The findings of the current study also suggest that the centrally managed prototype is not optimally functioning as a referential point because of the lack of communication between the six colleges and with the PD and the slow or absent decision-making. Hogg (2005a) stresses that in hierarchal structures, vertical communication between the leader and the group becomes infrequent and autocratic behaviour can appear. In such a case, the leader does not represent a

source of knowledge about the group prototype. Such leaders affect social identity formation within a group such that they create an 'aggregate of individuals' (Haslam, 2004:45) rather than a group (based on a shared identity). This is demonstrated in the emerging drift towards local contexts where gradual changes in the prototype are introduced by local leaders in coordination with their teams rather than with the PD or other CAS English Departments.

Dissatisfaction with the bureaucratic practices associated with the hierarchy based decision-making echoes findings by Neal (2010) who observes that Omani and non-Omani academic faculty members at a state HEI equally consider the organisational bureaucratic practices as a shared enemy; albeit at an administrative level in his study. Anderson and Brown (2010) summarise similar disadvantages of hierarchy in their review. They maintain that hierarchy could impair work when tasks are perceived to require wider perspectives, when the leader is an autocratic and ineffective decision-maker, when intragroup coordination is hindered by the hierarchy, and when the hierarchy negatively affects the motivation of members.

### **5.2.2 Prototype and teacher autonomy**

While the SIA suggests that conformity to a unified prototype leads to establishing social identity through the prototype-based influence (Hornsey, 2008), this seems unrealistic in this context because the prototype is not decided based on a consensus within the English Department group and the group is culturally diverse with varied perspectives and norms. Finley (2010:432) points out that 'the imposition of an unrepresentative identity has particularly important implications for individuals rejecting and resisting the unwanted identity, and the values, norms, and ideas that that identity represents'. Despite the centrality of the value of autonomy within academia (Power, 2013), the ELT prototype is perceived as rigid and restrictive of teacher autonomy. Thus, the findings suggest that it causes dissatisfaction and turnover among non-Omani teachers. In her study regarding the motivating factors among teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in a university in Oman, Khan (2011) reports that teacher autonomy and ability to effect change are key motivators for ELT teachers.

Similarly, Anderson and Brown (2010) indicate in their systematic review that hierarchical structure tallness <sup>21</sup>relates to lower job satisfaction among employees. The participants at the micro level perceive limitations in the curriculum concerning aspects such as the mismatch between the course objectives and the course content; yet, they are unable to affect changes. This dissatisfaction also concerns aspects such as their limited contribution to decision-making, and a need to adhere to certain teaching styles (;formal classroom teaching). Such dissatisfaction that is largely experienced by the non-Omani teachers is also found to be the case by Khan (2011) who reports that expatriate EFL<sup>22</sup> teachers in an Omani university feel restricted in their teaching practices for cultural reasons. Brandt and Dixon (2010) also highlight that central decision-making and lack of staff involvement in decision-making cause dissatisfaction among the staff working at GCC universities and create intentions for turnover.

### 5.2.3 **Prototype and influence of middle leaders**

At the level of subject leaders, the centrality of decision-making appears to restrict their influence over the group towards enhancing performance and managing instruction. Lumby, Bhopal, Dyke and Maringe (2007) report comparable results in their study of the English further education context. They find that downward control of communication and strategic decision-making by senior leadership restricts the influence of lower level leaders. The need to influence teachers to conform to the ELT prototype that is non-responsive to change initiatives restricts the agency of the subject leaders at the English Department to introduce new practices or respond to feedback from teachers to change current practices. This goes against the view of Rudhumbu (2015) that middle managers—being in a position that enables them to understand both the organisational perspective and those of the teachers at the micro level—are in a strategic position that enables them to be active participants in curriculum planning and change management. Kaparou and Bush (2016) highlight comparable results in the Greek school system where centralised decision-making is viewed as restrictive and stressful by subject advisors. In fact, as the current

---

<sup>21</sup> Tallness of organizational structure refers to the number of layers constituting organizational hierarchy (Anderson & Brown, 2010)

<sup>22</sup> English as a Foreign Language.

study is conducted in a higher education context where academic autonomy is considered a core value (Lumby, 2012), centralisation seems more unattractive as it could be a reason for leaving CAS altogether.

While the inconsistent perspectives resulting from cultural diversity seem to cause conflicts in the English Department (as will be discussed in section 5.4.2), it is in such inconsistency that the advantages of diversity lie because of its association with functional benefits (Schneider & Northcraft, 1999). Ayub and Jehn (2006) stress that national diversity is beneficial at the task level because of the underlying informational diversity that can lead to improved task accomplishment. The findings of the current study indicate that centralised decision-making makes benefiting from the diverse perspectives and experiences of the group members difficult. Anderson and Brown (2010) report similar results from their review. They find that hierarchy limits the use of the spectrum of views within the group and that flatter structures are better for such an effect. In principle, the use of teams as a style of managing aims at flattening structures, improving decision-making process (Schneider & Northcraft, 1999; Ramthun & Matkin, 2012) and achieving collegiality and participation which are central values to faculty work (Dowling-Hetherington, 2013). However, while the English Department functions in subject-based teams, the parallel existence of the hierarchical structure and the centrality of decision-making at the ELT seem to encumber such advantages. In fact, the leadership of the ELT system represents a smaller cloned picture of leadership in Oman where consultative councils could only review practices but decision-making is the task of the 'elite' (Peterson, 2011).

### **5.3 Categorisation and the group characteristics**

The findings suggest that there are a number of salient differences among the group members at the English Department that influence behaviour within the English Department and influence the enactment of the central prototype. The salience of these differences seems to reduce perception of homogeneity within the group. This appears to create identity intersectionalities that are based on organisational categorisation that correlates with the cultural and linguistic identities of the staff members. Lumby and Morrison (2010) stress that considering the intersectionalities shaped by the individual categories and those imposed by the organisational contexts is necessary for understanding the

advantages and disadvantages of diversity in a workplace. These advantages and disadvantages manifest in relation to various group dynamics.

### 5.3.1 Recruitment and access to the group

As the faculty members at the English Department are recruited following two different routes, the findings suggest that the two employers observe inconsistent standards for recruitment. As perceived by the participants, language seems to be the level of categorisation in relation to this aspect where NESTs and non-NESTs appear to be two competing groups. The NESTs, who are outsourced and comprise 45% of the staff body, appear to be favoured even when they are unqualified in ELT whereas higher standards in terms of qualification, specialisation and experience are applied to the MoHE employees (Omanis or non-Omanis on fixed contracts). This results in professional heterogeneity among the staff members in terms of qualification, specialisation, and experience especially in tertiary education. This contradicts the conclusion of Al-Harthi and Al-Harthi (2012) who report that qualification rather than cultural category is the criteria for employment in the Omani workplace. Such inconsistency in findings could be because the study of Al-Harthi and Al-Harthi (2012) reports the perceptions of employers in non-academic workplaces. As for the ELT discipline, the centrality of linguistic identity seems to make being a NEST an indicator of instructional quality (Baporikar & Ali Shah, 2012; Yarahmadi & Magd, 2016). Similar results are also reported by Alenazi (2014) who concludes that while academic qualification is considered a main criteria for recruiting ELT teachers, being a native speaker of English is given priority by recruiters in the Saudi context. Clark and Paran (2007) also report that being a NEST is seen on the whole as moderately or very important criteria for employment by recruiters in the UK besides other criteria; namely, teaching qualifications, performance in interview, teaching experience and educational background.

The English Department participants in this research argue that academic qualification rather than being a NEST should be the criteria for recruitment for enhancing professionalism. This links to findings by Wang (2013) who finds that non-NEST pre-service teachers consider qualification the criterion that should be observed in recruiting NESTs because that eases communication and collaboration between them and the non-NESTs. The tendency to prefer recruiting NESTs despite their level of qualification at the English Department is reported by

Omani and non-Omani participants alike. Surprisingly, the low ratio of Omani staff members at the English Department contradicts the national localisation policy and the CAS bylaw that emphasise giving priority to Omanis in recruitment. This is contrary to findings by Khan (2011) who reports that expatriate ELT teachers in her study think that Omanis are favoured in recruitment even when they lack necessary skills.

The salience of English identity at the ELT context seems to render Omanis non-prototypical notwithstanding their qualification in ELT and their perceived prototypicality at the wider organisational context as evidenced from the findings reported in section 4.6.1 in the previous chapter. Despite the fact that who could be defined as a NEST is a contested matter in the literature (Alenazi, 2014; Clark & Paran, 2007), a wide body of ELT literature indicates that NESTs enjoy perceived superiority over the non-NESTs along linguistic aspects (e.g., Al-Issa, 2006; Phillipson, 2016; Selvi, 2011; Sung, 2011). Sung (2011) indicates that while the non-NESTs outnumber the NESTs internationally, the demand for NESTs is still high. Recruiting unqualified NESTs could be an influence of the native speaker superiority fallacy<sup>23</sup> among the recruiters in the Omani context despite the fact that previous research conducted by Ismail (2011) in a similar context in Oman indicates that such fallacy is not present among students nor among NESTs themselves. The expanding spread of English, its status as the language of academia and business in the Omani context and internationally sets being a NEST as a qualification on its own right. This is especially so with the increasing role of the private sector (where Omanis constitute only 12%) as the main employment option for higher education graduates (Al-Mahrooqi & Tuzlukova, 2014).

Interestingly, quality of teaching does not seem to be always an objective for the NESTs. The findings suggest that NESTs could seek employment in Oman for tourism purposes rather than establishing a profession-based career. Wong (2009) argues that travelling is not an uncommon target of working in ELT for NESTs and Romanowski and Nasser (2015) consider it generally part of the

---

<sup>23</sup> The native speaker fallacy concerns the ideological thought that ‘...the ideal teacher is a native speaker, somebody with native speaker proficiency in English who can serve as a model for the pupils’ (Phillipson, 1992:192, cited in Ismail, 2011:4).

professional life of expatriate faculty. This implies that members within the English Department do not all pursue similar goals based on the profession of ELT. Unity of purpose where self-interest is defined in terms of the group is a key element of social identity within a group according to the SIMOL model (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). It could be seen as a result of the depersonalisation process where behaviour becomes informed by the shared identity (Turner, 1999).

While participants mention that only some members who belonged to the NEST category actually proved to be unqualified ELT teachers who displayed unprofessional behaviour, the frequent association between the NESTs and such attributions seems to be a function of accentuation that creates a stereotypical image of those perceived as a competing outgroup. The attributive function of stereotypes known as social causality (Hogg & Abrams, 1998) could lead to associating negative evaluations with the Western/NEST/outourced staff category by the non-NESTs. Haslam (2004) stresses that in-group members attribute adherence to the right norms to the behaviour of the in-group while they consider the behaviour of out-group members a result of other reasons; such as tourism or lack of professionalism in this research context.

Such negative evaluations could be viewed as a strategy to deal with the perceived illegitimate higher position of this group in the language-based social structure that associates privilege with being a NEST (Clark & Paran, 2007). This emphasises the unequal power status that has been historically linked to political imperialism associated with the countries of the NESTs as opposed to the non-NESTs' (Phillipson, 2016). Guerrero and Meadows (2015) observe that despite becoming a majority in ELT internationally, non-NESTs are still being viewed to possess less legitimacy and authority in ELT in comparison to their counterparts. The feeling that the NESTs group presents a powerful comparison group with impermeable boundaries could underlie such negative attributions according to the SIA (Haslam, 2004), which aims to enhance the position of the non-NEST group within the structure.

### 5.3.2 Inclusion within the CAS-1 wider community

The findings suggest that the range of duties assigned to staff members depends on their employment paths and on their languages. Non-Arabic speakers report

that they are less involved in the wider college community either for being non-Omanis or because of not speaking Arabic, which seems to limit their access to information. Mor Barak (2008) classifies such a practice as a form of exclusion within a workplace. This links to findings by Romanowski and Nasser (2015) who report that expatriate faculty members express a feeling of remaining an outsider in the universities in Qatar and that they have limited resources to understand the local culture. In relation to ELT, marginalisation has usually been associated with non-NESTs, led by the widely held assumption that the NESTs are powerful by virtue of being native English speakers (Bayyurt, 2018; Sung, 2011). ELT at CAS, however, is one discipline in the higher education system. The findings indicate that when this wider context is taken into consideration, NESTs become marginalised because of their outsourced recruitment nature and because of not being Arabic speakers. In fact, lack of involvement within the college community is also expressed by non-Arabic speakers who are non-NESTs.

This suggests that language-related power poles are reversed as one moves from the English Department to the wider organisational context. The fact that Arabic is the language of administration renders the English Department the only terrain of practice for non-Arabic speakers. Thus, the duties of the non-Arabic speaking staff members are mainly related to teaching and teaching-relevant tasks within while wider responsibilities are exercised by Arab staff members. This goes in line with the view expressed by Gappa (2008) that a wider range of responsibilities is a characteristic of tenured staff who are considered more advantaged in the American context. While not all Arab staff members in the English Department are tenured/permanent staff, they all share the same language with the administrative body mainly composed of Omanis. Omanis report that this involvement over-burdens them in comparison to other English Department teachers but it is also seen as a sign of trust. Although language could be the determinant of the range of duties here, the findings suggest that contract type could also contribute to that. Outsourced staff members appear to be an invisible or adjunct category in relation to the wider college community. Ashforth and Johnson (2001) argue that with transient employees, personal self becomes more salient than organisational identification forms which is a view that is reported in this research too as discussed in section 5.4.

Surprisingly, the findings do not report religion as a cultural identity that influences categorisation and group dynamics at the English Department despite



the centrality of Islam to the Omani context (Al-Araimi, 2012; Albadri, 2012). In fact, Neal (2010) reports in his study that the presence of Islam in relation to daily practices conversations even in the multicultural academic place which sometimes influences relations among the religiously diverse staff members. One possible explanation for the absence of reference to the religious identity here is the organisational context of CAS where the academic building is mainly composed of offices with no amenities for religious practices and the uncontextualised ELT curriculum that does not subscribe to Omani cultural identity. In relation to this, the ethnographic nature of Neal's (2010) study might be the reason for the researcher to report all objective aspects of alterity extant within the context he researched while the current research is interested in perceived/salient diversity. This emphasises the role of the context in deciding what identity becomes salient to guide behaviour and the importance of contextualised approaches to diversity research. Besides, the reported lack of interaction could be a reason why such discourse does not mark interactions despite the fact that surface level categorisation is marked by the way Muslim Omani staff dress at the English Department in comparison to non-Muslims.

## **5.4 Group identity and the influence of diversity**

The identity categories discussed above that are defined by nationality, language, professionalism and mode of employment appear to shape team processes and outcomes within the English Department. The findings suggest that the English Department group is characterised by instability, conflict, lack of cooperation, and lack of interaction. While these factors could be seen as manifestations of an absence of social identity, they could also be thought of as antecedents hindering its establishment.

### **5.4.1 Instability, insecurity and turnover**

The findings show that the English Department is generally characterised by instability in staff composition that leads to varied levels of employment security. Omanis are the most secure category being employed permanently. On the other hand, non-Omanis and especially outsourced staff members report feeling of low employment security because of their short contracts and the possibility for their contracts to be terminated by changes in their recruiting agency. Such differences in longevity are also reported by Neal (2010) where he observes that such

differences cause frictions between Omanis and non-Omanis. Naithani and Jha (2010) maintain that short employment and employer control over contracts creates lack of employment security in the GCC countries generally. The low level of employment security among the majority of the English Department members is perceived to affect motivation and accountability and increase anxiety among non-permanent staff members especially the outsourced ones. Furthermore, it is seen as a reason for the lack of motivation among outsourced staff to be involved in non-teaching activities outside the English Department. Motivation to serve the group is a function of perception of identification with the group (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). Thus, low employment security seems to negatively influence identification with the group and thus hinders social-identity-based motivation to work (Davis, 2014).

Shah (2017) emphasises that different contracts within faculty could affect motivation and performance especially in relation to research. Similarly, Romanowski and Nasser (2015) report comparable findings concerning expatriate university faculty who experienced high anxiety because of lack of tenure which, among other factors, encouraged some of them to seek other employment opportunities. Khan (2011), however, relates contradictory findings by reporting that expatriate ELT teachers in a state university in Oman feel motivated by their employment security as their contracts were usually renewed. This difference in findings might be a result of the fact that in CAS-1, over 40% of the English Department staff members are outsourced and that staff members are not actually recruited by the same employer which makes non-permanent staff members constitute over 70% of the total number of staff.

The SIA suggests that one reason for individuals to identify with a group is to reduce uncertainty by advocating a group's norms. With more fluid compositions, certainty is undermined which makes the role of the prototype essential in reducing uncertainty (Barth-Farkas & Vera, 2017). However, the salience of categories at the English Department seems to undermine the role of the prescribed prototype. With the differences in employment contracts, categorisation appears to create a spectrum or an 'institutional hierarchy' (Purcell, 2007:121) that concerns how strongly individuals feel they are in-group members. Outsourced staff members as discussed above seem to be seen as adjunct rather than in-group members.

Lack of employment security is seen by the participants as a reason for turnover, which could be either voluntary (because of perceived employment insecurity, dissatisfaction or absence of intention for long employment) or a result of contract termination (because of perceived lack of professionalism or change of recruiting agency). Contrary to what the findings suggest, Joarder, Subhan, Ghani and Islam (2015) report— out of their correlational study— that there is no significant relation between perception of employment security and intention to leave. The researchers explain this by the young age of the academics in their study. They, however, provide no information about the cultural backgrounds of their sample, which they recruited in an academic context in Bangladesh. It could be that locals develop less intention to turnover than do expatriate academics. In fact, the findings of this research suggest that Western teachers are more likely to have this intention to leave early because of their better chances of employment elsewhere as NESTs and because settlement in one specific place for a long time is culturally not the norm for them. On the other hand, Cole and Bruch (2006) find that there is a negative correlation between organisational identification and turnover intentions among lower level workers, which suggests that low identification is a reason for high turnover.

Generally, identification with a group is driven by a motivation to achieve distinctiveness (Horton et al., 2014) and positive self-evaluation (Koivisto & Rice, 2016) and it is related to job satisfaction and willingness to remain in an organisation (Avanzi, Fraccaroli, Sarchielli, Ullrich & van Dick, 2014). Hence, the quest for belonging and certainty leads individuals to search for groups that fulfil such motivations. The structure created at the English Department based on the different employment methods restricts mobility between the impermeable employment categories. According to Haslam (2004), the presence of such structure motivates individuals to leave the group to join other groups that could realise their motivations. When members of certain categories feel that their lower status is illegitimate, one strategy to promote their self-distinctiveness is to decide to leave the group (Finley, 2010).

Avanzi et al. (2014) report that when employees highly identify with their organisation, they tend to have fewer intentions to leave even when the perceived organisational support (e.g. money, employment security, emotional support) is low. As introduced earlier in this chapter, there is a perception among the participants that instability also results from absence of intention for longer

employment among Western teachers who might come to Oman with the purpose of exploring the country and not having a career. In such a case, individual motivation rather than English Department-based motivation informs the intentions of employees to leave or stay. In addition, high turnover at the English Department is attributed to perceived lack of professionalism (especially with outsourced staff). In such a case, and due to the relevance of profession to the English Department context, lacking professionalism especially in terms of not being qualified in ELT increases the likelihood of viewing an individual as a divergent or deviant member who is not in line with the group norms (Spears, 2011).

High turnover affects establishing a collective identity. It reduces the shared history between group members which affects social group formation (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Instability at the English Department thus hinders establishing a cohesive academic/professional culture that could bring perspectives closer. Longevity within a group is key for value conversion towards cohesion (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Being in charge of the group, the leaders report being pressured by such instability because they repeatedly have to deal with new teachers and explain the ELT prototype to them. Tuckman (1965) explains that the life of a team goes through four stages: forming, storming, norming, and performing. The instability characterising the English Department seems to make it go through this process repeatedly and to less effectively complete the norming and performing stages based in the previous discussion.

#### **5.4.2 Diversity, collaboration and conflict**

The findings indicate that relationship conflict is a characteristic of the staff at the English Department but it varies in intensity from year to year depending on the nature of staff composition. Relationship conflicts take place when people do not perceive themselves as compatible with others (Ayub & Jehn, 2006). Cultural diversity affects behaviour within a group because of the inconsistency in the underlying norms, attitudes and values (Paletz, Miron-Spektor & Lin, 2014) which according to the categorisation theory could hinder cohesion and lead to sub-groups (Mannix & Neale, 2005; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Such inconsistent norms appear to affect teachers' perceptions and evaluations of practices at the English Department. Inconsistent norms resulting from diversity lead people to behave in ways that could conflict with the interests of others (Hobman, Bordia &

Gallois, 2012) and to produce evaluations about others that are based on their own individual or sub-group norms. Thus, a unified prototype becomes somewhat irrelevant as individual incompatible prototypes prevail.

Furthermore, conflict could manifest when professional identity, which is perceived as a moderator of the negative effects of diversity in this context (as will be discussed in a later section) is not perceived as salient among all the English Department members. The findings indicate the existence of behaviour such as derogation of others based on the diversity in academic qualification or feeling of pride in relation to being a NEST. Haslam (2004) states that individual's perception of belonging to a high status group could lead to conflict and antagonism toward the lower status group when relations are insecure. The relevance of English language and academic qualification to the English Department makes them markers of distinctiveness which some individuals appear to emphasise. Members who are not perceived as professional (mainly in terms of being a qualified ELT teacher) act based on personal identities informed by their personal characteristics. The findings suggest that this instigates personal conflicts based on dimensions that are not related to the ELT profession or the workplace generally. Mitchell et al. (2015) assert that professional diversity in inter-professional teams can lead to perceived status difference between team members, which can lead to negative effects such as hostility. This seems to be also applicable to the English Department albeit at the individual level.

While the findings reveal that sometimes the reasons for conflicts are trivial, the SIA suggests that salience of categorisation leads to extenuating difference between groups as a way for emphasising distinctiveness and promoting self-esteem (Hogg, 2005a). Furthermore, in cultural diversity contexts, what might be perceived as 'trivial' for one individual might not be so for another due to their different values. Paletz et al. (2014) argue that gaps in the mental models of individuals in culturally diverse contexts make individuals interpret information differently and thus react to it differently. An interesting example the findings reveal in relation to this notion concerns how frustratingly an American teacher reacted to the content of a reading task he was expected to teach according to the prescribed syllabus. The teacher perceives this text to express an essentialist view and the teacher is frustrated on the ground that an American cannot teach an Arab crowd a text on terrorism. While this example does not illustrate conflict

per se, it does illustrate how diverse backgrounds could construct different and possibly contradicting versions of reality that could ultimately lead to conflict.

Conflicts among staff is also linked to stress resulting from lack of employment security in relation to temporary contract teachers, which creates intolerance between staff and hinders the establishment of good relations. Wilkin, de Jong and Rubino (2018) attribute such an effect to the fact that temporary workers establish less social networks than permanent workers. This again highlights the role of group composition stability in enhancing diversity climate. Contract-based categories as mentioned earlier create bounded categories that make staff members see themselves as not belonging to one homogenous group. Ashforth & Mael (1989:33) argue that 'in the absence of strong organisational identity, the desire for favourable intergroup comparisons generates much conflict between differentiated and clearly bounded sub-units'. Such relation conflicts seem to negatively affect the morale of the staff in the English Department.

The findings also suggest that conflict between teachers could be task-related. The findings indicate that tasks that require collaboration and joint decisions between staff members are a source of anxiety because of the conflicts that result from different interpretations. Mazur (2010:10) asserts that 'diversity can make it harder to arrive at an agreement on a particular course of action, and can result in negative dynamics and cultural clashes'. Although the literature suggests that diversity in views can lead to enhanced performance because of the resulting informational diversity (Mazur, 2010; Paletz et al., 2014; van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007) the fact that teamwork at the English Department sometimes requires making decisions based on agreement seems problematic because it increases the interdependence for the task to be completed. This could be because tasks that require joint decision are perceived as more complex. Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt and Jonsen (2010) point out that there is a positive association between cultural diversity and conflict when tasks are complex.

Inconsistency in interpreting tasks that is attributed to the differences in professional backgrounds and the lack of shared professional culture causes some staff members to refuse to reach middle grounds for making such decisions which leads to conflicts. This is inconsistent with findings reviewed in van Knippenberg and Schippers (2007) which link diversity in educational backgrounds to positive outcomes. The fact that the specialisation here

represents a reference for decision-making makes diversity along this aspect problematic. Thus, different interpretations and attitudes towards tasks could lead members to feel that their distinctive identities are threatened due to the need to adapt these identities in order to work cohesively with others (Finley, 2010). Such conflicts make teamwork a hard task for team leaders too. Kreindler, Dowd, Dana Star and Gottschalk (2012) emphasise that cooperation is a consequence of social identification. Members of a salient group anticipate that they share similar norms that direct their behaviour, attitudes and opinions towards conversion (Adarves-Yorno, Postmes & Haslam, 2006). When social identity is absent, influencing team members towards agreement becomes a challenge.

Instability of the staff composition seems to also exacerbate task conflicts by compromising the longevity condition necessary for establishing shared norms and thus promoting consistent interpretation of reality. The findings suggest that as members spend more time within the English Department, they develop better understanding of the prototype and develop strategies to deal with diversity in perspectives so that conflict is reduced. Besides, instability is seen to hinder other forms of collaboration between teachers such as sharing teaching resources. Wilkin et al. (2018:208) argue that ‘teams that [...] fully utilize team members by exchanging resources (i.e., seeking their advice and friendship), or have denser social networks, are more likely to experience higher performance’. This seems to be rather limited at the English Department.

Participants also express perception of conflict in relation to processes. Ayub and Jehn (2006:184) define process conflict as ‘disagreements about logistical issues, such as the assignment of responsibilities or resources, or the setting of agenda’. Various perceptions of procedural and distributive justice at the English Department seem to lead to process conflict. Teachers express concerns about involvement in decision-making and fairness in teaching load distribution. In addition, wider distribution and delegation of responsibilities at the English Department appear to be sometimes hindered by the high teaching load and the lack of trust in the professionalism of some teachers. Perception of fairness appear to vary among the staff members. While involvement in decision-making (e.g. concerning selection of courses) is considered a sign of trust and value for an Indian and a Filipino participant, an American participant thought that deliberations for making decisions and consulting teachers in operational aspects

is a waste of time. Self-categorisation theory suggests that when individuals categorise themselves as members of a group, they tend to perceive things in light of the group's prototype (Adarves-Yorno et al., 2006). When categorisation with a shared identity is absent, perceptions of reality and judgments of behaviour become a function of the cultural values that inform the perception of individuals (Stahl et al., 2010). Thus, perceptions could result from idiosyncratic prototypes rather than consensus-based prototype based on the group norms (Hogg & Reid, 2006).

While appealing to a shared prototype increases perception of leader fairness due to the trust established (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003), transparency and involvement in decision making appear to be important in the English Department context. Bryman (2007) indicates that staff involvement in decision-making is a key indicator of leader effectiveness at university departmental level and that communication of directions to staff members increase the feeling of ownership among staff. Lack of trust seems to also affect other duty distribution and concentrate many tasks within the leadership team. Such findings concur with the assertion of van Knippenberg and Haslam (2003) that an inclusive identity in a diverse context should be based on relational values such as fairness and respect of difference.

These findings concerning team conflict generally seem not to fully agree with the findings in Stahl et al. (2010). Using a meta-analysis study, Stahl et al. (2010) suggest that there is a positive association between cultural diversity and task conflict but there is no relationship between cultural diversity and relationship or process conflict. While the current study is not a correlational one to prove or rebut such findings, the evidence generated suggests that cultural diversity in the English Department context seems to relate to the three types of conflicts mainly because of the absence of shared understanding which appears to be hindered by the intersection of cultural diversity with professional and contractual diversity. Moreover, this could be explained by the absence of clear diversity management strategy at CAS, which makes diversity in perspectives translates into conflict.

#### **5.4.3 Low interaction/communication**

The findings indicate that communication and interaction between teachers within the English Department is low. Interaction during team meetings— which



are seen as the only opportunity for group gatherings—is minimal because of various reasons such as avoiding conflict between teachers, the lack of trust between teachers, and employment insecurity. Instead of group interactions, teachers feel that personalised interaction and individualised leader support are more effective than those within a group context. van Knippenberg and Hogg (2003) argue that low salience of a social identity leads members to prefer personalised leadership. On the other hand, low interaction between staff members hinders social identity establishment. Socialisation within a group is key for social identity construction (Yilmaz, 2014). This could be especially so given that the staff composition at the English Department is unstable. Socialisation between group members becomes particularly important for new members joining an academic community because it helps them learn the academic culture within the context (Clarke et al., 2013; Thomas-Gregory, 2014). Through the interaction that takes place between group members, constructing and modifying group norms becomes possible through ‘referent informational influence’ where members verify their understanding of the group’s identifying norms (Hogg & Reid, 2006).

Furthermore, the prescribed prototype that does not value individual distinctiveness seems to result in low motivation among teachers to interact in the context of the group which makes their input minimal. Thus, communication is largely one-way and the type of interaction that takes place mainly concerns ensuring that the prototype enactment is in place. Haslam (2004) maintains that communication in this way is ineffective because it is based on formal directives and forced influence rather than shared social identity and shared motivation. Dowling-Hetherington (2013) reports comparable findings. They indicate that faculty participants working in an Irish university that is gradually shifting governance towards a more managerial style say that meetings are not always an effective vehicle for collective decision-making. When group members see little value in sharing their perspective, the functional benefits associated with diversity cannot be reaped. Schneider and Northcraft (1999) maintain that interaction mediates the functional benefits of diversity. It reduces conflict resulting from differing perspectives and values and enhances professional learning between team members (Mitchell et al., 2015). It is also key for bringing views closer to create a level of cohesion (Hogg & Abrams, 1998). Leader-member one-to-one interaction appears to be more favoured in this context than leader-to-group. This

echoes the findings of Tse and Chiu (2014) that individual differentiation becomes a better style for leadership when group identity is not salient. In such a case dyadic/relational rather than group-based leader-member interaction becomes preferable (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003).

While participants mention high teaching load as one main reason for the lack of communication, instability and lack of trust associated with the staff's cultural diversity were also main reasons. Stahl et al. (2010) state that trust is associated with social integration, which is undermined by the group diversity. Lack of trust between teachers is seen as a reason for not discussing matters related to teaching in meetings and thus reducing the chances for learning from the experiences of other teachers. Stahl et al. (2010) highlight that not only does communication improve team performance but it also reduces conflict and enhances cohesiveness within a team. Haslam (2004) points out that effective communication takes place when individuals have a shared identity based on a shared cognitive understanding of reality. It follows that shared understanding of reality (that leads to collective identity) is enhanced when communication is effective.

### **5.5 Collective identity management at the micro-level: prototypicality and leadership effectiveness**

The findings reveal that with the lack of clarity about the criteria for leader selection at the English Department, Omanis seem to emerge as the most prototypical category for leadership positions. Despite the reported lack of authority devolved to the members of leadership team, this finding is generally in line with the findings of Neal (2010) where the author reports that Omanis occupy leadership roles in the university context he observed which he interprets as a marker of alterity within the academic context. Despite the fact that two leaders of the current research participants are non-Omanis, one reason for associating leadership with Omanis at the English Department is the instability characterising the employment of non-Omanis, which does not make such positions desirable for non-Omanis. Wilkin et al. (2018) argue that permanent staff members are perceived as high-status in comparison to temporary ones and thus they become sources of information, advice, and influence. The association between high status and prototypicality echoes findings by Rubin (2012) whose experiment shows that high status group is perceived as more prototypical when participants

do not identify with any group. The prototypicality of Omanis is reinforced by the policy of Omanisation that ascribes prototypical status to Omanis.

Previous research in the nursing sector suggests that the Omanisation process could instigate competition for employment and reduce job security among non-Omanis (Zerovec & Bontenbal, 2011). Whereas the current study confirms such an effect of Omanisation on the employment security of the non-Omani staff, Omanisation seems to be perceived as a natural process by non-Omanis, which might partially explain why they see Omanis as more prototypical leaders. Ashforth and Mael (1989:33) maintain that intergroup relation effects are less likely to be expressed in relation to resource distribution if there is a perception within the subordinate group that the difference is 'legitimate and institutionalised'.

In fact, and as discussed earlier in this chapter, defining the prototype at the wider organisational level makes Omanis more prototypical than others. The centralised nature of the ELT system makes the nested identities associated with the other levels of the organisation (namely the academic leadership and the administrative leadership) main influences on behaviour within the English Department and hence they partially construct the ELT prototype. In other words, due to the highly centralised ELT system, organisational identification becomes more subjectively salient (more central to self-definition) than the lower order English Department unit. Ashforth & Johnson (2001) explain that by the effect of the level of abstraction on the level of identification. The salience of the organisational level of identity as opposed to the English Department level makes speaking Arabic and having knowledge of the CAS culture more relevant characteristics of prototypical leaders than being a NEST. This does not enable all the English Department members to perceive themselves as 'interchangeable exemplars of the group prototype' (Hornsey, 2008:208) and makes permanent Omani members more likely to function as 'agents of continuity' (Hogg, van Knippenberg, et al., 2012).

By considering the level of the English Department, however, the prototypicality of Omanis could be seen as incomplete. While Omanis in the English Department are all well qualified in ELT, they are non-NESTs, which perceptually and contextually could render them non-prototypical. If Omanis were to be seen as prototypical, they would need to enjoy the organisational trust and empowerment

that enables them to practise a level of management over the prototype. Fielding and Hogg (1997) maintain that being a prototypical member only results in passive leaders but exercising power through being liked and exercising charismatic leadership leads leaders to be active. Hence, even when Omanis occupy leadership roles at the English Department, they do not perceive their roles to enable them to become identity entrepreneurs. Besides, there is a perception among the Omani members that occupying these positions distances them from the other teachers because they are seen as more powerful advocates of the prototype.

In fact, the position of team leaders as middle managers is generally seen as unattractive because of the inconsistent demands from the teams they lead and from the senior leadership. Rajput and Kochhar (2014) also emphasise such a challenge in contexts that aspire to hold to one prototype. The wider the range of diversity surrounding norms and values, the more challenging prototype-based leadership becomes due to the lack of consensus over the prototype (Hogg & Reid, 2006; Hogg, 2005b; Wells & Aicher, 2013). Furthermore, the findings reveal inconsistent views about the role of the leader in relation to the group among the diverse staff members. While some non-Omani teachers saw leadership as a way for pursuing individual gains (such as contract renewal and monetary benefits), Omanis generally saw it as a chance for reform and change that requires a sincere person.

This finding contrasts with the finding reported in Neal (2010) where he observes that the common sense of mission between Omani and non-Omani academic staff members works as a unifier in the academic context he explored. This inconsistency over the salience of individual versus collective identity could be a result of the above-mentioned contract-based categorisation that makes non-Omanis see themselves as out-group members and thus do not value group interests. Davis (2014) explains that with the salience of individual self, instrumental rationality based on means-end logic motivations rather than group-based motivations becomes the impetus for people to tackle certain roles. On the other hand, prioritising group interest over individual interest and working based on group-oriented manner is a characteristic of strongly identifying leaders (Platow & van Knippenberg 2001; van Dick & Kerschreiter, 2016).

As discussed in section 5.4, the findings suggest that at the English Department, prototype-based social identity seems to be ineffective. The criteria for effective leadership in Steffens et al. (2014) do not seem to be effectively met at the English Department leadership team. As explained in section 2.5 of the literature review, Steffens et al., (2014) conceptualise effective leadership in a diversity context as that where the leader advances the group identity through working in group-oriented behaviour, crafting a sense of the group by being an identity entrepreneur, and embedding a sense of the group (identity impresarioship). The effort of the leaders to emphasise an overarching collective identity through team meetings is seen as ineffective because the discussions during meetings do not involve negotiations for establishing agreements that could nurture a representative group identity. Furthermore, the findings provide evidence that there is an initiative towards establishing such a collective identity at the micro level through introducing changes to the central prototype, involving staff members in different tasks including the leadership team and by explaining procedures for resolving conflict and specifying professional standards for continuity. On the other hand, the findings suggest that the effectiveness of team leader as judged by Steffens et al.'s criteria is limited by:

- the hierarchy-based leadership that conceptualises the group at a large scale and centrally decides on the group prototype
- the uncertainty characterising the role and authority of the team leaders
- the characteristics of the group that promote incompatible prototypes and make identification with the overarching prototype ineffective

At the level of the English Department group, cultural diversity is seen as a potential advantage because of the richness of the experiences and expertise nationally diverse staff members could bring. This provides a chance for learning and improving practice. However, making effective use of such diversity through entrepreneuring a collective identity seems to require a number of moderating factors as discussed below.

## **5.6 Moderating the negative effects of diversity**

The findings suggest that there is a number of factors that could moderate the negative effects of diversity at the English Department and hence facilitate the establishment of a higher order collective identity. Group stability is seen as a key factor as discussed in section 5.4.1. Stability is decided by individual's longevity

within the group and its role in establishing group cohesion is also emphasised in the existing body of literature (e.g. Hogg et al., 2005). van Knippenberg and Schippers's (2007) review uncovers consistent findings confirming that the time spent within a group is a key for creating a level of congruence that neutralises the effect of difference and downplays the effects of categorisation resulting from demographic diversity.

The findings of the current study also highlight other moderating factors.

#### 5.6.1 The leadership schema of the HoD

As introduced earlier and as the Identity Management Model (section 2.5.4) suggests, relational values seem to characterise effective leadership schema in relation to diverse contexts where social identity is less salient. The HoD is seen as a moderating factor that influences the diversity climate within the English Department. The importance of the position of the HoD lies in the fact that they are in charge of the English Department which is the lower and more concrete level of organisational identity that staff at the English Department could identify with. Ashforth and Johnson (2001) argue that this level of organisational identity translates the organisational vision into action. Thus it represents the organisation's position in relation to staff diversity. In comparison to their past experiences with another HoD, participants emphasise that the new HoD manages the diversity climate better. The Handbook she introduced appears to set a precedent at the English Department where the identity of the English Department is constructed to be based on the values of cultural awareness and collegial respect among teachers. This resonates with findings by Al-Harthi and Al-Harthi (2012) who report that skills such as cultural empathy and open-mindedness are needed skills in the diverse Omani workplace.

The procedures stipulated in the Handbook represent an initiative at the level of the English Department to manage the negative effects of diversity (e.g. conflict) and to set standards for professional practice that could make diversity work better. Furthermore, participants report being involved in different tasks where their individual potentials are appreciated. Moreover, the perceptions of the leader's fairness, despite some disagreement, appear to emphasise that the HoD's attempts to craft a sense of the group based on its defining features and notably its cultural diversity. Procedural fairness in terms of enacting similar

treatment is emphasised by the participants. This resonates with findings by Platow and van Knippenberg (2001) who find that when social identification is low among the participant in their experiment, participants endorse a fair leader despite leader prototypicality status.

Avanzi et al. (2014) argue that perceived fairness is related to performance and continuity within an organisation. Besides, Shaban (2016) emphasises that fairness enhances motivation to work. Emphasis on the importance of leader fairness is also in tune with the findings of the review conducted by Bryman (2007). Analysing research from the UK, the USA, and Australia, the author concludes that leader fairness is a key characteristic of effective leader at the departmental level in higher education. For outsourced staff members at the English Department a fair leader means more certainty concerning their contracts renewal because of the fair recommendation the leader provides for contract renewal in this case. van Knippenberg and Hogg (2003) argue that while procedural fairness is more valued by high identifiers, low identifiers value distributive fairness more. This is natural with low salience of social identity where individual interests are more valued. Thus, distributive justice is an important characteristic of effective leader in diverse groups.

#### **5.6.2 The role of senior leadership and leader empowerment**

The findings highlight the need for support from senior leadership through understanding the demanding nature of the roles of leaders at the English Department and empowering them. To illustrate, the findings suggest that the induction provided to teachers is seen as inadequate sometimes due to the high number of new recruits. Apart from the Employee Handbook and the guidance of the team leaders, there is not much cultural induction for the culturally diverse staff members. In addition, communication between teachers is seen as limited and sharing information and experiences is not always welcomed. While the role of team leaders concerns providing induction to the courses taught, newly joining teachers require much more thorough induction to understand the organisational culture which calls for a wider organisational involvement. These findings are in line with the findings reported in Al Ghatrifi (2016) who states that participants from CAS report that there is no structured induction programme in place for new teachers. Szu-Fang (2013) stresses that support from superordinate levels of leadership is key for a leader's success to lead in multicultural context. Top level

leaders should articulate the organisational objective from having a diverse staff body and to find the mechanisms through which all staff members can equally co-exist (DiTomaso & Hooijberg, 1996; Shaban, 2016).

This is especially so that distribution and empowerment are increasingly shaping the discourse of leadership in higher education contexts (Bolden, Petrov & Gosling, 2008). In fact, the role of the organisation becomes key for effectiveness because of the nature of the diverse staff composition at the English Department in comparison to the wider context. Ashforth and Mael (1989:28) argue that 'the more the organisation's identity, goals, values, and individual role requirements deviate from the societal mainstream, the greater the need for organisationally situated identification'. Such a level of identification requires more collaboration at the organisation level. Especially with the nationality and language based disjoints between the societal context and the organisational context, the role of the senior leadership is essential for establishing a diversity welcoming culture (Shaban, 2016).

Furthermore, empowering team leaders is seen as the key to effective leadership in this context as it could result in making better use of diverse perspectives which could increase the feeling of being accepted within the group among the members (Rosenauer, Homan, Horstmeier & Voelpel, 2016). Spears (2011) highlight that while social identity can inspire certain actions, actions can also transform identity. Rejecting conformity, embracing flexibility and accepting varied outcomes are seen as important leadership practices that could establish a collective superordinate identity and give space to individual identities to appear. This, however, requires encouraging teacher autonomy and reducing micro-management and control over teachers. Thus, senior leadership should be aware of the demands for managing culturally diverse contexts within academic departments.

### **5.6.3 Professionalism as a higher-order collective identity**

The findings suggest that the negative effects of diversity in the English Department could be reduced by promoting professionalism as an overarching identity. Cultural diversity is generally seen as a potential strength at the English Department but negative attitudes towards it are expressed to the extent that it compromises professionalism. Professionalism is compromised at the English



Department when staff are recruited not based on their qualification in ELT but based on being a NEST and when they do not act professionally in the workplace by emphasising personal over academic matters. Professional identity in terms of being specialised in ELT provides a frame of reference based on which members behave. van Knippenberg and Schippers (2007) indicate that the effects of diversity can follow a curvilinear pattern such that diversity becomes negative when it threatens the group's frame of reference. Ashforth and Johnson (2001) stress that making a higher order identity (such as professional identity here) salient could produce professional behaviour, give priority to professional rather than individual goals, guide the interpretation of reality, enhance cooperation between individuals despite possible personal conflicts, and enhance citizenship behaviour. For a professional identity to establish a collective identity, it needs to be made perceptually salient to all teachers so that identification with such an identity takes place.

Hogg and Reid (2006:12) maintain that 'salience is not only a cognitive perceptual process but also a social process in which people may compete or "negotiate" over category salience'. This implies that the salience of professional identity is a mission that could be achieved jointly by the organisation and the members. In fact, Kreindler et al. (2012) state that there is a positive correlation between professional and organisational identifications. Professional staff members are more likely to identify with the organisation as a whole. Teacher professional identity in the English Department is defined in terms of being qualified and experienced in ELT especially at tertiary level, having personal qualities such as being cooperative and helpful and having cultural knowledge of the Omani context. Ashforth and Johnson (2001) propose that making a higher order identity salient requires senior management to embark on substantive management (by finding structures and practices that enhances individual's identification with the higher order identity; managing the input towards a shared identity) and symbol management (through managing the group output and creating symbolic representation of the identity). Such practices resonate with the leadership effectiveness criteria identified by Steffens et al. (2014).

#### **5.6.3.1 Qualification for group membership**

Perceived similarity is one condition of social identification in addition to motivational factors such as certainty, positive self-image and personal

distinctiveness (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). Making professional identity salient requires recruiting teachers based on similar professional standards. A professional ELT teacher as perceived in the English Department is one who is qualified in the discipline and not merely a NEST. The importance of qualification is also emphasised by Drakulic (2013) who explains that language teachers need to have linguistic competence in relation to the language being taught and pedagogical competence. Participants in the English Department associate being professional with being qualified in ELT in addition to having certain general qualities such as being cooperative. This echoes the view of Clarke et al. (2013) that professional identity is complex and informed by values pertinent to the profession that are not major-specific and ones that are derived from the specific disciplines a member belongs to. Richards (2011) calls these two competences pedagogical knowledge and disciplinary knowledge and subsumes them both under content knowledge. Such competences represent the basis of ELT.

Notwithstanding the importance of content knowledge, Song and Castillo (2015) stress that English discipline-specific professional identities have long been defined along power lines where unaccented pronunciation of English was an adequate marker of NEST's professionalism whereas the professionalism of the non-NESTs was defined based on race and accent. Conceptualising professionalism in terms of qualification could actually benefit ELT especially given that an increasing body of research suggests that non-NESTs might actually be better teachers of English because they have gone through the process of learning the language and thus they might be a better learning model for students (Chen, Tigelaar & Verloop, 2016). By emphasising qualification, chances are that a level of professional similarity that is merit-based would be created which could enhance perceptions of equity within the group. In such a case, the stereotypes that Omanis are recruited because of institutionalised privilege or that NESTs are recruited for their accent could be played down. Schneider and Northcraft (1999) point out that reducing the correlation between social identities [based on nationality or native language in this context] and functional categories [e.g. ELT teacher] helps members of diverse groups perceive more similarity between themselves.

#### **5.6.3.2 Cultural competence**

The findings suggest that cultural knowledge is a main component of

professionalism in the Omani context. Professional teachers are expected to have knowledge about the Omani context to which the learners belong. Richards (2011) dubs such knowledge as the 'hidden curriculum' that includes knowledge about the organisation and the values and norms related to the learners and the community where they teach. Due to the influence of the societal culture on the organisational culture in Oman, this hidden curriculum actually informs organisational behaviour. Interestingly, this does not accord with findings by Drakulic (2013) who reports that intercultural competence in terms of knowledge about the target (English) culture rather than the local culture of the learners is perceived (by students) as a key competence for language teacher.

While the participants indicate that previous experiences in the GCC countries or other countries help teachers adapt to the Omani context, differences between contexts are also reported which means that context-specific knowledge is necessary as professional identity is emergent and is shaped by context-related factors (Clarke et al., 2013; Fitzmaurice, 2013). Previous experiences could nurture previous expectations that members have as they join a group which Haslam (2004) considers a factor that decides on the salience of certain social category along with fit and accessibility. Lestinen et al. (2004:8) emphasises that 'the policies and practices of the university institution and society, directly and indirectly, frame professional identity. Concurrently, linguistic, cultural, and social identities are interwoven with professionalism'.

Enhancing cultural knowledge could also be achieved through retaining professional teachers. As the findings suggest, the insecurity characterising the employment of non-Omanis makes qualified staff members seek employment elsewhere. In relation to leaders, the findings indicate that lacking the intercultural skills that enable leaders to deal effectively with the cultural diversity at the English Department is one challenge leaders face. This is especially reported by Omani leaders. The shared cultural resources within Omani society in terms of language, religion, and history makes behaviour more predictable and management easier than in the higher education multicultural context. Geleta and Amsale (2016) also report comparable findings albeit in another context. The researchers state that Ethiopian leaders at university lack the multicultural competences necessary to lead in the culturally diverse university context. Such competence is key for effective leadership in culturally diverse academic context. Ramthun and Matkin (2012) stress that when the distinctiveness of cultural

differences is to be maintained and differences to be negotiated, leaders need to possess intercultural competence. Such competence enables the leader to use their understanding of cultural differences to reduce conflict and enable cultural learning. Furthermore, communication skills such as justifying, negotiating, managing conflict, being flexible, being fair are seen as key characteristics for leader effectiveness in such a context. Szu-Fang (2013) and Shaban (2016) confirm that leaders in multicultural settings need to value individual differences, have interpersonal skills and good communication skills such as negotiation and ability to adjust linguistic choices to the different individuals

#### **5.6.3.3 Professional development**

Professional development is one organisational tool for promoting professional identity. The findings suggest that access to professional development and information about it is limited for non-Omanis. The outsourced staff members seem to lack information about how to engage in professional development programs. This finding echoes the findings reported in Al Ghatrifi (2016) where expatriate teachers at CAS report that professional development is mainly for Omanis and that non-Omanis are responsible for their own professional development. For professional identity to become an inclusive identity at the English Department, inclusion in professional development should be a right for all faculty members so that fairness and equality are emphasised. Teachers joining a workplace come with expectations and with their own prototypical image of the profession. The findings indicate that communication is very limited at the level of the English Department and with the wider CAS-1 community. Facilitating communication between teachers is a factor that helps communicating identity information to new employees and develop their context knowledge which is part of professional identity (Richards, 2011). A study by Ahmad, Fatmawati, Shah and Wahab (2017) on expatriate Pakistani EFL teachers in Saudi universities shows that interaction with colleagues is perceived as key for professional development.

The lack of interaction between the English Department teachers reduces their chances of exchanging knowledge and experiences. Ashforth and Mael (1989) argue that interaction is an antecedent for group formation and social identification within a group because it helps new employees achieve certainty through understanding the organisational values and norms. Such interaction is

necessary not only for newly recruited staff members but also for all staff as it enhances their intercultural competence in addition to their professional competence through sharing. Besides, Neary (2014) argues that professional identity is based on a sharedness of expertise among those practicing the profession. The high teaching load at the English Department limits such interactions as mentioned above. The study of Al Ghatrifi (2016) also reports that being busy with teaching responsibilities is a barrier against establishing such informal interactions. This implies that an appreciation of the role of staff interaction in establishing a positive diversity climate needs to be observed when assigning duties and defining teaching loads.

## 5.7 Summary

The discussion highlights that the centralised ELT system governing the academic work of the English Department creates a gap between the espoused and the enacted prototype due to the fact that it is not consensually negotiated at the level of the group. Due to the perceived rigidity of the central prototype and its lack of responsiveness to the micro-level diverse perspectives, dissatisfaction is expressed by teachers and leaders at the English Department. Such rigidity coupled with lack of cross-CAS communication and slow or absent decision-making leads to creating local versions of the prototype where gradual changes are introduced by the leaders in response to the feedback from teachers.

The findings suggest that the management of prototype-based identity at the level of the group is hindered by such high central control over the prototype. It is also hindered by the characteristic of the diverse English Department group. The instability characterizing the staff, the high conflict rate and the lack of interaction between the staff members hinder the establishment of a cohesive set of norm that could underlie the establishment of a collective identity based on the membership of the English Department. The intersectionality of the identities of the staff members creates categories that affect the processes within the group. In terms of recruitment, identity is perceived to be constructed along being a NEST or not where NESTs are perceived to be a privileged category. This is almost reversed in relation to staff involvement within the CAS-1 community. In this case, speaking Arabic becomes a facilitator or a hindrance to such an involvement. It also limits the access to information about the context for non-Arabic speakers.

Within such a context, emergent leadership is associated more with Omanis because of their nationality, language, and permanent contract that render them more in-group than other teachers. However, the role of leaders as identity entrepreneurs seems to be hindered by the central decision-making, the uncertainty concerning their authority, and the incompatible prototypes inspired by the group composition. The establishment of a collective identity based on professional identity requires paying attention to the moderating factors which are, the approach of the HoD to leadership, the involvement of senior leadership, the empowerment of leaders at the micro-level, and facilitating the salience of professional identity through qualification-based selection of teachers, enhancing cultural competence and facilitating professional development for all teachers.

## Chapter 6: Conclusions

This research uses a social identity lens to understand the influence of cultural diversity on group dynamics and on constructing identities within an academic context in Oman. By attending to the identity intersectionalities shaping behaviour within the organisational context, the investigation thus far has attempted to explore the effectiveness of prototype-based group identity and to unpack some of the complexity and fuzziness of the concept of 'prototype' as it applies to an ELT context. This chapter provides a summary of the main findings in relation to the research questions and lays out the study implications, limitations, and contribution. It also sets a view for where practice and policy in the Omani higher education context could be directed in relation to managing cultural diversity for enhanced academic outcomes.

### 6.1 Summary of findings

This section provides a summary of the findings in relation to the research questions.

***Q1: How is identity constructed in the English Language Teaching (ELT) context in Oman?***

This research sets out to investigate cultural diversity predicting that in relation to ELT, it could be defined in terms of nationality and language. The findings presented in section 4.4 of the fourth chapter suggest that at the English Department level, identity is constructed along intersectional aspects based on nationality, language, mode of employment, and professional identity. These intersectionalities emphasise the dynamic nature of group membership that could provide a basis for social identity (Davis, 2014). These identities construct structures within the group that decide on the extent to which a teacher could be seen as a typical member of the group. The intersectionality of these identities appears in relation to different processes that highlight the power differentials shaped by these identities. In relation to recruitment, being a NEST as a linguistic identity appears to override other identities and set the norm for membership within the English Department. Thus, other categories appear to be considered less prototypical at this level.

This changes as the discussion moves to permanence within the group where national identity forefronts Omanis as the normative group and sets structure accordingly. The NESTs in this case become most vulnerable because of their contractual identity that ascribes to them a contingent status within the group and affects their behaviour within the group. Being a speaker of Arabic comes to the picture as we move to the CAS-1 wider context where this category becomes more normative at the wider group level whereas other linguistic categories do not seem to fit in. Here, language decides on the extent to which a member could become prototypical within the group depending on the extent to which they have access to knowledge about the prototype.

National identity and contractual identity together define the structure in relation to professional development where Omanis again are the advantaged group whereas the case for non-Omanis depends on whether they are MoHE-employed or outsourced. The outsourced category is most disadvantaged in this case. It appears to be also the least normative in relation to perceived professional identity where it least corresponds to the professional standards that are perceived to apply to the context. These standards are defined mainly in relation to academic qualification and sociocultural competence.

The category of teachers that is non-NEST, non-Omani and as such is not on permanent contract appear to correspond to Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach's (2008) 'intersectional invisibility' category. This category does not fit within the powerful identity groups defined in terms of being NEST or being Omani. However, being mostly recruited through MoHE contracts elevates its employment security and renders it more professional in comparison to the outsourced category. In brief, identity at the social category level seems to be defined by the linguistic, national, contractual, and professional trajectories where the norm, the advantages and the disadvantages could be experienced differently in relation to the different group processes.

***Q2: How is prototype constructed in the ELT context and to what extent is prototype-based social identity effective in such a context?***

The findings reveal that the construction of 'prototype' as the representation of a group identity is influenced by the hierarchy-based system of governance and central decision-making from the macro level and the identity intersectionality within the micro level of the group. The higher level of the hierarchy defines the



group in terms of six different English Departments functioning at six different campuses and aspires to manage these English Departments in terms of one uniform organisationally defined prototype. Being imposed on the English Department group and not based on consensus and negotiation within the diverse group, this prototype poses restriction and dissatisfaction among the group members. The highly prescriptive nature of this prototype that is influenced by the nested nature of the CAS, within which the English Department is the lowest level, makes the influence of the actual English Department group on defining what is prototypical rather limited. The findings suggest that this is creating a demand for a localised version of the prototype that could be more representative of the actual group at the English Department level.

With such inconsistency, the effectiveness of social identity based on the central construction of prototype seems to be impaired at the level of the English Department group. The ELT system requires that the teachers within the group perform based on prescribed syllabus that guides practices across the six CAS colleges. On the other hand, the varied identities among teachers create a heterogeneous group that varies in terms of perceived professionalism and accessibility to prototypical knowledge. The diverse cultural backgrounds accompanied by low group longevity reduce cohesion and retain salient individual identities that influence the perceptions, attitudes and behaviours of the English Department members. The research findings provide evidence that a common prototype-based group identity that is based on shared understanding of the group prototype does not seem to be salient. Social identity is defined in terms of cognitive perception of being a group member, evaluative aspect derived from such membership and emotional significance achieved by such membership (Spears, 2011). As presented in more details in section 4.5 of the findings chapter, the absence of prototype-based social identity at the level of the English Department is manifested in:

- the group instability where the high turnover hinders cohesion,
- conflicts at the level of relations, tasks, and processes which demonstrate that staff members are not appealing to a unified prototype that directs their understandings and interpretations of reality
- and the limited interaction and collaboration which hinders creating cohesion in perspectives that could lead to establishing a collective identity.

These varied dimensions of prototype at the English Department appear to influence behaviour within the group and propose inconsistent components of what could be called the ‘enacted ELT prototype’ as Figure 6.1 illustrates. Being embedded within a wider organisational context that is guided by central governance, the prototype at the English Department is in effect decided by a combination of the nested nature of the organisational centralised context that prescribes behaviour at the academic (i.e. prescribed curriculum) and administrative level (i.e. integration and HRM aspects) and the professional, contractual, national and linguistic identities that operate at the level of the English Department and influence behaviour, interactions, and dynamics within the group.

With such complexity and fuzziness, the extent to which group members are representative of this complex prototype appears to be constrained by the disconnects of language and nationality. Knowledge about this overarching prototype is seen to be more accessible to those who are permanent group members, share the language with the wider context, and understand the organizational culture better. This corresponds best to the Omani category according to the findings.

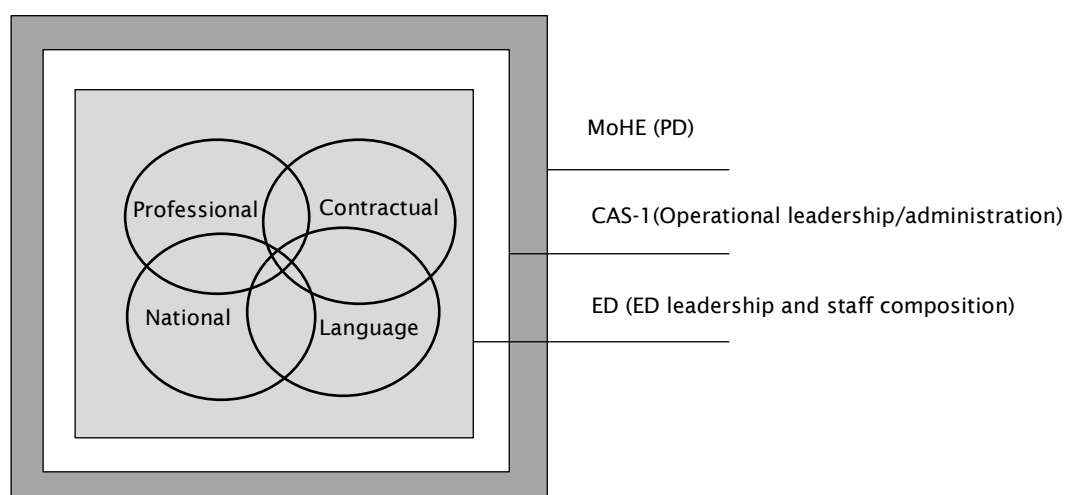


Figure 6-1: Constellation of identities at the English Department

***Q3: How-if at all- is leadership as practised in the research context effective at managing a collective/group identity?***

The findings suggest that group identity does not seem to be salient at the level of the English Department because of the salience of intersectional categories that make individual identities more effective. The low salience of group identity at the English Department level and the influence of the organisational hierarchy on the authority of the leadership team at the English Department makes the role of the leader as a collective (higher order) identity entrepreneur rather restricted by their limited authority at the micro level. This effectiveness is also restricted by the uncertainty characterising the roles of the team leaders who directly manage the diverse teams within the English Department. Reaching an equilibrium between the demands for complying with the assimilative prototype and the need to respond to the team's diverse perspectives appear to restrict the effectiveness of this level of leadership in relation to managing a collective identity.

The findings indicate that effectiveness of leaders here is perceived by the participants in terms of relational characteristics such as fairness, flexibility, individualised consideration, etc. (as presented in section 4.6.2 in the findings chapter). These characteristics of an effective leader seem to correspond more to the individual-oriented transformational leader schema. For leadership in this context to be effective with regards to establishing such a collective identity, the findings suggest that there are moderating factors that should be considered. These include the correspondence between the leader schema that is perceived to be required for leading the English Department context and the HoD appointed, the support of the senior leadership, the empowerment of the micro-level, and the enhancement of professional identity salience as to make it the higher-order identity that could establish cohesion within the English Department. As all these aspects are not within the current authority of the leadership team within the English Department, its efforts towards emphasising a collective identity seem to be limited by the central decision-making that makes engineering the multiple identities towards a higher order collective identity, that both values difference and maintains a level of cohesion, a challenging task.

## 6.2 Identity management for enhanced HE-market transition

While the Omani higher education has depended on a culturally diverse staff body since its inception, the demands for explicit management strategy about staff diversity seem to be stronger now with the echoes of Omanisation on the one hand and the further expansion of higher education on the other hand. Lumby and Morrison (2010) argue that the movement of people is parallel to the transferability of values and cultures to which these people subscribe. Being influenced by such influx, higher education is responsible for preparing students to interact with an increasingly globalising context. A key role of education in Oman is preparing global citizens through encouraging an appreciation of cultural diversity and establishing cultural dialogue (Philosophy of education in the Sultanate of Oman, 2017). Nonetheless, Al-Maamari (2014) argues that this aspect is inadequately provided for at school education level. As school education could only provide theoretical global citizenship education due to the higher cultural homogeneity characterising it, higher education with its cultural diversity provides a hands-on experience for students.

The demand for considering cultural diversity in higher education as an asset that requires proper management could thus provide a better transitional environment in the workplace. Whereas the workplace in the government sector has achieved a high level of Omanisation, the private sector is not equally pressured to do so even with the recent enforcement of Omanisation quota within the sector. Beside entrepreneurship (Yarahmadi & Magd, 2016), the private sector is increasingly becoming the main employment option for higher education graduates with the high saturation with Omanis in the government sector (Al-Lamki, 1998). The private sector is characterised by higher cultural diversity relative to the public sector as 82% of the workers are non-Omani (Bel-Air, 2015).

Hence, it is timely to consider the staff cultural diversity in higher education as a bridge that could ease such a transition. A culturally diverse academic environment has the potential to ease the transition of graduates to the culturally diverse private sector and thus enable them to acquire the cultural competence which they currently inadequately possess (Al-Harhi & Al-Harhi, 2012). In fact, such an outward view has been initiated already with adopting English as a medium of instruction. Building intercultural communication competence is an objective of ELT (Zhang, 2017). Besides, global relations at

institutional level have been encouraged through establishing academic affiliations for promoting the quality of higher education provision in Oman (Baporikar & Ali Shah, 2012). In brief, considering cultural diversity as an asset and managing it well through better integration has the potential to enhance students' intercultural skills that ease their integration in the culturally diverse market after graduation. Previous research (e.g. Van Der Zee et al., 2004) points out that building intercultural skills is related to individual performance and well-being in highly culturally diverse contexts.

### **6.3 Identity management for sustainable intellectual capital**

In a similar vein, the Omani higher education that is seen as a tool for enabling the diversification of the Omani economy from oil-based to knowledge-based can only face the demands for managing staff diversity. This is especially so with the yet insufficient local academic capacity. How organisations manage cultural diversity moderates the effects of cultural diversity on group processes (Cox & Blake, 1991). Better management of cultural diversity enables making use of its functional advantages to promote performance and educational outcomes. Wider perspectives for solving problems, creativity and innovation in teaching, building networks, specialised skills and interests (Schneider & Northcraft, 1999) are all fruits that the Omani higher education could reap with the adoption of a perspective that makes such advantages attainable. In fact, the quest for capability and expertise is a driving feature of a knowledge-based economy which urges us to think of cultural diversity as a means for building intellectual capital that facilitates establishing knowledge-based economy. Viewing cultural diversity as a means for building intellectual capital requires viewing cultural diversity from a learning and effectiveness perspective. Lorbiecki (2001:346) summarises that this perspective 'sees people not in terms of what they look like, or where they come from, but through incorporating their different, important and competitively relevant knowledge and perspectives about how to actually do work, learnt from being members of different identity groups'. While such a perspective has largely been discussed in relation to business, it is of great value for knowledge-based economies where higher education and market define each other.

Kelly (2004:610) argues that value in knowledge-based economy is associated with managing intellectual capital represented partially by viewing staff as

thinking capital that could engender intellectual capital by transferring knowledge from tacit form residing in the minds of individuals to explicit form that could provide a basis for new learning. This suggests that professional staff in higher education are an asset that (when managed well) could contribute to enhancing practices and provision by the multiple perspectives they could bring. In his typology of intellectual capital for schools, Kelly (2004) suggests that there are three means for teachers to generate intellectual capital:

- competences: related to the knowledge and skills earned through formal education and which could manifest in 'problem-solving ability, technical/academic knowledge, and managerial and human relations skills' (p.619),
- attitudes: which is related to the motivation to invest these competences for the advantage of the institution rather than personal interests
- and intellectual agility: related to the agency teachers have to apply their competences to different situations through techniques of imitation, adaptation, and innovation.

While Kelly (2004) presents these three components as parallel forms of human capital, a social identity perspective would suggest that for competent teachers to invest themselves for the interest of the group (the HEI in this context), they would need to have the attitude that makes them do so. This happens when one identifies with the group and perceives it as a salient form of self-concept (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). Thus, attitude could mediate the effect of competence on creating an intellectual capital through knowledge transformation. Benefiting the organisation as a whole through sharing knowledge with other individuals or contributing to improving practices requires cooperation. Cooperation and trust between culturally diverse staff members could be hampered by the salience of individual self that makes one work on a self-interest basis rather than on group-oriented manner. Kelly (2004) suggests that organisations cannot do much about this form of capital as it is very much individual-dependent. The SIA, however, argues that transforming self-concept from personal to collective could address this limitation. Ellemers, De Gilder and Haslam (2004:461) stress that 'a self-conception in collective terms would energize people to exert themselves on behalf of the group, facilitate the direction of efforts towards collective (instead of individual) outcomes, and help workers sustain their loyalty to the team or organization through times in which

this is not individually rewarding'. Nonetheless, Kramer (2006) argues that for individuals to identify with a collective group and produce group-oriented behaviour, salience of contextual cues is an antecedent. When a collective identity is made salient, perceptual, motivational, and evaluative behaviours become guided by the norms underlying the collective identity.

Hence, HEIs could engage in transformational enterprise to make organisational collective identity salient through following the identity management strategies advocated by Steffens et al. (2014). In such a case, attitudes could be reconceptualised to serve the HEIs and work as a means for transferring competences into intellectual capital. On the other hand, the findings of the current study suggest that the employment of competences at the academic context level could only happen if individuals are empowered to do so through reduced centralisation of decision-making. High centralisation and low teacher intellectual agility could hinder such investment in competences. Thus, empowerment is another means for enabling the establishment of intellectual capital where individual selves are given a space and agency within the organisational context.

In light of Kelly's (2004) intellectual capital typology, Omani higher education could utilise cultural diversity for sustained intellectual capital following the HE intellectual capital model depicted in Figure 6.2. In brief, this model suggests that investing in professional staff functional and informational competences that underlie their cultural diversity could enable the Omani HEIs to make use of their competences for establishing intellectual capital that enhances educational processes and outcomes. This happens when staff members' tacit knowledge and experiences are transformed into explicit knowledge that is shared and utilised within the HEIs. This process is mediated by factors at the level of the leadership of the HEIs that moderate the effects of intellectual agility and attitude capital. The latter factors, in turn, mediate the process of intellectual capital establishment. Hence, staff empowerment and identity management are two main leadership practices that are necessary for enabling intellectual agility and attitude capital that in turn mediate the process of establishing intellectual capital through knowledge transfer (tacit to explicit).

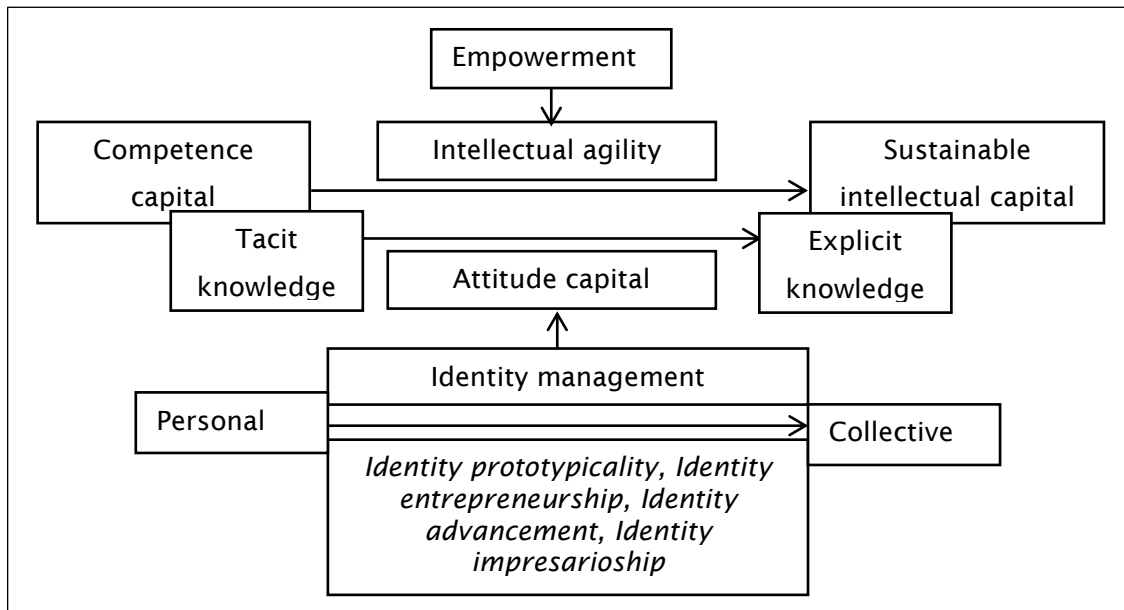


Figure 6-2: HE intellectual capital model

In the Social identity Approach, the salience of a comparative context makes group members accentuate their perception of the difference of the out-group relative to the in-group which they perceive as more homogenous under the effect of attenuation of between-members difference. This perception of similarity within a group is what makes members identify with the group as a perception of self. This suggests that in practice, leadership could focus on behaviour that enhances this perception of similarity between organizational group members so that it increases their identification with the organizational collective identity. The findings of the current study suggest that in practice, identity management processes could focus on a number of processes such as staff recruitment, staff retention, staff empowerment, and staff professional development.

- Recruitment standards

Qualified international faculty should be sought after especially with the expressed worries about the quality of higher education and its graduates in Oman and the GCC generally (Shah, 2017). Increased social identification is related to the perception of commonality among the group members according to the SIA. Hence, establishing commonality upon recruitment through following unified recruitment standards reduces the cost of identity transformation. In relation to the specific context of ELT and with the prevailing perception of inequality associated with the NEST vs. non-NEST, observing unified recruitment standards reduces the chances of perceptions of inequality. Similar standards of



employment and scrutiny of academic qualifications should be observed to promote equal distinctiveness and enhance professional practices. Besides, a review by Bryman (2007) suggests that recruiting and retaining well established academics enhances perception of leader effectiveness and enhanced institutional reputation. This, in turn, enhances the organisational social capital.

- Staff retention

Wilkin, de Jong and Rubino (2018) assert that temporary staff members could be financially less costly and could bring direct benefits but they could undermine team functioning. With the propensity towards externalising risk in organisations (DiTomaso & Hooijberg, 1996) and reducing costs related to HRM procedures (Schibik & Harrington, 2004), employing temporary staff through outsourced recruitments could be cost-efficient. However, as the aim of higher education is building knowledge-based capital, financial cost should not be the main gauge. This study provides evidence that high staff turnover is negatively influencing diversity climate and hindering collective identity formation. This is also consistent with previous findings that suggest that tenure moderates the effects of diversity (van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). The study reveals that most of the negative effects of cultural diversity within the staff are associated with the instability of the staff body. Temporary staff could have fewer social networks, could be less sought after as a source of advice in contract blended teams, and could have negative effects on team effectiveness (Wilkin et al. (2018). Hence, employing temporary staff hinders collective identity formation, which obstructs intellectual capital building. On the other hand, staff retention through longer tenures helps building intellectual capacity.

- Empowering micro-level

For teachers to be able to exert their competences for the organisation's interest, they need to have a level of agency. Intellectual capital could be enhanced by devolving academic power to the micro level so that innovation, imitation, and adaptation processes (Kelly, 2004) could take place. Moreover, with decreasing the need for conformity through increasing teacher empowerment, teachers could reach a balance between identity differentiation and social inclusion (Brewer, 1991) that could enhance their identification with the group and their willingness to stay longer. This could also enhance teacher retention and accountability through increasing ownership and group embodiment. Lumby et al. (2007)

contend that more dispersed practices of leadership and less centralisation gives room to diversity to be more effective. For the particular context of CAS, devolving a level of academic leadership to the level of each college might increase group distinctiveness in relation to the other CAS campuses and thus enhance collective organizational identification at the level of each campus. This is parallel to the SIA prediction that the salience of a comparison context increases group identification among members and thus sustains member' motivation to maintain the group distinctiveness in comparison to other groups (Ellemers et al., 2004).

- Professional development

A high level of professionalism could be a substitute for leadership in higher education departments as Bryman (2007) outlines. Thus, focusing on promoting teacher professionalism enhances the salience of collective/organisational identity and thus enhances intellectual capital. For increased cohesion that could lead to collective identification, staff members should be trained on intercultural dialogue where they work together and learn from each other based on task interdependence. Task interdependence could then lead to social group formation (Rabbie et al., 1989; Turner, 1999). As for leaders, they need to be trained to lead effectively in diversity contexts and to gain the skills, confidence, and flexibility required (Cheng et al., 2009; Shaban, 2016). Traditional management skills are not enough to function effectively in such a context and organisational awareness of such a demand is essential. Continuous professional development should be a right for all staff so that intellectual capital is enhanced. Effective diversity management requires finding a climate where all employees feel that they are equal despite their differences (Rosenauer et al., 2016).

## **6.4 Empirical implications**

The study is an original contribution to knowledge in that it applies the SIA to generate evidence from the under researched Omani higher education context. Investigating prototype-based social identity within the Omani context sheds light on the cultural gap between higher education and the societal context in Oman. Using a text analysis presented in section 2.4.2 of the literature review, the study contributes to knowledge by exploring the applicability of the SIA as a conceptual framework for studying diversity in the Omani context. The analysis highlights

the ontological differences between the SIA conceptualisation of prototype-based social identity and that of the Islamic perspective. By applying the SIA to the higher education context, the study highlights the gap between the Islamic values and the organisational practices. The emphasis on collective identity based on communication, fairness, and merit-based leadership in the Islamic perspective does not optimally apply in the higher education context where categorisation is salient. In such a context, the overarching identity is defined in terms of linguistic and national terms that set Omanis as most prototypical. On the other hand, the effectiveness of this prototypicality is rather curtailed by the high centralisation that renders the hierarchy the main actor that shapes group context rather than qualification or competence at the group level. This echoes the phenomenon of 'doublethink' characterising management practices in organisational contexts in the current Islamic societies as emphasised by Almoharby (2010) and Kirk and Napier (2009).

This study also contributes to bridging the gap between educational leadership and other disciplines in relation to the study of diversity. By adopting a social psychological conceptual framework to shed light on the group dynamics in culturally diverse educational teams, the study responds to Lumby and Morrison's (2010) call for widening the scope of educational leadership research by integrating theory from other disciplines especially in relation to the study of diversity. By doing this, the study also integrates the use of methodology commonly used in management/leadership research to explore both diversity and leadership from a social psychological perspective that traditionally employed mainly experimental and post-positivistic methods for researching group and identity. Such integration enabled the study to construct a nuanced picture of actual group processes and view identity as a dynamic rather than a static construct.

Moreover, it enabled deeply investigating perceived/subjective diversity where the researcher sets themselves free from the limits of positivistic approaches that operationalise diversity in terms of specific objective categories at the onset of the investigation. It also sets them free from the limits imposed by intersectionality theory, which by default associates disadvantage with specific categories. To this end, the study also bridges the gap between the SIA and intersectionality theory highlighted in Powell et al. (2015) by integrating

principles from the two approaches to study identity at the workplace. The study brings the SIA and the intersectionality perspective closer through focusing on the concept of identity as a dynamic construct, the concept of salience as shaped by intersectionality, and the concept of prototype as complex and multidimensional.

In addition, through using the salience concept in an academic workplace, the study provides support for expanding intersectionality foci to examine identity as perceived in relation to the research context and thus allowing for identity effects to emerge from the context rather than ascribing advantage or disadvantage to a limited number of identities that currently dominate intersectionality research (Romero, 2017). In other words, the study employs the concept of identity intersectionality but allows for identities, their intersections, and their associated advantages or disadvantages to emerge through the data, which again emphasise the dynamic and context-specific construction of identity and its effects. It also enables the analysis to consider the role of power in defining identity which is an aspect that has been neglected in social psychological research (Zanoni et al., 2010).

Moreover, the study is an original contribution to the field of English language teaching management. It provides a discipline-based exploration of identity and leadership in a context where language is an identity nexus between the discipline level and the individual level. Such a nexus seems to affect whether language teaching is seen as a professional identity that could provide a basis for collective identity or an individual identity that sets power differentials along NEST versus non-NEST lines. This is especially important that ELT here operates within a context that emphasises localising the workforce. Such a political context sets nationality as another main player in the game of power. Thus, this study also provides evidence that discipline could have a bearing on how culturally diverse teams function. While discipline generally provide a basis for establishing group identity because, in principle, it represents a commonality that shapes the ideas and behaviours of those affiliating with it, the research suggests that the case in relation to ELT is different. However, the role of discipline in shaping diversity climate might differ in relation to other disciplines. Mathematics or Science, for example, might have less influence on shaping power relations within group members because they could provide a salient basis for social identity; but, this requires an empirical evidence. Thus, replicating this study in relation to other disciplines is worthwhile.

## 6.5 Theoretical implications

The study contributes to knowledge by indicating that in organisational groups, group prototype—as the presentation of group identity—is not only a function of the group itself (as most of the SIA research conceptualises it) but also the identities of the individuals within the group and the wider organisational context within which it is embedded. This suggests that in hierarchal systems, there is a need for conceptualising group identity as a multi-level construct rather than a uni-level one. Previous research (e.g. Horton et al., 2014) suggests that patterns of identification are related to individual's position in the hierarchy but the current study suggests that higher levels of hierarchy partially constitute the identity of the lower levels by informing behaviour and partially constructing group prototype. This implies that looking at how the hierarchy-level-based group identities constitute each other is important for understanding how organisational group prototype is constructed. This is in line with the assertion of Spears (2011:203) that 'it is [...] important to take into account the nature of the social structure in which people and groups are embedded, and their position in that structure'. While the Social identity Theory initially focused on the study of intergroup relations and the effect of the comparative contexts within the social structure where a group is positioned, much of the later research within the Self Categorisation Theory focuses on the intragroup level only and thus studied groups in isolation of their contexts. Thus, this study is a call for directing the focus to the hierarchical structures within which work groups are embedded in organizational contexts especially in higher education contexts where managerialism is increasingly manifesting itself.

Within the group context and by looking at identity as a complex anatomy rather than 'a neat package of atomistic identities waiting to be awakened by the appropriate salience stimulus' (Powell et al., 2015:523), the study further emphasises the significance of identity intersectionality and the complexity associated with the concept of 'salience' as applied to natural groups. To illustrate this, the findings of this study suggest that within the research context being an Omani implicitly means being a non-NEST who is employed through permanent contract because of meeting certain qualification standards. Thus, aspects of identity simultaneously constitute and define each other (Levon, 2015). By understanding salience in terms of the relevance of one aspect of identity only (as is the case with most SIA positivistic and post-positivistic research), we

actually only focus on the tip of the iceberg and choose to ignore the huge body underneath.

The study contributes to theory by emphasising the need for revisiting the concept of 'leader's emergence' in a diversity context. Leader's emergence in diversity context could be along historically prejudiced identities such as national group or linguistic group rather than genuine leadership competences that are conducive towards establishing a higher-order inclusive identity. This echoes Lumby's (2005:34) argument that '[emergent leadership is [...]] intimately linked with notions of ethnocentrism, prejudice and discrimination'. To avoid sustaining the effects of intergroup relations on leadership selection and legitimacy, capability and competence rather than 'group prototypicality' should define leaders. This brings back the notion of leadership schema or leadership prototypes where leadership is defined in relation to competences and values required in relation to certain task. Leadership schema represents a better measure of leadership effectiveness in culturally diverse groups where group identification is low (Fielding & Hogg, 1997).

The study also contributes to theory by highlighting the need for contextualising the concept of effective leadership at the system level. In highly centralised hierarchical systems, leaders' ability to function as identity entrepreneurs is limited by the authority they have to embark on activities that establish the collective identity of the group. Hence, leaders' effectiveness as identity entrepreneurs (as defined by the SIA) is not only mediated by group salience and members' identification with the— as the SIMOL model suggests— but also by the authority endowed to the leader to manage collective identity. Hence, the conceptualisation of leadership effectiveness in terms of Steffens et al. (2014) criteria applies to transformational leaders who have the power and authority to manage a group's identity (usually top level leaders in hierarchal structures) but the effectiveness of leaders in the lower levels of the organisation is limited by their positions within the organisational hierarchy. Thus, the nature of the structure within which the team leader is embedded is an important consideration for conceptualising effective leadership in terms of identity management.

## 6.6 Limitations and recommendations for future research

This study conceptualises group at the level of the English Department and thus focuses on the effects of perceived diversity at this level. The findings, however, emphasise the relevance of the macro level and the meso level in shaping behaviour at this level given the nature of the hierarchical structure. Hence, while evidence is triangulated through the use of various research methods, the triangulation of the participant groups did not include those two other levels that influence the functioning of the English Department. Future research in relation to cultural diversity within workgroups could investigate the perspectives of the other leadership levels that influence the functioning of the micro-level given the centralisation of the system.

Moreover, the conceptual framework of the study highlights the importance of time for social identification to take place in natural groups. Previous research emphasises that time affects value cohesion which influences social identification (Fielding & Hogg, 1997; Messarra, 2014). However, this research follows a case study approach to the exploration. A case study design is used because of the aim to explore the effect of diversity on leadership and other group process and dynamics within the context of the research. Thus, future research focusing mainly on identification could follow a longitudinal approach that could help establish the specific milestones that affect such reconstructions of identity over time. Future research focusing mainly on identification could follow the recommendation of Ashforth and Mael (1989:34) which suggests that longitudinal designs could help establish ‘(a) how the antecedents [of organisational identification interact to influence identification, (b) what antecedents (if any) are necessary or sufficient, (c) the sequencing and timing of effects, and (d) if threshold conditions exist’.

This study focuses more on the social/group aspects of diversity rather than the individual level. The findings indicate that linguistic diversity could have psychological effects on culturally diverse groups such as divergence strategies that promote authoritative language choices and perception of power expression (especially by team leaders). It is not within the scope of this research to deeply investigate how language use stands as a marker of identity. It would be an interesting area for future research to focus on the aspect of language within the linguistically diverse ELT context and to reveal the ways by which identity is reinforced through linguistic choices. Future research in relation to ELT and

leadership could focus on this aspect guided by Giles and Johnson's (1987) ethnolinguistic identity theory which is based on the SIA.

The study provides evidence that the different tracks of employment could influence commitment and motivation among teachers because of its influence on employment security. As these aspects could directly influence teaching, it could be interesting to investigate the effect of contractual diversity on teaching as perceived by the students. Such a focus is beyond the scope of this study but it is important to consider the view of students being a main stakeholder in the process of teaching and learning.

## **6.7 Concluding overview**

This case study employed the Social Identity Approach to explore the context of a culturally diverse group with a view to understand the effect of diversity on group dynamics and on the construction of identities. The study contributes to the existing knowledge about leadership in culturally diverse contexts by unravelling some of the complex nature of the 'prototype' concept being a nexus between group identity and leadership and a basis for the two in light of the SIA.

The study shows that by focusing on natural group dynamics and the perceptions of the group members in natural groups rather than ad hoc ones, it appears that the mere categorisation of people into a group is not enough for them to perceive themselves as belonging to one social identity as initially claimed by the SIA (Mor Barak, 2008). The findings highlight the role of the organisational hierarchy, the group cultural composition, and the professional discipline in shaping the diversity context in the research context. By analysing real group dynamics, the study provides in-depth understanding about the effect of diversity on group processes and dynamics. The study is a construction of reality shaped by the accounts of the participants that are triangulated by other sources of data within a case study design. It further stresses the socially constructed nature of diversity and calls for more emphasis on under-researched contexts that could enrich knowledge with context-specific evidence.



## List of References

- Abbas, A. (1995). Cultural discontinuity and Arab management thought. *International Studies of Management & Organizations*, 25(3), 7–30.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307/40397307>
- Adarves-Yorno, I., Postmes, T., & Haslam, S. (2006). Social identity and the recognition of creativity in groups. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 45(3), 479–497. <https://doi.org/10.1348/014466605X50184>
- Ahmad, H., Fatmawati, L., Shah, S., & Wahab, M. (2017). Exploring the construction of professional selves of non-native EFL teachers at a Saudi Arabian University. *Arab World English Journal*, 8(44), 148–166.  
<https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol8no4.10>
- Al Ariss, A. (2014). Voicing experiences and perceptions of local managers: expatriation in the Arab Gulf. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 25(14), 1978–1994.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2013.870288>
- Al Balushi, A. (2012). *Leadership of private universities and colleges in the Sultanate of Oman*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Southampton.
- Al Fahdi, S., & Swailes, S. (2009). *Barriers to human resource development in the public sector of the Sultanate of Oman*. Retrieved from <http://www.ufhrd.co.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/2-19-refereed-paper.pdf>
- Al Ghailani, R. (2005). *Equal employment opportunity in public office in principle and practice: an empirical study of the Omani civil service*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Hull.
- Al Ghatrifi, Y. (2016). *The professional development of teachers in higher education in Oman: A case study of English teachers in the Colleges of Applied Sciences*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Reading.
- Al Shmeli, S. (2011). Tertiary education in Oman: catching up rabidly. In M. Martin & T. M. Bray (Eds.), *Tertiary education in small states: planning*

- in the context of globalization* (pp. 181–191). Unesco Pub.: International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Al'Abri, K. (2011). The impact of globalization on education policy of developing countries: Oman as an example. *Literacy Information and Computer Education Journal (LICEJ)*, 2(4), 491–502.
- Al'Abri, K. (2016). Internationalisation of higher education in Oman: practices of affiliation and accreditation. *A Conference Paper Presented in ECER 2016, Leading Education: The Distinct Contributions of Educational Research and Researchers*. Retrieved from <http://www.eera-ecer.de/ecer-programmes/conference/21/contribution/36992/>
- Al-Araimi, M. (2012). *The relationship between the Full Range of Leadership Styles and employees' creative performance in civil service organizations: A field study of Omani civil service managers*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Manchester.
- Albadri, N. (2012). *The influence of societal and organizational culture on employment equity: the case of the public sector in the Sultanate of Oman*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Manchester.
- Al-Barwani, T., & Albeely, T. (2007). The Omani family. *Marriage & Family Review*, 41(1-2), 119–142.
- Al-Barwani, T., Chapman, D., & Ameen, H. (2009). Strategic brain drain: implications for higher education in Oman. *Higher Education Policy*, 22(4), 415–432. <https://doi.org/10.1057/hep.2009.1>
- Alenazi, O. (2014). *The employment of native and non-native speaker EFL teachers in Saudi higher education institutions: programme administrators' perspective*. Doctoral dissertation, Newcastle University.
- Alexander, H. (2006). A view from somewhere: explaining the paradigms of educational research. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9752.2006.00502.x>

- Alghofaili, N., & Elyas, T. (2017). Decoding the myths of the native and non-native English speakers teachers (NESTs & NNESTs) on Saudi EFL tertiary students. *English Language Teaching*, 10(6).
- Al-Hamadi, A., Budhwar, P., & Shipton, H. (2007). Management of human resources in Oman. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 18(January), 100–113.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09585190601068383>
- Al-Harthi, A., & Al-Harthi, H. (2012). Perceptions of the demand for cultural diversity in the Omani workplace and its availability among secondary school students. In Tchibozo G. (Ed.), *Cultural and Social Diversity and the Transition from Education to Work. Technical and Vocational Education and Training: Issues, Concerns and Prospects* (vol 17, pp. 37–54). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Al-Issa, A. (2005a). An ideological discussion of the impact of the NNESTs' English language knowledge on ESL policy implementation. *Asian EFL Journal*, 7(3).
- Al-Issa, A. (2005b). The role of English language culture in the Omani language education system: an ideological perspective. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 18(3), 258–270.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07908310508668746>
- Al-Issa, A. (2006a). Ideologies governing teaching the language skills in the Omani ELT system. *Journal of Language and Learning*, 4(2), 218–231.
- Al-Issa, A. (2006b). The cultural and economic politics of English language teaching in Sultanate of Oman. *Asian EFL Journal*, 8(1), 194–218.
- Al-Lamki, S. (1998). Barriers to Omanization in the private sector: the perceptions of Omani graduates. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 9(2), 377–400.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/095851998341143>

- Al-Lamky, A. (2007). Feminizing leadership in Arab societies: the perspectives of Omani female leaders. *Women In Management Review*, 22(1), 49–67. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09649420710726229>
- Allen, R., Dawson, G., Wheatley, K., & White, C. (2007). Perceived diversity and organizational performance. *Employee Relations*, 30(1), 20–33. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01425450810835392>
- Al-Maamari, S. (2014). Education for developing a global Omani citizen: current practices and challenges. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 2(3). <https://doi.org/10.11114/jets.v2i3.399>
- Al-Mahrooqi, R., & Tuzlukova, V. (2014). English communication skills and employability in the Arabian Gulf: The case of Oman. *Pertanika Journal of Social Science and Humanities*, 22(2), 473–488.
- Almoharby, D. (2010). Shuratic decision- making practice: a case of the Sultanate of Oman. *Humanomics*, 26(1), 4–17. <https://doi.org/10.1108/08288661011024968>
- Almoharby, D., & Neal, M. (2013). Clarifying Islamic perspectives on leadership. *Education, Business and Society: Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues*, 6(3/4), 148–161. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EBS-02-2011-0008>
- Al-Sadi, H. (2012). Giving voice to the voiceless: learner autonomy as a tool to enhance quality in teaching and learning in higher education in Oman. In *Oman Quality Network Regional Conference on Quality Management & Enhancement in Higher Education*. Muscat.
- Altbach, P. (2011a). Oman's academic dreams. *International Higher Education*, 64, 3–4.
- Altbach, P. (2011b). Reforming higher education in the Middle East- and elsewhere. *International Higher Education*, 64(1), 2–3.

- Andersen, S., & Moynihan, D. (2016). How leaders respond to diversity: the moderating role of organizational culture on performance information use. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 26(3), 448–460. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muv038>
- Anderson, C. (1996). Understanding the inequality problematic: from scholarly rhetoric to theoretical reconstruction. *Gender and Society*, 10(6), 729–746. <https://doi.org/10.1177/089124396010006004>
- Anderson, C., & Brown, C. (2010). The functions and dysfunctions of hierarchy. *Research in Organizational Behavior*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.riob.2010.08.002>
- Ashforth, B., & Johnson, S. (2001). Which hat to wear? The relative salience of multiple identities in organizational contexts. In M. Hogg & D. Terry (Eds.), *Social identity processes in organizational contexts* (pp. 31–48). New York: Psychology Press.
- Ashforth, E., & Mael, F. (1989). Social identity theory and the organization. *The Academy of Management Review*, 14(1), 20–39.
- Austin, A., Chapman, D., Farah, S., Wilson, E., & Ridge, N. (2014). Expatriate academic staff in the United Arab Emirates: the nature of their work experiences in higher education institutions. *Higher Education*, 68(4), 541–557. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-014-9727-z>
- Avanzi, L., Fraccaroli, F., Sarchielli, G., Ullrich, J., & van Dick, R. (2014). Staying or leaving: a combined social identity and social exchange approach to predicting employee turnover intentions. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, 63(3), 272–289. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-02-2013-0028>
- Aycan, Z., Al-Hamadi, A., Davis, A., & Budhwar, P. (2007). Cultural orientations and preferences for HRM policies and practices: the case of Oman. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 18, 11–32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585190601068243>

- Ayub, N., & Jehn, K. (2006). National diversity and conflict in multinational workgroups. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 17(3), 181–202. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10444060610742317>
- Azmitia, M., Syed, M., & Radmacher, K. (2008). On the intersection of personal and social identities: introduction and evidence from a longitudinal study of emerging adults. In M. Azmitia, M. Syed, & K. Radmacher (Eds.), *The intersections of personal and social identities* (pp. 1–16). Wiley Periodicals, Inc.
- Badke-Schaub, P., Neumann, A., & Lauche, K. (2011). An observation-based method for measuring the sharedness of mental models in teams. In M. Margarete Boos, M. Kolbe, & P. Kappeler (Eds.), *Coordination in Human & Primate Groups*. (pp. 37–56). Berlin Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag.
- Baillie, L. (2013). Enhancing observational data in qualitative research. *Nurse Researcher*, 20(5), 4–5.
- Baporikar, N., & Ali Shah, I. (2012). Quality of higher education in 21st Century : a case of Oman. *Journal of Education and Industrial Studies in the World*, 2(2 (May)), 9–18. Retrieved from <http://www.wjeis.org/FileUpload/ds217232/File/02.baporikar.pdf>
- Barth-Farkas, F., & Vera, A. (2017). Leader prototypicality and displayed power in the public sector: an empirical analysis of its impact on leader endorsement and trust in the German police forces. A paper presented in the 14th Biennial Public Management Research Conference, June 8-10, 2017, The American University School of Public Affairs, Washington, DC.
- Bass, B., & Avolio, B. (1993). Transformational leadership and organizational culture. *Public Administration Quarterly*, 17(1), 112–121. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01900699408524907>
- Bassey, M. (2012). Case studies. In A. Briggs, M. Coleman, & M. Morrison (Eds.), *Research methods in educational leadership & management*

- (3rd ed., pp. 155–169). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Bassy, M. (1999). *Case study research in educational settings*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). *Qualitative case study methodology: study design and implementation for novice researchers*. *The Qualitative Report* (Vol. 13). <https://doi.org/10.2174/1874434600802010058>
- Bayyurt, Y. (2018). Equity and inclusivity and non-native English-speaking teachers. In J. Lontas (Ed.), *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching*. New Jersey, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Bel-Air, F. (2015). *Demography, migration, and the labour market in Oman*. Explanatory Note No. 9/2015, Gulf Labour Market and Migration (GLMM) programme of the Migration Policy Center (MPC) and the Gulf Research Center (GRC), <http://gulfmigration.eu>.
- Billig, M. (1976). Social identity and social categorization. In M. Billig (Ed.), *Social psychology and intergroup relations* (pp. 322–369). London: Academic Press.
- Blackwell, L., Snyder, L., & Mavriplis, C. (2009). Diverse faculty in STEM fields: Attitudes, performance, and fair treatment. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 2(4), 195–205. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0016974>
- Bolden, R., Petrov, G., & Gosling, J. (2008). Tensions in higher education leadership: towards a multi-level model of leadership practice. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 62(4), 358–376. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2273.2008.00398.x>
- Brandt, C., & Dixon, C. (2010). Culture matters: issues in the adaptation of expatriate academics to GCC host societies. *International Journal of Arts and Sciences*, 3(17), 347–361.
- Brannen, J. (2005). Mixed methods research: a discussion paper. *ESRC National Centre for Research Methods*, 1–30.

[https://doi.org/10.1658/1100-9233\(2004\)015\[0085:SAAMIP\]2.0.CO;2](https://doi.org/10.1658/1100-9233(2004)015[0085:SAAMIP]2.0.CO;2)

Brewer, M. (1991). The social self: on being the same and different at the same time. *PSPB*, 17(5), 475–482.

Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2015). *Interviews: learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (3rd ed.). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Brundrett, M., & Rhodes, C. (2014). *Researching educational leadership and management* (1st ed.). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Bryman, A. (2007). Effective leadership in higher education: a literature review. *Studies in Higher Education*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070701685114>

Bush, T. (2017). Leadership and context: why one-size does not fit all. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 1–2.

Busher, H., & James, N. (2012). The ethical framework of research practice. In A. Briggs, M. Coleman, & M. Morrison (Eds.), *Research methods in educational leadership & management* (3rd ed., pp. 90–104). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Chemers, M. (2001). Leadership effectiveness: an integrative review. In M. Hogg & R. Tindale (Eds.), *Blackwell handbook of social psychology: Group processes* (pp. 376–399). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Chen, D., Tigelaar, D., & Verloop, N. (2016). The intercultural identities of nonnative English teachers: an overview of research worldwide. *Asian Education Studies*, 1(2), 9–25.

Cheng, G., Fielding, K., Hogg, M., & Terry, D. (2009). Reactions to procedural discrimination in an intergroup context: the role of group membership of the authority. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 12(4), 463–478. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430209105041>

Chinh, D. (2013). Cultural diversity in english language teaching: learners'



- voices. *English Language Teaching*, 6(4), 1–7.  
<https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n4p1>
- Christian, J., Porter, L., & Moffitt, G. (2006). Workplace diversity and group relations: an overview. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 9(4), 459–466. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430206068431>
- Christians, C. (2008). Ethics and politics in qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 185–220). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Clark, E., & Paran, A. (2007). The employability of non-native-speaker teachers of EFL: a UK survey. *System*, 35(4), 407–430.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2007.05.002>
- Clarke, M., Hyde, A., & Drennan, J. (2013). Professional identity in higher education. In *The Academic Profession in Europe: New Tasks and New Challenges* (Vol. 5, pp. 7–21). [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-4614-5\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-4614-5_2)
- Clegg, S. (2008). Academic identities under threat? *British Educational Research Journal*, 34(3), 329–345.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01411920701532269>
- Cole, M., & Bruch, H. (2006). Organizational identity strength, identification, and commitment and their relationships to turnover intention: does organizational hierarchy matter? *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 27(5), 585–605.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/job.378>
- Coleman, M. (2012). Interviews. In A. Briggs, M. Coleman, & M. Morrison (Eds.), *Research methods in educational leadership & management* (3rd ed., pp. 250–265). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Common, R. (2011). Barriers to developing “leadership” in the Sultanate of Oman. *International Journal of Leadership Studies*, 6(2), 215–228.
- Cox, T. (1994). *Cultural diversity in organizations: theory, research and*

*practice*. San Francisco: CA: Berrett-Koehler.

Cox, T., & Blake, S. (1991). Diversity: managing cultural implications for competitiveness organizational. *The Executive (Academy of Management)*, 5(3), 45–56.  
<https://doi.org/10.5465/AME.1991.4274465>

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241–1299. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039>

Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Creswell, J. (2014). *Research design* (4th ed.). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Davis, J. (2014). Social capital and social identity : trust and conflict. *Social Capital and Economics*, 1–16.

Dickson-Swift, V., James, E., & Liamputtong, P. (2008). *Undertaking sensitive research in the health and social sciences: managing boundaries, emotions, and risks*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

DiTomaso, N., & Hooijberg, R. (1996). Diversity and the demands of leadership. *Leadership Quarterly*, 7(2), 163–187.  
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843\(96\)90039-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(96)90039-9)

Donn, G., & Issan, S. (2007). Higher Education in Transition: Gender and Change in the Sultanate of Oman. *Scottish Educational Review*, 39(2), 173–185.

Doody, O., & Noonan, M. (2013). Preparing and conducting interviews to collect data. *Nurse Researcher*, 20(5), 28–32.  
<https://doi.org/10.7748/nr2013.05.20.5.28.e327>

- Dowling-Hetherington, L. (2013). The changing shape of university decision-making processes and the consequences for faculty participation in Ireland. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 19(3), 219–232. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13583883.2013.790071>
- Drakulic□, M. (2013). Foreign language teacher competences as perceived by English language and literature students. *Journal of Education Culture and Society*, 158–165.
- Ellemers, N., De Gilder, D., & Haslam, A. (2004). Motivating individuals and groups at work: a social identity perspective on leadership and group performance. *Academy of Management Review*. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMR.2004.13670967>
- Elmir, R., Schmied, V., Jakson, D., & Wilkes, L. (2011). Interviewing people about potentially sensitive topics. *Nurese Researcher*, 19(1), 12–16.
- Ennis, C., & Al-Jamali, R. (2014). Elusive employment development planning and labour market trends in Oman. *Middle East and North Africa*. Retrieved from <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/elusive-employment-development-planning-and-labour-market-trends-oman>
- Feilzer, M. (2010). Doing mixed methods research pragmatically: implications for the redicover of pragmatism as a research paradigm. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 4(1), 6–16. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689809349691>
- Fielding, K., & Hogg, M. (1997). Social identity, self-categorization, and leadership: a field study of small interactive groups. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 1(1), 39–51.
- Finley, S. A. (2010). An identity-based understanding of intergroup conflict. *Contemporary Justice Review: Issues in Criminal, Social, and Restorative Justice*, 13(4), 425–441. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10282580.2010.517977>

- Fitzgerald, T. (2012). Documents and documentary analysis. In A. Briggs, M. Coleman, & M. Morrison (Eds.), *Research methods in educational leadership & management* (3rd ed., pp. 296–308). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Fitzmaurice, M. (2013). Constructing professional identity as a new academic: a moral endeavour. *Studies in Higher Education*, 38(4), 613–622. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2011.594501>
- Flick, U. (2007). *Analysing qualitative data*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2004). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. In C. Seale, G. Gobo, J. Gubrium, & D. Silverman (Eds.), *Qualitative research practice* (First, pp. 420–434). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Forstenlechner, I. (2010). Expats and citizens: managing diverse teams in the Middle East. *Team Performance Management*, 16(5/6), 237–241. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13527591011071322>
- Gaertner, S., Rust, M., Dovidio, J., Bachman, B., & Anastasio, P. (1994). The contact hypothesis: the role of a common ingroup identity on reducing intergroup bias. *Small Group Research*, 25(2), 224–249.
- Gappa, J. M. (2008). Today's majority: faculty outside the tenure system. *Change*, 40(4), 50–55. <https://doi.org/10.3200/CHNG.40.4.50-54>
- Gee, J. (2000). Identity as an analytic lens for research in education. *Review of Research in Education*, 25, 99–125.
- Geleta, A., & Amsale, F. (2016). An assessment of educational leaders' multicultural competences in Ethiopian public universities. *European Scientific Journal*, 12(10). Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1846400697?accountid=14548> %0Ahttps://julac.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/openurl/HKU\_ALMA/SERVICES\_PAGE??url\_ver=Z39.88-2004&rft\_val\_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&genre=article&sid=ProQ:ProQ%3AAbiologicalsciences&atitle=An

- Giles, H., & Johnson, P. (1987). Ethnolinguistic identity theory: a social psychological approach to language maintenance. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 1987(68).  
<https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl.1987.68.69>
- Gillham, B. (2000). *Case study research methods*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13398-014-0173-7.2>
- Gillham, B. (2008). *Observation techniques: structured to unstructured*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Givens, R. (2008). Transformational leadership: the impact on organizational and personal outcomes. *Emerging Leadership Journeys*, 1(1), 4–24.
- Greenwood, R. (2008). Intersectional political consciousness: appreciation for intragroup differences and solidarity in diverse groups. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 32(1), 36–47. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.2007.00405.x>
- Guba, E., & Lincoln, Y. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In K. Norman & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. pp. 105–117). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Guerrero, C., & Meadows, B. (2015). Global professional identity in deterritorialized spaces: a case study of a critical dialogue between expert and novice nonnative English speaker teachers. *PROFILE Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 17(2), 13–27.  
<https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v17n2.44194>
- Hamilton, L., & Corbett-Whittier, C. (2013). *Using case study in education research*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Haslam, N., Rothschild, L., & Ernst, D. (2000). Essentialist beliefs about social categories. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 39(1), 113–127.

<https://doi.org/10.1348/014466600164363>

Haslam, S. (2004). *Psychology in organizations: the social identity approach* (Second). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Haslam, S., & Platow, M. (2001). The link between leadership and followership: how affirming social identity translates vision into action. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27(11), 1469–1479.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672012711008>

Hawamdeh, S., & Raigangar, V. (2013). Qualitative interviewing: methodological challenges in Arab settings. *Nurse Researcher*, 21(3), 27–31. <https://doi.org/10.7748/nr2014.01.21.3.27.e357>

Hayati, N. (2010). Empowering non-native English speaking teachers. *TEFLIN Journal, Volume 21, Number 1, February 2010*, 21(1), 78–89.  
<https://doi.org/10.15639/TEFLINJOURNAL.V21I1/78-89>

Hayes, D. (2009). Non-native English-speaking teachers, context and English language teaching. *System*, 37(1), 1–11.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2008.06.001>

Hennink, M., Hutter, I., & Bailey, A. (2011). *Qualitative research methods*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Hentschel, T., Shemla, M., Wegge, J., & Kearney, E. (2013). Perceived diversity and team functioning: the role of diversity beliefs and affect. *Small Group Research*, 44(1), 33–61.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1046496412470725>

Herbst, T., & Conradie, P. (2011). Leadership effectiveness in higher education: managerial self-perceptions versus perceptions of others. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*.  
<https://doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v38i1.867>

Hobman, E. V, Bordia, P., & Gallois, C. (2012). Consequences of feeling dissimilar from others in a work team. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 17(3), 301–325.

<https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1022837207241>

Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: comparing values, behaviors, institutions and organizations across nations*. London: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Hogg, M. (2001). A social identity theory of leadership. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 5(3), 184–200.

Hogg, M. (2005a). Social identity and misuse of power: the dark side of leadership. *Brooklyn Law Review*, 70(4), 1239–1257.

Hogg, M. (2005b). The social identity perspective. In S. Wheelan (Ed.), *The handbook of group research and practice* (pp. 133–157). California: Sage Publications, Inc.

Hogg, M., & Abrams, D. (1998). *Social identification: a social psychology of intergroup relations and group processes*. New York: Routledge.

Hogg, M., Martin, R., Epitropaki, O., Mankad, A., Svensson, A., & Weeden, K. (2005). Effective leadership in salient groups: revisiting leader-member exchange theory from the perspective of the social identity theory of leadership. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, 31(7), 991–1004. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167204273098>

Hogg, M., & Reid, S. (2006). Social identity, self-categorization, and the communication of group norms. *Communication Theory*, 16(1), 7–30. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2006.00003.x>

Hogg, M., Van Knippenberg, D., & Rast, D. (2012). Intergroup leadership in organizations: leading across group and organizational boundaries. *Academy of Management Review*, 37(2), 232–255. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2010.0221>

Hogg, M., van Knippenberg, D., & Rast, D. (2012). The social identity theory of leadership: theoretical origins, research findings, and conceptual developments. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 23(1), 258–304. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10463283.2012.741134>

- Holstein, J., & Gubrium, J. (2004). The active interview. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative research: theory, method, and practice* (second, pp. 140–161). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Hornsey, M. (2008). Social identity theory and self-categorization theory: a historical review. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 2, 204–222. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2007.00066.x>
- Horton, K., McClelland, C., & Griffin, M. (2014). Defined by our hierarchy? How hierarchical positions shape our identifications and well-being at work. *Human Relations*, 67(10), 1167–1188. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726713516374>
- House, R., Hanges, P., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P., & Gupta, V. (Eds.). (2004). *Culture, leadership, and organizations: The GLOBE study of 62 societies*. California: Sage publications.
- Huang, I. (2014). Contextualizing teacher identity of non-native-English speakers in U.S. secondary ESL classrooms: a Bakhtinian perspective. *Linguistics and Education*, 25(1), 119–128. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2013.09.011>
- Ismail, M. (2011). *Language planning in Oman: evaluating linguistic and sociolinguistic fallacies*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Newcastle.
- Jackson, C., & Sherriff, N. (2013). A Qualitative approach to intergroup relations: exploring the applicability of the social identity approach to “messy” school context. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 10, 259–273.
- Joarder, M., Subhan, M., Ghani, A., & Islam, R. (2015). Pay, security, support and intention to quit relationship among academics in developing economy. *Investment Management and Financial Innovations*, 12(3), 190–199.
- Kaparou, M., & Bush, T. (2016). Instructional leadership in Greek and English outstanding schools. *International Journal of Educational*



- Management*, 30(6), 894–912. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-03-2015-0025>
- Katzman, K. (2018). Oman: Reform, Security, and U.S. Policy. Congressional Research Service.
- Kearney, E., & Gebert, D. (2009). Managing Diversity and Enhancing Team Outcomes: The Promise of Transformational Leadership. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94(1), 77–89. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013077>
- Kelly, A. (2004). The intellectual capital of schools: analysing government policy statements on school improvement in light of a new theorization. *Journal of Education Policy*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0268093042000269180>
- Kelly, A. (2009). In defence of anonymity: rejoining the criticism. *British Educational Research Journal*, 35(3), 431–445. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01411920802044438>
- Khan, S. (2010). Convergence, divergence or middle of the path: HRM model for Oman. *Journal of Management Policy and Practice*, 12(1), 76–87. Retrieved from [http://www.na-businesspress.com/JMPP/khan\\_abstract.html](http://www.na-businesspress.com/JMPP/khan_abstract.html)
- Khan, S. (2011). *Factors affecting the motivation of expatriate English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers in the Sultanate of Oman*. University of Exeter.
- Kirk, D., & Napier, D. (2009). The transformation of higher education in the United Arab Emirates: issues, implications, and intercultural dimensions. In J. Zajda, H. Daun, & L. J. Saha (Eds.) (pp. 131–142). Springer Netherlands.
- Koivisto, S., & Rice, R. (2016). Leader prototypicality moderates the relation between access to flexible work options and employee feelings of respect and leader endorsement. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 27(22), 2771–2789.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2015.1126337>

Konrad, A. (2003). Defining the domain of workplace diversity scholarship. *Group & Organization Management*, 28(1), 4–17.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601102250013>

Kramer, R. (2006). Social identity and social capital: the collective self at work. *International Public Management Journal*.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10967490600625316>

Kreindler, S., Dowd, D., Dana Star, N., & Gottschalk, T. (2012). Silos and social identity: the social identity approach as a framework for understanding and overcoming divisions in health care. *Milbank Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0009.2012.00666.x>

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2016). The decolonial option in English teaching: Can the subaltern act? *TESOL Quarterly*, 50(1), 66–85.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.202>

Lee, R. (1993). *Doing research on sensitive topics*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Lestinen, L., Petrucijová, J., & Spinthourakis, J. (2004). *Identity in multicultural and multilingual contexts*. London: CiCe, London Metropolitan University.

Levon, E. (2015). Integrating intersectionality in language, gender, and sexuality research. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 9(7), 295–308.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/lnc3.12147>

Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (2002). Judging the quality of case study reports. In M. Huberman & M. Miles (Eds.), *The qualitative researcher companion* (pp. 205–215). California: Sage Publications, Inc.

Litvin, D. (1997). The discourse of diversity: from biology to management. *Organization*, 4(2), 187–210.

Lo, W. (2010). Decentralization of higher education and its implications for

- educational autonomy in Taiwan. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 30(2), 127–139. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791003721572>
- Lofland, J., Snow, D., Anderson, L., & Lofland, L. (2006). *Analyzing social settings: a guide to qualitative observation and analysis* (Fourth). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Lorbiecki, A. (2001). Changing views on diversity management: the rise of the learning perspective and the need to recognize social and political contradictions. *Management Learning*, 32(3), 345–361.
- Lumby, J. (2005). Leadership, development and diversity: in the learning and skills sector in England. *Management in Education*, 19(3), 33–38.
- Lumby, J. (2011). Methodological issues in and intersectionality in gender studies. In *Gender equality in education: looking beyond parity* (pp. 1–12). Paris: Unesco Pub.: International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Lumby, J. (2012). What do we know about leadership in higher education? *London, GB, Leadership Foundation for Higher Education*, 23pp. (Review Paper Series).
- Lumby, J. (2014). Intersectionality theory and educational leadership: help or hindrance? Paper presented to the British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Special Interest Group, Gender and leadership, Birmingham.
- Lumby, J., Bhopal, K., Dyke, M., & Maringe, F. (2007). Integrating diversity in leadership in further education. *Learning*, (March).
- Lumby, J., & Coleman, M. (2007). *Leadership and diversity: challenging theory and practice in education*. London: Sage Publications.
- Lumby, J., & Foskett, N. (2015). Internationalization and culture in higher education. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143214549978>

- Lumby, J., & Morrison, M. (2010). Leadership and diversity: theory and research. *School Leadership & Management*, 30(1), 3-17.
- Mael, F., & Ashforth, B. (1992). Alumni and their alma mater: a partial test of the reformulated model of organizational identification. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 13(2), 103-123.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/job.4030130202>
- Mannix, E., & Neale, M. (2005). What differences make a difference? The promise and reality of diverse teams in organizations. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest, Supplement*, 6(2), 31-55.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1529-1006.2005.00022.x>
- Mazur, B. (2010). Cultural diversity in organisational theory and practice. *Journal of Intercultural Management*, 2(2), 5-15. Retrieved from <http://themirs.net/CIIM/Cultural Diversity in Organisational Theory and Practice by Barbara Mazur.pdf>
- McCall, L. (2005). The complexity of intersectionality. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 30(3), 1771-1800.  
<https://doi.org/10.1086/426800>
- Meeussen, L., Schaafsma, J., & Phalet, K. (2014). Fast track report when values (do not) converge: cultural diversity and value convergence in work groups, 528(August 2013), 521-528.
- Mercer, J. (2007). The challenges of insider research in educational institutions. *Oxford Review of Education*, 33(1), 1-17.
- Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. California: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers.
- Messarra, L. (2014). Religious diversity at work: the perceptual effects of religious discrimination on employee engagement and commitment. *Contemporary Management Research*, 10(1), 59-80.
- Miller, J., & Glassner, B. (2004). The "inside" and the "outside": finding relations in interviews. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative research:*

- theory, method, and practice* (2nd ed., pp. 125–139). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Milliken, F., & Martins, L. (1996). Searching for common threads: understanding the multiple effects of in diversity on organizational groups. *Academy of Management*, 21(2), 402–433.  
<https://doi.org/10.5465/AMR.1996.9605060217>
- Ministry of Higher Education. (2015a). About the Colleges of Applied Sciences. Retrieved February 20, 2015, from <http://mohe.gov.om/InnerPage.aspx?id=2F491019-0855-4708-9F7D-AD03EAAB10BB>
- Ministry of Higher Education. (2015b). CAS Strategic Plan (Phase 2). Oman.
- Mitchell, R., Boyle, B., Parker, V., Giles, M., Chiang, V., & Joyce, P. (2015). Managing inclusiveness and diversity in teams: how leader inclusiveness affects performance through status and team identity. *Human Resource Management*, 54(2), 217–239.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21658>
- Moore, J. (2012). A personal insight into researcher positionality. *Nurse Researcher*, 19(4), 11–14.
- Mor Barak, M. (2008). Social psychological perspectives of workforce diversity and inclusion in national and global contexts. In R. Patti (Ed.), *Handbook of Human Service Management* (pp. 239–254). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Morrison, M., & Lumby, J. (2009). Is leadership observable? Qualitative orientations to leadership for diversity. A case from FE. *Ethnography and Education*, 4(1), 65–82.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17457820802703515>
- Muhtada, D. (2012). Managing workforce diversity: an Islamic perspective. *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, 2(1), 79–108.
- Mulhall, A. (2003). In the field: notes on observation in qualitative

- research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 41(3), 306–313.  
<https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2648.2003.02514.x>
- Museus, S., & Griffin, K. (2011). Mapping the margins in higher education: on the promise of intersectionality frameworks in research and discourse. In K. Griffin & S. Museus (Eds.), *Using mixed methods to study intersectionality in higher education: New directions in institutional research* (pp. 5–13). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers.
- Naithani, P., & Jha, A. (2009). Challenges faced by expatriate workers in Gulf Cooperation Council countries. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 5(1), 98.
- NCFSI. (2017). *Statistical Year Book*. Oman: Omani National Centre of Statistics and Information.
- Neal, M. (2010). When Arab-expatriate relations work well: diversity and discourse in the Gulf Arab workplace. *Team Performance Management*, 16(5), 242–266.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/13527591011071331>
- Neary, S. (2014). Professional identity: what I call myself defines who I am. *Career Matters*, 2(3), 14–15.
- Oleksy, E. (2011). Intesectionality at the cross-roads. *Women's Studies International Forum*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2011.02.002>
- Oman Academic Accreditation Authority. (2010). *Report of an audit of the College of Applied Sciences Ibri*. Muscat.
- Oppong, S. (2014). A Critique of the philosophical underpinnings of mainstream social science research. *Academicus International Scientific Journal*, (10), 242–254.
- Paletz, S., Miron-Spektor, E., & Lin, C. (2014). A cultural lens on interpersonal conflict and creativity in multicultural environments. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, 8(2), 237–252.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035927>

- Parent, M., DeBlaere, C., & Moradi, B. (2013). Approaches to research on intersectionality: perspectives on gender, LGBT, and racial/ethnic identities. *Sex Roles*, 68(11-12), 639–645.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-013-0283-2>
- Pearsall, J. (Ed.). (1999). *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (Tenth). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Pearson, M., Albon, S., & Hubball, H. (2015). Case study methodology: flexibility, rigour, and ethical considerations for the scholarship of teaching and learning. *Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 6(3). Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1084596&site=ehost-live>
- Peterson, J. (2011). Oman faces the twenty-first century. In M. Tetreault, G. Okruhlik, & A. Kapiszewski (Eds.), *Political change in the Arab Gulf states: stuck in transition* (pp. 99–118). London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Phillipson, R. (2016). Native speakers in linguistic imperialism. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 14(3), 80–96.
- Philosophy of education in the Sultanate of Oman (2017). Sultanate of Oman.
- Platow, M., & van Knippenberg, D. (2001). A Social identity analysis of leadership endorsement: the effects of leader ingroup prototypicality and distributive intergroup fairness. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27(11), 1508–1519.
- Podsiadlowski, A., Gröschke, D., Kogler, M., Springer, C., & van der Zee, K. (2013). Managing a culturally diverse workforce: diversity perspectives in organizations. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 37(2), 159–175. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2012.09.001>

- Ponelis, S. (2015). Using interpretive qualitative case studies for exploratory research in doctoral studies: a case of information systems research in small and medium enterprises. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 10, 535–550. Retrieved from <http://ijds.org/Volume10/IJDSv10p535-550Ponelis0624.pdf>
- Poulis, K., Poulis, E., & Plakoyiannaki, E. (2013). The role of context in case study selection: an international business perspective. *International Business Review*, 22(1), 304–314. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2012.04.003>
- Powell, G., Jayasinghe, L., & Taksa, L. (2015). Intersectionality, social identity theory, and explorations of hybridity: a critical review of diverse approachers to diversity. In R. Bendl, I. Bleijenbergh, E. Henttonen, & E. Mills (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of diversity in organizations* (pp. 518–538). Oxford, UK: Open University Press.
- Power, R. (2013). Leader-member exchange theory in higher and distance education. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, 14(4), 277–284.
- Punch, K., & Oancea, A. (2014). *Introduction to research methods in education* (2nd editio). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Purcell, M. (2007). “Skilled, cheap, and desperate”: non-tenure-track faculty and the delusion of meritocracy. *Antipode*, 39(1), 121–143. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2007.00509.x>
- Purdie-Vaughns, V., & Eibach, R. (2008). Intersectional invisibility: the distinctive advantages and disadvantages of multiple subordinate-group identities. *Sex Roles*, 59(5-6), 377–391. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-008-9424-4>
- Rabbie, J., Schot, J., & Visser, L. (1989). Social identity theory: a conceptual and empirical critique from the perspective of a behavioural interaction model. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 19, 171–202.



- Rajput, N., & Kochhar, R. (2014). Demographic factors: organizational culture in the academic institutions. *SCMS Journal of Indian Management*, 11(3), 51–63. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=buh&AN=98654094&site=ehost-live>
- Ramthun, A., & Matkin, G. (2012). Multicultural shared leadership: a conceptual model of shared leadership in culturally diverse teams. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1548051812444129>
- Randeree, K. (2012). Workforce nationalization in the Gulf Cooperation Council states. *Center for International and Regional Studies*, 1–31.
- Rast, D. (2015). Leadership in times of uncertainty: recent findings, debates, and potential future research directions. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 9(3), 133–145.
- Rast, D., Hogg, M., & Tomory, J. (2015). Prototypical leaders do not always get our support: impact of self-uncertainty and need for cognition. *Self and Identity*, 14(2), 135–146. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2014.964755>
- Regmi, K., & Naidoo, J. (2012). Understanding the process of writing papers reflectively. *Nurse Researcher*, 20(6), 33–39.
- Richards, J. (2011). Exploring teacher competence in language teaching. Singapore: Regional Language Centre, University of Sydney.
- Richardson, J., & McKenna, S. (2002). Leaving and experiencing: why academics expatriate and how they experience expatriation. *Career Development International*, 7(2), 67–78. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430210421614>
- Riessman, C. (2002). Narrative analysis. In M. Huberman & M. Miles (Eds.), *The qualitative researcher companion* (pp. 217–270). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

- Romani, V. (2009). The politics of higher education in the Middle East: problems and prospects. *Middle East Brief*, (36), 1–8.
- Romanowski, H., & Nasser, R. (2015). Identity issues: expatriate professors teaching and researching in Qatar. *Higher Education*, 69(4), 653–671. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-014-9795-0>
- Romero, Y. (2017). Developing an intersectional framework: engaging the decenter in language studies. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 14, 320–346.
- Rosenauer, D., Homan, A., Horstmeier, C., & Voelpel, S. (2016). Managing nationality diversity: the interactive effect of leaders' cultural intelligence and task interdependence. *British Journal of Management*, 27(3), 628–645. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12131>
- Rothbart, M., & Taylor, M. (1992). Category labels and social reality: do we view social categories as natural kinds? In G. Semin & K. Fiedler (Eds.), *Language Interaction and Social Cognition* (pp. 11–36). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Rowbottom, D., & Aiston, S. (2007). The myth of “scientific method” in contemporary education research. In D. Bridge & R. Smith (Eds.), *Philosophy, methodology, and educational research* (pp. 11–30). Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing.
- Rubin, M. (2012). Group status is related to group prototypicality in the absence of social identity concerns. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 152(3), 386–389. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.2011.614648>
- Rudhumbu, N. (2015). Managing curriculum change from the middle: how academic middle managers enact their role in higher education. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v4n1p106>
- Sachdev, I., & Bourhis, R. (1990). Language and social identification. In D. Abrams & M. Hogg (Eds.), *Social Identity Theory: constructive and*

- critical advances*. (pp. 211–229). London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Saldana, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (Third ed.). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Savin-Baden, M., & Major, C. (2013). *Qualitative research: the essential guide to theory and practice*. New York: Routledge.
- Schibik, T., & Harrington, C. (2004). The outsourcing of classroom instruction in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy & Management*, 26(3), 393–401.
- Schmaling, K., Trevino, A., Lind, J., Blume, A., & Baker, D. (2014). Diversity statements: how faculty applicants address diversity. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, December(22), 1–12.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038549>
- Schneider, S., & Northcraft, B. (1999). Three social dilemmas of workforce diversity in organizations: a social identity perspective. *Human Relations*, 52(11), 1445–1467.
- Schwandt, T. (1994). Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry. In *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 118–137). Retrieved from <http://psycnet.apa.org/psycinfo/1994-98625-006>
- Scotland, J. (2012). Exploring the philosophical underpinnings of research: relating ontology and epistemology to the methodology and methods of the scientific, interpretive, and critical research paradigms. *English Language Teaching*, 5(9), 9–16. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n9p9>
- Scott, D. (2012). Research design: frameworks, strategies, methods and technologies. In A. Briggs, M. Coleman, & M. Morrison (Eds.), *Research methods in educational leadership & management* (3rd edition, pp. 106–121). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Selmer, J., & Fenner, C. (2009). Job factors and work outcomes of public sector expatriates. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 19(1), 75–90.

- Selvi, A. (2016). Native or non-native English-speaking professionals in ELT: "That is the question!" or "Is that the question?" In F. Copland, S. Garton, & S. Mann (Eds.), *LETs and NESTs: voices, views and vignettes* (pp. 51–67). London: British Council.
- Selvi, A. F. (2011). The non-native speaker teacher. *ELT Journal*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccq092>
- Shaban, A. (2016). Managing and leading a diverse workforce: one of the main challenges in management. *Procedia- Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 230, 76–84. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.09.010>
- Shah, I. (2017). Teaching-learning challenges of higher education in the gulf cooperation council countries. *Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, VIII(1), 1–18.
- Simons, H. (2009). *Case study research in practice*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Simons, S., & Rowland, K. (2011). Diversity and its impact on organizational performance: the influence of diversity constructions on expectations and outcomes. *Journal of Technology Management & Innovation*, 6(3), 171–183.
- Song, K., & Castillo, A. (2015). NNESTs' professional identity in the linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms. *Identidad Profesional Del Profesorado (NNES) En Aulas de Cultura Y Lengua Diversas.*, 4(1), 54–83. <https://doi.org/10.4471/ijep.2015.03>
- Spears, R. (2011). Group identities: the social identity perspective. In S. Schwartz, K. Luyckx, & V. Vignoles (Eds.), *Handbook of identity theory and research*. (pp. 201–224). London: Springer.
- Stahl, G., Maznevski, M., Voigt, A., & Jonsen, K. (2010). Unraveling the effects of cultural diversity in teams: a meta-analysis of research on multicultural work groups. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 41(4), 690–709. <https://doi.org/10.1057/jibs.2009.85>

- Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Stake, R. (2008). Qualitative case studies. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (3rd ed., pp. 119–149). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Steffens, N., Haslam, S., Reicher, S., Platow, M., Fransen, K., Yang, J., ... Boen, F. (2014). Leadership as social identity management: introducing the identity leadership inventory (ILI) to assess and validate a four-dimensional model. *Leadership Quarterly*, 25(5), 1001–1024.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2014.05.002>
- Stephens, D. (2012). The role of culture in interpreting and conducting research. In A. Briggs, M. Coleman, & M. Morrison (Eds.), *Research methods in educational leadership & management* (3rd ed., pp. 46–60). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Sung, C. (2011). Race and native speakers in ELT: parents' perspectives in Hong Kong. *English Today*, 27(3), 25–29.
- Szu-Fang, C. (2013). Essential skills for leadership effectiveness in diverse workplace development. *Online Journal for Workforce Education and Development*, 6(1), 1–23. Retrieved from <http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1133&context=ojwed>
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (pp. 33–47). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Tatli, A., & Özbilgin, M. F. (2012). An emic approach to intersectional study of diversity at work: a Bourdieuan framing. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 14(2), 180–200.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2370.2011.00326.x>
- Taylor, R. (2013). Case-study research in context. *Nurse Researcher*,

20(4), 4–5.

Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2009). *Foundation of mixed methods research: integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in the social and behavioural sciences*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Thomas, D. (1999). Cultural diversity and work group effectiveness: an experimental study. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 30(2), 242–263. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022199030002006>

Thomas, G. (2016). *How to do your case study* (2nd ed.). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Thomas-Gregory, A. (2014). Professional identities of middle managers: a case study in the faculty of health and social care. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 42(5), 620–639. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143213513186>

Trepte, S. (2006). Social identity theory. In J. Bryant & P. Vorderer (Eds.), *Psychology of entertainment* (pp. 255–271). Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers. Retrieved from <http://books.google.com.br/books?>

Tse, H., & Chiu, W. (2014). Transformational leadership and job performance: a social identity perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, 67(1), 2827–2835. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2012.07.018>

Tuckman, B. (1965). Developmental sequence in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin*, 63(6), 384–99.

Turner, B. (2010). Revisiting weber and Islam. *British Journal of Sociology*, 61(SUPPL. 1), 161–166. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2009.01285.x>

Turner, C., González, J., & Wood, J. (2008). Faculty of color in academe: What 20 years of literature tells us. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 1(3), 139–168. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012837>

- Turner, D. (2010). Qualitative interview design: a practical guide for novice investigators. *The Qualitative Report*, 15(3), 754–760.  
<https://doi.org/http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR15-3/qid.pdf>
- Turner, J. (1999). Some current issues in research on social identity and self categorization theories. In N. Ellemers, R. Spears, & B. Doosje (Eds.), *Social identity: context, commitment, content* (pp. 6–34). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Valentine, G. (2007). Theorizing and researching intersectionality: a challenge for feminist geography. *Professional Geographer*, 59(1), 10–21. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9272.2007.00587.x>
- Van Der Zee, K., Atsma, N., & Brodbeck, F. (2004). The influence of social identity and personality on outcomes of cultural diversity in teams. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 35(3), 283–303.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022104264123>
- van Dick, R., & Kerschreiter, R. (2016). The social identity approach to effective leadership: an overview and some ideas on cross-cultural generalizability. *Frontiers of Business Research in China*, 10(3), 363–384.
- Van Knippenberg, D. (2011). Embodying who we are: leader group prototypicality and leadership effectiveness. *Leadership Quarterly*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2011.09.004>
- van Knippenberg, D., & Haslam, S. (2003). Realizing the diversity dividend: exploring the subtle interplay between identity, ideology, and reality. In S. Haslam, D. van Knippenberg, M. Platow, & N. Ellemers (Eds.), *Social identity at work: developing theory for organizational practice* (pp. 61–80). New York and Hove: Psychology Press.
- van Knippenberg, D., & Hogg, M. (2003). A social identity model of leadership effectiveness in organizations. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 25(03), 243–295. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-3085\(03\)25006-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-3085(03)25006-1)

- van Knippenberg, D., & Schippers, M. (2007). Work group diversity. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 58(1), 515–541.  
<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.58.110405.085546>
- Van Vianen, A., De Pater, I., Kristof-Brown, A., & Johnson, E. (2004). Fitting in: surface- and deep-level cultural differences and expatriates' adjustment. *Academy of Management Journal*, 47(5), 697–709.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307/20159612>
- Walford, G. (2005). Research ethical guidelines and anonymity. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 28(1), 83–93.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01406720500036786>
- Wang, L. (2013). Non-native EFL teacher trainees' attitude towards the recruitment of NESTs and teacher collaboration in language classrooms. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 4(1).  
<https://doi.org/10.4304/jltr.4.1.12-20>
- Warner, L. (2008). A best practices guide to intersectional approaches in psychological research. *Sex Roles*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-008-9504-5>
- Warren, C. (2001). Qualitative interviewing. In J. Gubrium & J. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: context and method* (pp. 83–101). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Watson, T., & Pojanapunya, P. (2009). Implicit attitudes towards native and non-native speaker teachers. *System*, 37(1), 23–33.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2008.08.002>
- Wells, J., & Aicher, T. (2013). Follow the leader: a relational demography, similarity attraction, and social identity theory of leadership approach of a team's performance. *Gender Issues*, 30(1-4), 1–14.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-013-9112-8>
- Wilkin, C., de Jong, J., & Rubino, C. (2018). Teaming up with temps: the impact of temporary workers on team social networks and



- effectiveness. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, pp. 1–15.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2017.1418329>
- Williams, K., & O'Reilly, C. (1998). *Demography and diversity in organizations: a review of 40 years of research. Research in organizational behavior* (Vol. 20).  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/104649640003100505>
- Williams, M., & May, T. (1996). *Introduction to the philosophy of social research*. New York: Routledge.
- Willis, J. (2007). *Foundations of qualitative research: interpretive and critical approaches. Foundations*.  
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452230108>
- Wong, C.-Y. (2009). Are native speakers “good” language instructors? A case study of untrained ESL tutors. *ARECLS*, 6(c), 122–140.
- Worthington, R. (2012). Advancing scholarship for the diversity imperative in higher education: An editorial. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 5(1), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0027184>
- Yarahmadi, F., & Magd, H. (2016). Entrepreneurship infrastructure and education in Oman. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 219, 792 – 797.
- Yilmaz, M. (2014). Social identity and socail conflict. *Turkish Journal of TESAM Academy*, 1(2), 137–151.
- Yin, R. (2014). *Case study research: design and methods* (5th ed.). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Zaccaro, S. (2007). Trait-based perspectives of leadership. *American Psychologist*, 62(1), 6–16.
- Zanoni, P., Janssens, M., Benschop, Y., & Nkomo, S. (2010). Unpacking diversity, grasping inequality: rethinking difference through critical

perspectives. *Organization*, 17(1), 9–29.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508409350344>

Zerovec, M., & Bontenbal, M. (2011). Labor nationalization policies in Oman: implications for Omani and migrant women workers. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 20(3-4), 365–387.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/011719681102000306>

Zhang, Y. (2017). A Study on ESL teachers' intercultural communication competence. *English Language Teaching*, 10(11), 229.

<https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v10n11p229>

## Appendix A: Team leaders job description

### Level coordinators' job description

#### In-college

1. Managing a team of teachers
  - Briefing teachers on level curriculum and materials.
  - Holding regular team meetings to troubleshoot problems and suggest solutions.
  - Observing teachers in a supportive, collegial and non-evaluative manner.
  - Encouraging as strong a sense of team membership and collegiality as possible.
2. Managing materials
  - As directed by HoD but this likely to include preparing sets of books for teachers and students and recording their return
3. Managing continuous assessment
  - Coordinating the creation of continuous assessment tasks by teachers as required by cross-college Level Coordinator team.
  - Coordinating the execution of continuous assessment tasks.
4. Managing spreadsheets and other assessment related administrative matters
5. Internal administration
  - As directed by HoD

#### Cross-college

6. Contributing to the strategic development of level curriculum, materials and assessment through:
    - Participating in the cross-college level team
    - Attending team meetings in Muscat (2-3 per semester)
    - Reviewing level curriculum, materials and assessment
    - Developing level curriculum, materials and assessment under direction of PD English
- The CAS Workload Policy (Final) indicates a notional figure of around 400 hours per academic year for this role.

Level coordinators' job description, from (CAS, 2011)

## Appendix B: Interview Guide V1

### Interview schedule: V1 (HoD)

Participant:

Date:

Time:

Location:

- **Introduction:**

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research. As you have read in the participant information sheet, we are going to have a conversation for about 45-60 minutes on the research topic. Before we start the interview, is there anything you would like to inquire about?

*Are you happy to proceed with the interview?*

- **Interview questions:**

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Tell me about the way the English department is managed.  
(teams, coordinators, members).
3. How are people recruited within these teams?  
(criteria, channels, differences, recruiting team coordinators, assignment of teachers to the different teams)
4. Could you describe a typical team in the department?/ who would be in it?  
(staff composition, advantages, disadvantages)
5. Based on your experience, how easy or challenging the position of team coordinator is?  
(challenges, examples)
6. So, how effective do you perceive the team-based style of management in the ED?  
(identification with the teams, types of interactions)
7. What makes an effective team leader in the ED?  
(leader's identity)
8. How might the positions of team coordinators be made more attractive?
9. Do you have anything else to add?

- **Participant bio data**

Would it be possible to get in touch with you in case any further clarification is required? Could you please fill in your contact details and some information about yourself?

Gender:	Nationality:
Age:	Religion:
Qualification:	Years of teaching experience:
Specialty:	Length of experience at CAS:
Length of experience in English language teaching:	Teams involved in:
Mother language:	E-mail: Telephone:

- **Closing**

Thank you for participating in this interview. Your time and contribution are highly appreciated. Once this interview has been transcribed, you will be sent a copy of the transcription to have your consent on its content. You will also be sent a copy of the findings' report to have your final say about the content reported (as per your request).

**Topics and sub-topics (for the interviewer's reference only)**

<b>Topic 1: Perceptions about diversity</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defining diversity</li> <li>• Salient diversity</li> <li>• Diversity of values</li> <li>• Advantages and disadvantages of diversity (disagreements/ decision-making, etc.)</li> <li>• Effect of personal identity on perception about diversity</li> </ul>
<b>Topic 2: Diversity and team identity</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effect of diversity on belonging to a team</li> <li>• Effectiveness of teams as a style of management</li> <li>• Effect of teacher's team/college tenure on their perception of teams and team identity</li> <li>• Advantages of having a team identity</li> <li>• Team identity and the role of coordinator</li> </ul>
<b>Topic 3: Perceived effective leadership</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of team coordinator</li> <li>• Diversity and its effect on the role of the leader</li> <li>• Best style of leadership (individual vs. group)</li> <li>• Defining effective team leader</li> <li>• The effect of the coordinator's identity on their effectiveness as team leaders</li> <li>• Challenges facing coordinators</li> <li>• Attractiveness of the post</li> <li>• Ways for making it attractive and effective</li> </ul>

## Appendix C: Interview Guide V2

### Interview schedule: V2 (Level Coordinator)

Participant:

Date:

Time:

Location:

- **Introduction:**

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research. As you have read in the participant information sheet, we are going to have a conversation for about 45-60 minutes on the research topic. Before we start the interview, is there anything you would like to inquire about?

*Are you happy to proceed with the interview?*

- **Interview questions:**

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Tell me about your role.
3. What is the team you coordinate like?  
(diversity, cohesion, advantages and disadvantages)
4. So, how do you perceive your experience in leading this team?  
(challenges, effect of leader's identity, team identity, interaction, style of leadership)
5. Based on your experience, what makes an effective team coordinator in a context like the ED?  
(Leader's perceived self-effectiveness, Attractiveness of these posts, coordinator's identity effect).
6. How might the position of a team coordinator be made more effective and more attractive?
7. Do you have anything else to add?

- **Participant bio data**

Would it be possible to get in touch with you in case any further clarification is required? Could you please fill in your contact details and some information about yourself?

Gender:	Nationality:
Age:	Religion:
Qualification:	Years of teaching experience:
Specialty:	Length of experience at CAS:
Length of experience in English language teaching:	Teams involved in:
Mother language:	E-mail:  Telephone:

- **Closing**

Thank you for participating in this interview. Your time and contribution are highly appreciated. Once this interview has been transcribed, you will be sent a copy of the transcription to have your consent on its content. You will also be sent a copy of the findings' report to have your final say about the content reported (as per your request).



**Topics and sub-topics (for the interviewer's reference only)**

<b>Topic 1: Perceptions about diversity</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defining diversity</li> <li>• Salient diversity</li> <li>• Diversity of values</li> <li>• Advantages and disadvantages of diversity (disagreements/ decision-making, etc.)</li> <li>• Effect of personal identity on perception about diversity</li> </ul>
<b>Topic 2: Diversity and team identity</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effect of diversity on belonging to a team</li> <li>• Effectiveness of teams as a style of management</li> <li>• Effect of teacher's team/college tenure on their perception of teams and team identity</li> <li>• Advantages of having a team identity</li> <li>• Team identity and the role of coordinator</li> </ul>
<b>Topic 3: Perceived effective leadership</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of team coordinator</li> <li>• Diversity and its effect on the role of the leader</li> <li>• Best style of leadership (individual vs. group)</li> <li>• Defining effective team leader</li> <li>• The effect of the coordinator's identity on their effectiveness as team leaders</li> <li>• Challenges facing coordinators</li> <li>• Attractiveness of the post</li> <li>• Ways for making it attractive and effective</li> </ul>

## Appendix D: Interview Guide V3

### Interview schedule: V3 (Team Members)

Participant:

Date:

Time:

Location:

- **Introduction:**

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research. As you have read in the participant information sheet, we are going to have a conversation for about 45-60 minutes on the research topic. Before we start the interview, is there anything you would like to inquire about?

*Are you happy to proceed with the interview?*

- **Interview questions:**

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. You are a member of at least one team at the English Department could you describe a typical team at the ED?/ How are members and team coordinators like?
3. Tell me about your experience in the teams you belong to.  
(role in these teams)
4. How do you perceive working at the English Department teams?  
(Effectiveness of teams as a style of management, effect of tenure, perceived value of team identity).
5. Tell me about the role of the team coordinators in the teams you belong to, as you perceive it?  
(Role of LCs in team identity, best leadership style, decision making, challenges facing leaders).
6. What makes an effective team coordinator?  
(Attractiveness of these posts, coordinator's identity effect).
7. Are you looking forward to become a team coordinator at the ED?  
(attractiveness of team coordinator position, ways for making it attractive)
8. How might a teacher's experience at the English Department teams be made more enriching?
9. Do you have anything else to add?

- **Participant bio data**

Gender:	Nationality:
Age:	Religion:
Qualification:	Years of teaching experience:
Specialty:	Length of experience at CAS:
Length of experience in English language teaching:	Teams involved in:
Mother language:	E-mail: Telephone:

Would it be possible to get in touch with you in case any further clarification is required? Could you please fill in your contact details and some information about yourself?

- **Closing**

Thank you for participating in this interview. Your time and contribution are highly appreciated. Once this interview has been transcribed, you will be sent a copy of the transcription to have your consent on its content. You will also be sent a copy of the findings' report to have your final say about the content reported (as per your request).

**Topics and sub-topics (for the interviewer's reference only)**

<b>Topic 1: Perceptions about diversity</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defining diversity</li> <li>• Salient diversity</li> <li>• Diversity of values</li> <li>• Advantages and disadvantages of diversity (disagreements/ decision-making, etc.)</li> <li>• Effect of personal identity on perception about diversity</li> </ul>
<b>Topic 2: Diversity and team identity</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effect of diversity in belonging to a team</li> <li>• Effectiveness of teams as a style of management</li> <li>• Effect of the teacher's team/college tenure on their perception of teams and team identity</li> <li>• Advantages of having a team identity</li> <li>• Team identity and the role of the coordinator</li> </ul>
<b>Topic 3: Perceived effective leadership</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of the team coordinator</li> <li>• Diversity and its effect on the role of the leader</li> <li>• Best style of leadership (individual vs. group)</li> <li>• Defining effective team leader</li> <li>• The effect of the coordinator's identity on their effectiveness as team leaders</li> <li>• Challenges facing coordinators</li> <li>• Attractiveness of the post</li> <li>• Ways for making it attractive and effective</li> </ul>

## Appendix E : Observation Guide

### Observation Objectives:

The observations aims at:

- Exploring how (or whether) diversity is represented in the meeting.
  - Exploring the nature of the interactions that take place at the group level.
  - Figuring out how decisions are made within the diversity context.
- 

### *1. Contextual data (to be completed before the start of the meeting)*

Date:

Time:

Location:

Type of meeting:

Chair:

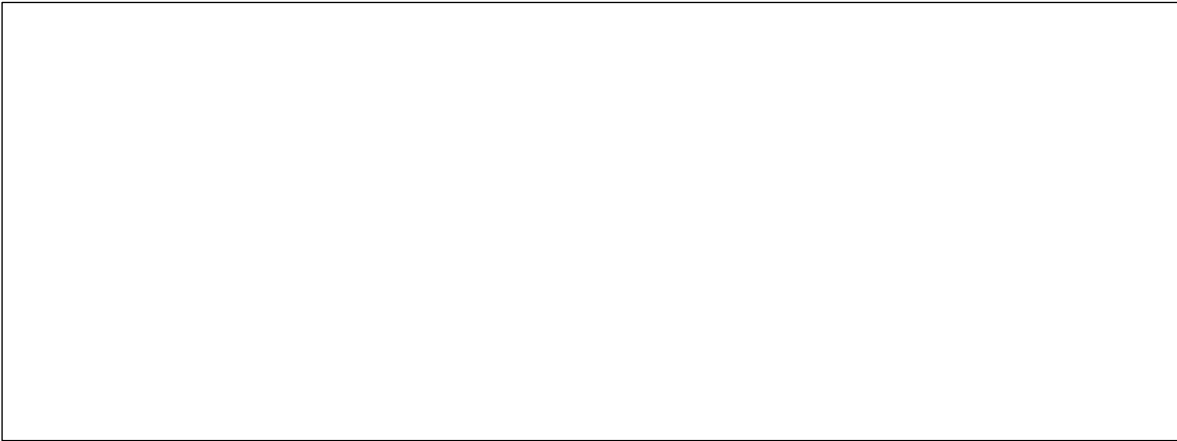
Minutes taker:

Meeting aim(s)/ agenda:

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

	Members	Position	Present/absent
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			

- Sketch of the setting



- Indications of subgroups in the seating.

**2. Meeting content *(to be completed during the meeting)***

I will take notes about:

- The topics of discussion?
- Who speaks?
- What do they contribute?
- What manner does the meeting take (collective interactions vs. individual speech)?
- What decisions are made? By whom? What about?
- What responsibilities are assigned? To whom?
- Indications of the overall atmosphere (agreements, disagreements, fights, anger, friendly chats, etc.).
- Indications of subgroups.

## **Appendix F : Informal Observation Guide**

### **Informal observation guide**

I will be observing informal settings like corridor chats, informal gatherings, etc.  
for the purpose of finding indications of:

- The overall atmosphere in the department
- Indications of leadership practices
- The nature of interactions
- Indications of sup-groups
- Indications of members overall involvement in the college.

## Appendix G: Research Ethical Approval

11/16/2016

Your Ethics Submission (Ethics ID:23424) has been reviewed and approved

[Reply](#) [Reply All](#) [Forward](#)

**Your Ethics Submission (Ethics ID:23424) has been reviewed and approved**

ERGO [ergo@soton.ac.uk]

To: Al Muqarshi A.S.

22 October 2016 22:46

Flag for follow up

Submission Number: 23424

Submission Name: Leading diverse teams: the case of the CAS EDs in Oman

This is email is to let you know your submission was approved by the Ethics Committee.

You can begin your research unless you are still awaiting specific Health and Safety approval (e.g. for a Genetic or Biological Materials Risk Assessment)

Comments

1.Good luck with your research.

2.Good luck with the study.

[Click here to view your submission](#)

Coordinator: Amal Al Muqarshi

-----  
ERGO : Ethics and Research Governance Online

<http://www.ergo.soton.ac.uk>

-----  
DO NOT REPLY TO THIS EMAIL



## Appendix H: CONSENT FORM (HoD)

**Study title:** Group dynamics and the construction of identities in Omani higher education: a case study of cultural diversity using a social identity approach

**Researcher name:** Amal Saleh Al Muqarshi

**Ethics reference:** 23423

*Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):*

I have read and understood the information sheet (17.10.2016 (V1)) and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

☐

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be audio-recorded, quoted and used for the purpose of this study and in future conference papers or publications.

☐

I understand that my responses will be anonymised in reports of the research and reference to my responses will be done using pseudonyms.

☐

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected

☐

### **Data Protection**

*I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored in a password protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study.*

Name of participant (print name).....

Signature of participant.....

Date.....

## Appendix I : CONSENT FORM (LCs)

**Study title:** Group dynamics and the construction of identities in Omani higher education: a case study of cultural diversity using a social identity approach

**Researcher name:** Amal Saleh Al Muqarshi

**Ethics reference:** 23423

*Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):*

I have read and understood the information sheet (17.10.2016 (V2)) and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

☐

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be audio-recorded, quoted and used for the purpose of this study and future conference papers or publications.

☐

I understand that my responses will be anonymised in reports of the research and reference to my responses will be done using pseudonyms.

☐

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected

☐

### **Data Protection**

*I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study.*

Name of participant (print name).....

Signature of participant.....

Date.....

## Appendix J : CONSENT FORM (Teachers)

**Study title:** Group dynamics and the construction of identities in Omani higher education: a case study of cultural diversity using a social identity approach

**Researcher name:** Amal Saleh Al Muqarshi

**Ethics reference:** 23423

*Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):*

I have read and understood the information sheet (17.10.2016 (V3)) and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

☐

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be audio-recorded, quoted, and used for the purpose of this study and in future conference papers or publications.

☐

I understand that my responses will be anonymised in reports of the research and reference to my responses will be done using pseudonyms.

☐

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected

☐

### **Data Protection**

*I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study.*

Name of participant (print name).....

Signature of participant.....

Date.....

## Appendix K: Participant Information Sheet (V1 - HoD)

**Study Title:** Group dynamics and the construction of identities in Omani higher education: a case study of cultural diversity using a social identity approach

**Researcher:** Amal Saleh Al Muqarshi      **Ethics number:** 23423

**Please read this information carefully before deciding to take part in this research. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.**

### **What is the research about?**

I am a PhD student at the University of Southampton. I am conducting this research to obtain a PhD degree. My aim of doing this research is to explore the experiences of level team (Foundation year, Year 1, and Year 2) members and leaders about being members in English Department teams. By exploring the perceptions of both the team leaders and the team members, this research aims also to identify the best practices for leading such teams.

### **Why have I been chosen?**

You have been approached to take part in this research because the researcher believes that you are a precious source of knowledge in relation to this research topic. Your experience as a Head of English Department that comprises three level teams with their diverse compositions will help the researcher formulate a collective picture about how the experiences of being members or leaders in these teams are perceived and experienced in reality. In addition, it will help the researcher form a picture about the context in which such team leadership is practised.

### **What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will be interviewed by the researcher for about 45-60 minutes. During the interview, a friendly conversation will take place between you and the researcher. The researcher will prompt you with questions pertaining to a number of areas under this topic and you will be expected to elaborate on the answers based on your experience and knowledge about the teams within the department and the CAS system. The interview will be recorded for later transcription. Data generated from the interview will be reported in the researcher's dissertation and are likely to be used in conference papers and article papers.

### **Are there any benefits in my taking part?**

This research aims to illuminate the researcher and the research community in general about the best practices for leading teams in educational settings. Such findings have the potential to provide local evidence that contributes to enriching the body of knowledge about leading in the increasingly changing workplace. They are also expected to highlight recommendations on how the specific context of the CAS English Departments might be made better environments for such teams to be effective. Hence, you are participating with the researcher and the other study participants to advance the process of leadership not only within the EDs at the CAS but also in other similar contexts both locally and internationally.

### **Are there any risks involved?**

Participation in this project is not expected to lead to any risks.

### **Will my participation be confidential?**

The researcher will follow the University of Southampton's Data Protection Act of data confidentiality. As per the Act, the researcher will keep confidential whatever information

you give during the conduct of this research. The researcher will use pseudonyms to refer to you and to the college in her reports. Access to the data generated from the interview and to the transcripts of the interviews will be possible only for the researcher. The researcher also promises to store any data in encrypted folders in password-protected devices. In addition, the researcher will keep the hard copies of any data gathered securely. The transcription of the recordings will solely be done by the researcher and access to the transcripts will only be possible to the researcher. As per your stated wish, the researcher offers to send you a copy of the transcript for you to read and confirm before the actual analysis of data starts.

In reporting the data, your name and the College's name will be replaced with pseudonyms and findings will be reported collectively so that the participants are not identifiable. The researcher might use quotes of the interviews attributed to anonymised participants to support the discussion and the findings. Your confirmation on the final report of the findings will be sought after (as per your request).

**What happens if I change my mind?**

If you happen to change your mind or feel that your contribution to this research might cause you any harm, you have the right to withdraw your contribution (partially or fully) at any time.

**What happens if something goes wrong?**

The researcher will observe your wellbeing during and after the research. If there is complaint, you can approach the Head of Research Governance at that University of Southampton with your complaint on the following details: Tel: 02380 595058, e-mail: [rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk](mailto:rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk).

**Where can I get more information?**

In case this sheet is not clear enough for you, you have other concerns that you would like the researcher to clarify, or you have more data that you would like to add after the interview, you could reach the researcher on the following details:

Tel: +44 7425334762, +968 99775056

e-mail: [amal.almaqrashi@gmail.com](mailto:amal.almaqrashi@gmail.com):

## Appendix L : Participant Information Sheet (V2-Level coordinator)

**Study Title:** Group dynamics and the construction of identities in Omani higher education: a case study of cultural diversity using a social identity approach

**Researcher:** Amal Saleh Al Muqarshi      **Ethics number:** 23423

**Please read this information carefully before deciding to take part in this research. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.**

### **What is the research about?**

I am a PhD student at the University of Southampton. I am conducting this research to obtain a PhD degree. My aim of doing this research is to explore the experiences of level team (Foundation year, Year 1, and Year 2) members and leaders about being members in these teams. By exploring the perceptions of both the team leaders and the team members, this research aims also to identify the best practices for leading such teams.

### **Why have I been chosen?**

You have been approached to take part in this research because the researcher believes that you are a precious source of knowledge in relation to this research topic. Your experience as a team leader will help the researcher formulate a picture of how such positions are perceived and experienced in reality. Your participation will also help uncovering aspects that might inform practice and might highlight areas to be addressed in the endeavour of making the team leader positions in such context attractive and rewarding.

### **What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will be interviewed by the researcher for about 45-60 minutes. During the interview, a friendly conversation about your experience as a team coordinator will take place between you and the researcher. The researcher will prompt you with questions pertaining to a number of areas under this topic and you will be expected to elaborate on the answers based on your experience. The interview will be recorded for later transcription. Data generated from the interview will be reported in the researcher's dissertation and are likely to be used in conference papers and article papers.

### **Are there any benefits in my taking part?**

This research aims to illuminate the researcher and the research community in general about the best practices for leading teams in educational settings. Such findings are expected to provide local evidence that contributes to enriching the body of knowledge about leading in the increasingly diverse workplace. They are also expected to highlight recommendations on how the specific context of the CAS English Departments might be made better environments for such teams to be effective. Hence, you are participating with the researcher and the other study participants to advance the process of leadership not only within the EDs at the CAS but also in other similar contexts both locally and internationally.

### **Are there any risks involved?**

Participation in this project is not expected to lead to any risks.

### **Will my participation be confidential?**

The researcher will follow the University of Southampton's Data Protection Act of data confidentiality. As per the Act, the researcher will keep confidential whatever information

you give during the conduct of this research. The researcher will use pseudonyms to refer to you and to the college in her reports. Access to the data generated from the interview and to the transcripts of the interviews will be possible only for the researcher. The researcher also promises to store any data in encrypted folders in password-protected devices. In addition, the researcher will keep the hard copies of any data gathered securely. The transcription of the recordings will solely be done by the researcher and access to the transcripts will only be possible to the researcher. As per your stated wish, the researcher offers to send you a copy of the transcript for you to read and confirm before the actual analysis of data starts.

In reporting the data, your name and the College's name will be replaced with pseudonyms and findings will be reported collectively so that the participants are not identifiable. The researcher might use quotes of the interviews attributed to anonymised participants to support the discussion and the findings. Your confirmation on the final report of the findings will be sought after (as per your request).

**What happens if I change my mind?**

If you happen to change your mind or feel that your contribution to this research might cause you any harm, you have the right to withdraw your contribution (partially or fully) at any time.

**What happens if something goes wrong?**

The researcher will observe your wellbeing during and after the research. If there is complaint, you can approach the Head of Research Governance at that University of Southampton with your complaint on the following details: Tel: 02380 595058, e-mail: [rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk](mailto:rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk).

**Where can I get more information?**

In case this sheet is not clear enough for you, you have other concerns that you would like the researcher to clarify, or you have more data that you would like to add after the interview, you could reach the researcher on the following details:

Tel: +44 7425334762, +968 99775056

e-mail: [amal.almaqrashi@gmail.com](mailto:amal.almaqrashi@gmail.com)

## **Appendix M : Participant Information Sheet (V3-Teachers)**

**Study Title:** Group dynamics and the construction of identities in Omani higher education: a case study of cultural diversity using a social identity approach

**Researcher:** Amal Saleh Al Muqarshi      **Ethics number:** 23423

**Please read this information carefully before deciding to take part in this research. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.**

### **What is the research about?**

I am a PhD student at the University of Southampton. I am conducting this research to obtain a PhD degree. My aim of doing this research is to explore the experiences of level team (Foundation year, Year 1, and Year 2) members and leaders about being members in the English Department teams. By exploring the perceptions of both the team leaders and the team members, this research aims also to identify the best practices for leading such teams.

### **Why have I been chosen?**

You have been approached to take part in this research because the researcher believes that you are a precious source of knowledge in relation to this research topic. Your experience as a team member will help the researcher formulate a picture of how such positions are perceived and experienced in reality. Your participation will also help uncovering aspects that might inform practice and might highlight areas to be addressed in the endeavour of making the experiences of both the team members and team leaders rewarding ones.

### **What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will be interviewed by the researcher for about 45-60 minutes. During the interview, a friendly conversation about your experience as a team member will take place between you and the researcher. The researcher will prompt you with questions pertaining to a number of areas under this topic and you will be expected to elaborate on the answers based on your experience. The interview will be recorded for later transcription. Data generated from the interview will be reported in the researcher's dissertation and are likely to be used in conference papers and article papers.

### **Are there any benefits in my taking part?**

This research aims to illuminate the researcher and the research community in general about the best practices for leading teams in educational settings. Such findings are expected to provide local evidence that contributes to enriching the body of knowledge about leading in the increasingly changing workplace. They are also expected to highlight recommendations on how the specific context of the CAS English Departments might be made better environments for such teams to be effective. Hence, you are participating with the researcher and the other study participants to advance the process of leadership not only within the EDs at the CAS but also in other similar contexts both locally and internationally.



**Are there any risks involved?**

Participation in this project is not expected to lead to any risks.

**Will my participation be confidential?**

The researcher will follow the University of Southampton's Data Protection Act of data confidentiality. As per the Act, the researcher will keep confidential whatever information you give during the conduct of this research.

The researcher will use pseudonyms to refer to you and to the college in her reports.

Access to the data generated from the interview and to the transcripts of the interviews will be possible only for the researcher. The researcher also promises to store any data in encrypted folders in password-protected devices. In addition, the researcher will keep the hard copies of any data gathered securely. The transcription of the recordings will solely be done by the researcher and access to the transcripts will only be possible to the researcher. As per your stated wish, the researcher offers to send you a copy of the transcript for you to read and confirm before the actual analysis of data starts.

In reporting the data, your name and the College's name will be replaced with pseudonyms and findings will be reported collectively so that the participants are not identifiable. The researcher might use quotes of the interviews attributed to anonymised participants to support the discussion and the findings. Your confirmation on the final report of the findings will be sought after (as per your request).

**What happens if I change my mind?**

If you happen to change your mind or feel that your contribution to this research might cause you any harm, you have the right to withdraw your contribution (partially or fully) at any time.

**What happens if something goes wrong?**

The researcher will observe your wellbeing during and after the research. If there is complaint, you can approach the Head of Research Governance at that University of Southampton with your complaint on the following details: Tel: 02380 595058, e-mail: [rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk](mailto:rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk).

**Where can I get more information?**

In case this sheet is not clear enough for you, you have other concerns that you would like the researcher to clarify, or you have more data that you would like to add after the interview, you could reach the researcher on the following details:

Tel: +44 7425334762, +968 99775056

e-mail: [amal.almaqrashi@gmail.com](mailto:amal.almaqrashi@gmail.com)

## Appendix N: Participant Information Sheet (V4-Observation)

**Study Title:** Group dynamics and the construction of identities in Omani higher education: a case study of cultural diversity using a social identity approach

**Researcher:** Amal Saleh Al Muqarshi

**Ethics number:** 23423

**Please read this information carefully before deciding to take part in this research. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.**

### **What is the research about?**

I am a PhD student at the University of Southampton. I am conducting this research to obtain a PhD degree. My aim of doing this research is, among other things, to understand how teachers interact in the group context and how leadership is practised in such a context. Gaining such data will contribute to identifying the best practices of leadership in the teams of the English Department.

### **Why have I been chosen?**

You have been approached because you are a member of the Department of English. The researcher is interested to observe some meetings that take place at the Department and team levels to explore group interactions. Such observations aim to help the researcher understand group interactions. Hence, you are getting this sheet because you are normally involved in such meetings and hence you are expected to be involved in these observations.

### **What will happen to me if I take part?**

The researcher will take notes of the interactions that happen. You are not required to do anything except acting normally as if the researcher is not present.

### **Are there any benefits in my taking part?**

This research aims to illuminate the researcher and the research community in general about the experiences of teachers within the English Department. It also aims at understanding the current and desired leadership practices that are seen more suitable for such contexts. Such findings are expected to provide local evidence that helps building an understanding about how teams function and what could be the seen as effective practices of leading in such context.

### **Are there any risks involved?**

Participation in this project is not expected to lead to any risks.

### **Will my participation be confidential?**

The researcher will follow the University of Southampton's Data Protection Act of data confidentiality. As per the Act, the researcher will keep confidential all the data gathered during the conduct of this research. The data gathered from such observations will help understanding the group context where individuals function and a collective picture will be reported where any reference to individuals or any quotes of conversations will be made using pseudonyms. Hence, participants are unlikely to be identifiable in the reports of the study.

The researcher also promises to store the observation notes in encrypted folders in password-protected devices. In addition, the researcher will keep the hard copies of any data gathered during the observation securely. Based on your consent, the researcher might take a photo of the meeting to help her sketch out the setting of the meeting in her observation notes.

**What happens if I change my mind?**

If you happen to change your mind or feel that attending the meeting might cause you any harm, please inform the researcher before the meeting so that necessary arrangements concerning your exemption from attending are worked out with the meeting chair.

**What happens if something goes wrong?**

The researcher will observe your wellbeing during and after the observation. If there is complaint, you can approach the Head of Research Governance at that University of Southampton with your complaint on the following details: Tel: 02380 595058, e-mail: [rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk](mailto:rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk).

**Where can I get more information?**

In case this sheet is not clear enough for you or you have other concerns that you would like the researcher to clarify, you could reach the researcher on the following details:

Tel: +44 7425334762, +968 99775056  
e-mail: [amal.almaqrashi@gmail.com](mailto:amal.almaqrashi@gmail.com)

## Appendix O : CONSENT FORM (Observation)

**Study title:** Group dynamics and the construction of identities in Omani higher education: a case study of cultural diversity using a social identity approach

**Researcher name:** Amal Saleh Al Muqarshi

**Ethics reference:** 23423

*Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):*

I have read and understood the information sheet (17.10.2016 (V4)) and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

☐

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for the observation data to be used for the purpose of this study and in future conference papers or publications.

☐

I agree for my CV to be used for the sole purpose of this research provided that my anonymity is observed.

☐
☐

I understand that my responses will be anonymised in reports of the research and reference to my responses will be done using pseudonyms.

☐

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected

☐

I agree to be captured in a photograph of the meeting that is going to be used for the sole purpose of this research.

☐

### **Data Protection**

*I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on a password-protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study.*

Name of participant (print name) .....

Signature of participant .....

Date.....

## **Appendix P: Data from Observations**

The eight meetings observed included: three general English Department meetings (GDM), three team B (TBM) and two team C (TCM). There were no meetings held for the third team (team A) during the period when this research was conducted but it was observed that aspects related to this team were discussed in the GDMs possibly because this team included almost all the teachers within the English Department.

### **Section 1: Team B reports**

#### Meeting 1

The meeting was called for by the team leader. It was held in a computer laboratory with teachers seated in rows facing the team leader who was in the front. Male teachers were sitting on one side of the table except for one who was sitting on the other side with the female teachers. The meeting content was prepared in a power point presentation and was sent to teachers one day before the meeting along with other documents referred to in the presentation. The meeting was a routine follow up one and the topics discussed were mainly about the project assessment, feedback and the final speaking exams.

Team leader and members were on time except for one teacher who joined the meeting 13 minutes late. In a post meeting discussion with the team leader, she said that that teacher acted as if he was not a member of the English Department and he was in close relations with the senior management because of his other non-teaching duties at the college.

The team leader thanked teachers for sending her the results of their students and asked those who had not yet done that to do it when they are through. Teachers were invited to report on how their groups were doing in relation to assessment submission. Team members' contributions were in the form of reporting on the performance of their student groups which they did one at a time. The meeting then moved to the third point which concerned giving feedback on the first draft and the team leader stressed that she did not want to interfere on how teachers give feedback to students but she advised teachers to document everything. She reminded teachers to indicate problems in students' work using the agreed codes and not to attempt to edit the work for them. One teacher raised a point about a sheet that he designed for this purpose and the

team leader promised to send that sheet to the teachers to use it if they wish. The meeting then moved to another point, which was about the project presentation. Pairs of teachers to conduct the presentation were displayed and teachers were encouraged to discuss the best approaches to do this with their co-assessors based on the documents sent to them.

The team leader moved to present the last point about the speaking exams reminding teachers about the date for that and that they should be done with teaching by then. She indicated that one teacher in the team who is in charge of the shared folder had placed some materials related to the speaking exams in the shared folder for the use of teachers. She also mentioned that some teachers were editing some of the materials in the shared folder for language mistakes. During the meeting, the team leader repeatedly encouraged teachers to contact her through email or come to speak to her face-to-face if they face any problems. Teachers did not raise additional points but after the meeting was closed, some of them went to her to discuss some aspects individually.

There was no group discussion during the meeting and thus no disagreement or sub-groups were noted and the atmosphere was formal. The content was very structured and procedures were explained in detail. Most of the talk was done by the team leader except where team members were asked for their reports or where one member suggested using the sheet he designed. No specific decisions were taken during the meeting. It appeared that teachers were teamed for the assessment by the team leader and pairs were displayed during the meeting. The researcher received no minutes for this meeting apparently because everything went according to the presentation.

### Meeting 2

This meeting was again held in the same laboratory using a power point presentation that was sent to teachers the day before the meeting. The meeting was called for by the team leader and one team member was assigned taking the minutes of which the researcher received a copy. One teacher was absent and one joined slightly late. In a post-meeting discussion with the team leader, she told the researcher that the absent teacher did not inform her that he will not attend and generally she thought he was not a committed teacher. The meeting was a routine follow up and the agenda included: progress updates from teachers,

project presentations results, project final draft, and final speaking exam. Male teachers sat in one side while females in the other side.

The meeting started by the team leader asking teachers to give reports on their progress through the semester and teachers did this one after another. The meeting then moved to the second point and the team leader presented a slide with the overall results of the project presentations for the different groups. Then the meeting moved to the third point about project final drafts. Teachers were asked to document everything and they were reminded to read some instructions sent to them by email. Teachers were asked to submit the project booklets of their groups to the team leader and they were given instructions about the way the team leader would like them to do things and the kind of documents she would like them to send her.

The meeting moved to discuss the last point, which was the final speaking exams. The team leader informed teachers that they will be paired to conduct the speaking exams (assessor and interlocutor) and the exam pack will be given to the interlocutor but they should both familiarise themselves with the exam content and procedure and discuss things together. Detailed instructions were given with the team leader using phrases like 'must', 'has to be', 'I don't want', 'has to be done immediately' in different occasions. She also mentioned that she would send teachers an email of the aspects they should emphasise in giving the project feedback

The team leader invited teachers to ask questions if things were not clear and she thanked them for coming to her office to brief her about their individual classes matters. She thanked teachers for being cooperative and professional and she ended the meeting by distributing the speaking exam packs to the responsible teachers. There were no group discussions during the meeting. After the meeting, one teacher approached the team leader to discuss aspect related to her group.

In the post meeting discussion with the team leader, she pointed out that meetings are for matters that concern all teachers and individual matters are discussed individually with teachers in her office. She commented that meetings were kept short and focused because teachers were too busy and that she learned through her experience that short and focused meetings were the most effective. She also mentioned that she was planning to gather feedback from teachers

through email and that she would distribute tasks to teachers based on the feedback, which she considered a chance for innovation.

### Meeting 3

This was a very brief meeting about which apparently teachers did not know beforehand. It immediately followed one GDM and thus teachers were already in the meeting room. The meeting was about the final speaking exam for the level groups. It included further explanations and advice about the exam conduct and how teachers should deal with aspects they could face during the exam. She reminded teachers that they should discuss and agree about the scores they assign to students. One teacher asked about the procedure to deal with cases where there are discrepancies in scores allocated and the team leader explained the procedure. She asked teachers to decide on the questions they will be asking students during the exam and to tell her about them. Two teachers clarified about certain aspects and the team leader explained the procedure to deal with them.

One teacher, who was involved in the exam but originally not from the team, commented 'you must understand that some of us are working with teachers with whom we cannot agree, we know it beforehand'. The team leader explained the procedure in case of disagreements and advised teachers: 'don't start any confrontations with the other teachers, refer back to me'.

Other teachers asked for clarifications about different aspects and the team leader explained. The atmosphere was positive and there were some side chats and jokes. Some teachers who were not from the team and who were new to the procedure were asked to come to the team leader's office for more details.

### Overview of team B meetings

Overall, meetings with this team seemed to be very structured and focused and they usually followed a structure decided beforehand by the team leader. Most of the content was provided by the team leader in the form of explanation of procedures and advice on how to deal with certain situations. The contributions of team member or attendees were limited and they were mostly in the form of individual reports on progress or questions for clarifications on certain procedures. No topics were opened for discussion during the meetings and no collective decisions were made but there were references to one-on-one



conversations that teachers usually have with the team leader concerning their own classes. There were no indications of uneven relationships between teachers and teacher-to-teacher interactions during the meetings were almost non-existent. It appeared that limited interactions during the meetings were strategically opted for to avoid conflicts and to keep meetings short and focused. The team leader was focused and clear on what she wanted teachers to do. There was a noticeable emphasis on explaining procedures for different things apparently to maintain standardised practices and the team leader seemed to emphasise the need for teachers to keep her in the picture through the files she sent or those she asked teachers to send her in addition to the one-on-one conversations she seemed to find useful to the same effect.

## **Section 2: Team C reports**

### Meeting 1

This team was smaller than the other teams as it included only six teachers. There were five males and one female teachers in the team. The meeting was held in a meeting hall where teachers sat around a table. This meeting was called for by the team leader and it was a routine one. Meeting agenda was decided by the team leader and included progress with teaching and syllabus, project first draft marking and feedback, project presentation assessment, and instructor's duties for the coming weeks. Before the meeting commenced, the team leader distributed hand-outs to the teachers that included: presentation guidelines for the instructors, presentation assessment teams, presentation outline form, presentation schedule form, presentation assessment rubric, presentation score sheet, instructions on creating a link for project first draft submission and a sheet on instructor's duties for the next seven weeks.

The meeting started with teachers giving reports on their progress in the syllabus one after another. The meeting progressed based on the agenda and most of the content was based on explanation of procedures and instructions related to the different items. All the team members spoke more than once but two teachers who were a couple contributed more to the discussion. The discussions were in the form of questions and answers, clarifications and reports. There were aspects discussed where teachers were invited to give their opinions. Teachers expressed opinions and some of them mentioned previous experiences. There was a discussion about the elements that students should present in their project

presentations and there were two sides in the discussion. One member went slightly loud during the discussion, as his viewpoint was different from the others.

Overall, both collective and individual manners of contributions were present in this meeting. The team leader was moderating the discussion and a decision was made according to the majority's opinion. The team leader suggested that if things appeared not to be working well based on the decision agreed, they could adapt things for the next semester. Teachers were expected to schedule their students and conduct things per the instructions and as agreed in the meeting. Duties assigned were all routine teacher duties related to teaching. No additional tasks were assigned to teachers. Teachers discussed things and agreed or disagreed with each other in several occasions but there were no indications of unfriendly atmosphere except for one teacher who slightly went loud but he said that he will do things as agreed in the meeting.

No clear indications of sub-groups except for the one teacher who was slightly distanced and who went against the group in his opinion but he indicated to the researcher in a later conversation that it was his mistake as the team leader asked for opinions earlier in an email but this teacher did not express his opinion. In a post-meeting conversation with the team leader, he indicated that the personality of that teacher was slightly unique but overall he was a good teacher. Another teacher was quieter than the others and contributed less to the discussions but it seemed that this was because of his personality but his performance was commended on by the team leader and the HoD in different occasions.

### Meeting 2

This meeting was again conducted in the same meeting hall where teachers sat around a meeting table. The agenda of the meeting were decided by the team leader and they included feedback on project presentations from teachers, final project draft submission and marking, final speaking exam, student attendance and returning textbooks.

The team leader asked teachers about their feedback on the presentations and the effect of reducing the presentation duration (a change introduced this year at the ED). He started by giving his own point of view then invited the other teachers to give their feedback. Teachers gave feedback on both the effect of presentation duration change and the effect of limiting the presentation focus on primary

research. Teachers were generally positive except for one teacher who was against the idea in the previous meeting. The team leader pointed out that he would communicate the feedback of teachers to the HoD to decide in ways forward for the next semester.

Teachers gave feedback and asked questions to clarify different aspects. Most of the time, the input was from the team leader in terms of explanation of procedures (e.g. plagiarism issues), instructions, or reminders about future milestones teachers need to attend to. He asked teachers to send him the results of the assessment for their groups. The speech during the meeting was mostly individual in the form of reports or explanations or questions and answers. No topic was opened for group discussion or decision making during this meeting. Teachers were instructed to do things as explained either in the meeting or in previous communications or emails that will be sent to them.

No specific responsibilities were assigned to teachers other than those related to their classroom activities and students assessment. The atmosphere was good and no indications of negative attitudes. At the start of the meeting, the team leader offered one team member condolence for the demise of his father. People sat almost in the same way as they did in the previous meeting with the distanced teacher again keeping distance from the other members.

#### Overview of team C meetings

Team meetings seemed to be mostly for following up with teachers and ensuring that things were going on as expected with no major issues. In comparison to the previous team meetings, this team meetings included more input from teachers despite the fact that the most part of the meetings was dedicated for explaining procedures and answering questions related to the different matters. It was not obvious if there were issues between teachers as the interactions were positive on the whole and where teachers were quiet or loud, it seemed to be because of different personalities. The team leader seemed to emphasise procedures either in his explanations during the meetings or the hand-outs he distributed. Besides, deadlines and milestones were focal. Minutes taking for these meetings seemed to be circulated between teachers.

### **Section 3: General Department Meetings**

#### Meeting 1

The general Department meetings were called for by the HoD of the English Department and were presided by her. They discussed aspects that were general to the whole Department or to one team that included almost all teachers. The minutes for the GDMs were written by the HoD herself and the researcher received minutes of two of the three meetings observed at this level.

The meeting was held in the meeting room in the English Department which was small and thus not all teachers sat around the table. Many teachers sat in distanced places. Omani female teachers were sitting close to each other. This meeting discussed the following aspects: the results of the team A mid-term exam, moderation of exam answer keys, and teacher absence procedures. Twenty teachers attended the meeting and seven were not present for different reasons. The HoD started the meeting by thanking teachers for their efforts during the exam administration and marking. Copies of the exam results for all the team A groups were distributed to teachers based on the groups they taught to have a look at and the team A leader was invited to present the results. The results were presented and teachers were instructed to share the results with their students. Teachers were invited to ask questions if they had but teachers started quiet chats with each other about the marks. The meeting moved to the next point, which seemed to have been added to the agenda by one teacher.

The HoD presented a suggestion by two teachers about moderating answer keys before the start of marking. The HoD gave her point of view about the item and invited teachers to give their opinions. The team A leader explained the procedure currently in place and indicated why she thought such a suggestion might not work. Another teacher who was involved in the assessment writing commented that any changes in the answer keys that might result from the moderation sessions suggested, cannot be enforced without the agreement of the other CASs because of the need to standardise practices. Different points of view were expressed by a limited number of teachers (almost six teachers including the HoD). The discussion took some time and there seemed to be no agreement. The HoD asked the teachers to send her their opinions by email about this topic and that based on that a decision would be made in coordination with the team leaders.

The HoD moved to the next point explaining the procedure teachers should follow in the event of planned absence for known reasons. The HoD explained that it is important that teachers follow the procedure because of the high teaching load that made sudden absences difficult to deal with. She also mentioned that the administration might ask her about the procedure followed to cover classes when teachers are absent. Decision about the procedure seemed to have been made earlier as the HoD pointed out that this procedure had been followed in the team A.

During the meeting discussions, there were many disagreements but all related to the matters discussed; not personal. The majority of teachers did not contribute to the discussions and many of them started side chats with each other while the main points were being discussed. At the end, teachers were asked if they had anything to add to the meeting. There were no additional points raised. The meeting lasted for around 50 minutes and friendly chats started after that. In a post meeting conversation with the HoD, the researcher asked why no decision was taken during the meeting concerning the answer key moderation and the HoD commented that although most of those who expressed their views were against the idea, she wanted to give a fair chance to teachers to express their views through email because some of them do not like to speak in meetings.

### Meeting 2

This meeting was called for by the HoD and it was mainly about the final exam instructions and guidelines and marking of the exam. Before the meeting, there were friendly chats between teachers. The HoD started the meeting by highlighting the main purpose of the meeting, which was explaining the final exam procedures sent by the College's exam committee. The HoD emphasised the importance of reading and understanding the instructions as from her experience 'not many teachers do'. She informed the meeting that she would be the Head of the exam committee this semester and she started explaining the procedure especially in relation to the English Department exams. Instructions about administering the exam were explained. As the HoD went through the instructions, some teachers raised questions and answers were given. One teacher made a suggestion regarding providing water during the exam. Explanation continued for some time regarding different aspects like dealing with cheating behaviour during the exam or dealing with mobile phones.

Then the HoD explained the process of marking for the English Department exams and the duties of assessors. Then the procedure for taking leave after the exams was also explained by the HoD who mentioned that further information would be posted on the notice board. Questions continued about the final exam procedure and many teachers contributed to the meeting mostly through asking questions. One question was asked and the HoD explained her point of view but she mentioned that she needed to refer to the Dean for the final say. Some teachers suggested ways for dealing with certain scenarios that could happen in the exam and the HoD mentioned that her authority to make decisions was limited and that the final decision would be the Dean's.

Towards the end of the meeting one teacher communicated the news that a former teacher at the English Department had a baby and the HoD also communicated the news that one team leader also had a baby. Some teachers remained quiet during the meeting and the overall atmosphere seemed to be positive.

### Meeting 3

The researcher was present before the meeting and there were already some teachers who were having different chats about friendly matters like personal anecdotes, plans for trips and exchanging jokes. One Omani male teacher was present but the rest were non-Omanis. The meeting was called for by the HoD for approving the team A final exam marks. There were chairs available in the first round but some teachers chose to set in distanced places. As with the other two meetings, most of the teachers who chose to set in these places kept quite during the meeting and did not contribute to the interactions.

The HoD opened the meeting and thanked teachers involved in the marking of the team A exam. Sheets of the results were distributed to teachers and the marks were presented by the HoD. Some teachers commented about the different results and the atmosphere continued to be friendly with some funny comment from some teachers from time to time. One teacher asked a question regarding one level (the lowest level in terms of linguistic proficiency) and he pointed out that there should not be 25 students in the class because these students need special attention for their performance to improve. He suggested that having two groups with around 12 students in each group could provide these students with fairer chances to improve.

The HoD commented that she agreed but it was not her decision; the administration does not permit classes to have that number of students. One teacher commented that the Quality Assurance Department at the College should be made aware of this case. One teacher mentioned her experience in another institution with a similar level of students. The HoD mentioned that it was beyond her capacity to make decisions about this group and that she made a proposal regarding aligning the course content with the level of the students. This topic generally invited different views and suggestions and there was a lively discussion for the possible solutions for improving the results of this particular level. Few teachers who never contributed anything to the other meetings observed previously did interact in this discussion.

The HoD informed the teachers that some international students might join the College next semester. The meeting was ended but discussions between some teachers continued concerning that level case. In a later interview with one teacher, the researcher made reference to this discussion and that teacher commented that such discussions did not usually happen.

#### Overview of GD meetings

Decisions made at the GDMs, also called the Department Board meetings, seemed to represent the voice of the English Department. During the observation of the three meetings, most of the content was related to explaining procedures and instructions either from the English Department itself or from the CAS-1 senior management. Some teachers contributed to the three GDMs by suggestions and questions but some others were silent during the three GDMs. Unlike the first two meetings, which were mostly about these procedures, the last meeting included a discussion that seemed to concern teachers. At least half of the staff present contributed to the discussion and put forward suggestions concerning possible solutions despite the fact that the HoD's authority seemed to be limited to take a decision.

The last meeting took place after teaching was completely over and during the final exam period. It seemed that one possible reason for the passiveness of some teachers during meetings was their busy teaching schedules during the semester which made them keen to keep the previous meetings short. In one post meeting conversation with the HoD, she mentioned that because of the high teaching loads, teacher did not like it when the meetings were long and there

were only two hours during the week when all teachers could be free for a meeting. She also commented that in the past there was an occasion when one teacher brought a topic to the meeting and it did not concern all the teachers so they were upset because that took so long. Thus, she tried to keep the meetings focused so that such 'hidden agenda' are avoided.



## **Appendix Q : Data from informal observations and field notes**

During the research period, the researcher noticed that there were limited interactions at the English Department. Most teachers were busy either teaching or working in their offices. Towards the end of the semester when teaching was over, there were more interactions audible in the corridors but generally there were no indications of negative atmosphere. During the research, the college celebrated the Omani 47<sup>th</sup> National Day. The celebration took place during a workday in a theatre at the College. Based on the researcher's observation, even the Omani teachers did not attend the celebration, except for one maybe.

During the research also, one Omani male teacher took the initiative to arrange a trip to one natural attraction to which he invited teachers from the English Department and the other departments at the college. Two non-Omani teachers commented to that in their interviews considering that a very good chance for them to meet other staff from other departments and to interact with them and with other teachers from the English Department in a non-formal manner.

The researcher generally felt that there is a feeling of caution at the English Department as teachers did not seem to be so open about their views. One teacher asked the researcher early during the data collection if those she would like to interview will be getting the questions before the interview. One teacher declined the invitation to be interviewed and two seemed to be hesitant and kept postponing the interview date. While the researcher assured staff in the consent forms used at the respondent recruitment stage that their identities will be kept as confidential, she observed that there was reluctance to participate in the interviews from some non-Omani staff possibly because of the lack of trust as the researcher is Omani and thus belonging to another identity group or because of the high teaching load. Thus, a considerable amount of the interview time was spent in conversation that not necessarily related to the topic but was anticipated to help establishing good rapport and trust.

Despite the fact that the researcher sent teachers participant information sheet in which she undertook to maintain confidentiality and she explained that also in a GDM, one non-Omani teacher seemed to be concerned about his views being exposed to the other Omani teachers. The researcher also felt that some teachers did not express their actual opinions during the interview and some tended to be

very positive about everything and to comment positively about their experience with reference to Oman and Omanis even when that was outside the context of the discussion.

The researcher collected information about teachers' types of contracts through informal conversations with the HoD. Data is included in the table below.

	<b>Code</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Type of contract</b>
1	T17	South African	Agency- Outsourced
2	T14	Filipino	MoHE-Fixed
3	T7	American	Agency- Outsourced
4	T11	American	Agency- Outsourced
5	T8	British	Agency- Outsourced
6	T18	American	Agency- Outsourced
7	T19	Omani	MoHE-Permanent
8	T20	Omani	MoHE-Permanent
9	T16	Tunisian	MoHE-Fixed
10	T9	South African	Agency- Outsourced
11	T21	Omani	MoHE-Permanent
12	T2	Omani	MoHE-Permanent
13	T5	Canadian	Agency- Outsourced
14	T4	Omani	MoHE-Permanent
15	T15	Indian	MoHE-Fixed
16	T22	Indian	MoHE-Fixed
17	T6	Omani	MoHE-Permanent
18	T23	Indian	Agency- Outsourced

19	T24	Omani	MoHE-Permanent
20	T25	Jordanian	MoHE-Fixed
21	T12	South African	Agency- Outsourced
22	T26	British	Agency- Outsourced
23	T10	British	Agency- Outsourced
24	T13	South African	Agency- Outsourced
25	T3	Omani	MoHE-Permanent
26	T1	Indian	MoHE-Fixed
27	T27	South African	MoHE-Fixed

South African= 5(18.5%)

Filipino= 1(3.7%)

American= 3(11%)

British= 3 (11%)

Omani= 8(29.6%)

Tunisian= 1(3.7%)

Canadian=1 (3.7%)

Indian=4 (14.8%)

Jordanian= 1(3.7%)

MoHE (permanent contract)= 8 (29.6%)

MoHE (fixed contract)= 7(25.9%)

Agency outsourced contracts= 12 (44.4%)

## **Appendix R: Data from Documents**

The researcher collected documents from the field with the aim of triangulating evidence, adding to the depth of data, and looking for evidence that could reflect the organisational perspective on staff diversity. These documents included minutes of the meetings observed, teacher CVs, copies of recruitment contracts, relevant parts of the Civil Service Law and the CAS bylaw, CAS strategic Plan, the Employee Handbook, and Teacher Assessment Form.

### **1. Meeting minutes**

The researcher observed eight meetings in total but she managed to get hold of six meeting reports in the form of meeting minutes, power point presentations, or both. The aim of scrutinising the content of meeting minutes was to triangulate aspects of the observations made by the researcher especially in relation to the type of interactions, decisions and responsibility distribution.

#### **1.1. Team B meeting minutes**

The researcher received the reports of two meetings for this team. The reports for the meetings were in the form of power point presentations sent to the teachers the day before the meeting. One meeting also had brief minutes written by one teacher during the meeting.

For the first meeting, the slides recorded that the agenda was: the 5% process, first draft, feedback for first draft, project presentations, final drafts, and final speaking exam. The first slide included a report of the groups that finished the first project milestone (5% process). The next slide included the type of feedback teachers 'need' to give to students for the project first draft and the way to do that. Then the teachers paired teams for the project presentations were displayed to teachers. This was followed by a slide that details the procedure teachers should follow in preparing students for the presentations. There was a frequent use of phrases like 'need to', 'have to', 'has to', and 'must' in the way this procedure was explained. Presentation follow up handout was presented followed by a reminder of due dates for submission of finalised schedule to the team leader, final essay draft submission time, and final speaking exams time.

For the second meeting, the agenda included briefings from teachers, project presentations results, research project final drafts, and final speaking exam. The

team leader presented a slide with the project presentation results of all the groups then moved to explain the documentation of projects teachers should submit to the team leader by certain date and the sheet to be used for recording scores. After that the slides recorded the final speaking exam pack content to be given to instructors by the team leader and the procedure to be followed in preparation for the exam and after the exam. The final slide contained items required from the teachers and these included feedback and suggestions from teachers in addition to documents related to the other items. Like the previous meeting report, the slides included use of phrases like 'must be' and 'need to' in displaying the procedures and the instructions.

There were minutes taken for this meeting as well. The minutes recorded that the team leader opened the meeting with display of agenda followed by briefings from the different teachers about their work with their classes. The meetings recorded that the scores of presentations of the different groups were displayed with explanation of the failure cases. The next item for discussion was the research project rubric which was recorded in the form of explanation, instructions, and a reminder of due date for actions to be taken by teachers. The other items concerning results excel sheets and final speaking exam schedules were recorded in the same format as the previous point. The minutes recorded that at the end the floor was opened for questions but did not record any questions from teachers. The meeting ended with team leader passing speaking exam folders to teachers.

### Overview

The reports of the meetings reflect a high level of structure. The content that was sent beforehand, the use of phrases like 'have to', 'must', 'need to' could suggest a level of control by the team leader. The content seemed to be mostly delivered by the team leader with teachers reporting on their progress and there was no record of discussions during the two meetings. However, it seemed that teachers were encouraged to communicate with the team leader for suggestions and feedback regarding the courses they taught.

#### 1.2. Team C meeting minutes

The researcher received two records of meeting minutes for the two meetings observed for this team. The two meetings were chaired by the team leader and minutes were taken by two different teachers within the team.

For the first meeting, the agenda recorded was progress with course books, speaking exam, essay final draft, draft 1 feedback, first drafts, presentations, presentation schedules, presentation: assessment and feedback, and students' attendance. The meeting recorded that teachers first gave reports of their progress through the books and they were reminded by the team leader about the duties for the remaining period of the semester (a sheet of duties was handed out). The minutes signalled when this assessment milestone would be discussed in details and the necessary material teachers ought to refer to in preparation for the assessment. The minutes stated that the guidelines for dealing with student plagiarism during project final draft marking were explained and necessary documentation for plagiarism cases should be retained. According to the minutes, type of feedback to students was discussed with a reminder of keeping records. Presentations expected content was recorded and schedules were expected to be sent to the team leader by a specific date. The meetings recorded discussions of issues related to assessment and student attendance and team leader was expected to be kept in the picture in the form of results reports or referral of critical cases.

For the second meeting, the agenda included presentations, essay marking, speaking exam, course evaluation, final written exam, course books return, and attendance. The minutes recorded the start of the meeting with reports from teachers about the status of speaking presentation completion. Teachers gave feedback regarding the agreed focus of presentations in which one teacher seemed to disagree with others. The minutes recorded that the HoD was to be consulted for an agreed practice for the following semester. The following items on the agenda were recorded in the format of explanation of procedures, reminder of deadlines or necessary documentation to be referred to or to be sent to the team leader, and procedures for double marking. Similar to the previous team records, the record contained phrases like 'should', 'has to' and 'must'.

### Overview

Overall, this team minutes reflect an approach rather similar to that with team B. A level of structure is demonstrated in the report of the meeting and an

indication of the overall purpose, which seemed to be ensuring clarity of procedures and time framework. Most of the content of the meetings was in the form of explanation of procedures and instructions and reminders of deadlines and documents to be submitted or referred to. There seemed to exist a level of discussion recorded in this meeting and feedback on how an agreed procedure went was obtained for future decisions (to be agreed by the HoD).

### 1.3. General Department meeting minutes

The researcher observed three GDMs but received two reports only as there was no minutes written for the third meeting. The meeting minutes were taken by the HoD herself who presided these meetings.

For the first meeting, the meeting agenda items were mid-term exam results, moderation of all sections of exam answer keys before starting marking, procedure to follow if you are aware that you won't be able to teach your class on certain days, AOB. The report show that the meeting was opened by the HoD but the first item was presented by one team leader who was responsible for the administration and handling of the mid-term exam. Teachers were recipients of score sheets in this regard and their responsibility was to share results with their classes.

The second item was suggested by one teacher according to the minutes but was presented by the HoD in the meeting. The minutes show that this item was opened for discussion to which five teachers of different designations contributed in addition to the HoD. The minutes stated that there was a general consensus towards disapproving the suggestion but because the teacher who suggested this insisted on the need for moderation, the HoD was to further study the suggestion and to welcome feedback from teachers through email. The minutes recorded that procedure of teacher absence was initially used by one team leader within her team but now it should be used for the whole English Department. The procedure was explained in the minutes and teachers were advised to follow the procedure. The minutes did not record further discussions.

For the second meeting, the agenda items were final exam instructions and guidelines, marking, and AOB. The minutes recorded that the HoD went over the exam instructions and guidelines during the meeting and the report presented the content of the meeting in the form of issues that were noticed in the past in

relation to the exam guidelines and recommendations to address them. The marking procedure of the English Department exams was also recorded in the form of issues related to different aspects and detailed recommendations to address them. In the AOB section of this report, there were items that were raised by teachers during the meeting concerning other aspects of the exam invigilation and marking procedures in addition to teacher leaves after exams. The report recorded the HoD's responsibility to post final version of exam instructions after Dean's approval.

### Overview

The meeting minutes closely and briefly reflected the content of the meetings observed. It appeared that the GDM also tackled aspects related to team A for which no separate meetings were held during the research. While the minutes did not record detailed interactions, they indicated that a level of interaction took place during the meetings which was contributed to by a limited number of teachers. It seemed that teachers could bring items for discussion either as main items within the agenda or as AOB aspects that rose during the meeting. Much of the content of the meeting minutes reflected explanation of instructions and procedures with one suggestion put forward by one teacher. Decisions seemed to be made either before the meeting where teachers were informed of the procedure in place and were asked to follow it (e.g. teacher absence procedure) or opened for discussion and consensus during the meeting (e.g. the answer key moderation proposal).

## **2. Data from teacher CVs**

The aim of scrutinising the CVs of teachers was to construct a profile about the English Department staff in order to understand aspects about their educational backgrounds and teaching experience that help understanding the diversity extant within the English Department. The researcher managed to obtain 18 CVs out of possible 27 for the whole English Department. A total of nine teachers did not agree to send the researcher copies of their CVs. The table below presents an overall profile related to teachers' education and experience as detailed description were avoided for maintaining confidentiality.



No.	Nationality	Degree/ speciality	Length of experience at CAS-1	Previous work experience
1	Omani	M. English Department. Curriculum and methods of teaching English language	Since 2009 (Around 7 years)	None
2	Indian	Master of Arts in English	Since Sep. 2010 (around 6 years)	Taught English at school and tertiary levels in various institutions
3	Tunisian	Master in English language and literature	Since 2003 (around 13 years)	Taught English at tertiary level in Tunisia
4	Omani	Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics and Experimental Psychology	Since 2008 (around 8 years)	None
5	English	PGCE Primary Education QTS	Since Nov. 2015 (just over a year) <i>(info. from interview)</i>	Taught English at an institute in UAE and other institutions before that
6	Indian	Master of Arts in English language and literature	Since 2008 (around 8 years)	Taught English at an school level in Oman and India
7	Filipino	Master of Science in teaching English & social studies	Since 2013	Taught English at another college in Oman

8	South African	BA in Literature (Major)& Communication	No evidence	Taught English at tertiary level in different institutions in KSA
9	South African	Bachelor of Social Sciences- Clinical Practice in Social Work	Over a year and a half ( <i>until interviewed; evidence from interview</i> )	Taught English at tertiary level in KSA and as social worker, student relation manager, and ESL instructor in SA
10	British	PGCE Post Compulsory Literacy and ESOL	<i>No specific evidence (after Sep-2015)</i>	Taught English at different institutions at the UK
11	Omani	Master Degree (TESOL)  PhD in educational studies (yet to be credited)	Since 2004 (around 12 years)	Worked as Assistant Dean at CAS and as teacher of English at CAS and College of Education
12	South African	Masters of Education (Higher Education Studies)	After Jan 2016  ( <i>around two months based on the interview</i> )	Taught English at tertiary level in KSA and taught school level in Taiwan and SA
13	American	CELTA (University of Cambridge ESOL Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults)  B.A., Communication and Minor in Journalism	One year ( <i>evidence from interview</i> )	Taught English at tertiary level in KSA

14	Omani	Master of Education in TESOL	Since March 2011 (over 5 years)	Taught for 3 months at school level in Oman
15	Omani	Master of Education in TESOL	Since 2011 (over 5 years)	Taught for 3 months at school level in Oman
16	Indian	Master of Arts in English	Since Sep. 2010 (over 6 years)	Taught English at school and tertiary levels in various institutions
17	Omani	Master Degree in Translation	Since Nov. 2012 (around 4 years)	Taught English at tertiary level at another college in Oman and at school level
18	Jordanian	Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics	Since 2005 (around 11 years)	Taught English at tertiary levels in Bahrain

### Overview

The data from the CVs shows variation in levels of education and experience among the staff. Considering the fact that data about nine teachers (over one third of the staff) is not present, it is not possible to suggest overall interpretation. However, the data indicate that all the 18 teachers have experiences teaching English at some level. In terms of qualification, teachers employed through agency had bachelor degrees whereas the rest of the teachers have Masters. One teacher has a degree in Primary Education, one in Social Work, and one in Communication and Journalism with CELTA. Overall, the data seemed to echo evidence from interviews that during the semester when the research was done, there were fewer inconsistencies in terms of specialisation and experience in comparison to previous semesters.

### **3. Data from employment contracts**

The aim of scrutinising employment contracts is to find out if they reflect any organisational view towards staff diversity and to triangulate evidence related to themes from interviews. There was no contract for Omanis as they are employed permanently and their employment is subject to the provisions of the CAS Bylaw, which is written in light of the Omani Civil Law. The researcher reviewed both these documents to discern areas for comparison with the other types of contracts.

The researcher obtained a copy of the contract for staff employed through the MoHE based on a fixed term. There were two versions of this contract: one for teachers recruited inside Oman and one for teachers recruited outside Oman. These two documents are rather similar in most of the parts with the exception of articles related to flight ticket allowance for those recruited outside Oman. All MoHE employees whether Omanis or non-Omanis are treated in accordance with the provisions of the CAS Bylaw of which the researcher obtained a copy.

As for outsourced staff, there was a change in the recruiting agency and there was no copy available for the current recruiting agency contract at the research site, as the researcher was told the contracts were not finalised yet. The researcher obtained a copy of the previous recruiting agency contract both with the MoHE and with the teachers.

With the exception of the Agency-employee contract and MoHE-employee contract, all the documents under this section were in their Arabic versions and the researcher translated relevant evidence into English for the purpose of this research. All the documents above have been scrutinised for evidence related to the themes established in light of the interview evidence with the objective of adding depth and breadth and verifying evidence.

### **3.1. MoHE employees contract**

- Article 2 in the contract states that unless terminated because of any reason stated in the CAS bylaw, the contract is valid for two years and it becomes yearly renewable after that as per the agreement of the two parties.
- The fourth article states that employees could be transferred to another CAS campus as per the requirements of CAS.

- The seventh article of the contract states that the employee ‘undertakes to respect and comply with the rules and regulations of the Sultanate as well as respecting its social, cultural, and religious traditions and they shall exercise sincerity and loyalty in their duties. They shall perform their duties and functions, including those duties and functions of the position, together with any duties required by the First party (the MoHE) in the usual conduct of business’.
- Article 13 of the contract states that the employee ‘undertakes to desist from involvement in any political, religious, or social activity that contradicts Omani laws and regulations, or that may compromise national security, provoke religious or sectarian strife or create feelings of hatred and resentment among citizens and its residents’.

### **3.2. Civil Service Law**

- Article 12 of the Law states that only Omanis are entitled for permanent contracts except when there is a need to recruit non-Omanis permanently.
- Article 54 of the Bylaw states that training is an obligation for all employees and the (government) units are required to train employees recruited on non-contract basis in accordance with work requirements, training plans and programs, and affordability.

### **3.3. CAS Bylaw**

- The bylaw states that the Department Council is composed of the HoD and all the staff within the English Department and it has responsibilities that include duties and teaching load distribution, approving results, and giving opinions in the matters referred to it by the Dean, or Dean Assistant for Academic affairs, or the HoD.
- The Department Council should convene in a meeting a minimum of once a month or more frequently as per the Department need.
- Decisions are made according to the majority’s opinion.
- Item one in article 69 of the Bylaw states that employment should be for Omanis and in case there are no Omanis available for the position, non-Omanis could be employed on a contract basis.
- Article 109 of the Bylaw states that Omani staff members participating in a conference or a symposium are entitled for a ticket fare, registration fees,

and official mission allowance if the organisers of these events did not offer that.

- Article 111 states that non-Omani staff members may be entitled for up to five days paid leave for participating in conferences, symposia, or exhibitions provided that they are responsible for all the expenses.
- Article 144 states that for academic staff to be promoted, they should prove competent in terms of teaching, research, and community service.
- The bylaw states that academic staff are responsible for:
  - Tackling their duties in relation to teaching and research
  - Participating in academic advising and supervising students' projects
  - Attending Department Council meetings and participating in committees and academic and administrative affairs.
  - Maintaining job integrity and academic conventions
  - Promoting academic collegiality
  - Participating in community development and communication with its different categories.
  - Desisting from involvement in religious, sectarian, or racial arguments.
- Based on their credentials and experiences, staff recruited through the MoHE could be classified in the various academic rankings: language teacher, assistant lecturer, lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. Language teachers should have a bachelor degree and a minimum teaching experience equal to four years.
- Staff members recruited undergo a three-month probation period to determine their fit to the position.

### **3.4. MoHE- recruiting agency contract**

- The contract states that there is a document of provisions and specifications that is part of the contract but of which the researcher got no hold. It would appear that such a document contains the detailed specifications of the teachers to be recruited.
- This contract [with this specific agency] is valid for three years subject to conditions.
- The contract states that the candidates are interviewed by representatives from the MoHE before getting an offer and the recruiting agency should provide the MoHE with all the necessary documents that verify the candidate credentials and experiences and these credentials and

documents should be endorsed by the Omani Consulate or Attaché in the countries of the candidates in addition to the issuing bodies of the documents.

- The recruiting agency is responsible for providing evidence of the validity of the documents and the original documents to the MoHE.
- The contract states that the minimum accepted credentials and experiences is as follows:
  - Bachelor degree with a minimum experience of three years
  - Master degree with a minimum experience of two years
  - PhD with a minimum experience of two years
- The contract also states that the recruiting agency is responsible for providing detailed explanation to candidates about the living and work conditions in Oman, information about the CAS and the nature of work in them and information related to the employee rights, obligations and monetary payments.
- Item nine of the second article states that candidates undergo a three-month probation period during which the MoHE determines if they are fit technically and ethically and if they are not, the agency is responsible for providing a substitute.
- The first item of the third article states that teachers employed through this channel should adhere to work hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) and should teach up to 20 hours per week. Teaching hours could be reduced if the teacher is assigned additional duties like administrative responsibilities or participation in material or assessment preparation and design.
- Item 5 of the same article states that teacher services could be ended as per their choice or that of the MoHE without justification provided that a minimum of one-month notification is given. In such a case, the agency is responsible for providing a substitute before the departure of the terminated teacher.
- Item seven states that the employee undertakes to desist from involvement in action that contradicts Omani laws and regulations, or that may compromise national security, provoke religious or sectarian strife or create feelings of hatred and resentment among citizens and its residents.

### **3.5. Recruiting agency-employee contract**

This contract is between the agency and the teachers employed through it.

- The contract states that the term of the contract is one year ‘renewable by mutual agreement for one year period; minimum two (2) months before the date of termination’. It states that the teacher undergoes three-month probation period during which their contract could be terminated.
- Besides, the contract states that ‘The first Party (the agency) may terminate the Second Party’s services at any time summarily and without notice or salary in lieu or accrued gratuity in any events described in Article 40 of the Labour Law of the Sultanate of Oman.’
- Item 3.1 states that ‘the Second Party (the teacher) is expected to work such hours as are reasonably necessary in order to fulfil his/her responsibilities. The second party is expected to work flexibly and efficiently and to maintain the highest professional standards in discharging his/her responsibilities and in promoting and implementing the corporate policies of the First Party and the College’.
- In describing the nature of the duties of the teacher, the contract states that ‘Working hours will be from 8:00 A.M. until 4:30 P.M., Sunday to Thursday. The workload per week will be 20 hours for the teaching periods and the rest will be devoted to teaching preparation and administrative work as required per the College.’

### Overview

Overall, the documents related to employment indicate that there are various terms of employment within the English Department all subject to provisions stated either in the CAS Bylaw for those recruited through the MoHE or in the Labour Law or recruitment contract for those employed through private agency. It would appear also that while agency contract is specific in the nature of work such as duties other than teaching should warrant reduction in the teaching load (maximum of 20 teaching hours per week), there is no such specification in the CAS bylaw and there is reference to other duties such as research, training, community service, administrative duties and committees.

Concerning staff employment specifications, it would appear that both methods of employment are specific and strict in the validity and relevance of the credentials and experiences of the staff recruited to teach. For recruiting staff in the rank of language teacher, they need to have a bachelor degree with a minimum of four-year teaching experience according to the CAS bylaw and a



minimum of Bachelor degree with three-year experience according to the MoHE-agency contract.

In relation to professional development like training or participating in conferences, it would appear that these could be facilitated to non-Omanis through the entitlement of a maximum of five days paid leave only. For Omanis, however, both paid leave and registration and passage expanses are covered.

The MoHE-agency contract states that it is the responsibility of the recruiting agency to introduce candidates to the life and work conditions in Oman in addition to the nature of work at CAS before they commence work. All employees are expected to respect the Omani culture, the integrity of the job, and to maintain professional and collegial work environment. Ethical and technical fit is a requirement to pass the probation period, which all employees undergo.

#### **4. Data from the English Department Employee Handbook**

This document is compiled and edited by the Head of the English Department who was in position when this research was conducted. As stated in its forward page, it aims to introduce teachers to the CAS-1 in terms of academic programs, policies, and procedures. Thus, it is relevant to all the staff within the English Department and it includes sections on professional conduct, employee responsibility, CAS-1 policies and procedures, attendance policies, leave policies, and termination policies.

- The handbook states in its introduction that the aim of the English Department is to 'be one of the best institutes in the Sultanate of Oman in the development of standards of excellence in innovation in the implementation of teaching, professional development and understanding between cultures'.
- The handbook highlights the structure and the nature of duties with the different structure levels; 'The hierarchal structure of the English Department is as follows: Head of Department (HoD), followed by the coordinators of the programmes mentioned above and then instructors. The HoD and the coordinators are engaged in teaching and they deal with administrative tasks. The instructors mainly perform the teaching duties and some instructors are also involved in the College committees.

- The handbook includes a section under professional conduct that regulates relations between the English Department staff.

### ***Respect for People***

*Employees must not harass or discriminate their colleagues, students or members of the public on a number of grounds including sex, marital status, pregnancy, age, race, ethnic or national origin, physical or intellectual impairment, and political or religious conviction. Such harassment is considered an offence.*

*Supervisors must ensure that the workplace and classrooms are free from all forms of harassment and bullying, and provide equal opportunity. If an employee believes that s/he or anyone else in the workplace is being harassed or discriminated, s/he is obliged to early report the behavior to the supervisors. The Department will take the report seriously and will take the necessary actions to prevent and correct such behaviors. Unfounded complaints with vicious or vexatious intent against colleagues or students must not be made.*

*All employees must treat their colleagues and students and any other members of the public with respect. Rude or insulting behavior including verbal and non-verbal aggression, abusive, threatening or derogatory language and physical abuse or intimidation towards other employees is intolerated in the Department and the College.*

*It is prohibited by the Department to using information and communication technologies, such as email, mobile phones, text or instant messaging and website to cause negative impact on another person, cause them harm, or make them feel unsafe.*

- Besides, the Handbook includes a section with regulations in relation to the relationship between the teachers and the students, appropriate use of electronic communication and social networking sites, use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco, protecting confidential information, and post separation employment.
- Under the section on Employee responsibility, there is a sub-section that deals with teacher complaints concerning employee conduct.

### ***Reporting Concerns about Employee Conduct***

*The English Department promotes an atmosphere whereby employees can talk freely to your supervisors. Employees are encouraged to openly discuss with their supervisor any problems so*

*appropriate action may be taken. If the supervisor cannot be of assistance, Human Resources is available for consultation and guidance. The English Department is interested in all of our employees' success and happiness with us. We, therefore, welcome the opportunity to help employees whenever feasible.*

*You must also report your concerns about the inappropriate actions of any other employee, children, students or colleagues to your supervisors. Any suspected corrupt conduct, maladministration must be reported.*

*In situations where employees feel a complaint is in order, the following steps should be taken:*

*If an employee believes that he/she has a legitimate work-related complaint, the employee is encouraged to first attempt to resolve the issue(s) through informal discussions with his/her immediate supervisor.*

*If the situation is not resolved within five working days from the time the complaint is discussed with the employee's immediate supervisor (level coordinator), barring extenuating circumstances, it should be brought to the attention of the next level supervisor (HoD) or a representative in the Human Resources Department with written documentation. The College will attempt to resolve the complaint within a reasonable period of time while preserving the confidentiality and privacy of those involved to the extent feasible.*

- This section also includes a sub-section about employee responsibility for record keeping.

### ***Record Keeping***

*Records includes class register (attendance sheets), student assessment records, emails, electronic documents, digital image, and audio recordings, files, forms, plans, notes, photographs and films.*

*As an employee at the Department, you have the responsibility to create and maintain full, accurate and honest records of your activities, decisions. You are not allowed to destroy records without obtaining appropriate consent.*

*You have the responsibility to assess and record marks for students 'work in accurate, fair manner that is consistent with the marking rubrics given to you.*

*You must keep confidentiality of all official information and documents which are not publicly available or which have not been published.*

- The next section of the handbook is about CAS-1 policies and procedures concerning dress code, payment of salary for MoHE employees and the agency employees, college property use, and complaint and grievance procedure. In relation to payments, it states that:

***Payment of Salary***

*The English Department at (CAS-1) has two venues of staff recruitment: though the Ministry of Higher Education and through [the agency name]. For the Ministry-contract employees, the monthly salary and payments is paid directly to you by the College towards the end of each month (around 23rd up to 30th day of a month). For the [the agency name]-contract employees, the monthly salary and payments are sent to [the agency name] by the College, and it is then [the agency name] pays the employees. [The agency name] staff should contact the managing director, currently [director name], on [director's email] for any queries about their payments.*

As for complaint and grievance procedure, the policy is as follows:

***Complaint and Grievance Procedure***

*If you have any problems or questions related to your employment, please follow the steps:*

*Informally discuss the matter with your immediate supervisor (concerned coordinator, HoD or Human Resource Services, depending on the type of problem or question you have). Your supervisor should be able to give appropriate answers or advice.*

*If the informal discussion does not resolve your matter to your satisfaction, and you wish to pursue a formal grievance, you must submit the unresolved issue in writing to your immediate supervisor within 5 days of the date the matter occurred.*

*The official decision will be made in writing to the employee within few days after receipt of grievance.*

- The fifth section of the handbook explains attendance policy and procedure to be followed by teachers. The following section explained the procedure to leaves, holidays, sick leaves, bereavement leave, and medical leaves. The last section of the handbook included policies related to

voluntary termination, immediate dismissal, discipline other than immediate termination, and exit interview.

- The sixth section includes different provisions to leave-taking. It appears that in relation to vacation and medical leaves, there are different provisions depending on the contract.

### ***Vacation***

*All full-time employees are eligible for paid vacation. During the first calendar year of employment at CAS, employees will be eligible for vacation in the same calendar year after completing six months of service. [The agency name] staff should contact [the agency name] regarding the number of paid day vacation that they are entitled to have.*

*Note that paid vacations in the English Department must only be taken during summertime when employees are free of teaching duties. Employees should make their vacation requests as far in advance as possible.*

*Employees should utilize at least 75% of their allotted vacation time during the calendar year.*

*For the Ministry-contract employees who resign, they will be paid for the unused vacation days provided that they took 75% of their allotted vacation time during the calendar year. [The agency name] -contract employees who resign should contact [the agency name] to clarify whether they will be entitled for payment for any unused vacation days.*

*When the employee vacation falls during a national holiday (e.g., Eid holidays), it is not counted as a vacation day.*

*Any employee that becomes ill during their vacation cannot change a vacation day to a sick day.*

### ***Holidays***

*All employees at Ibri CAS are eligible for national holidays per year as follows:*

*Eid Al Fiter*

*Eid Al Adhaa*

*National Day*

*Renaissance Day*

*Al Israa wal Miraaj*

*New Hijri year's Day*

*The dates and the duration of these holidays will be posted on the Department's Bulletin Board.*

### ***Sick Leaves***

*All employees who are unable to perform their jobs due to illness or injury must obtain a sick leave slip from their doctors so that they are eligible for taking a sick leave. If employees obtain a sick leave from a government hospital/ polyclinic or health centers, they should make sure that the sick leave is signed and stamped by the doctor and by the Patient Services Department. In case the sick leave is obtained from a private hospital, polyclinic or health center, employees must also obtain Ministry of Health attestation of the sick leave alongside the doctor's and the private health institution's stamps. This attestation can be obtained by visiting the Patient Services at Ibri Reference Hospital.*

*In case of having a sick leave, employee must telephone their supervisors (either coordinators or the HoD) and report the duration of the sick leave. If an employee is unable to make the call personally, a family member or a friend should contact the supervisor.*

#### **Bereavement Leave**

*In the unfortunate event of a death in the immediate family, a leave of absence of up to 5 days with pay will be granted. These five days are to be taken consecutively within a reasonable time of the day of the death or day of the funeral, and may not be split or postponed. For this purpose, immediate family is defined as:*

- Spouse*
- Child*
- Step-child*
- Parents (including in-laws), step-parents*
- Siblings, step-siblings*
- Uncle*
- Aunt*
- Grandparents*
- Grandchildren*

*Employees should make their supervisor aware of their situation. In turn, the supervisor should notify Human Resources of the reason and length of the employee's absence.*

*Upon returning to work, the employee must record his/her absence as a Bereavement Leave on his/her attendance record. Proof of death and relationship to the deceased is required.*

#### **Family and Medical Leave**

*In case of accompanying/escorting a family member with serious health conditions in a treatment trip abroad, the Ministry-contract employees are eligible to up to 20 days of paid leave for certain family and medical reasons during a 12 month period. The College may require the employee to provide documentation or statement of*

*family relationship (e.g., birth certificate). An employee may be required to submit medical certification from a health care provider to support a request for Family and Medical leave for a family member's serious health condition.*

*[The agency name]-contract employees are not eligible to take Family and Medical Leave.*

## Overview

This document is the only one, among the ones collected for this research that acknowledges the cultural diversity within the English Department and compiles the policies and provisions relevant to all staff categories within the English Department with a view towards promoting cultural understanding. It addresses some aspects that were mentioned in the interviews like procedure towards resolving conflict between teachers, academic conduct and relations with staff and students, and documentation.

## **5. Data from the Teacher Assessment Form**

This is a form adapted by the HoD who was in position when this research was conducted. It is used to assess the performance of teachers within probation period in order to decide on their continuation within the English Department. The form seems to be filled by two assessors and the instructor under assessment. It includes a five-item scale for assessment in relation to five aspects as stated below.

- Scholarship

1. Demonstrates knowledge of subject matter
2. Integrates current developments/research findings into the content
3. Shows relevance and appropriateness of course content
4. Provides appropriate source material and references.
5. Refers students to additional source material where appropriate

- Methods of presentation

1. Is well prepared and presents material in a well organised manner.
2. Demonstrates appropriateness and effectiveness of teaching techniques/methods (specific to course objectives).
3. Tasks/activities are introduced suitably and timed appropriately. There is a smooth transition between activities.

4. The lesson unfolds as per plan and activities help to meet the lesson objectives.
5. Teaching aids such as handouts/power point/ whiteboard are legible, with appropriate, current and accurate information with appropriate referencing and no copyright violations.
- Communication and interaction
  1. Encourages student inquiry/class discussion.
  2. The instructor has good control over the class.
  3. Instructions are clear and ideas are expressed clearly and audibly.  
Language used is appropriate to the students' level.
  4. Responds to student needs and incorporates feedback.
  5. Exhibits a positive attitude to all students. Deal fairly with students.
  6. Instructor is aware of cultural differences when communicating and respect these differences.
- Learning
  1. Stimulates critical thinking and analysis.
  2. Adjusts to individual and group needs.
  3. Meets student needs through a range of teaching styles.
  4. Demonstrates respect for alternative points of view.
- Approachability
  1. Open to suggestions from students.
  2. Treats students with respect.
  3. Instructor is appropriately dressed.



## Appendix S: English Department staff profile

ED staff profile based on field notes, interviews and CV data

	Code	Nationality	Type of contract	Degree/ speciality	Length of experience at CAS-1	Previous work experience
1	T17	South African	Agency-Outsourced			
2	T14	Filipino	MoHE-Fixed	Master of Science in teaching English & social studies	Since 2013	Taught English at another college in Oman
3	T7	American	Agency-Outsourced	CELTA (University of Cambridge ESOL Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults)  B.A., Communication and Minor in Journalism	One year	Taught English at tertiary level in KSA
4	T11	American	Agency-Outsourced	Masters in International Comparative Education	Since Fall 2013	Taught English in all GCC countries and South Korea
5	T8	British	Agency-Outsourced	PGCE Post Compulsory Literacy and ESOL	<i>No specific evidence (after Sep-2015)</i>	Taught English at different institutions at the UK

6	T18	American	Agency-Outsourced			
7	T19	Omani	MoHE-Permanent	Master of Education in TESOL	Since 2011 (over 5 years)	Taught for 3 months at school level in Oman
8	T20	Omani	MoHE-Permanent	Master Degree (TESOL) PhD in educational studies (yet to be credited)	Since 2004 (around 12 years)	Worked as Assistant Dean at CAS and as teacher of English at CAS and College of Education
9	T16	Tunisian	MoHE-Fixed	Master in English language and literature	Since 2003 (around 13 years)	Taught English at tertiary level in Tunisia
10	T9	South African	Agency-Outsourced	BA in Literature (Major)& Communication	More than 3 years	Taught English at tertiary level in different institutions in KSA
11	T21	Omani	MoHE-Permanent			
12	T2	Omani	MoHE-Permanent	Master of Education in TESOL	Since March 2011 (over 5 years)	Taught for 3 months at school level in Oman
13	T5	Canadian	Agency-Outsourced	Master in English	Since March 2016	Taught English in KSA

14	T4	Omani	MoHE-Permanent	Master in applied linguistics	Since 2009	Worked as a lecturer at a state university in Oman.
15	T15	Indian	MoHE-Fixed	Master of Arts in English	Since Sep. 2010 (around 6 years)	Taught English at school and tertiary levels in various institutions
16	T22	Indian	MoHE-Fixed	Master of Arts in English	Since Sep. 2010 (over 6 years)	Taught English at school and tertiary levels in various institutions
17	T6	Omani	MoHE-Permanent	Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics and Experimental Psychology	Since 2008 (around 8 years)	None
18	T23	Indian	Agency-Outsourced			
19	T24	Omani	MoHE-Permanent	M. Ed. Curriculum and methods of teaching English language	Since 2009 (Around 7 years)	None
20	T25	Jordanian	MoHE-Fixed	Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics	Since 2005 (around 11 years)	Taught English at tertiary levels in Bahrain
21	T12	South African	Agency-Outsourced	Masters of Education (Higher Education Studies)	After Jan 2016 <i>(around two months based on the interview)</i>	Taught English at tertiary level in KSA and taught school level in Taiwan and SA

22	T26	British	Agency-Outsourced			
23	T10	British	Agency-Outsourced	PGCE Primary Education QTS	Since Nov. 2015 (just over a year) <i>(info. from interview)</i>	Taught English at an institute in UAE and other institutions before that
24	T13	South African	Agency-Outsourced	Bachelor of Social Sciences-Clinical Practice in Social Work	Over a year and a half <i>(until interviewed; evidence from interview)</i>	Taught English at tertiary level in KSA and as social worker, student relation manager, and ESL instructor in SA
25	T3	Omani	MoHE-Permanent	Master Degree in Translation	Since Nov. 2012 (around 4 years)	Taught English at tertiary level at another college in Oman and at school level
26	T1	Indian	MoHE-Fixed	Master of Arts in English language and literature	Since 2008 (around 8 years)	Taught English at an school level in Oman and India
27	T27	South African	MoHE-Fixed			

## Appendix T: Profile of interview participants

No.	Code	Role	Gender	Nationality	Mother language	Last Qualification	Speciality	Previous work experiences	Length of teaching	Length of experience in ELT	Length of experience at CAS	Teams involved in
1	T1	Team leader	M	Indian	Malayalam	Masters	English Language and Literature	4 years ELT in India  1 year Assistant Head Master in India  8 years ELT at school in Oman	+20 years	+20 years	9 years	C
2	T2	Team leader	F	Omani	Arabic	Masters	TESOL		5 years	5 years	5 years	A
3	T3	Team leader	F	Omani	Arabic	Masters	Translation	4 years- ELT at school level  2 years- ELT at Technical College	11 years	11 years	5 years	A and B

4	T4	Team leader	F	Omani	Arabic	Masters	Applied Linguistics	8 years ELT teaching at a state university	13 years	13 years	5 years	B
5	T5	Team leader	F	Canadian	English	Masters	Education	Few years working as an engineer- Ba in engineering  Ba in education	6 years	5 years	7 months	A and B
6	T6	HoD	F	Omani	Arabic	PhD	Applied linguistics and experimental psychology		4.5 years	4.5 Years	4.5 years	A
7	T7	Team member	M	American	English	Ba	Communication		15 years	14 years	1 year	A and B
8	T8	Team member	M	British		Diploma	TESOL/ English literature	Construction	14		3 years	B and C
9	T9	Team member	M	South African	English	Ba	Law (Major)  English (Minor)		8 years	8 years	3+ years	B

10	T10	Team member	F	British	English	Ba CELTA	English		7 years	7 years	1 year	A and B
11	T11	Team member	M	American	English	MS- Education	International and comparative education		About 13 years	About 13 years	+3 years	A and C
12	T12	Team member	M	South African	English	MEd	Higher education studies		12 years	12 years	2 months	A
13	T13	Team member	F	South African	English	Ba.	Social Sciences	Social worker	4 Years	4 years	1.5 years	A and B
14	T14	Team member	M	Filipino	Filipino	Master	English	Worked in ELT in the Philippines and Oman	12 years	12 years	3 years	A and C
15	T15	Team member	M	Indian	Bengali	MA	Literature		12 years	12 years	6+	A and B
16	T16	Team member	M	Tunisian	Arabic French	MA	English language and literature		20 years	20 years	13.5 years	B

## Appendix U: Extract interview transcript

Teacher: Interview 11: T11 (28.11.2016)	
Interview transcript	Initial codes
... <i>So, you are fine with whatever is assigned to you.</i>	
Yeah. I think generally speaking I am happier with Year Two than Year One generally speaking.	Happier with Y2
<i>Why is that?</i>	
It was the matter of a person who was working here before conflicts; continuous conflicts with certain people. So, I was happy to be moved to Year Two and I think the person who I had conflict with was the reason why I was moved from Year One to Year Two.	Continuous conflict resulting in moving to another team
<i>Would you like to tell me more about this conflict? I mean you don't have to mention names?</i>	
I think this certain person didn't know how to use her position in a positive manner. Instead this person used her position to intimidate people and I tolerated certain things for a long time and continued to smile and ignore it but then after a while you just have to put your foot down and draw the line in the same sort of speed and do not tolerate such disrespect.	Crossing lines; disrespect
<i>OK lets go back to the teams you belong to now this semester. Could you describe these teams? Who is there?</i>	
Year Two is kind of small. Of course it is Mr. T1. There are four: T15, [a female teacher], T14, T8 and me. Yeah I mean counting T1, we are six so it is really small in comparison to the teams I have worked with. The number of students has dropped so in Second Year; we are seeing a lot of fewer students. No problems here.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- T1 the LC</li> <li>- Small team</li> <li>- Less students</li> </ul>
Do you want me to be honest?	
<i>Yeah of course.</i>	
Micromanaging because sometimes I think certain coordinators worrying about too much. Too many forms, or too many requirements, or like one example I think attendance. So, when I first arrived it was 5% verbal warning, 10% written warning, 20% of course..	Micromanaging



<p>Goes to the Dean. That is too much of secretarial work.</p> <p>Students are grown men and women, they should be able to know when they are going to be absent. We shouldn't have to give them warnings. You know, they can come to us anytime and ask, what is their percentage and we tell them. I think the forms is too much, I think it creates little boys and girls who can depend on the teacher on everything.</p> <p>A couple of other things I think are micromanaged just small things that coordinators shouldn't worry about. It should be the teachers who make the decisions.</p>	<p>Too much of secretarial work</p> <p>Treat students as grown men and women!</p> <p>Empower teacher!</p>
<b><i>So, you feel they are restricting teachers' freedom or ability to make decisions or manage that certain situation?</i></b>	
Teacher autonomy I think, to a certain degree I think so, yeah.	Teacher autonomy
<b><i>Yeah please tell me more about that.</i></b>	
I think it is very rigid what we are expected to do. Not in terms what we expose them to or how we teach them but in terms of forms and deadlines, and sometimes it is a bit overwhelming and I think sometimes they loose the focus of what is the main reason we are here; to teach. Just sometimes, not all the time.	<p>Teacher autonomy:</p> <p>Focus on teaching rather than administrative things!</p>
<b><i>You feel this is because of the coordinators themselves? Or because they are asked to do it?</i></b>	
<p>I feel it is the coordinators—not just one; a couple—who just always want to create forms for whatever we have to do, warnings, tell the students this, and tell the students that, do this and do that, sometimes they made it more of a job of a secretary than a teacher.</p> <p>Like the course evaluation for example, I had to take time of the class to show them how to get into Blackboard and click on course evaluation and—all someone has to do is one person send a mass email to all the students; tell them to do it and it is done. I am sure it is possible, that is it, it takes thirty seconds and it is done.</p> <p>I get tired of doing the attendance. It is a pain in the, it is a pain in the butt to have to routinely check your attendance, for someone who should get the 5%, give them verbal warning. They didn't require that before—I am sorry they required a verbal warning but now we've been told—at least I have been told to create a list and they sign it for 5%; it just unnecessary work.</p>	<p>Coordinators choosing to micromanage</p> <p>Too much of secretarial work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attendance</li> <li>- Course evaluation</li> </ul> <p>Unnecessary work</p>

<p>Administration should be doing that; they have the attendance and they see it. All they have to do is send a form and send it as an attachment to the students.</p> <p>It takes time from my day, from preparing for my class, everything I am telling you now takes time away from me to prepare for the class.</p>	<p>Administration should do that</p> <p>Lack of efficiency:</p> <p>Wastes teacher's time</p>
<p><b><i>OK, describe the members you have in team, you spoke already about Year Two.</i></b></p>	
<p>Year Two they are fine. No issues with any of the teachers they are fine. Foundation, no issues. Everyone here has problems here or there with teachers, that is natural but no major issues. I think it is a lot better this semester, less conflict than it has been in the past.</p>	<p>a lot better this semester</p>
<p><b><i>Why do you think the case is so?</i></b></p>	
<p>First of all I am someone who—I can be antisocial; I am an introvert, and I just like to come to work, say as little as possible, do my job and go home; avoid conflict. Out of sight, out of mind and I like to just not be seen.</p> <p>In the past I think there were a lot of unprofessional instructors who were worried about very immature things like who is friend with who and why such and such likes someone? 'I don't like that person, so you shouldn't like that person'; just creating unnecessary divisions. Not putting personal feelings aside for professionalism first.</p> <p>But it is a lot better now, but it was I think the last couple of semesters, not this semester but the last couple; I think it was really miserable to come to work because you have a lot of unnecessary conflicts between teachers.</p>	<p>T11's personality</p> <p>Unprofessional behaviour</p> <p>Unnecessary divisions</p> <p>Personal feeling for professionalism Now better</p> <p>Conflict made him miserable</p>
<p><b><i>How have these conflicts been resolved? I mean what happened, what changed?</i></b></p>	
<p>For me I have had conflicts with—since I have been here, last semester was the worst one I think conflicts—I am starting my fourth year now with no conflicts but maybe three to four teachers and two of them went to [the HoD] with the problem. Not because of me, the other person made it an issue. I've always been—I think my opinion is if two teachers don't get a long, what at least one teacher should do is inform the other teacher that there is a conflict. The other teacher might not know.</p> <p>Here I think there are many unprofessional teachers who they have a problem or don't like another teacher for whatever problem. Instead of speaking to that</p>	<p>The other teacher might not know!</p> <p>Unprofessional behaviour</p>

<p>person first, they will make an issue about it with management.</p> <p>So then we have coordinators and the Head of the Department aware of a problem that the other teacher might not even know it exists.</p>	<p>The other teacher might not know!</p>
<p><b><i>They don't like them you mean because of work-related issues or personal stuff?</i></b></p>	
<p>Maybe, I don't know, it is a good question, I don't know. Last time it was an instructor who has complained twice, I didn't even know, it wasn't even brought to my attention. I knew he didn't like me. I didn't care because I didn't do anything to him, if he doesn't like me, life goes on. I would feel guilty if I did something wrong but if I didn't do anything wrong, I don't care.</p> <p>But anyways it was later shown through other people speaking about the situation that he was wrong and I told my superiors that I have no problem with them calling me to the office and discussing with me of course but I did have a problem with them being aware that another teacher is complaining about me and they are not making me aware that there is a problem.</p>	<p>Conflict because he didn't like me!</p> <p>Make the teacher concerned aware!</p>
<p><b><i>Why do teachers tend to do this, you think?</i></b></p>	
<p>Immaturity, lack of professionalism.</p>	<p>Lack of professionalism</p>
<p><b><i>Is there certain type of teachers that makes certain problems or certain conflicts?</i></b></p>	
<p>No, I don't think it is just the place, I think it is just work in the world generally speaking. I don't think it is just CAS-1, no. So that is another reason why I just ...[Inaudible]..., keep quiet and do my work and say little and I mind my business.</p>	<p>Conflicts are natural thing everywhere</p>
<p>...</p> <p>I think a lot of people don't feel comfortable sharing their viewpoints in meetings.</p> <p>I think sometimes there are too many meetings. We have lessons to prepare. I think just there are too many meetings. I am not speaking specifically towards Department or levels but I think there are too many meetings for one.</p> <p>So, there is a mood in the—you can see, you can ask any teacher about it, 90% of them will tell you, we are not in there. Most of us want everyone to be quiet, don't ask questions, so we can get out of there.</p>	<p>Meetings not for sharing views</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- too many meetings</li> <li>- be quiet</li> </ul>

<p>And there are certain people who, who were here but are not here anymore and certain people who are here and always have something to say. No matter what it is, always. Most of them have good intentions but sometimes I think they are just too much; be quiet and let us go.</p> <p>I think they will get—if at any time they want some input from us, I think they will get more feedback if they get it by email.</p> <p>Or, I don't know it might sound stupid but I've been teaching for twelve or thirteen years now, I think I have always said a good idea is to put box somewhere with a slit on top to drop in a piece of paper about an opinion about something or an idea. I think they will get more feedback and more teacher input if it was anonymous or just between them and someone else.</p> <p>I think a lot of people don't feel comfortable for whatever reason expressing their opinion in a meeting.</p>	<p>Email is better</p> <p>Anonymous is better</p> <p>Meeting is not the place</p>
<p><b><i>How did you perceive the experience of being a member of the different teams overall in the Department?</i></b></p>	
<p>For me, sometimes it can be difficult depends on who you are working with. For example, if you are marking an essay, co-marking with another teacher or doing presentations.</p> <p>Sometimes it can go very smoothly if you work with the teacher who 1) is willing to change their mark or their view to closer to you, that is what I mostly do,</p> <p>I don't like to argue which I think we have here a lot if the teachers who are like 'no I think it is this and it is supposed to be like this'. I have heard it; so it could be difficult depends on who you are with.</p> <p>Some teachers don't work well with others, some do. I hate to argue, I say what I think. If someone else feels something else I compromise and go home for dinner. ... [Inaudible], but some teachers are difficult to work with but mostly no.</p> <p>Another thing that bothers me is—and it is related to the question about working with other people in a team.</p> <p>I think it is part of having a job, part of being professional is working with people who you don't like, who you don't get along with; that is part of the work and this is no—this is not intended as disrespect towards this Department</p> <p>but I strongly—it seems that there has been a window opened for teachers to come and complain about other teachers and be able to avoid working with certain teachers and I think that is totally wrong; to</p>	<p>Depends on whom you work with</p> <p>Easy with flexibility and compromise</p> <p>Arguments</p> <p>Easy with flexibility and compromise</p> <p>being professional</p>

<p>allow a teacher to not have to work with someone simply because they don't like them. I come to work everyday, there are teachers here before whom I couldn't stand but I would never go and say 'I don't want to work with this person. So, there is I think some kind of a list that I have heard about; such and such doesn't want to work with such and such. It is just gonna create more problems and we are not gonna get where we can work together because so many people want to be immature and take this role and say 'I wanna work with this person, this person, and this person'.</p> <p>I think that is immature, I will never ever say 'I don't wanna work with someone I think that is so unprofessional no matter how I don't like this person, I would never ever do that. It is part of work doing things that you don't wanna do. You are paid for it, you are supposed to do it.</p> <p>It was said in a meeting 'we have some teachers who don't want to work with other teachers and that is OK'. I was shocked; I was about to go away. You know, be mature, suck it up, keep your mouth shut, just do what you have to do and get the job done, period [laugh].</p>	<p>Immature practice</p> <p>Be mature</p>
<p><b><i>[laugh] I think I will ask you about that later on but let's go back to that the point you've just mentioned; what sort of conflicts do they usually deal with between teachers?</i></b></p>	
<p>Teachers are not working well together so they are not doing their job in the opinion of other teachers or whatever,</p> <p>conflicts between teachers and students erm, problems with just teachers, whatever, showing up late or complaints from students.</p> <p>So, I am sure, like I said I try not to say anything; so, you know,</p> <p>I am usually the last to learn something but sometimes I have been surprised to hear from other teachers what kind of problems are going on along this hallway [laugh].</p> <p>Now, it is not bad as it was but yeah some things I hear about what other teachers are doing; I am very surprised, shocked like 'OK, are they educated mature person or they are just crazy?'</p> <p>...</p> <p>I am sure we have teacher conflicts like I said before, I am sure some teachers complain to them all the time</p>	<p>Conflicts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers not working well together</li> <li>- Conflicts between teachers and students</li> <li>- Complaints from students</li> </ul> <p>Surprising problems</p> <p>It is better now</p>

<p>about another instructor instead of speaking to the teacher first.</p> <p>And I am sure they would deal with conflicts between teachers a lot less if teachers would just go to their peers, their colleagues, even if it is someone they don't like him, you know, voice their opinions about something that happened and they are happy and then at least the other teacher knows and try to fix the problem very happily. Probably they would still don't like each other but they now know what upsets the other person and they'll try to avoid it, conflict resolved and the coordinator or the Head of the Department didn't even have to be involved.</p>	<p>LCs dealing with conflicts</p> <p>Reducing the load from LCs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More transparency could eliminate conflict</li> </ul>
<b><i>Yeah. So you think how this could be avoided? This kind of getting into these..</i></b>	
<p>It will never be avoided; it is human nature to cause troubles for some people; it can't be avoided.</p>	Complete avoidance of conflict is impossible
<b><i>But if you feel, if you think that communication between teachers is promoted and chances for communication are created, would this problem of conflict and going to the coordinator and to the HoD solve the problem?</i></b>	
<p>It won't happen. It is common sense; some people don't have common sense [laugh]</p>	No common sense
<b><i>So you think we just need to live with it.</i></b>	
<p>As I said before, sadly you have some people in the world who aren't mature or who are spiteful, hateful or dislike people for whatever reason and they just want to cause problems or give someone a bad time. It is human nature for some people, you can't fix it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Immature</li> <li>- Spiteful</li> <li>- Hateful</li> <li>- Troublesome</li> </ul>
<b><i>What styles of team leadership or team management that you feel are effective within this context?</i></b>	Effective leadership
<p>To let teachers do what they want to do as long as they are teaching what they are supposed to teach and meeting deadlines for doing their job.</p>	Teacher autonomy
<b><i>Do you feel coordinators are restricting your freedom to do what you want to do?</i></b>	
<p>My experience with Foundation as with T2 and [another coordinator] has been 'do as you like as long as you are doing your job, there is no problems'; it is very very easy.</p> <p>This doesn't go anywhere right? [laugh]</p>	FY increasing teacher autonomy

<b><i>No, only me.</i></b>	
The other coordinators have been a bit too serious, too, too 'this, this, this and this should be done, this this and this' too much, I think they forget about what is most important; teaching. Like I said before, sometimes so many forms; just too much. Or having to inform students about something that is not my job. It shouldn't have to be done.	Micromanaging  Secretary work
<b><i>Do you think they are asked to do it this way or because they chose to do it this way? Erm, I mean so much.</i></b>	
I have never really thought about it because what if I did think about it? Do I have any power to change it? No. So I needn't think about it. ...[inaudible]..., so why even think about it.	No power to change leadership style
<b><i>So, you have never been given a chance to give your feedback about the way things are—the way coordinators do their jobs?</i></b>	
No, no. But that is in most jobs of course.  Most jobs, most jobs don't give the lower level workers a chance to express their opinions about higher levels. It is not just here, but in jobs in general.	Teacher-coordinator power differentials





