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Workload, accountability and stress: A comparative study of teachers' working conditions in state and private schools in England

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Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my thesis has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.

Judith (Jude) Brady

Abstract

Workload, accountability and stress: A comparative study of teachers' working conditions in state and private schools in England.

By Jude Brady

England's state education system is in the midst of a teacher retention crisis. Stressed teachers are leaving state schools citing intensive monitoring and burdensome workloads, propelled by the perceived demands of hard accountability systems as their core reasons. There is a net flow of teachers into the private education sector which runs in an ancillary sphere to the public sector. However, very little is known about teachers' experiences in private schools. The research takes the view that in a time of a state school teacher retention crisis, it is pertinent to look across the sectoral divide to compare conditions between the sectors and consider what each might learn from the other.

Through questionnaires with over 800 practitioners, the mixed-methods study achieves a novel overview of teacher workload, stress, and experiences of teacher monitoring systems across sectors. It finds that in comparison to state school teachers, those in private schools are significantly less stressed and hold better perceptions of their workload despite working a similar number of weekly hours. In depth interviews and focus group discussions with 51 teachers provide further insight into these findings. These qualitative data were analysed through a Foucauldian lens, and this analysis foregrounded the damaging effects of high-stakes accountability and economic discourses in the state sector. Teachers who felt misaligned with these overarching values felt stressed and experienced their work as burdensome and meaningless. However, through comparison with the private sector, it was evident that it was possible for teachers to experience their work as fulfilling despite working long hours during the term-time.

The research provides an original contribution to knowledge because it is one of the first to offer overview and insight into the work of private school teachers. Furthermore, it presents a fresh look at state education through comparison with the private sector. In this way, the research illuminates the kinds of systemic changes, such as peer-review inspections, possible within the English context which could help teachers to maintain positive perceptions of their workload. It ultimately suggests that the current high-stakes accountability systems of England's state education system must be softened in order to allow teachers to refocus on the work that they find most meaningful: that which benefits pupils.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to James who irrevocably changed the way that I see the world and placed me back on track more times than I can count.

Acronyms

A Level   Advanced Level

ATL   Association of Teachers and Lecturers

CPD   Continuing Professional Development

DfE   Department for Education

ERA   Education Reform Act

FOIA   Freedom of Information Act

FSM   Free School Meals

FTE   Full-time Equivalent

GCSE   General Certificate of Secondary Education

GDP   Gross Domestic Product

GSA   Girls' School Association

HMC   The Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference

HMI   Her Majesty's Inspectors

IGCSE   International General Certificate of Secondary Education

ISA   Independent Schools Association

ISC   Independent Schools Council

ISJC   Independent Schools Joint Council

ISI   Independent Schools Inspectorate

ISIS   Independent Schools Information Service

LEA   Local Education Authority

NEU   National Education Union

NFER   National Federation for Educational Research

NPM   New Public Management

NQT   Newly Qualified Teacher

OECD   Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

Ofsted   Office for Standards in Education

PPA   Planning, preparation and assessment time

PRP   Performance Related Pay

QTS   Qualified Teacher Status

SEND   Special Educational Needs or Disabilities

SES   Socio-Economic Status

SIS   Schools Inspection Service

SITQ   Stress In Teaching Questionnaire

SLT	Senior Leadership Team (includes headteachers, deputy and assistant headteachers)
SWC	Schools Workforce Census
TALIS	Teaching And Learning International Survey
TPS	Teacher Pension Scheme
TWD	Teacher Workload Diary
TWS	Teacher Workload Survey

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

This mixed-methods work addresses the underexplored field of teachers' experiences of their work in the private sector in comparison to the well-documented state sector. As state education continues to contend with rising pupil numbers and a teacher recruitment and retention crisis, the domain has been the subject of a substantial body of government and academic research. Private education, however, has largely eluded the gaze of research – perhaps because it remains a closed world with diligent gatekeepers, or perhaps because elite education is not perceived as a worthy investment for research resources (Maxwell & Aggleton, 2015). I work on the premise that as the state sector endures a teacher retention crisis, it is valuable to explore the practices and operations of private schools in order to consider if teachers' experiences of their work are substantially different, and if so – why? Specifically, I explore teachers' workload, stress, and experiences of teacher monitoring because as the literature review will later demonstrate, these areas have been shown to contribute to state school teachers' discontent. Through this novel comparison, it becomes possible to identify the systemic features and school-level behaviours that are optimal for teachers to experience their work as manageable, meaningful, and fulfilling.

1.1. Thesis structure

The thesis structure mirrors the research design in that it starts with a wide lens which provides an overview of the state and private education sectors in England. In this chapter (*Chapter 1: Introduction*), I provide an outline of my journey from teacher to PhD researcher and explain the genesis of the project. Following this, I move outwards to consider the macro political contexts that frame teachers' work in England before progressing to detail the dominant discourse which provides the theoretical framing for understanding teachers' experiences of this work. From this basis, in *Chapter 2: Concepts and constructs*, I narrow the focus to explore previous research concerning workload, stress, and national and school-level accountability practices. I locate the current study within the field and explain that the research addresses a gap in the literature because it offers an original comparison of teachers' experiences of their work in the private sector in comparison to the state sector.

In recognition of the limited information available about teachers' work in private schools, I developed a mixed-methods study which is described in *Chapter 3: Methodology.* Mixed-methods were appropriate because I had acknowledged the need to obtain a comparative oversight of the key features of teachers' experiences within each sector, as well as insight into their emotional responses to their work*. Chapter 3* also provides a practical discussion of the research design, the instruments that I selected for use, and the mechanisms through which data were gathered. It details the sequential design structure, the role of qualitative data in explaining quantitative findings, and the manner in which data were integrated. The chapter concludes with a recognition of the study's limitations, and a clear explanation of the ethical considerations involved in undertaking this work. Data preparation, cleaning, processing, and procedures of analysis are described in *Chapter 4: Data handling and quality*. As this is a mixed-methods study, I detail the way in which all data types were managed. From here, I reflect on the characteristics of my sample and discuss data quality.

Following the evaluation of the data and overall study quality, *Chapters 5 – 7* outline the findings from the quantitative and qualitative data. The findings chapters mirror the study design in that each one corresponds to a research question, and each question is taken in turn with quantitative findings reported first. I then engage with the qualitative findings to explain the quantitative trends in a pragmatic manner. *Chapter 8: Meta-inferential discussion* explains the meta-inferences which I drew from the study; these inferences represent the culmination of data integration as findings from all the research questions are drawn together to propose a model of the way in which the three variables of interest connect. From here, utilising a range of concepts stemming from the Foucauldian tradition, I pose further meta-inferences about the contextual factors which interact with teachers' experiences of their work. The thesis concludes with *Chapter 9*, where I indicate the contribution of the research to the field, discuss policy implications arising from the findings, and make recommendations for future research in this area of study.

1.2. Personal context

The proposal for this thesis was developed during my 5 years of teaching as a secondary school English teacher, firstly in Yorkshire and then in South London. While my first year of teaching in Yorkshire was primarily about survival and managing the workload demands of teaching both my subject (English) and an out of field subject (Religious Studies), the subsequent years provided more space and time for reflection as I grew in competence and efficacy.

In my second year of teaching, I relocated to London and took a job in a state funded secondary and sixth form school. The school was renowned for its academic achievement and strong community. It routinely achieved the best results in the borough; during my time there, 90% of pupils gained five GCSEs at grade A* – C (including Maths and English). The headteacher attributed the school's success to its strong relationships with parents and guardians and its competitive culture. Headship employed some unorthodox accountability strategies which were intended to motivate staff and pupils via competition. The comparative book, produced by the deputy head teacher on an annual basis, provides a good example of these practices. This book compared the results of each teacher's GCSE class(es). Teachers were ranked in order of most to least effective and they were given a percentage score which reflected the number of students under their tuition who had achieved their average GCSE grade, or above.

The children were also immersed in a culture of competition. They were assigned form groups based on their academic achievement and they would line up in file formation by form group every morning offering a visual representation of 'best' to 'worst' groups. Each student knew their 'rank' number which told them where they were in comparison to the rest of the year group in terms of academic achievement. While the school undoubtedly supported the pupils to achieve academic outcomes that were exceptional by most measures and developed a culture whereby academic achievement was highly prized by students, like many other members of the school community, I was never fully at ease with the practice of 'ranking' for pupils or staff.

In my third year of teaching I started a part-time Masters in Education at Goldsmiths University. Through this study I encountered the work of Stephen Ball, Jane Perryman, Annette Braun, and Meg Maguire among others. Their work named and conceptualised the unease that I was experiencing, and I came to understand my work as a teacher as

positioned within a wider neoliberal context. For the first time I understood my experiences as effects of my enmeshment within grander socio-political structures. With this understanding my unease developed into discontent and I began to question and challenge technologies, such as inspections of teachers' marking, that were increasingly prevalent in the practice of the school in which I worked.

As I concluded my MA studies, the school (which had previously enjoyed a relatively low turnover of staff) saw over one fifth of teachers leaving. Curiously, some members of staff were leaving to work in prestigious private schools in the home counties. Following a particularly challenging year, I had also begun to consider leaving not just the school, but the teaching profession. Following conversations with my friends at work, I evaluated my options and considered applying for jobs in private schools. During this period of consideration, I perceived teaching in the independent sector as a half-way house between staying in the profession, and quitting completely. As a teaching friend at the time posited, she expected to be just as busy in her new role in a private school, but in a 'more satisfying' way.

It was at this point that the questions that would later develop into a thesis started to arise; was it true that private school teachers were just as busy but less stressed than state school teachers? Did they also experience the feeling of chaos and overload so characteristic of my work in the state sector? Did they also contend with relentless inspections of books, lessons, and systems of perpetual ranking and judgements? As I contemplated a move to the private sector, I began to build expectations and develop hypotheses based on personal perceptions informed by anecdotal evidence. I expected that in the private sector there would be pressure, but that the frenzy of accountability and accompanying anxiety would cease. As my friend had suggested, I envisaged a calmer working environment with a lighter timetable and the reduced intensity that accompanies smaller class sizes. In the end, I chose not to pursue any applications in the private sector after deciding that I as long as I continued to teach, I wanted to serve the state system in which I was educated and later trained as a teacher.

Instead of leaving teaching, or the state sector, I took a job as second in charge of the English department in another London state school. This small non-denominational secondary school was located in one of the most deprived boroughs of London and its community faced significant challenges. I found the school to be an immensely stressful

work environment due to a heavy teaching load and relentless accountability operations. However, amidst the chaos of the daily operations of the school, I came to genuinely enjoy my role and working within the school community. As much as I felt my work within the school was worthwhile, I recognised again the feeling that I could not sustain such levels of intensity for much longer. The affirmation that this could not be a life-long career for me came as the school was downgraded by Ofsted to 'requires improvement' in a surprise inspection in the week before the Christmas holidays. Staff morale slumped to an all-time low as we traipsed away to Christmas with the shame of knowing that our best efforts in this immensely challenging and under-resourced environment were insufficient.

Prior to this point I had already begun to develop a research proposal that initially planned to look at the identities of teachers preparing to move across sectors. I redoubled my efforts to refine the proposal in the wake of the Ofsted inspection, as I knew by this point that I wanted to remain working in education, but not as a teacher. By the end of the academic year I had accepted an offer to assume full-time PhD study. The research proposal, which in an early incarnation was entitled 'Teacher in Transition', appeared more pertinent than ever as I left the school alongside several other staff most of whom moved directly into the private education sector.

As I started to engage with my new work as PhD researcher, the project transformed into the research presented in the following pages; a study which compares teachers' experiences of workload, stress and accountability by sector. The following section provides an overview of the school system in England and suggestions of the ways in which conditions for teachers vary between sectors.

1.3. Introduction to England's Schools

1.3.1. Overview of schools

There are approximately 2,300 private schools in England (Department for Education, 2017b) which educate 7% of the country's school aged children (ISC, 2017). Green, Anders, and Henderson (2017) note that this figure drops to 5.8% once children whose families reside abroad are excluded. Although the proportion of pupils who are privately educated is small by comparison to the maintained sector, the legacy created by

private schools is a source of social and political contention. The private sector is open to charges of exacerbating social inequalities because it serves an economically privileged subsection of society (Green, Anders, et al., 2017). Furthermore, the privately educated disproportionately occupy positions in elite universities and high-status professions (Green, Henseke, et al., 2017; Macmillan, Tyler, & Vignoles, 2015). Even more of a concern is that private school alumni also go on to attract a considerable pay premium throughout their working lives compared to state school pupils (Green, Anders, et al., 2017; Green, Henseke, et al., 2017).

Although there is substantial research concerning private school pupil outcomes and the 'value-added' by such an education, surprisingly little is known about the teachers in these establishments. In terms of teacher supply, Green, Anders, et al (2017) indicate that since the 1980s, the proportion of teachers working in the private sector has risen faster than the percentage of pupils participating in private education – which has remained relatively stable. There are an estimated 78,000 private school teachers in England, who represent approximately 17% of England's overall teaching workforce (Department for Education, 2018b, 2018c). As such, the pupil to teacher ratio in the private sector stands at 8.5:1 compared to 18:1 in state schools (ISC, 2019; Department for Education, 2018b).

Data concerning the demographics and movements of the private school teacher workforce are sparse. However, statistics from the Independent Schools Council (ISC), which is the umbrella organisation that represents the majority of the country's mainstream private schools, indicate that around one third of teachers arriving in ISC schools each year have moved from the state funded sector (ISC, 2015, 2016, 2017a, 2018a). These teachers are employed across more than 1,300 ISC schools in the UK, all of which have varying characteristics and pupil intakes (ISC, 2018). ISC schools, like other private school types, are disproportionately clustered in London and the South of England with lower rates of participation in private education elsewhere in the UK (Green, Anders, et al., 2017).

The most substantial difference between private schools and state schools is that the former are permitted to charge fees to parents and guardians. As this is the case, the government is not obliged to commit any public funds to their running. Although there has been a long and complex history of financial interaction between the government and the private education sector, the sector is autonomous from the state in that its schools are not

required to teach to the National Curriculum, employ staff with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), or adhere to national pay and working conditions for teachers (although they must comply with UK employment law). Private schools are required to register with the DfE if they offer full-time education to school-aged pupils (Department for Education, 2016a).

In England, compulsory schooling starts at the age of 5. For most pupils, primary phase education ends in the academic year of their 11th birthday. At this point they will progress to secondary level education where they will remain until the age of 16. Most pupils work towards General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSEs) or equivalent qualifications, which are national exams taken at the end of secondary phase education. After this, pupils progress to further education, employment, or training. Government figures indicate that 50% of state school leavers go on to assume Advanced Level (A Level) or equivalent courses in state funded schools, or dedicated sixth form colleges (Department for Education, 2018a).

School phases are distinguished differently in the private sector compared to the state sector. Private schools operate in variations of the following phases: Pre-preparatory (children aged up to 9); preparatory (ages 9 – 13); senior school (ages 13 – 16), and sixth form (ages 16 – 18). It is common for pre-preparatory schools to have a nursery attached and for providers to offer 'all through' education for 3 – 18 year olds. Some schools offer single sex education, although the majority are now co-educational (ISC, 2018). There are variations in the type of packages offered – while some schools are exclusively day schools, others offer full boarding packages, either day or boarding places, or 'flexi-boarding' for pupils who wish to alternate between boarding and day pupil status (ISC, 2018). Although there are a handful of state boarding schools which charge fees for board, the overwhelming majority of state schools offer day provision to children from the local geographical area (Department for Education, 2019c).

1.3.2. Working conditions in the private sector

Although there are few data concerning teachers' experiences in the private sector, higher pay, longer holidays, smaller classes, and superior pupil behaviour are commonly believed to be benefits of working privately (Green et al., 2008). Indeed, private school teachers are typically allocated longer holidays than those working in state schools. As a broad guide, a private school teacher might expect 18 – 20 weeks of holidays per annum (Griff, 2013;

Griff, 2014, NASUWT, n.d.). While there are no set holiday periods for state funded academies, or free schools, typically state schools provide 13 weeks of holiday per annum. In relation to pay, it is unclear as to whether or not private school teachers are better enumerated than their state counterparts. While one study from 2008 suggested that there were no significant differences in pay (Green et al., 2008), more recent research suggests that private school teachers are more likely to perceive that their pay is 'fair' compared to state school teachers (Micklewright et al., 2014). In terms of other differences, private schools have the option of registering staff with the national Teacher Pension Scheme (TPS), whereas state funded schools must enrol all teaching staff on the TPS unless the teacher opts out.

In line with common beliefs, there is some evidence to suggest that private school teachers have better perceptions of pupil behaviour compared to state school teachers (Allen & McIntyre, 2019; Micklewright et al., 2014). It could be the case that these superior perceptions are informed by smaller class sizes in the private sector, or else opportunities to work with pupils in a variety of contexts beyond the classroom. In particular, teachers in private boarding schools may work with pupils across all facets of their lives through assuming roles as housemistresses/masters who lodge with pupils. A housemistress/master role may also attract a pay premium for staff and free or heavily subsidised accommodation for the teacher and their family (Rae, 1981). Depending on the resources and location of the school, other non-boarding staff or even teachers in private day schools may be offered subsidised or free accommodation if they live on site, or in the locality.

Teachers in the private sector may have different teaching and career progression opportunities compared to state school teachers. For example, those who specialise in Classics teaching are more likely to find employment opportunities in the private sector as its schools are more likely to offer the subject to students compared to state schools (ISC, 2019; Ofqual, 2018). Other teachers might be attracted by opportunities to become involved in the extra-curricular life of a private school, especially as sport, arts, music and theatre are integral parts of the 'co-curriculum' – a term which refers to an educational programme whereby such activities are prized alongside the academic curriculum. As such, schools promise to educate the 'whole child' by developing their skills and competencies across all the dimensions of a child's life. Mannion Watts (2017), Forbes and Weiner (2008), and Meadmore and Meadmore (2004) have found that the 'co-

curriculum' provides a cornerstone for private school identity in England, Scotland, and Australia respectively.

1.4. Policy context

1.4.1. Protecting private education

Private schools have endured a strained and at times acrimonious relationship with governments of all political persuasion. In response, the private sector has established organisations which act as pressure groups and public relations bodies to manage interactions with government and the media. The Headmasters' Conference (HMC) is the earliest example of such an organisation and it represents some of the oldest schools in the country. HMC was established in 1869 after a public inquiry known as the Clarendon Commission (1861 – 1864) was instigated to investigate financial mismanagement in nine fee-paying schools: Eton, Harrow, Shrewsbury, St Paul's, Merchant Taylors', Winchester, Rugby, Charterhouse, and Westminster. This set of schools became known as the 'public schools' after the Public Schools Act 1886 was passed in response to the Clarendon Commission's report. The legislation stipulated new modes of governance and financial regulation for the seven of the schools (Merchant Taylor's and St Paul's successful appealed to avoid being included in the Act). The public school masters, perturbed by the unprecedented political interference in their affairs, founded HMC to protect the interests of the schools against any such future interference from government (Lawson & Silver, 1976). HMC remains today as the oldest private school organisation, and it continues to represent the interests of its members to government and other education stakeholders.

Over a century later, the private education sector established the organisation that is now known as the Independent Schools Council (ISC) in response to political and economic challenges which arose in the 1970s. During this time period, private school enrolments declined as the country contended with economic recession. In response, in 1972 the Independent Schools Information Service (ISIS) was established to spearhead a rebranding campaign for the sector. ISIS's choice of name was deliberate as the sector wished to relaunch itself as the 'independent' sector as opposed to the 'private' sector in order to shed connotations of exclusivity and elitism (Griggs, 1985). John Rae, headmaster of Westminster school (1970 – 1986) and Chairperson of HMC in 1977, explained in his autobiography that ISIS was intended to provide 'confident and

sophisticated handling of the media' (1981, p. 67). Although the HMC already represented the interests of a number of elite boys' schools, there was now a need for a more modern organisation that could represent a wider range of private school types including more recently established day schools. Although ISIS initially represented only boys' schools, in 1974, it became the Independent Schools Joint Council (ISJC) as it offered to nationally represent both boys' and girls' schools for a fee. With its united front and professional press communications, the ISJC was able to defend the public image of its schools and promote its brand identity and services nationally and internationally (Griggs, 1985). In addition to this, the organisation started to negotiate with government on behalf of its members. For example, it successfully lobbied government to allow private school teachers to be included in the TPS (Rae, 1981). The ISJC later morphed into the Independent Schools Council (ISC) as it remains known today.

Despite the 1970s recession, private school fees rose three-fold during this time period – as such, school leaders needed to be able to justify this increase in charges (Green, Anders, et al., 2017). In light of a recessive economy which entailed mass inflation, the concept of 'value-for-money' had come to the forefront for fee-paying parents who were assuming an increasingly 'meritocratic [and] materialistic outlook' with regards to education (Peel, 2015, p. 60). Private schools were under pressure to prove that they could provide something more than state education which was readily available at no direct cost to parents. To this end, schools began to fill their calendars with activities above and beyond regular academic provision; they introduced parents evenings, sporting events, and match teas in order to court parents and fulfil the promise of an enhanced educational product (Peel, 2015).

Pupil enrolments in private schools began to improve in correlation with economic recovery. Although pupil numbers rose from 5.7% in 1964 to 7.2% in 1989, boarding school pupil numbers continued to decline (Peel, 2015; C. Ryan & Sibieta, 2010; Green, Anders, et al., 2017). In part, this was due to increased numbers of private day schools which now presented a more affordable and attractive option for middle-class families who were assuming a more involved role in parenting (Peel, 2015; C. Ryan & Sibieta, 2010). In addition, many boarding schools needed to modernise their facilities and overturn their reputations as 'austere places with under heated dormitories' that demanded 'compulsory rugby' (Peel, 2015, p.35).

As some boarding schools were faced with closure due to their low rolls, in 1993 the ISJC launched a campaign to improve the image of boarding, which continued to lose favour to new co-educational day schools. This effort commenced with an ISJC report about living conditions in boarding schools; the report was entitled 'One Big Happy Family' – a refrain that resounds in boarding school marketing materials today (Peel, 2015). In addition to this, several schools undertook renovation and started to build common rooms, so that they could begin to market more convincingly as cosy places that fostered a 'family atmosphere' with communal living spaces (Peel, 2015, p.41). Echoes of the notion of 'family' and 'community' continue to feature in contemporary private school marketing and provide the foundations for the identity of some schools (Mannion Watts, 2017; Maxwell & Aggleton, 2015).

1.4.2. State education

Just as the private sector was compelled to reform its image and offerings as a result of the 1970s recession, the state sector underwent radical changes following this period. From 1944 – 1979 state education had been characterised by a set of national values that promoted a distributive justice agenda that was committed to the equitable allocation of resources and opportunities across society (Gewirtz, 2002). Logistically, government allocated funds to Local Education Authorities (LEAs) which held the responsibility of distributing these across local schools. Additionally, LEAs were responsible for recruiting teachers, and providing training for the Authority's teachers. Matters such as pay and working conditions were negotiated nationally and the teacher unions played a central role in these discussions. Some researchers argue that during this time period, teachers' work was characterised by considerable professional autonomy, and that the collective bargaining power of unions gathered the teachers into a united professional body (Stevenson, 2014).

Economic crisis prompted what Ball (2008) terms a 'policy rupture' which is a seismic shift to the set of values that undergird national decision making. This shift, which was marked by the election of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government in 1979, had profound consequences for state education and teachers' understanding of their work. With economic recovery and reform in mind, the Conservative government began to install a series of policies which propelled the country into the next phase of its socio-economic development: post-welfarism (Gewirtz, 2002). Under this new mode of operation,

Keynesian commitments to growth and consumption alongside collective bargaining were replaced by market logics of value-for-money, efficiency, and effectiveness (Pierson, 1994; Ball, 2008; Gewirtz, 2002). In order to roll out policies which aligned with this new mode of operation, the government passed a series of Acts to impose restrictions on workers' strikes and picketing, and it removed the mandate for teacher unions to be consulted over pay (Stevenson, 2014; Towers, 1989; Whitty, 2008). The move was strategic, as with the collective power of teacher unions disbanded, the path to rapid and far reaching reform was cleared.

The 1980s saw a deluge of education policy which heralded the start of the high-stakes accountability era that continues to identify state education today. The Education Reform Act (ERA) 1988 was a landmark piece of such legislation. The ERA introduced the National Curriculum and set out the materials that teachers should teach and the criteria against which pupils would be assessed. It marked the dawn of standardised testing for pupils at ages 7, 11 and 14, the results from which would come to provide the basis for league tables as the government began to construct national scale systems of accountability.

1.4.3. National league tables

National league tables were launched under John Major's Conservative government in 1992. Through the ranking of schools by performance, school leaders could be held to account for their use of public funds, and parents could be afforded a choice about the school they wished their child to attend. The discourse of 'choice' was critical in rolling out the earliest mechanisms of the high-stakes accountability system which would gradually become synonymous with teaching in England.

Initially league tables were published in local and national newspapers. Although this practice has now disappeared, the Department for Education (DfE) publish 'performance tables' which are accessible on a comprehensive website: 'Find and Compare Schools in England' (Department for Education, 2019a). The website allows users to search and download information so that they can compare schools across a range of variables: pupil demographics, attainment, progress, attendance levels, Ofsted gradings, and teachers' mean salary.

1.4.4. Independent school league tables

For private school teachers, sector specific league tables have proved controversial. The 'independent school league tables' were first published in 1992 by national newspaper *The Daily Telegraph*. As the tables were published without consultation with the ISC, or its affiliate bodies, school leaders' responses were mixed (Peel, 2015). Some heads angrily rejected this enforced public comparison, perhaps because the newspaper had sidestepped the sector's gatekeepers and thus infringed on their perceived right to manage the sector's image (*ibid)*. On the other hand – in the neoliberal spirit of improvement by competition – other school leaders perceived league tables as a motivation to improve standards (*ibid).* Debates concerning the value of private school league tables continue into the present day, with some high profile public schools such as Eton and St Paul's boycotting the tables which they perceive to be an inadequate measure of a school's success (St Paul's School, n.d.).

Although some private schools refused to supply information for league tables in the 1990s, until 2013 pupils' exam results by school were still published as part of government performance tables. However, from 2013, the Conservative-led coalition government began to deregulate a qualification known as the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) which was commonly taught in private schools. The qualification had gained traction in both the state and private sectors because unlike the national GCSE examinations, the IGCSE offered stability in the face of curriculum and political reforms. Following the launch of a new national curriculum in 2013, several IGCSE courses were deregulated and so would no longer be recognised in school performance measures. As private schools are autonomous from the state, unlike state counterparts, they were not obliged to drop these qualifications, or to adopt the new curriculum. In practice, this meant that from 2013, data relating to private school performance began disappearing from public data sets. Eton College, for example, is listed publicly as having 0% of its pupils achieving minimum standards in English and maths in 2017, and thus the potential for this kind comparison with other schools is diminished (Department for Education, 2019a). Since 2019, no deregulated IGCSE, such as those offered by the major provider Cambridge International, has been acknowledged in national league tables. In effect, this enables private schools to elude the gaze of public scrutiny in a way that is not available to state schools.

1.4.5. Inspection

The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) was established alongside league tables in 1992. As Amanda Spielman, the current Chief Inspector of Ofsted explained at the Bryston Education Summit, 6th June 2018: 'Ofsted and performance tables were deliberately introduced at the same time, to complement and balance each other' (Spielman, 2019). The initial intention was to provide a deep qualitative evaluation of individual schools which would afford more detail to the quantitative data offered by exam results and comparatively displayed in national league tables.

Ofsted replaced Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI, established in 1944) as the national inspection service. At the time of Ofsted's launch, John Major's Conservative government argued that HMI had become too aligned with teachers' interests and that its inspectors were 'infected by liberal or child-centred pedagogic principles' (Grek Lindgren & Clarke, 2015, p. 123). Not only had HMI 'gone native', but it was argued that left-wing teachers were able to politicise children's education because they were not accountable for anything to anyone (Ozga & Lawn, 2014, p. 12; Whitty, 2008). In a bid to set up a tougher and more rigorous inspectorate, which more closely aligned with post-welfarist values, Ofsted was launched. The new inspectorate, informed by league table data, would direct school-improvement through the promotion of competition and accountability (D. H. Hargreaves, 1995).

The crisis discourse with which Ofsted was introduced meant that the first decade of its existence was characterised by hostility between inspectors and the teaching profession (Grek et al., 2015). The tensions were exacerbated by the decision to make HMI inspectors redundant from inspection teams and to open school inspection contracts to bidders from the private sector. Following this move, the teaching profession started to question the validity and reliability of Ofsted's methods as they perceived that school visits and reports were compiled by non-experts (Baxter, Grek & Segerholm, 2015). Despite various efforts to restructure inspection teams and numerous new frameworks for school inspection, concerns about the validity and reliability of Ofsted's processes reverberate among state school teachers today – in particular, the organisation is accused of engaging deliberately foggy and unstable criteria to trick schools into a poor performance (Chapman, 2002; Courtney, 2016; Page, 2017a).

Private school inspections

While the state sector's teachers found themselves subject to new high-stakes accountability mechanisms, private schools evaded some of this national scrutiny. In part this was because, in 1978, the Labour government had ceased to inspect private schools as it did not wish to provide this service free of charge to fee-charging schools. After this, inspections of educational quality were non-compulsory for private schools, although boarding provision became subject to inspection under the Children's Act 1989. Even though the ISC and HMC ran accreditation services that checked schools' suitability for association membership, these checks were voluntary and irregular, and they were not assessed against any published criteria (ISI, 2018; Peel, 2015). As such, there was a clear need for change as the 1990s dawned and an era of heightened accountability unfolded.

After Ofsted 's launch, the ISC approached government and suggested that it could inspect its own schools (ISI, 2018; ISI, n.d.; Peel, 2015). While the ISI (2018) claims that the move was intended to 'avoid the burden of a dual [inspection] system' whereby both Ofsted and a private sector body regulated private schools, Peel (2015, p. 118) suggests that the sector was wise to respond 'to the way the wind was blowing in an age of greater transparency'. By taking the initiative with inspections, ISC could exercise autonomy over this matter and protect its schools from falling under the remit of Ofsted. The ISC established the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) for this purpose, and in 2002 it was approved under the Education Act and granted a licence to inspect private schools. The following year, HMC agreed that all its member schools should be reviewed, and regular compulsory inspections for all private schools soon followed.

Although historically tied to the ISC, the ISI is regulated by Ofsted, and today all private schools must undergo inspection by one three licensed bodies: Ofsted, ISI, or Schools Inspection Service (SIS). The majority (65%) of private mainstream schools are inspected by ISI. Schools that are under the remit of ISI are members of ISC associations or affiliate bodies, and as such they are known as 'association schools'. Ofsted assumes responsibility for all state schools and 'non-association' private schools i.e. private schools that are not affiliated with ISC. Non-association private schools account for approximately half the fee-paying schools in the country, but only 32% of the schools which are of concern to this study (i.e. mainstream schools). A third organisation, Schools Inspection

Service (SIS), inspects approximately 4%[1] of mainstream private schools in England. SIS is regulated by Ofsted.

Inspection features and criteria

Although new Ofsted (2019a) and ISI (2019) frameworks for inspection were released during the course of the research project, all participants worked under the criteria described in *appendix 1*. There are two elements to inspection in the private sector: compliance and educational quality. Compliance inspections check that schools are working in accordance to the Independent Schools Standards (ISS, 2014). This kind of inspection can be conducted as a stand-alone event, or it can form part of an 'integrated inspection' which combines a compliance inspection with an 'educational quality' inspection. Educational quality is assessed according to the criteria outlined in *appendix 1*.

A key difference between Ofsted and ISI is that Ofsted publishes overarching judgements on a school's quality, whereas ISI does not. Instead of awarding an umbrella judgment, ISI rates different components of the provider's provision as 'excellent', 'good', 'sound', or 'unsatisfactory'. Ofsted, on the other hand, awards an overarching judgement on a school's quality which can be rated as 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement', or 'unsatisfactory'. In addition to this summative judgement, Ofsted reports also include sub-judgements across four categories believed to comprise the 'quality' of a school: effectiveness of leadership and management; quality of teaching, learning and assessment; pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, and outcomes for pupils. With regards to the last of these categories (outcomes for pupils), Ofsted and ISI operate with different interpretations concerning what constitutes 'good outcomes'. For Ofsted this is a largely quantifiable measure, as shown by its inspection reports that discuss exam performance across different grouping variables including indicators of social and economic disadvantage (e.g. 'Free School Meals' [2] and pupil premium[3]), Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and gender. ISI, on the other hand, considers exam results as a sub category of a broader evaluation of pupil 'achievement'

[1] This estimate has been calculated from SIS website and other public data sources. SIS could not be contacted to confirm the estimate.

[2] Free school meals (FSM) is an indicator of economic deprivation used in English schools. Pupils who meet the set criteria receive fully subsidised lunches in school.

[3] Pupil premium is a grant given to schools by government to spend on those who meet 'pupil premium' criteria which indicate educational disadvantage.

(*appendix 1*), and its reports typically offer a greater focus on the extra-curricular accomplishments or opportunities afforded to pupils compared to reports by Ofsted.

Ofsted judgements are central to a state school's identity as a good or bad provider (Ball, 1997). However, it is not known as to whether or not a poor judgement has the same devastating effects on private school teachers as it does for state school teachers. However, by looking to other contexts, it is possible to conjecture the role that inspection might play for private schools. For example, Forbes and Weiner's (2008) research into private schools in Scotland identified that school leaders referenced their schools' 'excellent' reports in school marketing materials and research conversations, thus suggesting that external judgements were pivotal to their self-positioning and identities.

1.5. Contemporary context

1.5.1. Definitions

The study incorporates teachers working in fee-paying and state-funded schools which educate children aged 5 – 18 on a full-time basis in England. While sixth-form and reception class teachers are included, teachers who work in private or state nurseries that educate exclusively under-5s are exempt from the study. Special schools, which exclusively cater for children with SEND, are a distinct category in the private and state sector. Such schools are beyond the remit of this study because their historical trajectory and funding arrangements differ significantly to mainstream schools.

<u>Private schools</u>

Throughout the thesis I mainly refer to 'private schools' in order to disambiguate them from state-funded academies and free schools which are considered 'independent' under some legislation and documentation. Where there are occasional references to the 'fee-paying', 'fee-charging', or 'independent' sector, these terms should be read as synonymous with the 'private school sector'. When the term 'independent' or 'private' school/sector is used, it refers to all fee-charging schools of the type outlined above – including the nine public schools. In order to protect school and participant identities, I do not make a distinction between respondents who worked in public schools, and other private school types, nor do I report data by this variable.

State schools are those which provide full-time education to school aged children and receive obligatory funding from government. Academy schools are considered 'independent' in some legislation because they have autonomy over finances, pay, staffing, working conditions, and curriculum. They are, however, still in receipt of state funding. These autonomies are not granted to 'maintained schools' which are schools that remain under LEA control. In practice, this means that teachers' pay and conditions will be set by the LEA which receives funding from central government to allocate to schools. A further school type, 'free schools', started to open in 2011. These schools are run by a limited company and board of directors on a not-for-profit basis. Free schools are typically established by universities, religious organisations, or educational charities. They share the same freedoms as academies, and do not charge fees to parents.

Table 1.1: Key features of school types

	State sector			Private sector
Autonomy over:	Academy	Free school	Maintained school	Private school
Curriculum	Y	Y	N	Y
Length of school day	Y	Y	N	Y
School holidays	Y	Y	N	Y
Qualified teachers	Y	Y	N	Y
Pay scale	Y	Y	N	Y
Government commits funds?	Y	Y	Y	N
Charge fees to parents/carers?	N	N	N	Y

There are various subtypes of schools within the state funded sector, all of which are academies, free schools, or maintained schools. These subtypes include: grammar schools; voluntary aided schools; voluntary controlled schools; community schools, and foundation/trust schools. State grammar schools, like 50% of ISC schools, are academically selective (ISC, 2019). Despite the competitive nature of state grammar schools, they are funded by government and there are no obligatory fees to parents/carers.

Other schools, known as 'voluntary aided' schools are affiliated with religious organisations which contribute towards schools' capital costs. Similarly, 'voluntary controlled' schools are run by the LEA, but the religious organisation (or another trust) owns the school site and

buildings. Foundation and trust schools are similar to voluntary controlled schools, but the governing body (not the LEA) assumes responsibility for appointments and pupil admissions. Finally, community schools are schools that are built on land owned by the LEA. In these cases, the LEA assumes an active role in staff appointments and pupil admissions.

1.5.2. Private school structure

Approximately two thirds of England's mainstream private schools are affiliated with the ISC, the umbrella organisation which represents the interests of its members. The ISC member organisations are: Girls' Schools Association (GSA); Girls' Day School Trust (GDST); Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC); Independent Association of Prep Schools (IAPS); Independent Schools Association (ISA); The Society of Heads; Association of governing Bodies of Independent Schools (AGBIS), and Independent Schools' Bursars Association (ISBA). There are a further four affiliated organisations: Boarding Schools Association (BSA); Council of British International Schools (COBIS); Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS), and Welsh Independent Schools Council (WISC). Schools which are located outside of England are not considered in this study.

Each of the member organisations has a distinct identity. As previously explained, the HMC was established in 1869 to protect the interests of the original nine public schools in the wake of the Clarendon Commission (Peel, 2015). The GSA promotes girls' education and prides itself on the proportion of students who pursue studies in areas where women are under-represented (GSA, n.d.). The BSA represents the interests of British boarding schools. IAPS, as suggested by the name, represents only preparatory schools (schools for pupils aged 9 – 13).

Figure 1.1 [4] visually represents the structure of the private sector. The number of UK schools each organisation represents is given (where relevant) below the organisation's name. The number of schools located in England is given in brackets below.

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[4] Sources: ISC (2018); association websites, and email and telephone communications with member organisations.

Independent Schools Council (ISC)												Non-association schools
Member associations								**Association organisations**				611
GSA	HMC	IAPS	ISA	GDST	SoH	AGBIS	ISBA	BSA	COBIS	SCIS	WISC	
Member schools (n)								**Member schools (n)**				
153 (147)	253 (209)	630 (620)	506 (493)	23 (21)	n/a	n/a	n/a	489 (153)	0 (5)	n/a	n/a	
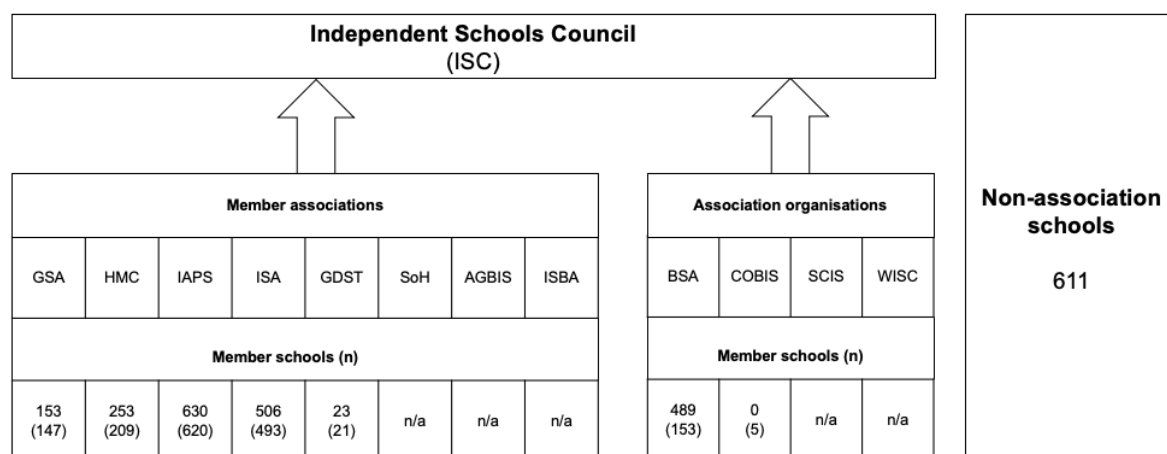
Figure 1.1: Structure of private sector in England

While the ISC reported 1,274 member schools in England in 2018 (ISC, 2018), the total number of member schools reported by the affiliate organisations is higher (n = 1,565). This discrepancy is because the ISC affiliate organisations collect and report information concerning their members at different time points. In addition, many schools have dual or multiple membership with two or more affiliate organisations. For example, a preparatory school may be a member of IAPS, and the senior section of the same school could be affiliated with HMC.

Membership numbers are not reported for AGBIS because this is an organisation that represents headteachers from GSA, HMC and Society of Heads members. The Society of Heads does not have member schools as such, rather it has headteachers who chose to be members. Therefore, a headteacher can be a member of the Society of Heads, and their school can be affiliated with another organisation such as GSA. Member numbers are not given for ISBA because this is an association for school bursars, nor are member numbers for England reported for SCIS or WISC because these are the Scottish and Welsh independent school councils respectively.

Beyond the ISC

As figure 1.1 shows there are over 600 mainstream non-association private schools. Some of these schools are proprietorial schools run by individuals, couples, or families. They may prefer to run independently from the ISC because they do not want to comply with ISC membership conditions such as having a governing body. In other cases, school groups might run independently to the ISC because they prefer the autonomy enabled by

their large group structures. Steiner schools, for example, are a group of private schools with a distinctive educational philosophy which the ISC does not specifically endorse. The Cognita school group also operates a network of more than 70 schools across the world, 38 of which are in England. Other school groups, such as United Learning and Woodard, operate in both the state and private sector, as does the GDST which sponsors two state academies (GDST, 2019). The GDST is, however, an associate body of ISC which means that all its fee-charging schools are ISC members.

1.6. Theoretical lens

1.6.1. Foucault's thinking

Teachers' work has been restructured in line with the national discourses within which it is situated. Governmentality theory provides a theoretical lens through which to comprehend this process of change. The theory is concerned with the modes of power through which members of societies regulate in order to normalise ways of thinking and acting. Governmentality theory is rooted in the work of Foucault, who was concerned with the dawn of liberalism and the emergence of the modern state. Foucault (1980) explored the entailing social shift towards individualism and questioned the implications for modes of governing. He proposed that the model of the sovereign state which subjectified its citizens had become obsolete, as nations shifted from government to governmentality (Foucault, 1980). His work posed a challenge to Marxist theories that the upper echelons of society oppressed the poor, who needed to revolt and overthrow their masters. Instead, he was concerned with more subtle channels of power whereby groups and individuals become self-regulating disciplined bodies (Foucault, 1977).

The modern state is characterised by governmentality which is a mode of social control. Perryman, Ball, Braun and Maguire (2017) explain that that governmentality operates through power which has three main faces: the disciplinary, the sovereign, and the pastoral. According to Foucault (1980) sovereign power was primarily concerned with the autocratic control of citizens. Under sovereign rule, citizens would be required to demonstrate obedience and allegiance to their monarch. However, with the emergence of the modern state this subjectifying mode of control gave way to new forms of disciplinary power which emerged as a way in which to organise subjects' behaviour and time. Like sovereign power, disciplinary power is subjectifying and hierarchical in nature; however, it operates throughout the social body. Through methods of 'hierarchical surveillance' and 'normalising judgements' disciplinary techniques guide individuals towards conformity with a set of socio-cultural norms (Foucault, 1977, p. 192). In schools, disciplinary power can manifest through systems of managerialism and accountability that force compliance through instilling fear of consequence in teachers. In fact, disciplinary mechanisms form a key component of national and school-level accountability systems. Disciplinary power can operate in tandem with the enactment of pastoral power mechanisms, which also encourage self-discipline but through softer methods (Foucault, 1982). Pastoral power,

which like all the faces of power creates subjects, interweaves with punitive disciplinary systems to create complex structures within which behaviour, policies, practices, and identities are negotiated (Perryman et al., 2017). Pastoral power assumes a moral dimension because is concerned with securing the good of the whole community as well as the individual (Foucault, 1982). As such, it differs from obsolete forms of sovereign power that demanded sacrifice of the subject for the throne, and instead it is willing to sacrifice itself for the wider good (Foucault, 1982). In relation to education, the modern teacher may work under regimes which encourage self-subjectification and regulation through a range of power techniques including the hard disciplinary methods of judgement and punishment, as well as the gentler and seemingly altruistic persuasion of the techniques of pastoral power (Perryman et al., 2017).

1.6.2. Notions of identity

In Foucault's view, in the modern state power is distributed through a complex web of interactions. As it is interactive in nature, it cannot be 'held' by any one body or isolated (Foucault, 1980). This thinking has extensive implications for the understanding of 'identity', which I interpret as a 'major component of the self' (Wilson & Deaney, 2010, p. 171). In recognising identity as a component of the self, it becomes possible to appreciate that identities can be multiple and simultaneously negotiated and organised within the power flows of the social world. While there is inevitable overlap between these multiple identities and the overall notion of self (Day, Kington, et al., 2006), I focus on a definition of 'teacher identity'.

Teacher identity involves a personal and professional aspect. The professional dimension relates to notions of 'agency, or the active pursuit of professional development and learning in accordance to the teachers' goals' (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p. 177). As such, the modern teaching professional has defined goals for her improvement and she is positioned as an agent who is responsible for her own 'learning' and 'professional development'. As Perryman et al (2017) explain, reflection is perceived as a condition of professionalism, as the developing teacher must be able to look inwards and take responsibility for her own ongoing improvement. Alongside the professional aspect of teacher identity, there is a personal dimension that interacts with teachers' emotions. Nias (1996) argues that teachers' emotions are fundamental to understanding the process of teacher identity negotiation. Rodgers and Scott (2008) explain that emotions are created

within context, and the experience of these emotions affects the way in which teachers interact with their environment or others in that environment. By way of example, teachers may feel stressed by high-stakes testing environments. The experience of stress arises within the context and can inform the way in which the teacher interacts with colleagues and pupils. As such, the teacher may form an identity as a short-tempered or erratic practitioner, which may contribute to feelings of reduced worth or competence. Therefore, the manifestation and personal experience of stress will form a tenet of the teacher identity negotiation process.

As such, identities can be understood as contextual; their negotiation occurs within a complex structure, the nodes and connections of which are nebulous. As power flows through these structures, identities 'emerge within the play of specific modalities of power' (Hall, 2000, p. 17). This means that identity is relational and discursively produced. The 'modalities of power' to which Hall (2000, p.17) refers can be intra-personal as well as inter-personal. Indeed, an appreciation of the manner in which human beings 'act upon themselves' is fundamental to understanding modes of governmentality whereby humans come to construct their identities as part of a socio-culturally specific normalised discourse (Rose, 2000, p.312). By virtue of their instability, both the framing discourse and the dynamic teacher identity are subject to the possibility of rupture or radical shift. Rose's (2000) metaphor of imbrication helps to understand the way in which they can undergo shift. Although Rose (2000, p. 316) refutes that identities are 'transhistorical' this does not mean that they are severed from their previous formations. He explains that identity is imbricated, and so the teacher's understanding of who she is as a professional and as a person is negotiated in an ongoing and overlapping sequence. This conceptualisation allows for traces of the past to resonate in the evolving present.

1.6.3. Truth discourses

In order to understand the formative contexts within which teachers operate, it is necessary to define the truth discourses which abound through these structures and to consider how and why these truths came to assume dominance. Gramsci (1988) theorised that an ideology first takes hold on a corporate level and it is likely to be underpinned by an economic rationality. Ideological discourses continue to gather strength through economic reasoning and achieve solidarity among the social group who will benefit from its adoption. The discourse moves towards dominance when the initial corporate group presents it as

serving the best interests of subordinate groups. In the next phase of hegemonic establishment, economic aims are unified with the 'intellectual and moral' (*Gramsci cited in* Forgacs, 1988, p. 205). In this phase, the discourse is pitched on a 'universal plane' which speaks to every domain of human and social life (*Gramsci cited in* Forgacs, 1988, p. 205). In this way it transcends the corporate and the economic to speak universally to societal struggles. Once consensus is achieved, the new mode of operation can become operative and maintain itself through non-violent means including normalised self-regulation.

Although Gramsci's (1988) writings invite a Marxist analysis of power, which Foucault later moved away from, the theory is valuable in interpreting the mechanisms through which the neoliberal hegemony took hold in the UK from the 1980s. Before I discuss the process through which neoliberalism took root, I first want to express caution over the use of this sweeping term. As Dean (2014) suggests 'neoliberalism' is used loosely as a misnomer for all the social, political and economic trends arising from the 1980s. Therefore, rather than seeing neoliberalism as a collection of policies enacted within a specific timeframe, I regard the concept as a set of practices guided by common underlying principles (Shamir, 2008). Specifically, supporters of neoliberal views herald the free market, a commitment to individualism, laissez-faire, and free trade (Olssen and Peters 2005, 314; Shamir, 2008). Although the market values of neoliberalism mirror those of the antecedent classical liberalism, the difference lies in the conceptualisation of the nation state. In contrast to the classical liberal model, early enactments of neoliberalism considered that the nation state should take an active hand in cultivating the conditions necessary for neoliberal practices to thrive (Olssen & Peters, 2005).

Taking root

The neoliberal ideology was able to expand because it found consensus in an appeal to the concept of freedom. Thatcher and Regan's branches of neoliberalism which spread across the UK and USA respectively evoked this principle of 'freedom' as their moral base (Harvey, 2005). This principle, which since the emergence of liberalism has become enshrined as a human right in the national psyches, cultural operations, and even laws of much of Europe, Australasia, and North America, secured the popularity and spread of this new way of thinking and operating across the globe (Olssen & Peters, 2005). Therefore, the notion of ensuring 'freedom' was merely a matter of 'common sense'. As Hall and O'Shea (2015, p. 52) explain, 'common sense' ideas are 'popular' notions that are 'easily-available' to the majority of the population because they do not rest on any 'complicated

ideas' or 'sophisticated arguments'. Through this invocation of individual freedom as its moral tenet, the neoliberal ambition transcended the traditional factions of politics and popularised the rejection of welfarist ideals, propagating instead a new set of straight-forward logics centred around market values (Olssen & Peters 2005, 314; Shamir, 2008).

As neoliberalism entered the UK in the guise of the 'common sense' Trojan horse, a 'bundle of beliefs' and invisible assumptions emerged and pervaded the economic and social domains of human life (Hall, Massey & Rustin, 2015, p. 14). The public sector and the work and practice of professionals were subject to reshaping under the emerging discourse which taught that competition and growth were worthy and desirable states with the former propelling the latter. As Hall et al (2015) conjecture, it was only through the invisibility of these truths that the neoliberal settlement could establish itself as inevitable and irrevocable. The moral and market assumptions upon which the nation state would be reformed became a truth so blinding that they were 'beyond question' (Hall et al., 2015, p. 14). Through this process of normalisation, the neoliberal modes of thinking and operating could be maintained.

Market discourses have come to dominate all domains of human life (Ball, 2008). The success of business, enterprise, markets, society, and workers is defined by the market principles of a growth economy which advocate expansion, efficiency, improvement, and profit – all in the name of progress. Rates of progress are measured through quantitative data, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and quantifiable worker productivity. Numerical outputs present as objective truths stripped of all political and economic ideology (Ozga, 2016). In this way, data have become the vehicle through which objectives that align with neoliberal ideals of efficiency, growth and competition are set and secured (Ozga, 2016). The objectives and their underpinning values form an 'irresistible discourse' as a system without growth and improvement becomes unthinkable (Maguire, 2009, p. 60). It is unthinkable because these aspirations have become the dominant truth discourse which is propagated through the arterial channels of the ecosystem and the veins of its actors.

Notions of the need to improve by enhancing efficiency define the education ecology and the those that act within it (Ball et al., 2012). Indeed, the professional must fall in line with the values of a market economy that celebrates growth and produces ever more outputs with maximum efficiency (Maguire, 2014). The reflective teacher and resilient pupil should adopt a 'growth mind-set' and embrace their limitless potential within a system of

boundless expansion. Actors within this framework are responsible for their own growth in the form of development, improvement, and enhancement privately and publicly (Fendler, 1998). As such, they may undertake 'self-work' through inward reflection, self-evaluation, or other practices geared at self-improvement (Maguire, 2009). In this way, the individual's actions become the individual – the teacher who stays late performs hard work and commitment, and in the act of performance becomes a hardworking and committed teacher. The teacher is judged against her outcomes and the extent to which she has guided herself to achieve against expected standards. When the teacher is judged to be inadequate, it can lead to profound consequences because the label applies not only to the actions of the teacher, but to her identity as a moral practitioner who works to the benefit of social good (Nias, 1996; Troman & Raggl, 2008). In order to maintain a sense of moral value, the teacher must achieve in line with the value systems that frame her. In order to succeed within this framework, the teacher must comply with societal and professional expectations; and so, through the performance of the good teacher, she becomes an actor within this hegemony.

The next chapter explores the ways in which hegemonic market discourses have shaped state education. While there is rich literature concerning this area for state school teachers, this matter is less understood in relation to the insular world of private education – and this limits my ability to draw comparisons.

Chapter 2: Concepts and constructs

2.1. Introduction

This chapter explores literature concerning the variables of interest: workload, stress, and school-level accountability. I draw from sociology of education literature to frame teachers' experiences of these variables within the neoliberal and managerial macro-context. Through a study of literature from complementary areas such as psychology, I build an understanding of the way in which these variables could interact for teachers. I start with section 2.2 which explains the diverse literature forms included in the review, and the methods through which I identified these studies. Following this explanation, in sections 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5 I discuss workload, stress, and accountability respectively.

Section 2.3 outlines prior research into teacher workload and considers the contexts that have shaped the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the workload construct. As teachers' workload in the private sector is an under researched area, I am limited in my capacity to make comparisons. Nevertheless, I include reports from 'grey literature' to offer tentative suggestions of the ways in which workload may differ between sectors.

Section 2.4 explores teacher stress. Here, I define the term and outline major themes from previous research. The section draws extensively on literature from psychology as well as framing teacher stress as a product of the neoliberal hegemony. Section 2.5 defines accountability and the components of this process. I examine monitoring mechanisms within state and private schools. From here, I explore studies which illuminate teachers' experiences of these processes. This exploration is framed by an explanation of related concepts: performativity and (post-) panopticism. In section 2.6, I link the key concepts together in a conceptual framework. The chapter concludes with section 2.7 which draws together and summarises the literature from various paradigms and disciplines.

2.2. Searching for literature

2.2.1. Scope of the search

As this is a mixed-methods and pragmatic study, I review literature from a diverse range of domains including education, economics, sociology, and psychology. Academic literature is supplemented with a consideration of 'grey literature'. I define 'grey literature' as studies which whilst addressing the relevant topic, have not been subject to an academic peer review process. These study findings are usually communicated in the form of reports aimed at lay audiences or policy makers. International organisations such as OECD, branches of government (e.g. DfE or Ofsted), think tanks, charities, and NGOs typically produce such reports. Companies and university faculty members may also be commissioned by government to conduct research of this type on a national level.

Authors of grey literature cited in this thesis have published technical reports of their studies in which they make their methods transparent. Grey literature provides an overview of the field, and it is complemented by academic studies which offer a depth of understanding into the manner in which national trends affect teachers' experiences of their work.

2.2.2. Search methods

I sourced grey literature by researching websites for reports and publications from bodies that publish or hold data on teacher workload, stress, and accountability. These organisations included: The DfE, ISC, ISI, Ofsted, House of Commons, OECD, NFER, Office of National Statistics, Institute of Fiscal Studies, General Teaching Council England (now disbanded), and Education Support Partnership. I also searched the IOE UK Digital Education Repository Archive (DERA), which is a digital archive of documents published by government bodies and related organisations in the area of education. The scope of my search included: teacher workforce movement, teacher wellbeing, and teacher retention in the state and private education sectors.

Additionally, I accessed academic literature through database searches for a range of terms including: teacher workload, teacher stress, teacher wellbeing, school inspections, Ofsted, and teacher/ school accountability. To conduct these searches, I used academic

databases including Scopus and ERIC, and I searched the University of Cambridge online library catalogue for books (iDiscover). I limited my search to studies published during or after 1979 (the seminal point at which the neoliberal ideals began manifest in education). In the first instance I selected works that related directly to England. Thereafter, I expanded my remit to consider work from other parts of the United Kingdom, other European countries, Australasia, and the USA. After the initial search phase, I was able to concentrate on more precise phrases and search for specific concepts of interest such as performativity, panopticism, fabrication, teacher surveillance, and workload intensification. Given the limited availability of literature relating to teachers' work in the private sector, I searched more generally for studies which included phrases such as 'independent schools', 'private education England', 'elite education', and 'boarding schools'. Although there is very occasional reference to private school literature from other contexts such as Australia, or Scotland, these studies do not feature highly in the literature review given the idiosyncrasy of the English private school system.

2.3. Workload

2.3.1. Definition and overview

As I will examine in this section (2.3), workload is a construct with a quantitative and qualitative dimension. It can be measured through the number of hours worked by teachers, the composition of their workload, and also through study into the way that teachers perceive their work.

At the time of writing, the workload of state school teachers was framed by a discourse of crisis. A government commissioned report – the Teacher Workload Survey 2016 (TWS) – reported that state school teachers worked in excess of 50 hours per week during term times (Higton, Leonardi, Richards, et al., 2017); the finding was reinforced by the OECD TALIS 2013 and 2018 reports (Micklewright et al., 2014; Jerrim & Sims, 2019). Compared to other professions such as policing, teachers work longer weekly hours for lower salaries (Worth & Van den Brande, 2019). In addition, teachers are reported to have lower rates of satisfaction with their work-life balance compared to both policing and nursing (Hillary, Andrade & Worth, 2018). The perception of a mounting workload with stagnating pay has been linked to poor teacher retention (Foster, 2019; Lynch et al., 2016; National Education Union, 2018). Significantly, research carried out for the DfE supports claims that

unmanageable workloads adversely impact on teachers' general wellbeing and drive their decisions to leave state school employment (CooperGibson, 2018a, 2018b).

There is limited evidence available concerning the working hours of private school teachers, so it is difficult to compare sectors. That said, the TALIS reports included small samples of private school teachers. The TALIS 2013 report for England recorded that teachers' working hours vary very little according to school type (Micklewright et al., 2014), whereas TALIS 2018 data suggested that lower secondary private school teachers work five hours per week more than their equivalents in the state sector (Jerrim & Sims, 2019). However, the survey analysts advised caution in interpreting the findings as the private school sample is small. Research by Green et al (2008) provided an additional comparison of teachers' working hours by sector. The study aggregated several data sets in order to analyse teachers' working patterns between 1996 – 2005. The data set, although it may not reflect the current picture of teachers' working lives, showed that male private school teachers worked 4.8 more hours per week than their male counterparts in the state sector 2001 – 2005 (50.7 hours per week compared to 45.9 hours per week). During the same time period, women teaching in the private sector worked 40.1 hours per week, which was 1.5 hours a week less than female teachers in the state sector. However, female teachers in the private sector were paid less than those in the state sector. The study also compared the average holiday allocation; taking account of this, the research found that average weekly working hours were similar between sectors. In other words, private school teachers worked more hours per week than their state peers, but they were compensated for this with longer holiday periods.

More recently, an online survey conducted by the former teacher union, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL, 2014a) asked 1,243 teachers from the private sector to estimate their average weekly working hours. The survey results were not grouped by contract type (part-time/full-time) or into regular bands of working hours, so it was difficult to derive any meaningful estimates from the data. Nevertheless, the most popular of these bands was 49 – 60 hours per week which was selected by 44.4% of respondents. A more recent ATL (2016) poll surveyed 730 teachers in the private sector. It reported that 92.5% of private school teachers worked over their contracted hours with 73.9% stating that their workload had 'increased over the past year'. Pressures from school leadership and parents were cited as the main reasons for this perceived increase in workload.

2.3.2. Perceptions of workload

Despite the discourse of state school teacher work-overload, a working paper from University College London suggests that teacher workload has remained quantitatively stable for the past 25 years (Allen et al., 2019). That is to say that contrary to popular beliefs, the number of hours state school teachers undertake does not appear to be rising. The TWS 2019 also stated that workload fell by an average of five hours per week for state school teachers between 2016 – 2019 (Walker et al., 2019). However, it is important to note that the wording of the workload question changed between 2016 and 2019, with the TWS 2019 explicitly excluding 'time spent travelling to work' as part of the working week.

Although Allen et al (2019) and the TWS 2019 report do not indicate a rise in working hours, various sources indicate that state school teachers regard their workloads as problematic. Just over half (51%) of TALIS 2013 respondents in England stated that their workloads were 'unmanageable' compared to 43% of those in private schools (Micklewright et al., 2014). Other reports suggest that state school teachers might find their workloads problematic due to a perceived infringement on their work-life balance. By way of evidence, to the statement 'overall, I achieve a good balance between my work life and my private life', 65% of primary school teachers and 74% of secondary teachers either 'strongly disagreed' or 'disagreed'. Additionally, TWS 2019 found that 91% of primary teachers and 94% of secondary teachers 'strongly disagreed' or 'disagreed' with the statement 'I can complete my assigned workload during my contracted working hours'.

Additionally, studies suggest that those in the private sector have a more positive perception of workload. For example, TALIS 2018 data found that only 25% of private school primary teachers considered their workload to be 'unmanageable' compared to more than half of state school primary teachers. Similarly, the study identified that private school teachers reported higher rates of job satisfaction compared to those working in state-funded schools (Jerrim & Sims, 2019).

There appears to be a disjuncture between teachers' perceptions of workload and the number of hours they undertake. In fact, Sims (2018) found that working hours alone are a poor indicator of teachers' feelings towards their work. Other research points to the importance of considering other factors such as the variety and complexity of tasks

undertaken by teachers within a working week as well as the measurable number of hours. The conceptualisation of workload as a qualitative as well as quantitative construct is supported by Perryman and Calvert (2019). Their study found that state school teachers in England enter the profession expecting to work long hours, however, they become disillusioned by the low quality of the work that they are asked to undertake once they have started the job. In particular, Perryman and Calvert's participants felt demotivated by tasks which were conducted for accountability purposes and not for the benefit of pupils. The relationship between workload and accountability is discussed in more detail in section 2.3.4.

In summary, state school teacher workload is *perceived* to be worsening with time, although the measurable number of hours undertaken each week seems to have been stable over a long period of time (Allen et al., 2019). Although data relating to private school teachers' working hours are somewhat limited, it appears to be the case that private teachers work a similar number, or fewer hours compared to their state school peers. The limited data also point to private school teachers having a more positive perception of their overall workload compared to teachers in state funded schools.

2.3.3. Intensification

In order to understand the disjuncture between the perception of workload as unmanageable and recent suggestions that it has remained quantitatively stable, it is important to track the history of teacher workload within the neoliberal context. The process of tracing facilitates an understanding of the influence of contextual forces on shaping teachers' experiences of their work.

Academic research has considered the 'intensification' of teacher workload in the public sector since the take-off of neoliberalism. In 1985, Apple defined intensification as the 'erosion of work privileges' with 'symptoms' which included feelings of work overload and insufficient time with which to complete tasks, or to fulfil basic personal needs such as take lunch breaks or use the bathroom (p.41). Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) suggested that teachers' workload became more intense as a result of the welfarist policy rupture. They attributed intensified workloads to 'an onslaught of initiatives' including the National Curriculum that contributed to 'extra tasks and responsibilities' which detracted from the time available to 'prepare for classroom teaching' as teachers became increasingly

preoccupied with ensuring and evidencing compliance with standards (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996, p. 15). While this phenomenon can occur inside the school space, other research – such as that of Valli and Buese (2007) – considers the way in which teachers' workload has expanded beyond the classroom.

The thesis adopts Valli and Buese's (2007) conceptualisation of workload intensification. Valli and Buese identify three aspects to the phenomena: role expansion, role increase, and the feeling of intensification. 'Role increase' refers to a rise in the number or volume of tasks that teachers are required to undertake, whereas 'expansion' is the widening scope of teachers' work and, in particular, work related tasks or activities which occur outside of the classroom, or beyond working hours. Additionally, as Gewirtz (2002) propounded, workload is also about how teachers feel, as well as what they do. Therefore, the experience of intensification can be interpreted as the feeling of being hectic, rushed off one's feet, being under pressure to conduct tasks within a given timeframe, or to meet a certain set of targets. As Gewirtz (2002, p. 75) reports, intensification can have 'emotional consequences' for the practitioner, such as stress or burnout. Not least, potential stress is linked to the erosion of the teachers' professional status as their work becomes more tightly regulated and scrutinised thus compromising autonomy – a central component of professionalism (Forrester, 2000; A. Hargreaves, 1994).

Although the reports cited earlier do not support the idea of a substantial increase in workload (Allen et al., 2019; Walker et al., 2019), other research has indicated a shift in the nature of duties undertaken by teachers. Ball (2008) discusses a perceived rise in 'second order activities' which are namely tasks that do not directly relate to interactions with pupils. While first order activities consist of the day to day core components of teaching such as delivering lessons, planning, and marking pupils' work, second order activities include administrative work, meetings with colleagues, and data-related tasks. Second order tasks are associated with negative workload perceptions (Ball, 2008; Lawrence, Loi & Gudex 2018), whereas direct engagement with pupils is understood as one of the primary motivators for teachers to enter the profession (Perryman & Calvert, 2019; Richardson & Watt, 2006).

Significantly, recent reports commissioned by the DfE have indicated that even first order activities such as marking and planning lessons have become burdensome to teachers. The reports recognise that whilst these duties are critical to teachers' roles, they have

become onerous because of the frequency, detail, and depth required by school-level policies (CooperGibson, 2018a; Higton, Leonardi, Richards, et al., 2017; Independent Teacher & Workload Review Group, 2016; Teacher Workload Review Group, 2016).

Increases to the level of detail required in teachers' marking and planning, as well as perceived increases to the volume of second order activities can be understood within the policy context. Robertson (1996, p. 45) suggests that since the take-off of neoliberal education policy, there has been 'an escalation of accountability and control initiatives'. Specifically, the public sector has loaned a series of techniques from the private sector with which to audit teachers' work. These practices are associated with the 'New Public Management' (NPM) method, which involves managers routinely scrutinising staff to ensure that they are working effectively and efficiently (Pollitt, 1993; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). NPM encourages managers to gather evidence of employees' compliance with policy and procedures through audit processes (Burns & Köster, 2016; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). As the NPM strategies have evolved in state education, managers have become preoccupied with collecting data with which to evidence teacher performance and pupil progress. In practice, this means that managers will check teachers' compliance with stringent marking or planning policies. Furthermore, teachers can be expected to attend frequent meetings to discuss and justify pupils' progress, and to upkeep databases of pupil attainment.

2.3.4. Accountability and workload

Government commissioned research suggests that senior leadership teams (SLT) are responsible for implementing policies that encourage these burdensome workloads (CooperGibson, 2018a). By way of example, some schools advocate marking pupils' work multiple times in different coloured pens, while others require detailed pupil seating plans with a written explanation of the rationale behind the arrangement (Independent Teacher & Workload Review Group, 2016; Teacher Workload Review Group, 2016). Reports suggest that SLTs develop these policies because they believe that Ofsted inspectors require to see documentation evidencing these practices (CooperGibson, 2018a). As a consequence, Ofsted is acknowledged as a formative influence over school policies and an indirect 'driver' of state school teachers' burdensome workloads (CooperGibson, 2018a; Higton, Leonardi, Richards, et al., 2017).

State school teachers hold poor perceptions of tasks that are completed in an endeavour to appease a real (or imagined) inspector (CooperGibson, 2018a; Higton, Leonardi, Richards, et al., 2017) . Reports suggest that burdensome tasks such as marking work multiple times are intended to 'please outside organisations', but they are simply 'not useful' for teachers or pupils (Independent Teacher & Workload Review Group, 2016, pp. 7 & 8).

Despite fulfilling only an evidencing purpose, teachers may adhere with the requirements of burdensome school-level policies because they fear the material or symbolic sanctions of non-compliance (Ball, 2003). In an era of performance-related pay, sanctions can include a pay penalty, or the symbolic identification as a 'failing' teacher. In a discussion of policy enactment within schools, Perryman, Ball, Maguire and Braun (2011, p. 188) found evidence of teachers in core subjects feeling empowered to 'speak back' to policies that they found meaningless by refusing to implement them, or introducing them in creative ways which suited the teachers' needs. However, these teachers only felt empowered to resist the meaningless when they had already achieved success within the framing context.

There is scant evidence concerning the extent to which NPM techniques have affected private teachers' work. From available literature, there is a suggestion from Peel (2015, p. 119) that the sector experienced a wave of performance management techniques in the late 1980s – 1990s which provided a 'jolt' for staff who were unaccustomed to having their work scrutinised. He speculates that school leaders were able to win favour with teachers by emphasising the 'positive side of appraisal' as a career development aid (*ibid*, p.119). While there are few other sources with which to corroborate Peel's analysis, the late arrival of compulsory inspections to the private sector (section 1.4.5) could mirror a slower or less intensive uptake of accountability-motivated management practices compared to the state sector. Although not directly relevant to NPM, Bryson and Green's (2018) paper lends some support to this suggestion because it finds that a set of management practices known as 'human resource management' are less prevalent in private schools compared to state schools. Therefore, it may be the case that private school teachers' work is less intensively regulated by managers as compared to teachers in state-funded schools.

2.4. Stress

In light of the discourse of intensifying workloads and a workload crisis, it is unsurprising that state teaching has been characterised as a stressful profession. In fact, teachers are believed to be significantly more stressed than members of the non-teaching population (Health and Safety Executive, 2017; Precey, 2015). A further report by NFER supports these findings and suggests that one fifth teachers feel stressed or anxious 'most' or 'all of the time' (Worth & Van den Brande, 2019). In terms of severity, in a sample of 555 secondary school teachers in England, Kidger et al. (2016) found that 19% exhibited moderate to severe depressive symptoms. These teachers were twice as likely to have taken time off work compared to colleagues within a given time period. In fact, a study of insurance records shows that absences from work for teachers due to stress, anxiety and depression account for 1.2 million lost work days a year, which (apart from maternity leave), is the single biggest reason for teacher absence (Precey, 2015). In addition to this, teacher stress has been linked to deleterious states such as depersonalisation, burnout, and attrition (Gluschkoff et al., 2016; Sass, Seal & Martin., 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

2.4.1. Definition of stress

Occupational stress has been measured by a range of psychological instruments, some of which have examined the manifestations of stress, while others have focused on identifying its sources. Stress can manifest physiologically as rapid breathing, increased heart rate, perspiration, and problems with sleep among other symptoms (Fimian, 1984; von der Embse, Kilgus, Solomon, Bowler & Curtiss, 2015; Gluschkoff et al., 2016). It has also been linked to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease and susceptibility to viral illnesses such as the common cold (Vaccarino et al., 2013; Cohen, Tyrell & Smith, 1991).

In addition to the physiological symptoms, stress has a psychological and emotional dimension. In relation to teachers, researchers have linked stress to feelings of exhaustion, work disengagement, and a reduced sense self-worth or accomplishment (Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2002; Van Droogenbroeck, Spruyt & Vanroelen, 2014). These manifestations are the characteristics of 'burnout' which is defined as 'an extreme form of fatigue' resulting from physical, cognitive, or psychological demands which are 'prolonged and intense' in nature (Bakker, Demerouti & Verbeke, 2004, p. 84). Burnout may occur when teachers are poorly resourced to meet the demands of their work (Bakker

et al., 2004). Potential resources include the provision of collegial support, rest-periods, or appropriate levels of autonomy (Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti & Xanthopoulou, 2007; Fernet et al., 2012). Burnout is linked to undesirable outcomes such as teacher absenteeism and increased chance of leaving the profession (Kidger et al., 2016; Jepson & Forrest, 2006; Naghieh, Montgomery, Bonell, Thompson & Aber, 2015).

Teacher stress arises from contextual factors within the school setting (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1977). Kyriacou (2001) defines it as:

> *'The experience by a teacher of unpleasant, negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration or depression, resulting from some aspect of their work as a teacher.'*

> *(Kyriacou, 2001, p.28)*

Kyriacou's broad definition enables a focus on the emotional aspects of stress. While the physiological manifestations of stress have been measured by researchers such as von der Embse et al (2015), it is work-related stressors and teachers' emotional responses that are of primary concern to this study. Furthermore, Kyriacou's wide understanding of stress as 'unpleasant negative emotions' allows a subjective understanding of the states that count as 'stressful'. Such a definition is valuable to studies with a qualitative component because it legitimises the emotions and experiences that participants define as stress or stress inducing. While the definition primarily understands stress as an emotional experience, it considers that these emotions arise from 'some aspect of teachers' work'. The specific aspects of work from which stress results can be defined as 'stressors'. As the next sections demonstrate, teaching presents a set of factors which, if unmoderated, can lead teachers to experience unpleasant negative emotions.

2.4.2. Personal factors

Although Kyriacou's (2001) stress definition is concerned with work-related factors, other studies demonstrate that personal factors also have a bearing on stress. Chaplain's (2008) study of new teachers in England suggests that female teachers record higher levels of stress compared to men – the finding has been echoed by other research (Antoniou, Polychroni & Vlachakis, 2006). Other researchers have pointed to certain personality traits

or behaviours as predictors of stress. Demetriou and Wilson (2012), for example, identify that teacher trainees who strive for perfection are more prone to frustration and dissatisfaction in a demanding school environment than peers. Complementary findings from other studies suggest that 'type A' personalities, which are associated with traits such as irritability, hostility, and competitiveness, are linked to increased stress levels (Jepson & Forrest, 2006; Mo, 1991).

In addition to considering individuals' behavioural traits, a teacher's age or years of teaching experience also may affect the extent to which they feel stressed by particular aspects of their work. For example, new teachers are more likely to find pupil behaviour stressful compared to more experienced peers (Day, Stobart, et al., 2006). Additionally, Day, Stobart et al (2006) found that teachers who had caring responsibilities outside of the work place also had a propensity towards elevated stress as some such teachers could struggle with the demands of work and home life. The study also indicated that those in the later stages of their careers could take longer to recover from stress compared to younger colleagues.

2.4.3. Workload stress

While certain personal traits may link to the onset of stress, research shows that there are several likely sources of stress on a school-level – most of which leaders can work to moderate. Of these common stressors, evidence suggests that workload and pupil behaviour are the two factors which explain the most variance for stress (Boyle, Borg, Falzon & Baglioni, 1995). Similarly, Harmsen, Helms-Lorenz, Maulana, van Veen and van Veldhoven (2018a), working in a Dutch context, found that aspects relating to poor relationships with pupils and heavy or complex workloads were stressful for beginning teachers. Other studies such as TALIS 2018 and Klassen et al (2013) which have researched teacher stress across multiple contexts have chosen only to measure stress from pupil behaviour and workload, thus implying that these are core stressors for teaching professionals.

With these considerations in mind, the first stressor to consider is 'workload'. When teachers' workload expands into the personal domain of their lives, it can be experienced as stressful. Expanding workloads can be characterised by long hours, some of which are completed outside of the workplace or contracted working hours. The TWS 2019 reports

that sampled full-time classroom teachers and middle leaders fulfilled 13 hours of work during weekends, evenings or out of school hours (Walker, Worth & Van den Brande, 2019). Overall, this accounted for 25% of their total weekly work which is indicative of 'expansive' workloads (Walker et al., 2019; Valli & Buese, 2007). In addition, qualitative studies indicate that teachers' workloads breach a psychological boundary as they extend into an emotional and mental space. As Nias (1996) posits, this breach occurs because teachers' work involves an emotional investment from the practitioner. This investment is tied to the concept of teaching as a job which fulfils an important social purpose. As they wish to maintain their identity as a good and thus ethical teacher, practitioners may experience feelings of guilt or frustration at their inability to complete their workloads within formal working hours. This frustration may lead to teachers taking home work in order to keep pace with the extensive demands of their job. In this way teachers' work infringes upon the boundaries of their home, and it may link with feelings of stress if they feel that they cannot manage these expanding workloads (Jeffrey & Woods, 1996; Perryman, 2007; Woods & Jeffrey, 2002).

Teachers may also experience workload stress when their value system is ill-aligned with their framing contexts. For teachers this may manifest as a feeling of distress or despair as they are moved away from the 'real work' of teaching pupils to spend more time on accountability-motivated tasks (Gewirtz, 2002, p.75). Furthermore, the competitive nature of the post-welfarist context positions pupils as products with a value: they can be winners or losers, and they can support or undermine a school's results. As Gewirtz (2002) outlines, pupils who do not excel academically might be side-lined and marginalised. This side-lining has led to a set of unethical behaviours whereby schools have strategically allocated resources to pupils whom they believe can achieve results that will 'count' towards the school's performance metrics (de Wolf & Janssens, 2007; Perryman, Maguire, Ball & Braun, 2018). In other cases, schools deregister pupils who are likely to impair a school's performance in comparative tables. This practice, known as 'off-rolling', is acknowledged as an unintended consequence of a high-stakes accountability system (Rowe et al., 2019). These practices may generate stress for teachers who feel morally compromised by their participation or complicity in such behaviours as they feel compelled to prioritise the reputation of the school over that which is potentially the best action for the pupil.

In other cases, teachers may articulate a value clash that is ideological as well as ethical. In educational psychology, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011, p. 779) discuss 'value dissonance/consonance' as a subscale of teacher stress. They define 'value dissonance/ consonance' as: 'the degree to which teachers feel they share the prevailing norms and values at the school where they are teaching'. While Skaalvik and Skaalvik's work focuses on value clash on a school-level, other research has indicated that teachers can feel dissonant with national discourses. Gewirtz (2002) makes the distinction between 'comprehensive values' (which abounded in education policy in the welfarist era), and the 'market values' of contemporary England. She associates the former with a persuasion towards a 'caring ethos', inclusivity, and the accommodation of students' needs; she suggests that comprehensive values are dissonant with a market context which privileges student performance, competition, exclusion, and an academic ethos (Gewirtz, 2002, p. 54). Ball (2008) argues that the rupture to the welfarist policy context had profound consequences for the identities of teaching professionals – some of whom struggled to adjust to a new political landscape that prioritised market values over previous ideals which were ostensibly 'child-centred'. That said, recent research has suggested that teachers who have been educated under market-based systems and who now also teach within this context are able to align accountability-motivated workloads with ideas of professionalism (Wilkins, 2011). Specifically, Wilkins (2011, pp. 400–401) speaks of a potential 'generational divide' whereby new teachers, unlike older colleagues, accept evidencing and accountability as 'a necessary evil', which could be useful in supporting the improvement of their practice.

Other research has viewed the evolution of teacher professionalism as a product of context. For example, Seddon (1997) recognises professionalism as a specific socio-cultural construct arising within the welfarist settlement. She suggests that although policy rupture has disturbed teachers' previous professional identities, they can exercise agency in order to become reprofessionalised, as opposed to deprofessionalised. Those with enterprising minds may be able to excel in this new environment which increasingly privileges data-management skills alongside qualities such as flexibility. At present it is not known as to whether or not private school teachers' work has been impacted in the same way as that of state school teachers by the rupture of the welfarist settlement and subsequent rise in neoliberal practices and behaviours. The study aims in part to address this unchartered area of research.

2.4.4. Pupil behaviour

Pupil behaviour alongside workload has been consistently shown to be a significant stressor for teachers (Boyle et al., 1995; Harmsen, Helms-Lorenz, Maulana, & van Veen, 2018a; Klassen et al., 2013). Stress from pupil behaviour may be particularly acute for those working in low socio-economic status (SES) environments (Pierce & Molloy, 1990; Pratt, 1978). Results from TALIS 2013 support this suggestion as they show that private school teachers – who typically work with pupils from high SES backgrounds (Green, Anders, et al., 2017) – have better perceptions of pupil behaviour compared to their state counterparts (Micklewright et al., 2014). Although the TALIS 2013 analysts warn about the small sample size of private school teachers, other studies afford further support to the finding. For example, a report compiled for the Sutton Trust (a charity that researches educational disadvantage) indicates that teachers leaving roles in the private sector are less likely than state school teachers to cite poor pupil behaviour as the main reason for their departure (Allen & McIntyre, 2019). While 7% of primary and 17% of secondary teachers in state schools serving the most disadvantaged pupils identified behaviour as a main reason to leave, 0% of primary and 7% of secondary private school teachers made the same claim (*ibid*).

The relationship between pupil behaviour and stress is not unidirectional. High levels of stress, stemming from various sources such as personal factors or workload, can lead to teachers reacting negatively to children and colleagues – thus creating a cycle of poor relationships which are stress inducing (Buettner et al., 2016; von der Embse et al., 2016). Richards, Hemphill, and Templin (2018) made the convergent finding that school environments which encourage collaborative and nurturing interactions between staff and pupils were linked to lower levels of teacher stress.

Alongside colleagues and pupils, parents are a core component of education. The role of parents may be a particularly important consideration for fee-charging schools which rely on parents for their income. Indeed, news reports concerning the private sector have characterised 'pushy parents' as stressful for school leaders and classroom teachers alike (Teacher, 2015; Ward, 2014). These reports suggest that some fee-paying parents hold unrealistic expectations of the kind of result or university place that their child will obtain, and they may place undue pressure on teachers' time believing that they are entitled to a specific form or level of communication. As demonstrated in *Chapter 1* (section 1.3.1), the

perceived emergence of such parents can be linked to wider economic trends. In fact, both Rae (1981) and Peel (2015) postulate that a new kind of consumer-parent arose in tandem with the national policy shift towards market values and consumer choice. Such parents may take an instrumental view of education and expect that by purchasing private schooling they are securing a certain set of outcomes for their child. Furthermore, as suggested in teacher union ATL (2014b) documentation, the idea of education as a consumable product may lead to increased pressures from private school parents who may demand comprehensive customer service from teachers. Whilst at present evidence is limited, it could be the case that private school teachers experience stress resulting from these parental expectations.

2.4.5. Colleagues and professional recognition needs

Convivial environments are conducive to supporting teachers to manage stress and enjoy their work. Mujtaba and Reiss (2013) found that teachers linked stress to feeling distrusted, lacking in autonomy, unsupported by leaders and colleagues, or under the guidance of poor leadership. Unsurprisingly, they found that the opposite conditions helped to enable the positive psychological experience of 'eustress' – a term which encapsulates the positive potential of a mild or moderate form of stress which can motivate individuals and support optimal performance (Lazarus, 1974; Mujtaba & Reiss, 2013). School leadership can influence the policies and practices which create the conditions for eustress. Specifically, teachers may thrive under conditions where leaders facilitate opportunities for them to reflect on their work, exercise autonomy, feel trusted, and supported (Mujtaba & Reiss, 2013). Supportive conditions and positive perceptions of school leadership have been linked to strengthened job commitment and improved teacher effectiveness (Buettner et al., 2016; Day, Stobart, et al., 2006).

Alongside strengthening commitment, supportive school environments can aid teachers to build self-efficacy which protects against the damaging effects of workload and stress from pupil behaviour (Fox, Wilson & Deaney, 2010; Klassen, 2010). In fact, collegial support plays a vital role in supporting teachers to maintain healthy levels of stress at all stages in their career (Day, Stobart, et al., 2006). For example, Chaplain (1995, 2008) found that new teachers who did not feel supported at work, felt unable to manage stress from pupil behaviour and workload, which placed them at increased risk of leaving the profession

prematurely. Similarly, Day, Stobart et al (2006) found that teachers at all stages in their careers, including those nearing retirement, benefitted from strong collegial support.

Other research has emphasised the role of leadership in mediating otherwise stressful conditions. Johnson, Kraft and Papay (2007) found that teachers in disadvantaged schools do not leave their posts because of pupil behaviour *per se*; rather they leave because of perceptions of poor management and low levels of support. This finding is important because supportive leadership has been linked to reduced teacher turnover and faster rates of teacher improvement (Kraft, Marinell, & Shen-Wei Yee, 2016; Kraft & Papay, 2014).

2.4.6. Accountability and stress

Working environments are informed by their macro-contexts. In a high-stakes accountability environment, teachers' workloads are informed by national and school-level policies (CooperGibson, 2018a; Higton, Leonardi, Richards, et al., 2017). Schools may implement policies that add to low quality workloads because they consider that they are preparing for inspection. When inspection arrives, it is intensely stressful for teachers and school leaders. Brimblecombe, Ormston, and Shaw (1995) report that their sampled teachers found all stages of an inspection process stressful. They found that the preparation of lesson plans (no longer required) and paperwork added to teachers' workload 'often for months in advance of inspection week' (*ibid*, p.56). Although the subsequent introduction of reduced notice periods for inspections may have reshaped the way in which teachers prepare for Ofsted, teachers in Brimblecombe et al's (1995, p. 54) study regarded inspection to be a 'harrowing' and 'traumatic' experience. Intense emotional reactions are a recurring theme across Ofsted literature. For example, Jeffrey and Woods (1996) report that teachers in their study experienced emotions akin to grief after an unsatisfactory inspection. Perryman (2007, p. 173) similarly found that teachers in a school that had been deemed to be failing felt 'a loss of power and control' as they struggled in the aftermath of their damning Ofsted report. Teachers' responses may have been so extreme because they had come to internalise the criteria and value system that defined them as adequate or inadequate practitioners.

In terms of private schools, the extent to which national accountability mechanisms (such as the schools' inspectorate) add to job pressures is unknown, although anecdotal

evidence indicates that an ISI inspection is not perceived with the same fear as an Ofsted inspection (Floyd, 2016). Perceptions of ISI as low-stakes could be attributable to core differences in the inspection process when compared to Ofsted. As explained in *Chapter 1* (section 1.4.5), ISI does not publish overarching judgements on schools. Furthermore, its inspection teams are comprised of current school leaders who may be in the same network as the inspected school's headteacher. It is possible that the peer-review element of inspection reduces the perceived threat from an unfamiliar external inspector. Finally, the broad interpretation of student success which is used in the ISI (2017a) handbook for inspection could indicate a less intensive focus on pupil performance measures and metrics compared to Ofsted. The broader definition could offer a wider range of criteria against which schools can excel.

2.4.7. Measuring stress from accountability

Although the link between accountability and negative affective responses such as stress is well-evidenced in qualitative works, it seems that England lacks a stress measurement instrument which considers a specific 'accountability' dimension. Studies in the similarly high-stakes USA context indicate that accountability stress is an important area to consider. Ryan et al (2017) show that mechanisms such as performance related pay are not only stressful, but that they are linked to teacher turnover. This finding is supported by other research based on USA data. In an analysis of 'Schools and Staffing Surveys and Teacher Follow-Up Surveys' from 1993–2009, Sun, Saultz, and Ye (2017) identify a weak link between the introduction of the national 'No Child Left Behind' accountability policy, and teacher turnover. Although the finding cannot indicate causality, it helps to quantify the potential relationship between federal policy and teachers' responses.

Other works also suggest a link between national level accountability practices and teacher manifestations of stress. One USA based study found that during standardised testing periods which were linked to the sampled teachers' pay, participants were more prone to the symptoms of anxiety such as perspiration, and the feeling of a pounding heart (von der Embse et al., 2016). Furthermore, findings from this study indicated that stressed teachers were more likely to use 'fear appeals' (messages which emphasise the negative consequences of certain behaviours) with students, and adopt limited pedagogies which aimed to 'teach to the test'. Therefore, the study points to the potential impact of hard-accountability systems on pupil-teacher relationships (von der Embse et al., 2016).

2.5. Accountability

2.5.1. Definition

This study makes a distinction between national and school-level accountability systems. Teacher/school-level monitoring is used as an interchangeable term with 'school-level accountability'. Ofsted inspections, progress and attainment metrics/measures, and the 'Find and Compare Schools' website are the primary mechanisms of national level accountability systems. School-level systems mirror their national progenitors by engaging in a series of monitoring techniques with which managers surveil teachers or evaluate their competence. Before describing such techniques in detail, I define the concept of accountability.

'Accountability' has multi-dimensional meanings. It often refers simultaneously to an individual or organisation's obligation to be answerable to another, and to the systems through which this obligation is fulfilled (Biesta, 2004; Levitt, Janta & Wegrich, 2008). To put this more explicitly, the term refers to the process of documenting performance, and to the ethical and moral concept that teachers have responsibilities which they are obliged to fulfil. Throughout this thesis, accountability is understood as a technical and managerial process which is legitimised on these ethical and moral grounds (Bovens, 2005; Gilbert, 2011). It is comprised of methods and mechanisms through which the actor is required to evidence her performance against standards, or expectations, so that the stakeholder can judge the extent to which these criteria have been met (Levitt et al., 2008).

Following Levitt et al. (2008), the accountability process has four stages:

1. Identification of agent and subject
2. Defining who is accountable for what
3. Gathering evidence and judging the extent to which the subject has met criteria
4. Rewards or sanctions

Each of these stages is shaped by a wider socio-political discourse which reverberates through and within layers of context to affect practices at a national, school, and individual teacher level. The justification for who should be accountable for what, to who, how, and why, arises from the various levels of the education ecology. For the purposes of this

study, I am interested in intra-school top-down hierarchical forms of accountability whereby managers monitor aspects of teachers' practice. My particular interest lies at stage 3 of the school-level accountability processes; this stage describes the data gathering techniques used by managers to deliver judgements on teachers' performance which are used as the justification for rewarding or sanctioning the practitioner (stage 4).

2.5.2. Why do schools monitor teachers?

In a mirroring of national inspection systems, managers hold state school teachers to account for the extent to which they produce effective outcomes (e.g. pupil results) and for the extent to which they comply with school policies. As discussed in section 2.3.3, techniques loaned from the methods of NPM are used to 'audit' teachers' performance and compliance in the expectation that regular scrutiny will prompt exemplary practice. Brown, Seddon, Angus and Rushbrook (1996, p. 325), researching in the Australian context, found that a rise in management roles and associated NPM techniques led to a 'cultural divide between school management and chalk face teachers'. Classroom teachers' disenchantment with managerialism is understandable when it is considered that many of the policies with which they are expected to comply are not substantiated with evidence that they make a positive difference to children's learning (Allen & Sims, 2018). Nevertheless, some school leaders persist in holding teachers to account for the extent to which they comply with these unhelpful policies; they may do this for two reasons:

Firstly, SLTs argue they are collating evidence for a future Ofsted inspection, believing that inspectors require evidence of scrutiny or the implementation of a particular marking or planning policy (Gibson et al., 2015; Higton, Leornardi, Richards, et al., 2017). In 2018, the DfE and Ofsted tried to counter these beliefs by launching an 'Ofsted myths' campaign, and a handbook which extensively outlined what Ofsted does **not** require (Ofsted, 2018). The core message being that Ofsted did not expect to see school data displayed in any particular format. Secondly, schools may persist with unhelpful practices because they are afraid to abandon established policies. Allen and Sims (2018) argue that schools often imitate the policies and practices of other schools that are perceived to be more successful. This imitation may include adopting inefficient ways of working. Such practices have become embedded across the state sector because schools which are judged to be successful by Ofsted may be reluctant to drop practices that do not seem to cause harm,

and other schools may hold onto these behaviours believing that they contribute to school success (Allen & Sims, 2018).

2.5.3. Performativity

Teachers within schools are judged according to the extent to which they evidence their effectiveness. The implicit requirement for teachers to evidence their performance has led to a series of data-related tasks ostensibly aimed at fulfilling this 'performative' purpose. Ball (2003) builds on Lyotard's (1984) work to develop the concept of performativity in education. Performativity is a system and a culture that operates through the creation of fear (Ball, 2000). In later work, Ball (2003) defines performativity as:

> *'A system of judgements, comparisons, and displays as a means of incentive, control, attrition and change – based on rewards and sanctions (both material and symbolic).'*

> *(Ball, 2003, p. 216)*

Under a performative system, teachers' efforts are compared to others through displays of data, teacher rankings, or labels of judgement on their work. They are judged against the 'progress' that pupils make and according to their own efficiency as a practitioner. Managers collect evidence of the teachers' performance through a range of technologies, which can involve inspection of classroom practice. Additionally, teachers are required to supply evidence of their performance through various methods including: providing examples of pupils' work, extensively marking exercise books with extended written comments, creating colourful classroom displays, or even photo and video images of exciting lessons and pupil engagement (Page, 2017a). Therefore, performativity can be understood as a process and a culture that is enacted by school managers, but also by teachers onto themselves as they become complicit in these systems (Ball, 2000).

Through the routine enactment of performativity, evidencing becomes a legitimate and normalised task in itself. For example, Hardy and Lewis (2017) found examples of managers encouraging teachers to create 'data stories' to evidence the success of their classes as a proxy for teacher effectiveness. These 'stories' became the means via which teacher success was judged, and so the performative system can be seen to uproot

'authenticity' in favour of 'plasticity' (Ball, 2003, p. 225). This claim means that the skilled performer or public-relations expert can flourish in a performative system which favours a carefully constructed portfolio of competence over the enactment competence itself i.e. time is spent constructing or documenting the story of excellence rather than focusing on first-order teaching related activities.

Teachers may even fabricate evidence in order to support their construction of a public image of efficiency. Specifically, data manipulation or invention present as options to classroom teachers looking to 'cheat' the system and evade the sanctions associated with being found lacking by managers (Ball, 2003). They might feel compelled to fabricate data because as Ball (2000, p. 1) explains, the judgements delivered on teachers and schools come to represent 'the worth, quality or value' of the individual or organisation. Herein lies the insidious force of performativity: its threat to define and expose the individual or organisation as worthless. Despite this recognition, performing in line with performativity is a double-edged sword as demonstrated by Woods and Jeffrey (2002). In this work, primary school teacher interviewees explained that they felt ashamed at failing against performative criteria, but also shame at their compliance with such systems – and so, it becomes possible to understand the way in which performative systems might generate a moral conflict for teachers who wish to identify as competent practitioners, but whom disagree with the methods through which they must cultivate and evidence this identity.

2.5.4. Technologies of performativity

In the contemporary school, teacher performance is surveilled and monitored through a dazzling array of technologies. Monitoring technologies are practices that are conducted within the school. They have the purpose of gathering data on various aspects of teachers' practice including: compliance with school policy, pedagogical approach, planning, marking, and behaviour management skills. Page (2017b) makes a distinction between 'vertical' monitoring practices, which are those perpetuated by Ofsted and school leaders, and 'horizontal' practices which are effected by peers or parents. More recently, schools have also embraced what can be termed 'bottom up' vertical reporting whereby pupils record and report on teacher performance (Page, 2017b). Whilst it is fully accepted that these practices can fulfil a useful professional development purpose when executed well, the blurred lines between 'monitoring', 'appraisal', and 'CPD' mean that it is not possible to disentangle the technology from its intended purpose or from the teachers' understanding

of these mechanisms (Page, 2015). Therefore, monitoring practices are best understood as a symptom of a broader surveillance society. For the purposes of this study, 'teacher monitoring practices/technologies' are defined as those that are conducted within the school space by managers, and involve the collection of data (empirical or otherwise) on any aspect of a teacher's classroom practice.

A range of nomenclature is used to describe these monitoring practices. I have grouped these together according to activity types in table 2.1 (see below). The included items are all examples of 'vertical' (hierarchical) school-level teacher monitoring which can be conducted by school managers. Items were sourced from academic literature, online teaching blogs, and in-person and online professional conversations. There are some monitoring activities which are not included in the table simply because these fall outside of the remit of this study. For example, I do not explore pupil or parent reviews of teacher performance, inter-school inspections, mock-inspections conducted by external agencies, or self-surveillance practices such as self-evaluation forms, or critiquing recordings of one's own teaching practice (Page, 2018).

Due to the speed at which new policies are developed and implemented, table 2.1 does not claim to be extensive. Although the current list is general, there may also be some activities that are specific to state or private schools. My preferred terms are highlighted in bold; these are the terms that I use most frequently throughout the thesis, although other phrases should be treated as synonyms unless otherwise specified.

Table 2.1: School-level monitoring practices and their characteristics

Activity type	Nomenclature	Typical characteristics
Observations	- Appraisal observations - Formal observations - Informal observations **Lesson observations** - Peer-observations - Performance management observations	- All/most of lesson observed - Observation is pre-arranged - Findings may be used to inform teachers' appraisal
Brief observation of lessons	**Learning walks** - Climate walks - Walk throughs - Snap-shot observations - Drop-ins / pop-ins - Informal observations	- Part of the lesson is observed (usually ~15 mins) - Observations may be unannounced
Inspection of teachers' marking	**Book inspection** - Book looks - Book trail - Book scrutiny - Marking audit - Marking inspection - Marking marketplace - Marking moderation - Show and tell - Work sampling - Work scrutiny	- Pupils' exercise books inspected by peers, middle leaders, or SLT - Prior warning may or may not be given - Teachers may or may not able to select which books to present
Inspection of age phase/ year group/ faculty/ subject area/ school policy area (e.g. behaviour/ asking questions)	**Age phase/ year group etc. audit** - Age phase/year group etc. review - Deep dive - Floodlight (focus on a broad area) - Spotlight (focus on a narrow area)	- Reviews may take place over multiple days - Process can entail data scrutiny, observations, learning walks, book inspections etc.
Regulation of lesson content	**Lesson or teaching plan/ scheme of work submission**	- Teachers required to submit teaching plans to managers - May be required daily, or less frequently

Learning walks are now the preferred method via which some school leaders gather data on aspects of teachers' practice (Page, 2015). Their popularity may be due to the methodology resembling the Ofsted process in that the snap-shot unannounced

observation simulates the high-stakes procedures of external inspectors (Page, 2016). While such observations are usually conducted by school managers, in a move towards the normalisation of surveillance across all levels of the school hierarchy, they may now also be conducted by pupils, teaching assistants, or other teaching colleagues (Page, 2015).

Alongside learning walks, managers may also conduct book inspections and age phase/ departmental audits without notice. Courtney (2016) notes that surprise inspections are intended to 'disrupt' schools that aim to produce carefully choreographed performances for Ofsted. Similarly, Page (2015) reported that some school leaders may prefer surprise methods as a way to access teachers' authentic performance and disable their ability to prepare for intra-school inspection.

While the term 'deep dive' is included in table 2.1, this phrase only came into use after the data collection ad analysis for this thesis were completed. The phrase finds its origin in the Ofsted (2019a) framework for inspection which was released during the course of this research. Under the new framework, Ofsted's (2019b) school inspection handbook advises that it undertakes 'deep dives' into subject areas through a detailed exploration of curriculum, teaching resources, and practices. School leaders, in preparation or imitation of Ofsted, now conduct 'deep dives' on an intra-school-level.

Just as there are various levels at which monitoring can be conducted, it can be implemented through different methods of control. As discussed in *Chapter 1* (section 1.6), schools might implement hard forms of disciplinary control alongside softer pastoral methods (Perryman et al., 2017). For example, data collected through monitoring may assume a disciplinary purpose when they are used to justify judgements on teachers' performance. In turn, judgements can be linked to material outcomes including performance-related pay schemes, or symbolic actions such as placing a teacher on a support plan. Alternatively, schools may predicate monitoring activities as 'learning opportunities' which invite the teacher to engage in self-reflection and development; in this way monitoring can invite the gaze to turn inwards as the teacher comes to subjectify the self (Perryman et al., 2017). In this way, the external judgement starts to form a component of the teacher's identity as a 'good' or 'bad' practitioner and she may begin to self-regulate in order to maintain her identification as 'good'.

2.5.5. (Post-)panoptic performativity

Collectively, the monitoring techniques displayed in table 2.1 form one aspect of what Perryman (2006) terms 'panoptic performativity'. As implied by the name, the teacher within a panoptic performative system perceives that she is always being watched. In Bentham's (1791) description of the perfect panopticon prison, he described a facility spanning out in a circular shape around the central point of a watch tower. Crucially, while the guard in the tower remained unobserved, s/he could view all prisoners at any time. The system would encourage self-regulation because inmates would not know at which point they were under observation and so for fear of reprisal, they would come to conduct themselves in an exemplary manner at all times. Foucault (1977) applied the image of the panopticon as a metaphor to describe contemporary surveillance systems which operate through the fear of being caught deviating from best practice.

For school leaders and teachers alike, the fear of inspection is omnipresent (Troman, 1997). Even if a school is not undergoing inspection, the threat of an impending or imagined future inspection is sufficient to ensure that teachers are always behaving as though an inspection is actual or imminent (Perryman, 2009). Therefore, state schools become continuously 'inspection ready' and their daily operations come to be characterised by concerns about 'what Ofsted wants' (Perryman et al., 2018). In an effort to prepare for Ofsted, as outlined in table 2.1, school leaders might subject teachers to activities that mirror Ofsted's behaviours.

The panoptic regime aims to maintain hegemony through normalising behaviours and practices. Normalisation is encouraged through a range of mechanisms including hierarchical supervision, teacher monitoring, measurement, and practitioner self-policing (Courtney, 2016). Indeed, as previous researchers have observed, monitoring methods such as 'learning walks' or marking policies stipulating 'deep marking' have become ubiquitous in the state sector through this process of normalisation (Allen & Sims, 2018; Page, 2018; Teacher Workload Review Group, 2016). As these practices and surveillance itself have become accepted, schools and teachers engage in these behaviours in an effort to negotiate identities as 'good' or 'outstanding' institutes or educators – thus contributing to the normalising cycle that allow hegemony to pertain. To date, it is not known if private school policies and practices are geared towards preparing for the

perceived demands of inspectors in this way, although as suggested in section 2.4.6, lower stakes inspection processes may mean that this is not necessarily the case.

Education theorists suggest that surveillance in the public sector has moved beyond panoptic performativity and into post-panopticism (Courtney, 2016; Page, 2017a; Perryman, 2006). According to Page (2017a), a post-panoptic system is characterised by its predictive nature. Actors in this system do not seek to perform temporarily for an inspectorate or upcoming external imposition, but conversely conduct mock-inspections or monitor teachers with the purpose of predicting the outcomes of future inspection. Prediction is achieved through simulation, and so schools enter a hyper-real performance stage whereby they are continually simulating the conditions of an inspection in an endeavour to remain one step ahead of the inspection game (Page, 2017a; Perryman et al., 2018). The shift from performance to simulation marks the 'elimination of the panopticon itself' as its subjects move into a new space of complete auto-regulation (Bogard, 1996, p. 66). A central watch tower residing over the panopticon is no longer necessary as control disperses through the channels of the social structure and it comes to characterise the operations of the school, interactions between actors, and even the identity of individual teachers. Dispersed and discursive control is more effective in maintaining discipline compared to centrally concentrated power because it cannot be held or overthrown.

Alongside predictive intent and simulation, Courtney (2016) sets out six principles which define a post-panoptic system. He specifies these as: total visibility to all, fuzzy norms, intent to expose failure, disruption of fabrication, dependency on external experts to detail success criteria, and the devaluation of the efforts of disadvantaged schools. Courtney (2016) explains that post-panopticism renders the teacher 'visible to all' through the normalisation of observation. New modes of surprise surveillance have become the favoured accountability mechanisms for state school leaders, thus exposing teachers to the possibility of being observed at any moment and at any time, and by anyone who happens to be passing the classroom (Page, 2015). Thus, casual or unannounced observation have become a part of everyday school life. Legitimacy is obtained on the premise that the good teacher will have nothing to hide and so will not obstruct these casual forms of surveillance (Perryman et al., 2017).

The second principle defined by Courtney (2016) is that of 'fuzzy norms', by which he means that observation criteria are founded on uncertainty with ever-shifting conditions and goal posts (Courtney, 2016; Perryman et al., 2018). As the literature review has alluded, advice from Ofsted and the DfE concerning school inspections focuses (arguably unhelpfully) on what is *not* required – leaving ample space for uncertainty and ambiguity about what *is* expected. This uncertainty is filtered down to a classroom level leaving the teacher to experience doubt over the evidence she should collate for an observation, or the practices an observer (internal or external) expects to see. The teachers who contributed to a study by Page (2015) spoke of ambiguity; specifically, they struggled to explain the link between learning walks and systems of performance management or formal appraisal. Lack of clarity about the purpose of these monitoring practices left participants unsure as to how the data collated from the learning walks were used.

A perceived advantage of cultivating uncertainty is that it curtails teachers' ability to prepare for inspections. Courtney (2016, p. 624) argues that Ofsted (like intra-school monitoring procedures) create 'fuzziness' or uncertainty because it aims to 'wrong-foot school leaders' and 'disrupt the fabrications that they have constructed'. Under such an interpretation, inspectors aim to outwit school leaders and teachers who have carefully prepared for inspections. They aim to unearth the 'truth' of their inadequate practice, and shame their failures publicly through summative judgements and comparative reports (Courtney, 2016). Crucially, the post-panoptic system prevents teachers from successfully performing the role of the 'good' practitioner, because the criteria upon which it is predicated is purposefully unstable (Page, 2017b).

Although ISI reserve the right to conduct 'no notice' inspections at the bequest of the DfE, the frequency with which this right is exercised is unknown. The ISI (2017a, p. 3) handbook advises that private schools receive 'no more than two days' notice of an inspection. With this in mind, it could be the case that private school leaders also favour monitoring strategies that mimic the inspectorate's 'short notice' policy. Currently, there is no research into this area; as such, this is one of the gaps in literature which the current study aims to address.

For state schools, the criteria for inspection is determined by outside agents. Performance metrics and inspection criteria are under continual re-evaluation as government attempts to stifle schools' efforts to 'game' the system (de Wolf & Janssens, 2007). For example,

schools' enrolment records are now inspected to identify those engaging in the conspicuous practice of 'off-rolling' (Rowe et al., 2019). Furthermore, academic review suggests that the performance measures introduced in 2016 (namely Progress 8) devalue the efforts of schools working with disadvantaged populations because they do not adequately factor in pupils' Socio Economic Status (SES) when predicting pupils' 'expected progress' (Leckie & Goldstein, 2018).

2.5.6. Performativity and stress

Fuzzy norms and indefinite school-level monitoring processes could have the effect of normalising teacher stress. Perryman (2009) finds that the requirement to be perpetually inspection-ready induces anxiety in teachers. Similarly, Skerrit (2019, p. 582) argues that normalised teacher monitoring activities such as lesson observations and inspections of book marking led to 'a strong sense of fear and anxiety' for teachers who felt that mangers conducted these activities in an unsupportive manner. Further evidence from qualitative works demonstrates the effect of performative systems on teachers' identity. As indicated throughout the present chapter, teachers who find their value systems or sense of professional identity challenged by the demands of performativity can experience a range of unpleasant responses including despair, guilt, shame and in the most extreme cases – identity dissonance (Ball, 2003; Jeffrey & Woods, 1996; Woods & Jeffrey, 2002). These consequences arise because the judgements exacted in performative systems reduce the teacher's sense of self-worth. When success and failure criteria become internalised, the stakes of success or failure are high. Poor observations, or Ofsted reports devastate practitioners because they have failed against criteria that they themselves have come to value – against values that have come to define their personal and professional worth (Jeffrey & Woods, 1996).

Performativity, panopticism, and post-panopticism in private schools

In terms of private schools, the extent to which performative or post-panoptic conditions are in operation is unclear. This lack of clarity is due to a scarcity of research into the area. However, the private and state education sectors both operate within the same neoliberal national framework. With this in mind, and given that the private sector operates as a free market as opposed to a quasi-market, the sector can be expected to adhere to market logics. When this consideration is matched with research from other contexts, it can be conjectured that teachers are likely to 'perform' in line with a set of expectations defined by

consumer demand. By way of example, Meadmore and Meadmore's (2004) research into Australian elite education finds that schools gain a market edge by providing an education for 'the whole' child and offering a 'family' environment for pupils. These aims alongside the promotion of other qualities and skills such as self-esteem and leadership abilities could add a qualitative dimension to the sector's success criteria. Indeed, the ISI (2017a) handbook for inspection indicates that inspectors take into account extra-curricular provision, and pupils' development of social skills and qualities, as well as academic outcomes when evaluating school quality.

As the private sector is independent from government, it is not accountable for value for public money – a concept that justifies high-stakes monitoring of state schools and teachers (Power, 1999). However, the degree to which private school leaders focus on appeasing ISI could depend on the extent to which they perceive its judgements affect their market position – and whether or not its reports are likely to affect the school's ability to recruit and retain pupils and teachers in the future. To date, I believe that there is no research which explicitly investigates private school teachers' perceptions of inspectorate bodies in England. Nor is there research which examines the methods through which private school teachers' performance is monitored on a school-level – in part, the current study aims to address this gap in understanding.

2.6. Conceptual framework

Through the process of reviewing literature in the field, I built a framework which conceptualises the manner in which national political, economic, social, and historical context could relate to teachers' experiences of workload, stress, and teacher monitoring. The depicted framework is consistent with the literature and conceptual links outlined throughout the chapter. Specifically, it is formulated on the assumption that macro-contexts affect teachers' experience of their work, and that:

- School policy and practices are devised in relation to macro-level demands (Perryman et al., 2017, 2018)
- School policies and practices are important to teachers' experiences of their work (Ball, 2003; Page, 2015)
- Workload is linked to teacher stress (Boyle et al., 1995; Chaplain, 2008; Day, Stobart, et al., 2006)
- School-level accountability requirements contribute to workload (Higton, Leonardi, Richards et al., 2017; Micklewright et al., 2014)

- High-stakes accountability and associated performative systems contribute to teacher stress (Jeffrey & Woods, 1996; Perryman, 2009; von der Embse et al., 2016)

The framework draws on ecology theory which posits that the social world is a 'nested structure' like 'Russian dolls' (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p.3). It perceives that human experience is enmeshed within contexts. As *Chapter 3: Methodology* explains in more detail, the 'innermost' setting in this case is the teacher, and this is the level at which data are collected.
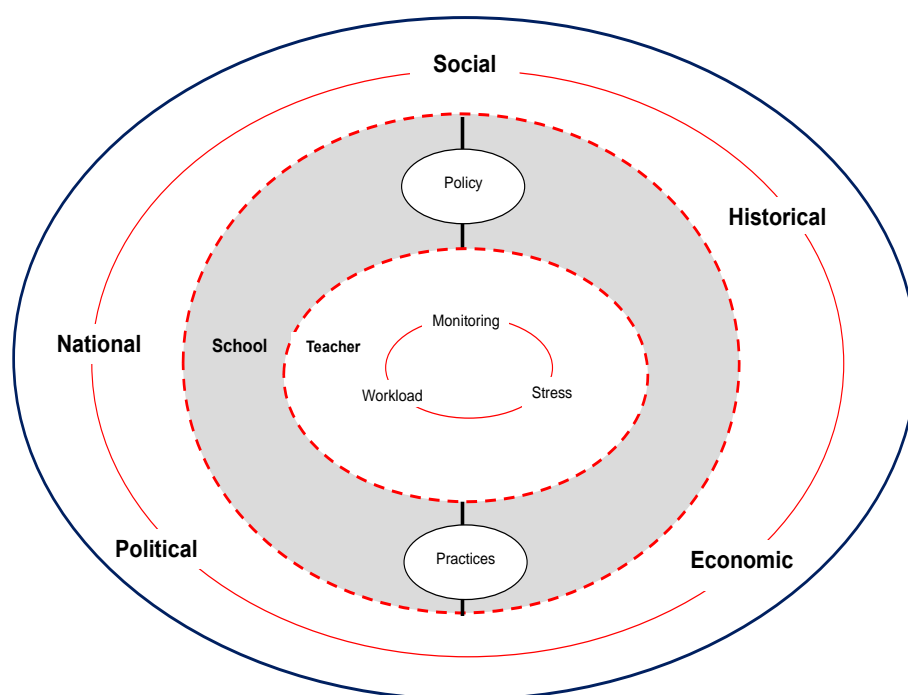
Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework (figure 2.1) embeds teachers' experiences within their macro-contexts. To use Gramsci's (1988) terminology, the outer ring of macro-context can be understood as the 'historical bloc'. This phrase refers to the national social, cultural, historical, political, and economic factors accepted as facts and which form the basis of societal consensus. Although Gramsci refers to the bloc as 'concrete' (*cited in* Forgacs, 1988, p. 195), hegemonic discourses are neither stable nor static because they can only pertain through ongoing processes of normalisation (Hall & O'Shea, 2015). Therefore, the components of the bloc are joined together by an unbroken red line to suggest the interaction between them.

As each layer of the ecology interacts with the other layers, I have depicted the boundaries of the national, school, and teacher levels with a dashed red line, which is intended to

depict permeability. These interactions are multidirectional, as teachers may influence national policy just as national policy may shape teachers' experiences of their work. The teacher (or micro level) is at the centre of the diagram, but it is connected to the school-level by 'policy' and 'practices'. The intention here is to depict the conceptualisation that school-level policies and practices are defined in response to their macro-contexts, and that the school-level manifestations of these contexts shape teachers' experiences of their work. Within the teacher level, the three core variables of interest (workload, stress, and monitoring) are joined by a single red line. The line suggests that teachers' perceptions of workload, monitoring and stress may be interlinked with each other as has been suggested by a review of the relevant literature.

2.7. Conclusion

The chapter has defined teacher workload, stress, and school-level monitoring processes. Workload has been defined as a quantitative and qualitative construct: the measurable number of hours worked, the types of tasks undertaken, and perceptions of workload all form facets of this construct. Stressors have been defined as work-based factors which contribute to teachers' experiences of negative or unpleasant emotions. Pupil behaviour, collegial support, workload, and accountability have all been identified as factors of stress by research from the UK, Australia, and USA. While there is limited research from the private sector, there are some indications that teachers may be less stressed despite working the same number or more hours than state school peers. However, it could also be the case that stress simply arises from different sources – for example from parents, rather than from workload. At the time of writing there were no psychological scales to measure teacher stress from school-level accountability practices for teachers in England, and so – in part, the research project aims to address this gap as well as identifying and comparing stressors for teachers in each sector.

I have defined 'accountability' as a process with a moral dimension: it includes agents and subjects, criteria, evaluation, punishment and rewards. As explained, the study explores accountability a school-level, and the ways in which teachers are held to account by school leaders through monitoring techniques such as lesson observations, inspections of book marking, and scrutiny of lesson plans or resources. Through the chapter I have argued that the emergence of these activities in the state sector can be read as an effect of the shift towards market values in education. Due to a lack of literature concerning teachers' experiences of their work in private schools, I am unable to anticipate the kinds

of monitoring technologies and practices that may or may not be operative in these institutions.

Finally, I have identified perceptions of intensified workloads, performativity, and (post-) panopticism as key concepts of interest. Through a consideration of literature relating to these concepts alongside a study of grey literature, and research from psychology and the sociology of education, I have developed a conceptual framework for the study which supported the development of the methodology outlined in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter details the study's methodology. Following the introduction, section 3.2 is dedicated to exploring the methodological foundations of the research, and it continues with a discussion of the philosophical premises of pragmatism. In section 3.3, I define 'mixed-methods' and explain my rationale for adopting this approach. This explanation sets the backdrop for the research design, which is described in section 3.4 where I outline the study phases and explain the logic behind the sequential explanatory approach.

Section 3.5 describes the both the design of the questionnaire utilised in this study, and the rationale for the semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Furthermore, I detail changes that I made to the questionnaire based on feedback from the pilot study. In section 3.6, I describe the participant recruitment strategies for the questionnaire, interviews, and focus groups. As the chapter explains, the asymmetrical structures of the state and private sectors posed challenges for recruiting participants – the full implications of which are discussed in *Chapter 4: Data handling and quality*.

Section 3.7, outlines the ethical considerations behind the methods and data collection procedures and I also document the means by which I arrived at informed consent from participants and how those data were managed.

I conclude the chapter in section 3.8 with a summary of the philosophical basis for inquiry and the overall study design.

3.2. Methodological foundations

3.2.1. Pragmatism as a paradigm

Pragmatism is the paradigm within which I locate this study. Previously, the positionality of pragmatism as a 'the third methodological paradigm' was disputed (Burke Johnson & Gray, 2010, p. 69). Some researchers advocated for two paradigms – positivism and interpretivism – which are associated with quantitative and qualitative research respectively. Methodological purists believed that the philosophy of sciences that underpin these two research traditions were incompatible with each other, and so could not be 'mixed' (Bryman, 2008). This belief in the incompatibility of the paradigms led to a suggestion by some researchers that mixed-methods work should focus on 'what works' rather than concerning itself with unanswerable philosophical conundrums (Howe, 1988; D. L. Morgan, 2007; Patton, 2015). This view prioritised the pragmatic concept of 'utility', which is the extent to which a study can provide useful answers for real world problems (Mertens & Tarsilla, 2015). In contrast, Biesta (2010) suggests that it is inadequate to justify mixed-methods simply on a claim to 'utility'; instead he considers that pragmatic studies must have a sound philosophical base. In response to Biesta's proposition, I firstly outline the traditions of quantitative and qualitative research and then explain the philosophical principles upon which this study is predicated.

Quantitative research is associated with a particular set of principles which entail a commitment to a positivist research tradition. The principles of physicalism and absolutism underpin the concept of positivism; these stances entail a believe that there is an external reality composed of physical matter that is regulated by laws which are universally 'true' (Burke Johnson & Gray, 2010). While the post-positivist movement acknowledges that a researcher's model of reality contains a quantifiable margin of error, the stance still assumes an empirical viewpoint which means that the nature of reality can be accessed through the 'scientific method' of formulating and testing hypotheses with observation and experimentation.

Qualitative research, on the other hand, tends towards an idealist or subjectivist understanding of reality. Idealists assert that there is no external reality beyond that which is created by the individual's faculties of perception. At the most extreme, this view renders

all claims to knowledge futile. Subjectivists, on the other hand, may believe that there is an external reality but that meaning in the social world is created by the human subject. Researchers in this camp believe that no study can ever be truly free of bias and that the researcher plays a pivotal role in the formation of the research and its findings. Qualitative researchers assume that the findings from a study cannot not be replicated by a different inquirer as data are subjectively interpreted.

Pragmatism presents an alternative paradigm with a unique set of assumptions. Burke Johnson and Gray (2010) suggest that this approach is syncretic in that it rejects the dualist mentality underpinning the 'paradigm wars' and brings together two versions of reality. Adopting this mode of thinking, I argue that the pragmatic standpoint of this study is syncretic and thus philosophically justifiable. Ontologically, I draw from the considerations of critical realism. I purport that an external reality exists, but that it is filtered through our perceptions, and thus it cannot be fully known through empirical study. Furthermore, as Archer et al (2016) suggest : 'our knowledge about […] reality is always historically, socially, and culturally situated'. This consideration paves the way for an epistemological relativism. This acknowledgement of the transience of the social world renders the quest for a static social truth incoherent (Archer et al., 2016; Burke Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The view that there is an external reality which is contextually interpreted by individuals remains harmonious with a belief that it is possible to approximate generalities in the way people experience the social world. I advocate that while social trends can be identified, the experience of these trends will be subject to variation because experience is informed by context.

3.3. Methodological approach

3.3.1. Mixed-methods

As suggested by Creswell (2009), pragmatism provides a strong basis for studies conducting mixed-methods inquiries. However, there is a diverse range of views as to the definition of mixed-methods (Burke Johnson, et al., 2007). Whilst some researchers consider mixed-methods to be the use of quantitative and qualitative data and/or methods of analysis (Creswell, 2009), others such as Bazeley (interviewed in Burke Johnson et al., 2007) consider that the definition of mixed-methods depends on the order of events.

Bazeley states that studies whereby the research tools were deployed at different (and not overlapping) time points are 'multi-methods' rather than 'mixed-methods'. As the research design will show (section 3.4), this study collects data sequentially, and integrates data types towards the end of the research process. As a consequence, this study would be classified as utilising 'mixed-methods' under Creswell's definition, and 'multi-methods' according to Bazeley.

In addition to debates concerning the order of data collection, mixed-methods authors also disagree on what needs to be 'mixed'. Some argue that that the data need to be integrated whilst others assert that researchers need to combine worldviews (Burke Johnson, et al., 2007). For example, Ventakesh, Brown, and Bala (2013) argue that research is only 'mixed' if it adopts multiple viewpoints; otherwise it would be considered 'multi-methods'. However, this line of argument becomes redundant when a syncretic pragmatic standpoint is recognised as a paradigm which provides a sound and singular philosophical base for inquiry. Therefore, following Creswell (2009), I submit that mixed-method studies are those located in this third paradigm, use both qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection and analysis, and integrate data types during an analytical stage.

3.3.2. Mixed-methods motivation

As outlined in the introduction, my motivation to conduct this research was directed by an ambition to understand the ways in which teachers' working conditions compared between the private and state sectors. My initial framing question was: 'Is it better for teachers to work in private schools than state schools in England?'. I was motivated to ask this question because as explained preiously, as a former teacher in the state sector, I had seen several colleagues leaving state school teaching in order to assume roles in the private education sector (or in private schools abroad). My colleagues' experiences mirrored some of the literature outlined in *Chapter 2: Concepts and constructs* in that they identified workload, stress, and incessant monitoring as determining factors in their decisions to leave state teaching. For this reason, I decided to investigate whether teachers' experiences of these factors were 'better' in the private sector. However, it soon became apparent that there was very little information in circulation about teachers' conditions in private schools, and, as such, I would need to gather quantitative data in order to achieve an oversight of this matter. Furthermore, as I was interested in understanding 'experiences' of workload, stress, and monitoring, it was apparent that this

aspect of the inquiry would require qualitative data. From here my mixed-methods study was developed.

As such, the major rationale for using a mixed-methods study was that it facilitates a comprehensive picture of the area of inquiry (Bryman, 2006). This research study gathers data at a teacher level, and utilises this to develop insight through which I explain sector-wide pictures. Foucault (1980, p.99) considered that an examination of 'infinitesimal mechanisms of power' at this cellular level would be more fruitful than conducting a descending systems level analysis because the latter inevitably leads to a reductionist understanding of all problems as located with an exercise of bourgeoisie power. However, as little is known about the experiences of private school teachers within their macro-contexts, my aim was to establish an overview of this matter and develop an appreciation of the way in which those experiences were formed by macro-contexts. As such, the teachers' narratives were understood as embedded within 'the amorphous domain of culture', and those narratives allowed an approximation of the ways in which the complex layers of context interacted with each other in order to partially shape and mould teachers' work (Rose, 2000, p. 311). While work inspired by Foucault typically focuses on the micro-relations between social actors, I purport that complete understanding becomes possible through abduction. Through the 'back and forth' abduction process, the researcher moves between the 'big picture' and individual narratives in order to gather an overview and insight into social phenomenon. In this way, the study can identify and explain trends and behaviours in a rounded manner.

The second reason for engaging with mixed-methods was that it allowed findings from different data types to be compared and thus 'cross-validated' (Bryman, 2006; D. L. Morgan, 2019). These multiple data sources can strengthen the study's knowledge claims as they are informed by multiple methods.

The third and final key reason for choosing a mixed-methods design was that it facilitated the development of meta-inferences. I define 'meta-inferences' as the conclusions which were informed primarily by qualitative insights, and which related to all three research questions. I developed meta-inferences by examining qualitative data through a Foucauldian lens, and considering the ways in which the findings of the study informed an understanding of the macro-contexts of teachers' work.

3.3.3. Research questions

In devising the study, I developed 'open-ended' and 'non-directional' research questions which could be answered with both quantitative and qualitative data (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006, p. 468). The questions were designed to invite a comprehensive view of teachers' experiences of workload, stress, and monitoring of their work by sector:

RQ1) How and why do the characteristics and contributors to teachers' workload compare between sectors?
RQ2) How and why do teachers' experiences of stress compare between sectors?
RQ3) How is teacher monitoring experienced by teachers in each sector?

The key terms 'workload', 'stress', and 'teacher monitoring' have been defined in *Chapter 2: Concepts and constructs*. Overall, questionnaire data were used to establish broad trends and to construct an overview of the variables of interest according to sector.

Answering RQ1

The wording of RQ1 is adapted from the TWS 2016 and the Workload Challenge, a national study and consultation that explored teacher workload for those working in state schools. The term 'characteristics' refers to:

- Hours worked a week (not accounting for holidays)
- Composition of workload: Distribution of time across tasks.
- Perceptions of workload: Is the workload 'acceptable'? Does it infringe on teachers' lives outside of contracted hours? Which tasks (if any) are perceived as burdensome and/or unnecessary? Why?

In order to address RQ1, questionnaire respondents were asked to estimate the number of hours that they spent on individual tasks during a regular full working week. From here, an average weekly workload (measured in hours) could be calculated. Additionally, this questionnaire item facilitated an overview and comparison of the time that teachers' spent on specific tasks such as 'lesson planning / preparation', or 'pupil discipline', and so it helped to identify the ways in which the 'composition' of teachers' workloads compared by sector. Perceptions of workload were addressed through both the questionnaire and qualitative data. The questionnaire aimed to identify if teachers perceived their workload to be burdensome or unmanageable. Following the Workload Challenge, my study defines 'burdensome' workload as tasks that teachers perceive to be unnecessary and unproductive (Gibson et al, 2015), whereas 'unmanageable' workloads are those that the

teachers perceive to infringe unacceptably on their non-working time, possibly because they extend beyond contracted hours. During qualitative data analysis, I adopted a broader understanding of 'perceptions of workload', and I considered any positive or negative remarks about the quantity or quality of work that the participants undertook. Additionally, I sought to understand why teachers held these perceptions e.g. why did some teachers find marking exercise books burdensome?

The second part of RQ1 enquired about 'contributors'. These are defined as the national and school-level factors that directly or indirectly contribute to aspects of workload that teachers perceive to be burdensome. Example 'contributors' include data-related tasks set by middle leaders, and the perceived demands of Ofsted – the full list is displayed in the questionnaire (*appendix 2*). Again, qualitative data enabled a more expansive exploration of contributors to workload. Specifically, interview and focus group data allowed me to identify factors that were not measured in the questionnaire, and to explain the processes via which factors such as Ofsted/ISI or middle leaders might add to teachers' workload.

Answering RQ2

RQ2 was concerned with comparing teachers' experiences of stress between sectors. To be able to fully understand and analyse these, I determined that firstly I would need to model the factors of teacher stress. In essence, this meant that I needed to identify the sources of stress for teachers (e.g. workload, pupil behaviour). Section 4.3 provides details of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) method, which is the primary method through which I identified the factors of stress.

Qualitative data helped to evaluate the proposed model of teacher stress, as well as providing a way through which I could cross-validate the questionnaire findings. Additionally, the qualitative data served an explanatory purpose as it provided an insight into to the reasons why teachers were more or less stressed by different factors according to sector.

Answering RQ3

RQ3 aimed at developing an understanding of the participants' perceptions of teacher monitoring within schools*.* Teacher monitoring has been defined in *Chapter 2: Concepts and constructs,* and it relates the range of activities undertaken on a school-level by

managers to gather data on teachers' performance. Such activities include brief on the spot lesson observations ('learning walks'), or inspections of the quality and/or frequency of teachers' marking in pupils' exercise books (table 2.1). While Q3.1 of the questionnaire (*appendix 2*), provided an overview of the types of practices that were experienced by teachers in each sector, qualitative data were used to offer comparative insight into the way in which teachers perceived these practices e.g. as unnecessary / helpful.

3.4. Research design

3.4.1. Sequential explanatory design

There were five major phases to the research project as depicted in figure 3.1. Creswell (2009) terms the kind of approach that I adopted as a 'sequential explanatory design'. It is understood as 'sequential' because one data type (quantitative) is collected before the other (qualitative). Furthermore, the design is 'explanatory' because the qualitative data provided an explanation of the trends suggested by the questionnaires (Almalki, 2016).

Phase 1: Pilot	Design questionnaire	Pilot questionnaire	Amend questionnaire
Phase 2: Quant	Distribute questionnaire	Analyse questionnaire	Pilot interviews
Phase 3: QUAL	Recruit interview participants	Conduct interviews	Analyse interviews
Phase 4: QUAL	Recruit focus group participants	Conduct focus groups	Analyse focus groups
Phase 5: quant + QUAL	Cross-validate findings	Explain and evaluate	Develop meta-inferences

Figure 3.1: Study design

Phase 1 (Pilot) was concerned with piloting and refining the study. The pilot process is detailed in section 3.5.1 of the chapter. Phase 2 (Quant) of the research enabled me to gain an overall picture of the ways in which the sectors compared across the major variables of interest. In research Phases 3 (QUAL) and 4 (QUAL), I was able to begin to explain quantitative trends in order to address the 'why' part of the research questions e.g. '*why* do teachers' experiences of stress differ according to sector?'. In Phase 5 (quant + QUAL), I considered both data types together for the purposes alluded to above in section 3.3.3, and described in more detail in the following section.

3.4.2. Data integration

The study assumed a 'quant +QUAL' design because, as evident through the explanations of the research phases, qualitative data formed the major component of the project. While quantitative data were used to gain an overview of trends within the samples from each sector, the qualitative data were used to cross-validate and to afford explanatory insight into the questionnaire data. In the case of RQ2, the qualitative data also assumed an evaluative purpose. The following sections explain the process of integration, and detail its purposes.

Cross validation

Firstly, I wished to consider both qualitative and quantitative data together to ascertain as to whether or not the data types cross-validated each-other i.e. did the qualitative data findings support the quantitative findings and *visa versa*? On a practical level, I integrated the data using Morgan's (2019) cross-tabulation method. This process involved listing the major quantitative findings in a table, and checking them against findings from the qualitative data. Following Morgan, I determined if the findings were convergent, complementary, or divergent. In instances of divergence, I reviewed all the data and sought explanations behind the divergence. Venkatesh et al. (2013) term this process 'bracketing' – a concept that builds on Lewis and Grimes (1999). Bracketing allows researchers to 'capture contradictions and oppositions from qualitative and quantitative findings' (Venkatesh et al., 2013, p. 19). Through the recognition of divergent findings, the researcher can develop robust theories about the nature of the phenomena which detail the nature and sources of the divergence. Where findings are concurrent or complementary, they facilitate 'bridging' (Lewis and Grimes, 1999). Venkatesh et al (2013,

p.19) define this as 'the process of developing consensus between qualitative and quantitative findings'.

Evaluation (RQ2 only)

In order to answer RQ2, I integrated data to evaluate my proposed factor model of teacher stress. As demonstrated in *Chapter 6: Stress findings*, using the CFA technique, I identified the core components of teacher stress ('workload and accountability' and 'pupil behaviour'). I cross-validated these findings with qualitative data by exploring participants' narratives and discussions for additional themes (e.g. stress from parents) that were not captured by the model. In this way, the qualitative data assisted me in identifying ways in which the proposed model could be adapted in future research.

Explanatory insight

Data integration also helped me to explain quantitative trends. Where I had identified a trend (e.g. private school teachers spend more hours engaged in extra-curricular activities compared to state school teachers), I sought explanations for this from the interview and focus group discussions.

Meta-inferences

Meta-inferences provided an insightful understanding of teachers' experiences in relation to their wider contexts (Venkatesh et al, 2013). I developed meta-inferences by considering the themes and commonalities which abounded across all three research questions. In order to understand the prevalence of these themes, I reviewed data through the theoretical lens outlined in *Chapter 1*. From here, I was able to posit reasons as to *why* teachers exhibited certain beliefs and behaviours and link these to the wider contexts of their work. Through integrating data in this way, I worked to provide a 'substantive theory' of teachers' experiences within each sector and how these related to their macro-contexts (Venkatesh et al., 2013, pp.19 – 20).

3.4.3. Study evaluation

The mixed-methods approach to research poses challenges for determining appropriate nomenclature for study evaluation. Bryman (2006) observes that a 'one size fits all' approach cannot be applied to mixed-methods projects because they engage different designs and different combinations of data-collection and analysis tools. To compound these difficulties, there is no consensus as to which set of terminology to use to discuss and evaluate this kind of research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2009).

Irrespective of this lack of unity, mixed-methodologists agree that such studies should be evaluated at each stage of the research process (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2008; Plano Clark & Badiee, 2010). These evaluations can be delivered using terminology that draws from both the quantitative and qualitative paradigms (O'Cathain, 2010). Therefore, in relation to the quantitative aspects of this work (Phase 1 and Phase 2), I adopt reliability and validity criteria and ask if the study could be replicated, and if the findings are generalisable i.e. likely to be true for the whole of the population of interest.

Concerns about reliability and validity are unsuitable for a discussion concerning qualitative data as the nomenclature and notions of quality differ from those of quantitative research. Therefore, in line with qualitative traditions, for Phases 3 and 4 of this research, I consider the credibility, dependability, and transferability of the study (Patton, 2015). Credibility relates to the extent to which data have been reported systematically and accurately. The researcher can enhance the credibility of their study by conducting it in a way that makes the findings believable (*ibid*). Researchers can also improve the dependability of their study, (which refers to the extent to which methods are clearly designed so that another researcher could repeat the procedure), through the clear and transparent reporting of research methods (*ibid*). Qualitative researchers should also consider the transferability of their work – this involves an evaluation of the extent to which samples are a fair, appropriate, and knowledgeable reflection of the target population (*ibid*). In the case of this study this would involve the inclusion of views from practicing teachers in different teaching job roles from across the sectors in England.

In addition to these quantitative and qualitative evaluation criteria, mixed-methods theorists agree that research should be evaluated according to the quality of the overall use of mixed-methods. Such an evaluation can be made by examining the 'suitability' of the

mixed research tools to the aims of the study, and the extent to which findings from the integrated data correspond to the research questions/aims (Venkatesh et al., 2013). With all these considerations in mind, I adopt the appropriate terminology in order to communicate the relevant concepts at the appropriate stages.

3.5. Developing research tools

3.5.1. Questionnaire design

The questionnaire, a template of which is displayed in *appendix 2*, was divided into four sections:

1. Demographics
2. Workload
3. Monitoring practices
4. Stress

The first section collected basic demographic information on the participants. The second section, which concerned teachers' workload, was comprised of: a question designed to measure working hours over a full-working week; a three item 'workload perception' question measured on a Likert scale; an open-question about 'unnecessary and unproductive tasks', and a multiple-choice question which asked teachers to identify the contributors to burdensome workload. The third section (monitoring) consisted of a single multiple-choice question designed to gather the relevant information about the types of school-level accountability practices encountered by teachers. The fourth section aimed to measure teacher stress from particular factors; the section was comprised of an adapted version of the 'Stress In Teaching Questionnaire' (SITQ; Borg, Riding & Falzon, 1991; Boyle et al., 1995) which was measured on a Likert scale.

The following sections describe these data collection tools in more detail. Additionally, I provide an outline of the rationale for the questionnaire, interview and focus group design and explain the pilot results.

Section 1: Demographics

The first section of the questionnaire ascertained participant eligibility and sector of employment. Those who were deemed ineligible were not able to progress further. For those who met the minimum criteria (a teacher currently employed at a school in England), the questionnaire branched according to sector to allow for appropriate phrasing of questions. This section of the questionnaire also collected information about school characteristics: location, age phase, and school type (e.g. state academy/private day school).

Teacher level information such as years of experience and job role were also collected in section 1. These 'general questions' were best placed early on as they were 'easy' and may have encouraged the respondents to proceed with the task. Additional participant-level demographic information was collected at the end of the questionnaire at which point respondents were invited to contextualise their answers by identifying their gender and age. This information, which may be perceived as sensitive, was included at the end of the questionnaire so as not to deter participation at an early stage (Bhattacherjee, 2012).

Participants were not obliged to answer any of the questions save for 'eligibility' and 'sector'. They needed to provide these answers so that the questionnaire could terminate or branch accordingly. All of this information was collected because it enabled me to benchmark the representativeness of the sample against statistics on the demographics of the national teacher workforce.

Section 2: Workload

The questions concerning workload (Q2.1 to Q 2.3.1) were drawn from TALIS 2013, the Workload Challenge, and the Teacher Workload Survey (TWS 2016). I replicated items from TALIS 2013 and TWS 2016 since they had been validated in an English context with large sample sizes (n= 2,640 and n= 44,000 respectively). As such, I was reassured that the questionnaire items were appropriately phased for the English context, and I could benchmark my state school findings against the TALIS 2013 country report and TWS 2016.

With regards to question 2.3 and 2.3.1, the Workload Challenge questions read:

2.3) Tell us about the unnecessary and unproductive tasks which take up too much of your time?

2.3.1) Where do these come from?

I used the codebook developed by Gibson et al. (2015) to provide multiple choice options in response to Q2.3.1 (*appendix 2*). Given that multiple choice questions are less taxing for participants as compared to open-ended questions, my expectation was that this approach would improve the questionnaire completion rate (Bhattacherjee, 2012). I did not offer multiple options for Q2.3 because Gibson et al's codebook identified 36 response categories and I determined that this would be too onerous for participants and a potential deterrent to continued participation in the study. As such, I chose to retain the original open question structure and later organised responses into the categories defined by Gibson et al.

Section 3: School monitoring practices

The third section of the questionnaire asked participants about the teacher monitoring/ school-level accountability practices that they had encountered, and the frequency with which these processes were carried out. In order to develop this question, I conducted a search of literature for a pre-existing measure of the types of monitoring systems in schools. Since I was unable to identify a measure, I developed my own question (Q3.1). The list of monitoring practices has been devised and developed from my own experiences as a teacher in England, TES blogs, teacher forums, teacher union literature, academic literature, and discussions with colleagues.

Piloting Q3.1: Teacher monitoring question

The pilot study tested the face validity of Q3.1. Initially, I had intended to use the question stem 'does your school use the following developmental practices?' because I perceived that the words 'monitoring' or 'accountability' bore political connotations. However, the pilot study demonstrated that the term 'developmental practices' was confusing to the pilot participants; in particular, the section which invited them to detail other unlisted 'developmental practices', educed responses relating to performance management,

'twilight training sessions', and CPD (Career Professional Development) which was an unintended interpretation of Q3.1.

Therefore, to address this shortcoming in the question design, I returned to the literature to draw a clear understanding of the conceptual differences between 'accountability' and 'CPD'. As outlined by Sugrue and Mertkan (2017), the concepts are intertwined and a significant overlap between the concepts meant that many practitioners were unable to clearly articulate the distinctions, or nature of this overlap. In light of the ambiguity in concepts, I amended the question to ask: 'What kind of practices does your school have?'. If participants indicated that their schools had a practice, they were then asked to state the frequency with which they experienced this. At the end of the main question, there was a sub-question asking teachers to identify any unlisted activities.

Section 4: Stress

There were various reasons for selecting and adapting Borg et al's (1991) Stress In Teaching Questionnaire (SITQ) as a measure of stress. Firstly, I selected this instrument because it provided a measure of 'teacher stress', rather than general occupational stress. Secondly, the instrument consisted of 20 items in its complete form, and so it was relatively short compared to some other instruments such as Fimian's (1984) 'Teacher Stress Inventory' (TSI) which contains 38 items. As my questionnaire surveyed a range of variables, I concluded that a shorter instrument would be less taxing for participants and encourage higher completion rates.

Previous studies have used subscales from the instrument to measure the sources of stress for trainee teachers in England (Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Klassen et al., 2013). Therefore, I considered the SITQ to be a suitable instrument because its phrasing was appropriate to the English context. Other questionnaires such as von der Embse et al's (2015) Educator Stress Test Inventory (ETSI) proved unsuitable because they included items concerning 'standardised testing periods' which do not relate to the experiences of teachers in England.

My final reason for selecting the SITQ was that its items were appropriate for beginning and experienced teachers. Other instruments such as the QEEW-BT (Harmsen, Helms-

Lorenz, Maulana, Veen, et al., 2018b) and Skaalvik and Skaalvik's (2017) had yet to be validated with experienced (rather than pre-service or beginning) teachers.

Updating the SITQ

Although SITQ was the most appropriate instrument for this study, it required amendment for a number of reasons. Firstly, the items on the SITQ were derived from Kyriacou and Sutcliffe's research (1978a, 1978b). As such the items were based on research that predated several significant shifts in education, including the ERA 1988, and the rapid spread of accountability procedures in schools throughout the 1990s.

Similarly, although researchers have proposed factor models of teacher stressed based on data collected through the SITQ, these models may have also required updating due to their age. Teacher stress models have been confirmed with samples of teachers in Malta by Borg and Riding (1991) and Boyle et al (1995). Through the process of Principal Component Analysis, Borg and Riding (1991) identified four factors to teacher stress: pupil misbehaviour, poor working conditions, poor staff relations, and time pressures. In 1995, Boyle et al proposed a revised five-factor model of teacher stress: pupil behaviour, workload, professional recognition needs, time/resource difficulties, and poor colleague relations.

As research identifies that accountability procedures can be stressful for teachers, I anticipated that this could be an unmeasured factor of stress (Jeffrey & Woods, 1996; Perryman, 2007; von der Embse et al., 2015). On close examination, I recognised that Boyle et al's (1995) model already incorporated two items which could be interpreted as measures of stress from school-level accountability: 'responsibility for students' success', and 'pressure from the headteacher'. However, in order to ensure that potential stress from 'accountability' could be adequately measured, I added two additional items to the SITQ: 'stress from performance related pay', and 'stress from internal monitoring processes (e.g. brief on the spot inspections/ book marking inspections)'.

The decision to include these items was based on research which has shown a link between performance related pay and stress in the USA and the damaging effects of performative systems on teachers' identities (von der Embse et al., 2016; Ryan et al., 2017; Troman, 2008; Ball, 2003). As I was primarily concerned with stress from aspects of

school-level accountability processes, I did not want to expand the questionnaire to consider external sources of stress. For this reason, I did not ask directly about stress from national comparison tables or external inspection processes.

With the addition of the two new items, there were now four items that I considered could potentially capture stress from school-level accountability:

- Pressure from senior leaders/ headteacher
- Responsibility for students' success (e.g. exam results)
- Performance related pay
- Internal monitoring processes (e.g. brief on the spot inspections/ book marking inspections)

However, as explained in the next chapter and in the findings chapter, I attempted to validate Boyle et al's (1995) model before considering an accountability dimension to stress.

Piloting the revised SITQ

I piloted the amended SITQ scale with my network of former teaching colleagues and academic staff. Three senior academics with education research backgrounds reviewed its face validity, and they confirmed that they considered the questions to be clear and appropriate. Furthermore, I piloted the stress scale with 93 teachers recruited via social media of whom 87 were from the state sector and 6 from the private sector. Feedback showed that all respondents were familiar with terminology including 'learning walks' and 'performance related pay'. The pilot questionnaire included space for teachers to identify any unlisted stressors or to leave other comments. There were 12 additional responses, most of which detailed specific events, or policies within the teachers' schools that the participants found stressful. From these results, there was no clear need to develop additional items for instrument. However, as the pilot achieved only 93 responses, it was inappropriate to attempt to confirm Boyle et al's (1995) model, or to test the hypothesis that accountability was a factor of stressor. Therefore, I did not drop any items and proceeded with a 22-item instrument for the main study (*appendix 2*).

3.5.2. Interview design

Interviews were semi-structured and based around the core variables of interest: workload, teacher monitoring, and stress. As detailed, interview data enabled me to cross-validate and explain questionnaire findings. *Appendix 3* displays a typical interview schedule. Although interviews were semi-structured, they were partly informed by participants' questionnaire responses. For example, in instances where teachers worked unusually long, or short hours, I would enquire about the reasons behind this feature of their workload.

Interviews started with a brief verbal and written explanation of the study and data handling, and an opportunity for clarifying questions about the research and/or use of data. Following this, I established consent for participation in the study and obtained permission to record the conversation. In all cases, I advised participants via email, at least 7 days prior to the interview, that I would like to record their responses – although this would only be done with their permission.

In instances where interviewees wanted to know about the findings 'so far' at the start of the conversation, I told them I would be pleased to discuss it at the end of the interview as I did not want to bias their responses. In the interests of sharing knowledge and gaining participant feedback, I did discuss these matters with those who were interested at the end of the interview. In many instances, this proved to be a valuable way of testing and developing emerging hypotheses and insights.

As interviewing requires 'the art of listening' (Patton, 2015, p. 427), I asked follow-up questions, and prompted/probed the interviewee in response 'to what [I was] learning' as the interview unfolded (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 7). I adopted a stance of 'empathetic neutrality' with the aim of encouraging 'openness and trust' which I hoped would arise from a 'non-judgemental rapport' (Patton, 2015, p. 457). While I wanted to encourage openness, as a former teacher, I wished to guard against erroneously assuming a shared understanding with participants. This was a particular concern during interviews with state school teachers as many of their experiences seemed to mirror my own, and so I aimed to avoid 'nodding in complicity' with interviewees and refrained from showing any verbal or physical signs of agreement or assumed understanding (Bell & Nutt, 2012, p. 81). Instead, I sought clarification in instances even when I thought I had understood the participants'

meaning. For example, I asked teachers who mentioned activities such as 'learning walks' to clarify what these were as I was aware that their purpose and execution could vary according to context and indeed differ from my own perception of such activities. In addition, I sought to achieve extended answers by asking teachers to develop their responses, or seeking an emotional aspect to their comments (e.g. 'how do you feel about that?').

Patton (2015) advises that asking open ended, clear, and singular questions can enhance the quality of the interview and elicit more meaningful responses from the participant. I practised this skill during early interviews and listened back to the recordings to identify areas for improvement. During a review of the first interview, I identified that I sometimes asked more than one question at once – a practice which is likely to confuse the participant and/or achieve a shallow response to all questions (Patton, 2015). I made a conscious effort to improve on this, and consider that the quality of the interviews developed with time.

3.5.3. Focus group design

Focus groups were designed to address the same core variables (workload, monitoring and stress) as the interviews and questionnaires. They provided a mechanism through which I could test the hypotheses that had developed through Phase 3 (interviews) of the study. However, the focus groups acted as more than a confirmatory device – they also contributed to theory development, and allowed me to examine certain areas in greater detail. By way of example, it became apparent from early interview analysis that school inspections were a prevailing concern for state school teachers – and that this interacted with feelings of stress as well as their perceptions of workload. As inspection systems started to emerge as an important topic for analysis, I determined to ask focus group participants about their experiences of Ofsted and/or ISI. The information gathered through this line of inquiry later became vital to understanding the operational differences between sectors. A typical focus group schedule is displayed in *appendix 4.*

Due to the time and cost restraints involved in organising interviews and focus groups, these could not be piloted. With this in mind and as I was a novice at focus group moderation, I ensured that I planned very carefully and sought practical and theoretical

advice prior to the groups on the best ways in which to organise and run these events. In accordance with best practice guidelines, I advised participants in advance that I would request to record the discussion, and indicated that they should expect the event to take 1.5 hours. Although discussions lasted around 1hr 15 minutes on average, to manage the expectations of participants, I deliberately over-estimated the required time in case the events over-ran, or were delayed for unforeseen reasons.

In order to optimise the group dynamics for discussion, I endeavoured to create a relaxed atmosphere. I did this by introducing participants where appropriate, and providing refreshments for those who attended groups outside of their school buildings (Kitzinger, 1995). Every group, with the exception of one, contained at least two participants who already knew each other. In the case of the private school focus groups run within schools, all participants were colleagues. Section 3.6 of the chapter explains why it was necessary to conduct some private school focus group discussions with participants who all worked within the same school.

Although conducting discussions with participants who were already known to each other could have presented a challenge, Rabiee (2004) explains that such an arrangement can also facilitate the flow of conversation. She suggests that groups that contain friends or acquaintances can also assist in the creation of a trusting atmosphere whereby participants are likely to speak openly to each other. However, it is also possible that the professional familiarity of colleagues may hinder participants from voicing negative or particularly strong opinions. However, my experience was that all group participants were lively and vociferous even where prior professional relationships existed.

My role in the focus groups was different to my role as a one-to-one interviewer. At the start of focus groups, I explained that my purpose was to guide the discussion as a moderator – not to be an active participant. I chose to explain this because, as Morgan (1998) advocates, the intention of the group was to access the participants' thoughts and feelings around the variables of interest – not to offer my insights. To ensure open discussions, it was essential to reiterate that I would not report conversation content back to senior leaders, or other members of the school community. At the start of each discussion, participants were reminded that confidentiality also relied on them not sharing information outside of the group.

During focus groups with teachers from the same school that were held on the school premises, I took care to ensure that managers and the people they managed were not grouped together, as this could hinder openness and honesty. On one occasion, a recently promoted member of a school's SLT presented to a focus group. As this member of staff had been invited to the group prior to her promotion, the situation was such that I did not wish to exclude her from the discussion. I managed this dilemma by welcoming her, and emphasising to the whole group that I wanted to learn about the participants' experiences of teaching in general, and stated that I was not researching their individual school. In addition, I geared the discussion towards the theoretical ('what would an ideal accountability system look like?') rather than grounding it in current experience which could potentially have restricted teachers' ability or desire to respond.

After the initial introductions and 'ice-breaker' question of 'what made you want to become a teacher?', I encouraged participants to speak to each-other rather than addressing me. In order to achieve this, after the first respondent to a question had finished their discursive turn, I remained silent, or asked a question to the whole group, so that another group member could participate in the conversation. In this manner I was able to achieve the role of a 'structured eaves-dropper' which helped to ensure that participants did not seek validation or approval from me for their contributions (Kitzinger, 1995).

The content of the group discussions was moderately structured as I wanted to ensure that teachers offered information relating to the core areas of interest. On some occasions, I intervened to re-directed conversation when it had become tangential. An example of this was during a state school teacher focus group; two teachers had started an impassioned and very detailed critique of subject specific curriculum reforms. I allowed the conversation to continue for a couple of minutes as it was interlinked, but not central to the group themes. Following this, I gently redirected the flow to ensure that it was inclusive and relevant to all group members, and more closely aligned with the core areas for discussion. I had, as recommended by Morgan (1998), decided in advance that I would adopt this approach as it mirrored the semi-structured style of the interviews, and kept the research objectives in mind.

In instances where there were quieter or less vocal members of the group, I invited them to contribute at least once within every topic discussion. I endeavoured to do this by directly inviting their personal response with questions such as 'have you experienced

anything like this?' or 'how does x work in your school?'. Perhaps due to the nature of the participants' work as teachers which requires astute interpersonal skills, the discussions largely self-moderated. When somebody had held the floor for an unusually long turn, in some instances they would apologise for this, or another speaker would quickly start to speak during a moment of hesitation.

As recommended, I concluded each group meeting with a summary of the discussion (Morgan, 1998). The summary invited participants to challenge or clarify my interpretations of their experiences and perceptions about workload, stress, and accountability. It was during this stage that I could test emerging hypotheses to ascertain the level of agreement among the group. The day after the focus groups, I sent participants an email to reiterate my thanks for their participation and to invite them to contribute any further comments/ideas that they had not had a chance to voice. Nobody responded with further questions or comments.

3.6. Participant recruitment strategies

As explained in *Chapter 1: Introduction*, the private and state school sectors are organised differently. It became apparent during the pilot study that it was not feasible to recruit teachers from different sectors via the same channels. It proved not to be possible to recruit an adequate number of private school teachers for the purposes of this research on an individual level. Therefore, to ensure a good sample size, participants were recruited through the structural communication channels of the sector. That is to say that they were recruited on a school or organisational level with permission of the headteacher, or the relevant association Chair.

In contrast, gaining access to teachers on a school-level in the state sector is extremely challenging and yields low returns. For example, the TWS 2016 (Higton, Leonardi, & Richards, 2017), which was a government funded study, contacted nearly 900 schools. In total, the survey procured 3,186 eligible teacher responses from 218 of these schools. The Teachers' Workload Diary survey (Department for Education, 2014) also experienced a low response rate. Across all teacher types, the survey received an average 15% returns which meant that to obtain just over 1,000 responses, the DfE sent diaries to 6,753 participants. Furthermore, I was aware from my own experience as a state school teacher that headteachers were unlikely to spend staff-briefing/ meeting time discussing an

external research project with teachers. I therefore concluded that it was more cost effective and efficient to recruit teachers from the state sector on an individual level. This strategy meant promoting the study via the pre-existing channels of communication facilitated by teacher unions and social media.

3.6.1. Questionnaire recruitment strategy

Table 3.1 presents the timeline for the questionnaire data collection.

Table 3.1: Participant recruitment strategies

Date	Method of promotion
September 2017	• Letters sent to 108 private school to generate awareness of study and recruit early participants
October 2017	• Questionnaire link advertised on social media channels via personal account • Emails to 108 private schools with questionnaire link • Follow-up email to questionnaire (2 weeks after link distributed)
November 2017	• Questionnaire link re-advertised on social media channels • Emails to all regional branches of the major teaching unions in England • Final follow up email to private school headteachers who were sent paper letter
December 2017	• Approached delegates from private school conference to ask to distribute questionnaire • Contacted all major private school bodies and organisations including ISC • Association A published advert for questionnaire in their newsletter
January 2018	• ISC advertised questionnaire in newsletter to headteachers
February 2018	• Contacted private school association organisations again • Association B issued advert for questionnaire in their newsletter
March 2018	• Association B re-advertised questionnaire

The survey achieved 806 mainly complete responses (i.e. responses which answered every item on the stress scale) from practicing teachers in England. Of these, 467 participants worked in the state sector and 339 in the private sector. However, some of the

findings report higher or lower numbers of participants because some participants had completed some sections of the survey, but not others.

Social media

As explained, recruiting state school teachers for research via their schools is typically a time consuming process and offers low returns – therefore, I elected to target state school teachers directly via social media platforms (namely Facebook). I achieved this by joining numerous online teacher groups for practitioners across phases, regions and subjects. These groups were usually part-social and part-resource sharing networks with visitors posting questions about the curriculum, pedagogy, or seeking employment advice. It became apparent that these groups were mainly run by online administrators who were themselves practicing teachers, or local trade union leaders.

I trialled this online recruitment method for the pilot study questionnaire. The pilot was intended to test the face validity of the questionnaire items that I had devised, and to provide an early indication of the proportion of responses that I was likely to achieve from each sector by promoting the questionnaire on social media platforms. As previously explained, in total the pilot questionnaire achieved 93 responses: 87 from the state sector, and 6 from the private sector. As the private school teaching population is significantly smaller than that of state school teachers, and as only 6% of the pilot respondents worked in this sector, it was clear that advertising on social media would not yield a sufficient sample of private school teachers. Furthermore, while researching social media platforms, I could not identify any active groups for teachers working in private schools in England. Social media pages were operated and administrated by the major private schools' associations. As they were run as promotional pages, there was no opportunity for teachers to engage in conversation, exchange resources, or post messages and this obstructed my direct communication within the private school teacher community.

Teaching unions

To boost responses, I also approached various regional branches of the teaching unions as they hold lists of individual teachers' contact details. Several of these branches supported the study by distributing communications to members. Following distribution from the regional branches, state school responses spiked (November 2017). While these methods were effective in obtaining state school respondents, they were not suitable for

the private sector as was evidenced by the low response rate from such teachers during this time period. Although private school teachers can be members of teaching unions, the branch managers were unable to tell me the proportion of state and private teachers included in their mailing lists of members.

Selecting schools

In direct contrast to the state sector, private school participants were best reached through a cluster approach. This strategy fitted with my understanding of the structure of the private sector whereby the headteacher is positioned as the gatekeeper to the school which may be contained within an association such as HMC. Further to this, I returned to a database of all the private schools in England and selected schools to approach. This database, which contained school contact details, was supplied by the DfE under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) in 2017 (Department for Education, 2017b).

As email requests inviting private schools to participate in the study could have been overlooked, or filtered out by administrative staff, I decided to issue paper letters to 108 private school head teachers. This number was selected because it represented just over 5% of the private schools eligible for this study. The schools were stratified into region, and then randomly selected. By 'randomly' I mean that each school was assigned a random number (using the Excel RAND function), the list was then reordered according to this number, and I selected the correct number of schools from each region to contact.

Letters

The first round of letters was sent to 108 private schools in September 2017. This letter provided information about the intended study and asked for an early indication of interest in participation. I undertook to send the questionnaire link in a subsequent email. I chose this approach because Robson (2002) suggests that generating excitement prior to the commencement of a study can be effective in improving response rates. This approach also gave time for the headteachers to consider participation and discuss it with their staff. These letters were individually addressed to the headteachers and they referenced the unique character of the schools e.g. 'I am aware that you are high performing boys' school and I would very much like the views of your teachers included in this study'. I chose to do this because based on previous research, I had recognised the potential difficulties of accessing private schools and considered that a personalised approach was more likely to

establish the level of trust required to engage with school leaders and their teachers (Maxwell & Aggleton, 2015).

Robson (2002) recommends sending follow-up communication expressing surprise or disappointment at non-participation as it can bolster the response rate by up to one third. The first follow-up email was sent two weeks after the questionnaire link was distributed, and a final one was distributed a month after the initial letter. Each follow up email triggered a new smaller wave of responses, even if these responses were to state that the school was unwilling to participate in the questionnaire. By November 2017, I had received communications from 22 private school headteachers, of whom 14 expressed interest in the study. Of those respondents, it was clear from the questionnaire data that 11 of these schools had participated. With regards to the three schools where it was unclear if the questionnaire link had been distributed, I had anticipated that some school leaders would be unable to support the research in the final event despite early enthusiasm. I expected this to occur because this pattern had been identified by other researchers of the private schools sector (Maxwell & Aggleton, 2015).

Private school associations

At the end of 2017, I wrote to a number of private school organisations in order to ask for their help promoting the research. The ISC and two other associations expressed a willingness to advertise the study. Both private school organisations and the ISC representative explained that the schools were autonomous bodies, and that while they could promote the questionnaire to headteachers, participation was at the discretion of the school.

3.6.2. Completion rate

Overall, the survey achieved responses from 1,088 teachers. Of these respondents, 806 provided questionnaires that responded to at least every item on the stress scale (the most substantial question on the questionnaire); this indicated an approximate 74% completion rate. It is challenging to anticipate the likely completion rate for online questionnaire respondents, although Hoerger (2010) identifies that in questionnaires aimed at undergraduate students, 10% can be expected to drop out immediately and an additional 2% per 100 survey items. As there were 129 items on the original questionnaire, a 12% drop out rate might have been expected. However, as Hoerger (2010) warns, there are

important contextual differences that need to be accounted for when comparing response rates across studies. For example, a teaching population may behave very differently to an undergraduate population, and there were no incentives on offer for this questionnaire.

3.6.3. Qualitative data recruitment strategy

My aim in this study was to speak to ten participants from each sector in a one-to-one interview and to conduct six focus groups (three in each sector) with between three to five participants in each group. As such, I had planned to speak with a minimum of 19 and a maximum of 25 participants in each sector in an interview or focus group format. This would have led to an overall qualitative sample size of 38 – 50 participants. I expected that this would be the 'saturation' point at which the interviews and focus groups would yield no new insights or explanations (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For qualitative studies, Creswell (1997) suggests that 20 – 30 participants are usually sufficient to achieve 'saturation', whereas Morse (1994) recommends more than 30 participants. From a meta-analysis of qualitative PhD theses, Mason (2010) identifies the average qualitative study sample size as 31 participants. Although my study was mixed-methods and so included another major data type (questionnaires), as I was comparing between sectors, I considered that I would need to achieve 'saturation' with teachers from both the state and private sub-samples. For this reason, I planned to gather information from a relatively largely number of participants.

The final project includes qualitative data from 51 teachers in total: 27 private school teachers and 24 state school teachers. These data were collected in ten one-to-one interviews with private sector teachers, and five private school teacher focus groups with 17 participants shared between them. I conducted a further 11 interviews with state school teachers, and ran three focus groups with a total of 13 participants.

Saturation was achieved rapidly with the state school sample. After the point of six interviews, I felt that I was no longer gathering further insights. I was concerned by the speed at which I felt I had achieved saturation and so continued to conduct further interviews and focus groups to check my emerging hypotheses and to search for new insights, alternative interpretations of the data, or dissonant views. With regards to the private school teachers, I collected data from a larger number of participants than initially intended. I chose to conduct more focus groups than planned (five instead of three) to

ensure that I captured as many voices as possible from different schools and from those in classroom teacher roles.

All interviewees and focus group participants had to fulfil the criteria of working as teachers within the English education system. Although sampling was largely dictated by those who were willing to engage in further discussion with me, I aimed to achieve a spread of interviewees from different genders, who worked across phases and job roles.

Interview recruitment strategy

Interviewees were selected from questionnaire respondents who had consented to receiving further communications from me. Of the private school questionnaire respondents, 98 had supplied contact details. Using these contacts, I obtained ten school one-to-one interviews, with teachers from nine different schools. Out of the state school questionnaire respondents, 117 participants had agreed to be contacted again. From these contact details, I was able to secure 11 interviews with state school teachers from 11 different schools.

Focus groups

As questionnaire respondents had been secured from the private sector mainly by appeal to headteachers on a school-level, the data were inevitably clustered. In terms of focus groups, this clustering meant that it was easier and most cost-effective to approach schools that had promoted the questionnaire and ask to conduct focus groups with staff. I approached only schools with five or more respondents who had stated that they were willing to be contacted again. Three schools were able to accommodate a visit. After obtaining permission from the headteacher, I sought participants' explicit consent before asking the administrative staff to organise the groups within school time.

In addition to the focus groups that were held within school buildings, I arranged for one group meeting (focus group 3) to take place at a neutral location outside of school hours. I decided on a location in the Midlands for focus group 3 as no other private school focus groups had been held in that area. I then contacted the school secretaries for all the private schools within a five kilometre radius and less than 20 minutes travelling time (by bus) from the selected location. I asked the school secretaries to issue my invitation to an after-school group that would compensate teachers for time and travel. Three schools

responded to say that they would share the invitation, and a fourth headteacher advised that he could not issue the invitation because he did not want his staff to attend the event. Although focus group 3 succeeded in attracting teachers from two different private schools (a participant from the third school was ill on the day of the group), the response from the fourth school reminded me that this method of recruitment also had gatekeepers. Again, unlike the state sector, it was only via headteachers that I could initiate contact with private school teachers.

In contrast, participants for the state school focus groups were recruited through both local union branch advertising and social media appeals. Advertising through online communities recruited five out of the 13 overall focus group participants. The remaining eight participants were recruited via teacher union advertising. Although union affiliation may have biased the sample, advertising in this way proved the most efficient way in which to recruit teachers who were within travelling distance of the group location.

3.7. Ethics

This research was conducted according to the overarching ethical principle of avoiding causing physical or mental harm to participants or their environments. It was approved by the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee and followed British Educational Research Association guidelines for best practice (BERA, 2011).

Informed consent is a central concept in ethical research practice (Wiles, 2013). To ensure that participants were able to give or refuse informed consent, I took steps to ensure that they understood the purpose of the research, how data would be processed and reported, what their participation in the study would involve, the risks/benefits of participation, and the way in which anonymity and confidentiality would be handled (Wiles, 2013). I facilitated this by way of a consent form which required signature at the start of the online questionnaire, and which included my contact details in the event that a participant required further explanation or clarification.

In the case of some private schools, headteachers or organisation chairs had agreed to share the questionnaire link with staff in order to gain some feedback from the questionnaire. In accordance, the consent page for the questionnaire stated that the aggregated questionnaire results might be reported back to headteachers/association

chairs, but only if there was no apparent risk of participants being identified. This information was highlighted in bold text to draw attention to it, since it may have been central to participants' decisions to take part in the study (Oliver, 2010). I advised study participants on a second occasion that findings might be reported back to schools/associations as a precursor to the question 'which school do you work in?'. I also reiterated that the question did not require an answer, and participants were under no obligation to share their employer's name if they did not want their answers linked with a particular institution.

As explained in section 3.5.2, for face-to-face interviews and focus groups, consent was established via a paper consent form and verbal discussion with participants. For telephone interviews, consent was verbally established. All participants were advised that they could withdraw from the study without the necessity to provide an explanation. Both interview and focus group participants had an opportunity to ask questions or raise concerns before research discussions commenced. I also signed the consent forms as part of my contractual commitment to maintain the anonymity of information obtained (Byrne, 2016). After explaining the study, offering the opportunity for questions and establishing consent, I requested the permission to record the conversation. I verbally acknowledged when recording had started and ended.

After interview, transcripts typically took 4 – 6 weeks to produce. I then offered a copy of the transcript to the one-to-one interviewees for review. There was very low take-up on the offer, and only in one instance did an interviewee request that information be redacted. As this interviewee never replied to say if she was satisfied with the new version of the transcript, I deleted the document, recording, and email chain referencing the requested changes. The data were not included in the study analysis.

In line with best ethical practice for the context of this study, all participants were provided with full anonymity (Oliver, 2010). While some interviewees were happy to be named, I opted to retain the anonymity of all participants and affiliated school and organisations as a means of removing any sense of obligation to present data in a way that would please the organisations that had contributed to the research (Oliver, 2010).

3.8. Conclusion

Overall, this chapter has argued that pragmatism is a distinct paradigm which provides the philosophical foundation for mixed-methods inquiry. From this starting point, I explained the rationale for adopting a mixed-methods approach and described the development of the research questions. These research questions were then set within the research design which followed a 'quant + QUAL' sequential explanatory pattern – with quantitative data serving the purpose of generating an overview of trends in each sector's sample, and qualitative data being used to cross-validate and explain quantitative findings. For RQ2, I explained that the qualitative data served the additional purpose of enabling an evaluation of the factor model of stress proposed through the responses to the teacher stress measure. Additionally, I detailed the way in which data facilitated meta-inferences in the final stage of the research project.

After describing the study design, I explained how I developed my data collection tools: questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and semi-structured focus groups. By detailing these research processes and displaying these research tools, I have demonstrated the suitability of the design and tools to the aims, and ensured that the relevant study phases are replicable and dependable. Furthermore, I have explained the manner in which I ensured compliance with best ethical practice during the research process.

Finally, the chapter has outlined some of the challenges that I encountered during the participant recruitment process, specifically, the hierarchical structure of the private sector that led to clustered data in private school responses. The clustering is discussed in more detail in *Chapter 4: Data handling and quality*.

Chapter 4: Data handling and quality

4.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the manner in which the data were cleaned, processed, and analysed after collection. Furthermore, it considers the quality of the data.

Section 4.2 details the data cleaning process for the both questionnaire and qualitative data. With regards to the questionnaire data, I outline the way in which I handled impossible values and dealt with incomplete responses. My approach to coding open questions included in the questionnaire is also made explicit. The section also explores the distribution of the data, and I identify outliers/ extreme values, and explain how they were managed. Qualitative data were also cleaned and checked for quality. In order to make my quality check methods explicit, I give examples of qualitative data that were not included in the study and explain why they were deemed unsuitable.

Section 4.3 includes a discussion of the methods used to analyse the questionnaire data and an explanation of the manner in which the interview and questionnaire data were organised and interpreted. The section details the use of 'framework analysis', a rigorous method of coding qualitative data (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994).

Section 4.4 proceeds to outline the demographics of my questionnaire participants, and I compare my sampled population to national statistics. In section 4.5, I discuss bias in the quantitative sample, and I detail the manner in which I assessed and accounted for this bias. Furthermore, I explain the way in which I ensured the qualitative data were of a high quality by engaging with reflexive techniques.

Section 4.6 reflects on the limitations of the study as detailed throughout the chapter. A discussion of the limitations leads onto section 4.7: the chapter conclusion. The concluding section provides a summary of my methods alongside an overview of my responses to methodological challenges to ensure the study's quality.

4.2. Data preparation and cleaning

4.2.1. Quantitative data preparation

Once data had been collected, I cleaned it and assessed its quality prior to analysis; this process was conducted in two stages. During the first stage, I examined the quantitative data for impossible values, entries that needed recoding, and responses from people who fell outside of the target categories. The second stage of the data cleaning process involved an examination of the interview and focus group data quality.

I conducted questionnaire data cleaning and analysis with RStudio (version 1.0.153) using *dplyr* package (version 0.7.4). The first eligibility question on the online questionnaire filtered out 79 participants who were not 'currently employed as a teacher in England'. This left 1,088 responses for the data cleaning process. After removing rows with all missing values, I could proceed with a sample of 826 respondents.

<u>Back coding</u>

The following questions were back coded:

Q1.2: Region of work

A small number of responses had selected 'other' for their region of work. All of these responses were easily assigned into the correct region. There were no respondents who appeared to work outside England.

Q1.3: Role

Some respondents had marked 'other' as their job role. Where possible, these answers were recoded into the nearest category e.g. 'Phase Leader' was coded as 'Head of Faculty/Department'; 'Housemistress/master' as 'Head of Year', and 'Year Group Coordinator' as 'Head of Year'. Some roles, such as 'SENDCO' (Special Needs and Disabilities Coordinator) were left categorised as 'other'.

Once the 'role' entries had been back coded, I recoded them into a new variable. The new variable assigned observations to one of three categories: Senior Leadership Team (SLT), middle leaders/managers, and classroom teachers:

- **Senior Leadership Team (SLT):** Headteacher/ Acting headteacher; Deputy headteacher; Assistant headteacher, or equivalent e.g. Principal, or Master
- **Middle leaders:** Heads of department/Key Stage/ Phase; Heads of Year, or equivalent e.g. Housemistress/master
- **Classroom teacher:** Classroom teachers; Second in charge of faculty/department.

There is some ambiguity around the job titles that can be categorised as 'middle leader' or 'classroom teacher'. For example, there is likely to be variation across schools whereby roles such as 'Head of house' carry significantly more or less responsibility in different contexts. Therefore, for the most part, I grouped 'middle leaders' and 'classroom teachers' together for data analysis.

Total working hours variable

In terms of recorded weekly working hours, there were some outlier values that were clearly errors of entry. Impossible working hours (i.e. >168 hours per week), were replaced with NAs; there was one such response. The 14 respondents who recorded working zero hours per week were also replaced with NAs. It was likely that these participants had clicked through this part of the questionnaire, but did not want to answer the question.

Contradictory information, such as the few teachers who recorded having part-time contracts, but stated that they were contracted to work in excess of 36 hours per week (a standard full-time working week), were also overwritten with NA values.

Implausible teaching time

I individually examined responses from participants who recorded > 40 hours a week of direct teaching time, as such high contact time would be implausible in most schools given the length of the school day (which typically involves five to six hours of teaching). There were two such observations: one respondent who recorded 65 direct teaching hours a week, and another who stated 50 hours of direct teaching a week. Both respondents worked in private schools. I judged that teaching 65 hours per week was not possible in this context, even taking into account a potential six day teaching week. Therefore, this

value was omitted from the dataset. The other value (50 hours per week) was left in as the questionnaire appeared to have been diligently completed, and it may have been possible for a teacher in a boarding house who supervises pupils each evening to perceive that they have a 50 hour per week teaching load. Although left in the data set, the observation was considered as a potential outlier during analysis.

Indexing variables

Although 'teacher stress' and 'perceptions of workload' are discrete variables measured on a Likert scale, they aim to capture continuous concepts. Therefore, I treated these variables as numeric in analysis. To make interpretation easier for the reader, I summed together item responses and rescaled them 0 – 100 e.g. 0 = no stress and 100 = extreme stress, and 0 = very negative perception of workload, 100 = very positive perception of workload.

Quantifying open questions

Question Q3.1 was an open question: 'Tell us about the unnecessary and unproductive tasks which take up too much of your time'. As explained, this question was replicated from the Workload Challenge. Therefore, I could use the codebook previously developed by Workload Challenge analysts to organise responses to this question (Gibson et al., 2015).

When categorising data according to the codebook, there were some tasks which fell outside of the coding categories. These included: cleaning the school/classroom, invigilation, and updating the school website. These items were all allocated to the best fitting categories – and in the case of 'cleaning the school', it was coded as 'other'.

Outliers

After deleting impossible and erroneous values, I explored the data for outliers. To do this, I used Tukey's method which examines data points in relation to the inter-quartile range (IQR). Values that were above or below 1.5 * IQR were classed as outliers. There were no clear outliers for 'stress', although using the above definition there were outlier values for the perceptions of workload (table 4.1) and working hours variable (table 4.2).

Table 4.1: Outlier observations for perceptions of workload for all observations by sector

	No. of outliers	Prop. of outliers	Mean of outliers	Mean with outliers	Mean without outliers
State (n = 483)	16	3.4	78.13	16.65	14.54
Private (n = 343)	5	1.5	100	36.42	35.48

For teachers in both sectors, outliers were observed at the top of the indexed Likert scale (0 = very poor perceptions of workload, 100 = very positive perceptions of workload), and there were no values that were below 1.5*IQR. These outliers upward biased the mean by more than two points for state school teachers and less than one point for private school teachers.

Table 4.2: Outlier observations for weekly working hours for all full-time observations by sector

	No. of outliers	Prop. of outliers	Mean of outliers	Mean with outliers	Mean without outliers
State (n = 400)	20	5.4	73.65	55.24	54.26
Private (n = 290)	16	5.9	90.47	56.41	54.39

When outliers are defined in this way, calculations suggested that for weekly working hours, there were 20 outlier values in the state sector sample and 16 in the private sector sample. However, by plotting a histogram (figure 4.1), it became clear that the outlier values were identified as such because the working hours variable had a long tail. Therefore, rather than considering these values as abnormal and as potential candidates for deletion, I considered the long tail an interesting feature of the data and explored the responses that corresponded to these 'outlier' values.

Private school workload 'outliers'

Ten of the private sector outliers were observations from boarding school teachers. Boarding house staff might perceive their working hours to run throughout the night if they

are 'on duty' during this time. As such, outlier observations for boarding school teachers were left in the data set as this may have conveyed information about the experiences of staff working as housemistresses/masters.

A further six respondents working in private day schools recorded working in excess of 80 hours per week. I examined each observation individually. One participant identified working 124 hours per week. This respondent recorded 40 hours of 'pupil supervision and duties' per week, which was anomalous for a day school teacher who would not be required to live in a boarding house. There was no way to verify these data, and so I left the observation un-amended. Without the value, the mean weekly working hours for full-time day school teachers was 54.14. The mean rose to 54.57 hours per week with the outlier included.

Data distribution

The study compares variables across sectors, and so in order to statistically test the significance of observed differences between groups, I needed to select the appropriate methods. Parametric significance tests are suited to continuous variables which are normally distributed, whereas non-parametric tests are appropriate for discrete variables, or in instances whereby the data distribution is not known.

'Stress' and 'perceptions of workload' were both discrete variables because they were measured on a Likert scale, therefore, they warranted non-parametric tests. 'Working hours' was a continuous variable, and so I needed to assess its normality to determine the most appropriate significance test. In order to do this, I generated histograms to visualise the shape of the data distribution, calculated skew and kurtosis, and conducted a Shapiro-Wilk test which evaluates data normality.

Figure 4.1. visualises the non-normal distribution of the 'working hours' variable for teachers in each sector. The long tail indicated outliers at the extreme end of the X-axis. These outliers were discussed in section 4.2.1.

Distribution of weekly working hours: Full-time state school teachers
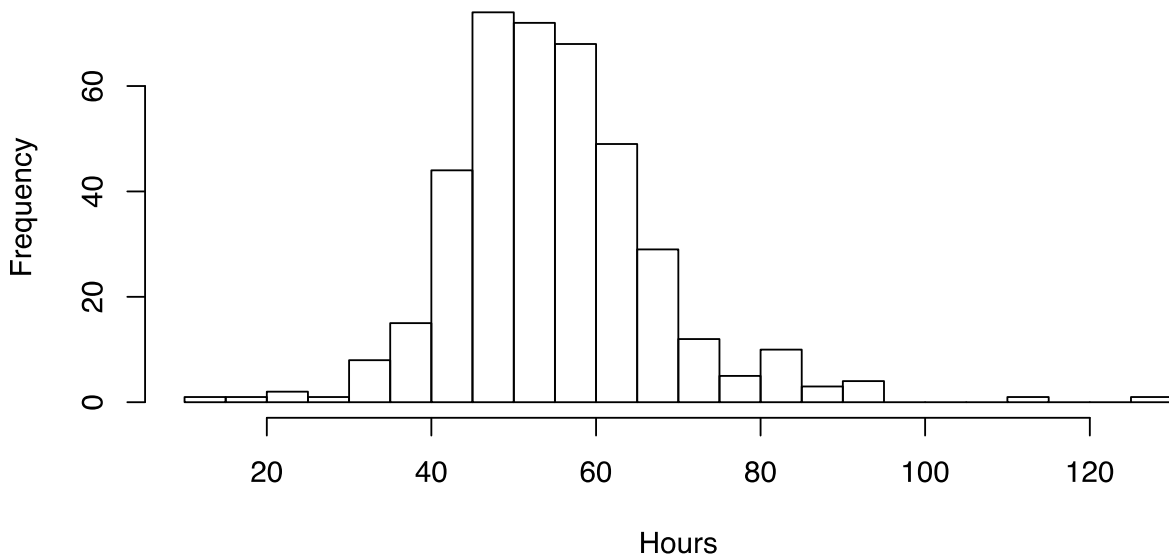
Distribution of weekly working hours: Full-time private school teachers
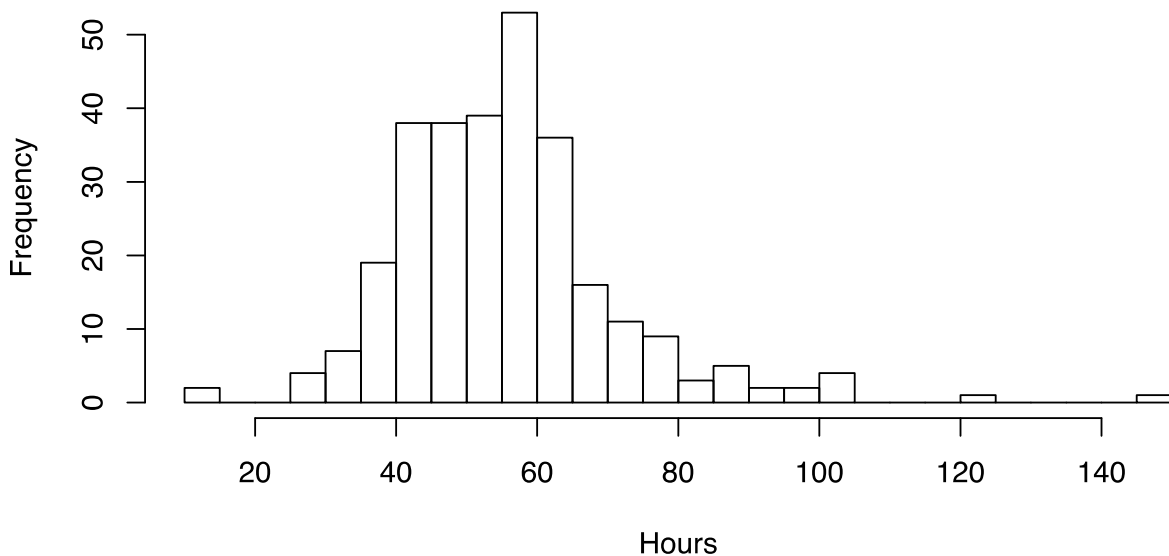
Figure 4.1: Histograms of weekly working hours for all full-time observations by sector

Table 4.2 presents skew and kurtosis calculated using the R package 'moments' (Komsta & Novomestky, 2015). As visualised in the histograms (figure 4.1) data were highly positively skewed with peaked kurtosis which indicated non-normality. The Shapiro-Wilk test, which is appropriate for sample sizes of up to 2,000, confirmed that the null hypothesis (that the data are normally distributed) could be rejected.

Table 4.3: Shapiro-Wilk test for working hours of all full-time observations by sector

Sector	Shapiro-Wilk		Skew	Kurtosis
	Statistic	Sig.		
State (n = 400)	0.942	<0.001	1.1	7.13
Private (n = 290)	0.919	<0.001	1.36	8.00

Tests

Given that the distribution of the working hours variable was not normal and not known, and stress and perceptions of workload were discrete variables, it was appropriate to proceed with non-parametric testing methods to evaluate the significance of differences between groups. These tests were appropriate because they do not rely on assumptions of normality and so provide more accurate results when the distribution of the data is not readily known. Therefore, null hypotheses are tested using the Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test variables (also named Mann-Whitney U Test, Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test, Wilcoxon rank-sum test). This test is appropriate for discrete variables, and assumes that samples are randomly drawn from independent groups. The test works by comparing differences between the distribution of variables by group. The method is not as accurate or precise as parametric equivalents (e.g. t-test) especially when there are ties in the ranks. Despite this consideration, the Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney tests remained the most appropriate for the data.

P-values

P-values have long been a controversial statistical measure. Cumming (2012) suggests that the focus on obtaining 'significant' P-values can obscure the richness of data. Instead of narrowly focusing on P-values as the indicator of important results, he advocates using estimation as an alternative to significance testing. Valentine, Aloe, and Lau (2015) build on this recommendation and suggest three key ways in which to present data alongside significance testing: display data graphically to aid understanding; present measures of spread, and report effect sizes. These recommendations are followed throughout the reporting and discussion of findings. Furthermore as recommended by Cumming (2012), I report confidence intervals around the means at a 95% level.

Language

Throughout the thesis, I aim to retain consistency in the language used to describe quantitative data trends. As explained, although P-values should be interpreted cautiously, I assign the following labels to the values:

P-value	Language
> 0.05	Non-significant
0.001 – 0.05	Significant
< 0.001	Highly significant

The terminology follows the British Medical Journal (2019) guidelines which warn that these categories are somewhat arbitrary, but remain useful in the efforts to apply consistent language to concepts.

4.2.2. Qualitative data cleaning and preparation

I excluded two interviews and a focus group from analysis due to poor dependability and compromised credibility. Both of the interviews and the focus group were collected from the same private school. On this occasion, the school had invited me in to speak to staff, but would not allow me to make a formal appointment time for the focus group or interviews. Furthermore, the school's headteacher asked that I did not email questionnaire participants in advance to ask if they would be willing to be interviewed on the day of my visit. This situation posed significant difficulties as it seemed unlikely that teachers who had completed the questionnaire would 'drop-in' on the day and be willing to engage in conversation for 45 minutes – 1 hour without prior warning.

Data collected from this school were unusable because I was unable to conduct interviews with people who had completed the questionnaire. Although some staff were willing to be interviewed on the day, I could not follow the interview schedule as no time had been formally set aside for the discussion. In addition, on review of the transcripts, I identified that the interview style had been significantly different to other cases. Specifically, I had spoken more freely, offered opinions, and shared experiences with the participants. This approach was something that I had tried to avoid in other interviews. While such an interview style has merits, it was not consistent with the rest of the study – and so I chose to omit these data from analysis.

4.3. Data analysis

4.3.1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The methods used to answer RQ2 differed from the other research questions. RQ2 invited a comparison of teachers' experiences of stress by sector. In order to calculate the descriptive statistics necessary to quantitatively compare 'stress', I firstly needed to confirm the factors of teacher stress. In this context, 'factors' are defined as the latent (or unobserved) variables that underlie a theoretical concept or 'construct' (Brown, 2015). Information about the construct is typically collected through an instrument (e.g. a questionnaire). By way of example, Boyle et al (1995) conducted a questionnaire (SITQ) with teachers in Malta. From here, they identified workload, pupil behaviour, professional recognition needs, colleague relations, and time or resources as the five factors of the teacher stress construct. In this example, the latent variables (or factors), such as 'workload' were not observed directly, rather they were measured through a series of indicators associated with the factor. For example, in Boyle et al's model, the indicator 'too much work to do' was associated with the 'workload' factor of teacher stress, whereas 'maintaining class discipline' was associated with the 'pupil behaviour' factor.

Prior to attempting to answer RQ2, I had developed a theoretical model about the factors which might underlie teacher stress for my sample populations. This model was based on Boyle et al's (1995) research, and informed by other literature which indicated that school-level accountability could be an additional sixth factor to teacher stress (section 2.4.6). Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) provided an appropriate means through which to test these theories because the technique, which belongs to the family of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) methods, is used in instances whereby the researcher has some prior understanding of the factor structures (Byrne, 2005; Blunch, 2013).

After developing the theoretical model, CFA allowed me to 'fit' this to the data in an effort to confirm my theory. From here, I could evaluate as to whether or not the model was a good fit, or if it required refinement, or re-specification. The following sections outline these methods in more detail, and explain the way in which models were evaluated.

Collaboration

The methods and analysis detailed here and in *Chapter 6: Stress findings* are based on an unpublished co-authored conference paper presented at BERA, Manchester UK, 2019 (Brady & Connolly, 2019). In the first instance, I ran preliminary CFA using data collected in response to questionnaire item Q4.1 (*appendix 2*). At a later date, I entered a collaboration with Vaughan Connolly, PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge. After reviewing the preliminary analysis, Connolly developed the methods which are described here and in the unpublished conference paper. Connolly conducted analysis using STATA 16. I replicated his methods and analysis using SPSS AMOS Graphics (version 25). The results reported here and in *Chapter 6: Stress findings* are from this replica analysis.

Pre-CFA checks

CFA is based on linear statistical models and it can be affected by sample size, missing data, and the presence of multicollinearity. Therefore, before attempting to fit models to my data, it was necessary to check the suitability of the data for this procedure. Firstly, I needed to consider if the sample size was adequate to conduct CFA. As I wished to model intra-sector factor relationships, I split my data into two groups: state school classroom teachers and middle leaders ($n = 421$), and private school classroom teachers and middle leaders ($n = 278$). Even when treated as two data sets, the sample sizes were more than adequate for CFA according to various estimations. Although reluctant to recommend 'rules of thumb', Kline (2011) advises that 200 observations should be sufficient to attempt CFA, but anything below 100 is untenable. On the other hand, Jackson (2003) makes the more stringent proposal that there should be at least 10 observations per item. For my 22-item questionnaire this would equate to a minimum sample size of 220, and both of my groups exceeded this recommendation. With regards to missing values, as the proportion of complete cases was very high (0.98), I opted to proceed with a listwise deletion method without imputation.

Although the sample sizes were satisfactory, I checked the data for multicollinearity as this can contribute to large Standard Errors and unreliable estimates. To evaluate the data for collinearity, I followed three steps with the unadjusted stress data. Firstly, I calculated the R^2 between each variable and the others. I did this in order to identify the proportion of variance that could be explained by another variable. High R^2 values would indicate collinearity, specifically Kline (2011) advises that R^2 values $>.90$ represent extreme

collinearity. However, all R² values in this data set were <.76. Nevertheless, before ruling out the possibility of problematic multicollinearity, I calculated tolerance values and Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs). Tolerance is the percentage of the independent variables' variance that is not explained by the other independent variables $(1 - R^2)$, whereas the closely related VIF $(1/ (1 - R^2))$ indicates the extent to which collinearity inflates the Standard Errors. Kline (2011) suggests that multicollinearity could be present when tolerance values are < .10, but the reciprocal VIF is > 10. Therefore, I made the calculations and found that the tolerance values for all indictors were >.29. I concluded that multicollinearity was not of significant concern, and that the data were suitable for CFA.

When considering models, we recognised that the private teacher data included some observations from the same schools. Connolly attempted to incorporate these groupings into the private school model by creating a two-level model. However, this additional level did not affect the results, and therefore we proceeded with a more parsimonious single level model.

CFA methods

I set out with the objective of attempting to confirm Boyle et al's (1995) five-factor model of stress before investigating as to whether this could be improved by the addition of an 'accountability' factor. However, *Chapter 6: Stress findings* reports more than two models, and this is because when conducting CFA, it is good practice to present a range of alternative models in order to ascertain the relative suitability of each. During CFA analysis, we took the following steps: model specification, fitting the data to the model (firstly with state school data and then with private school data), model refinement or re-specification as necessary.

We used the Maximum Likelihood Estimation method to determine our model parameters, and we had devised in advance a method through which we would refine models. This method, based on Brown's (2015) recommendations, involved examining global fit indices and local areas of strain – which are specific points of ill-fit within a model.

There are a range of indices that help researchers to evaluate and compare the overall 'global fit' of the models that they are testing. When evaluating our models, we adopted conventional indices, of which we selected the more conservative guidelines:

- CFI ≥ .95
- TLI ≥ .95
- RMSEA ≤ .07
- SRMR ≤ .08
- X^2 (chi-squared)

(Hair et al., 2014; Hooper et al., 2008; Kline, 2011).

Both the CFI and TLI link to the average correlation between variables whereby greater correlations will lead to higher fit indices. Both CFI and TLI assume a value of 0 – 1 with higher values suggesting a better model fit. However, these indices should not be studied in isolation. It is also important to consider the RMSEA which is a measure of the residual variance in a model. In the case of RMSEA, smaller values indicate less residual variance and thus a better fit. The SRMR, on the other hand, provides an absolute measure of fit. The SRMR is a standardised measure that calculates the difference between observed and prediction variance (Kenny, 2015). Unlike other fit indices, it does not favour parsimony and so does not penalise models for complexity (*ibid*). In this case, lower values indicate a better fit. Finally, although the chi-squared (which checks the null hypothesis that the model is correct), is reported, less weight is afforded to this when determining the goodness of fit because it is sensitive to sample size. Specifically, with sample sizes >400, paying undue attention to the chi-squared test could lead to increased likelihood of Type II error (i.e. rejecting the model when it is true) (Kenny, 2015; Hair et al., 2014).

To compare models, we considered the theoretical fit as well as the fit indices. We evaluated the theoretical justification of a model based on prior literature and on a review of the themes that emerged in the qualitative sample. Reviewing models with the qualitative data in this way helped us to identify how factors related to each other, and how and why covariance across indicators occurred.

Alongside these considerations, we evaluated the validity of our models. Specifically, we considered construct, convergent and discriminant validity. The first of these 'construct

validity' ascertains the extent to which a model measures the hypothetical construct that it claims to measure. Kline (2016) notes that there is no specific test for this, however a factor that is indicated by items concerning pupil behaviour, but is labelled 'workload' might be considered to have poor construct validity. Convergent validity asks as to whether or not items that should be related are in fact related (Kline, 2016). For example, it would be expected that indicators on the same factor (e.g. pupil behaviour) would be associated with each other (*ibid*). If one indicator did not link to the others, the researcher would need to ascertain as to whether or not the indicator was reflecting stress from pupil behaviour. We measured convergent validity by examining the composite reliability of factor indicators and this suggested the extent to which these indicators belonged together as a group of reliable indicators for the identified factor. Discriminant validity is related to convergent validity as evaluates the extent to which a model adequately distinguishes between factors (Kenny, 2016). For example, if two factors on a model (e.g. workload and colleagues) are very highly correlated, it might be concluded that the discriminant validity is poor because the indicators do not adequately distinguish between these theorised latent variables. We measured discriminant validity by looking at the correlation between factors as well as the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each factor.

As part of our model evaluation we also considered local areas of strain, which are specific points of ill-fit within a model. Local areas of strain can be identified through an examination of standardised residuals and modification indices (MI). Specifically, standardised residuals, which measure the difference between observed and expected values), any values of >2.58 can indicate areas poor fit (Brown, 2015). Based on the standardised residuals and theoretical considerations, the researcher may consider the justification for removing items from a factor. MI show covariance and they can suggest ways in which to modify the model to improve fit e.g. by allowing errors on the same factor to covary. Researchers typically address higher MI first, and $MI \geq 3.84$ would suggest serious ill-fit (Brown, 2015). However, as Hair et al (2014) advise, these suggested refinements should only be enacted if they are supported by theoretical or empirical considerations.

Model refinement

During the model refinement process, we followed a procedure recommended by Brown (2015):

   a.   Examine MI and indicators to identify those with a low proportion of variance arising from the associated factor (≤ 20%). Consider theoretical basis for removing items.
   b.   After removing each unsatisfactory item, rerun model, and reanalyse global fit alongside MI. Identify and allow theoretically justified parameters (e.g. covariance of error terms)
   c.   Examine the matrix of standardised residuals for items with excessively high residuals (>2.58). Consider theoretical basis for removing these items.
   d.   Re-run with refinements. Repeat as necessary.

As *Chapter 6: Stress findings* details, overall we tested five models starting with Boyle et al's (1995) five-factor model of teacher stress, before attempting to refine this and considering if it could be improved by the addition of an 'accountability' dimension'.

4.3.2. Qualitative data analysis

Interview and focus groups were analysed using a framework analysis approach. This method was first designed by Ritchie and Spencer (1994) and intended for use with policy orientated research. It is well suited to research projects that have a pre-existing topic of interest in mind, and a limited time frame for completion (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009). Furthermore, it is dynamic which means that interpretations can change or adapt as new data are presented (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). Finally, due to the time constraints of the PhD research, framework analysis offered a pragmatic approach whereby it was possible to commence interview analysis before all the interviews were complete.

As part of the data interpretation and analysis process, I developed understandings which then were tested, adapted and altered as new data were collected. However, it should be noted that despite occasional adaptations to the line of questioning in interviews and focus groups, the field of inquiry and core questions remained the same i.e. centred around teachers' experiences of workload, stress, and teacher monitoring practices.

As Ritchie and Spencer (1994) outline, there are four stages to framework analysis:

- familiarisation
- identifying a thematic framework
- indexing
- charting
- mapping and interpretation

The following sections explain my experience of each of these steps in relation to the study, and *appendix 6* displays the categories and sub-categories with which I labelled qualitative data.

Familiarisation

Familiarisation is a stage of data organisation which involves 'immersion in the data' (Ritchie, & Spencer 1994, p. 179). It involves listening to recordings, reviewing transcripts, and identifying preliminary ideas for themes.

The process of familiarisation was drawn out over the qualitative data-collection period. It typically took four to six weeks to transcribe each recording, after which I would read over the transcript and annotate initial ideas about teachers' experiences of workload, stress, and monitoring. After all the interviews and focus groups had been transcribed, I re-read the content and created a summary document of each case. For one-to-one interviews I treated each individual as a single case. With the focus groups, I provided a summary of the group discussion as a whole and noted which participants tended to be in agreement with the discussed topic and who were the dissenters or atypical cases. If a consensus was evident, this was also recorded.

Identifying a thematic framework

During this stage of analysis, I worked to identify key themes. As I was already familiar with the data, I had an overview of some of the recurring core themes. The over-arching 'headings' for the thematic framework were already determined as I was guided by the research questions and the topic of interest. I started with the key variables of interest: workload, stress, and monitoring, and highlighted any information which spoke to any of these categories.

Identifying contributions that related to the key concepts was more straightforward with one-to-one interview transcripts compared to focus group transcripts. It was simpler

because the focus group conversations had a greater tendency to meander across topics, while the one-to-one interviewees tended to respond in detail to each question in turn. However, the analysis of the focus group data in particular proved useful in identifying the links that participants made between themes. At a later stage, these group discussions also helped me to map the complexity of the interrelations between variables.

Indexing

The thematic framework evolved into an index, or codebook – displayed in *appendix 6*. After identifying the major theme of discussion (workload/ stress/ monitoring), I began to sub-code within that category.

Workload:

For 'workload', the first sub-code was based around the aspect of 'workload' discussed by participants: composition, contributors, or perceptions of workload. These initial categories were structured according to my conceptualisation of 'workload' as comprised of these elements.

Composition:

The sub-sub categories displayed in *appendix 6* reflect workload questions included on the questionnaire. For example, the composition sub-code is further categorised into tasks such as 'marking', and 'meetings'. This list of tasks is the same list of tasks presented in questionnaire item Q2.2 – and this was loaned from TALIS 2013 and the Workload Challenge. To illustrate the coding mechanism, if an interviewee made a comment concerning a heavy volume of workload from marking, this would be categorised as Workload/Composition/ Marking.

Contributors:

'Contributors' comprised another sub-code of the workload category. Again, the sub-sub codes within 'contributors' were derived from existing literature and reflected the questionnaire. Questionnaire item 2.3.2 asked teachers where their burdensome workloads came from, and this question replicated a question asked in the Workload Challenge. The response options were presented as multiple choice (e.g. school policies,

pressures of schools' inspectorate). These multiple choice options formed the basis of the qualitative coding categories. However, during analysis, it was necessary to collapse some categories. 'School policies' and 'accountability', for example, were confounded as it quickly emerged that teachers felt that they had to comply with burdensome school policies such as regular in-depth marking because their managers monitored the extent of their compliance with these policies.

Responses / perceptions:

This sub-sub code of 'workload perception' was developed from the data. It is further divided into only two further categories: pragmatic responses, and affective responses. The first of these was used to flag instances whereby teachers identified that they, or their schools had implemented workload reduction measures, or found ways in which to effectively organise work demands, whereas the 'affective' category captured teachers' reports of their emotional or psychological response to their workload. This category had significant overlap with 'stress', and during the indexing process, I eventually collapsed it into the 'stress' code.

<u>Stress</u>

When participants discussed negative emotions relating to aspects of their work, I coded this as 'stress' (Kyriacou, 2002). Initially, the sub-codes of stress were based on the five factors of stress identified by Boyle et al (1995). This approach was appropriate as the qualitative data were designed to offer insight into the potential factors or stress, as well as to emphasise stressors that were not covered in the questionnaire. Therefore, the stress sub-sub codes were subject to development, amendment, and change through the process of analysis.

Furthermore, although my interest centred around school-level sources of stress, I could not develop an appreciation of these areas without considering their wider contexts – and so the codebook adapted to include discussion of stress from other sources such as parents, or external school inspections.

Monitoring:

My coding of discussions concerning 'monitoring' reflected the conceptual framework of the study. While I had initially planned to focus discussions on school-level instances of hierarchical monitoring, I recognised that this approach was limiting and would lead me to overlook a wealth of rich data which provided valuable information about the relationship between school-level monitoring practices and the wider contexts of teachers' work.

For this reason, the I expanded the coding category to consider 'accountability' from various layers of context instead of just school-level teacher monitoring. This change is reflected in the codebook displayed in *appendix 6*. Firstly, I identified whether participants discussed school, community, or national level monitoring. From here, I labelled the specific kind of monitoring under discussion (e.g. book trail), and then I considered teachers' perceptions of the purpose and value of those processes e.g. were they useful to teacher development? Or were they undertaken for a 'box-ticking' purpose?

Charting

'Charting' proved helpful when trying to understand patterns across and within cases. The process involves arranging extracts of data under the appropriate headings, as this facilitates quick review. By way of example, I documented all the different responses/ perceptions towards workload/ composition/ extra-curricular activities under the same heading. As I was able to quickly review across cases and within cases, the charting process supported my search for connections between ideas. To illustrate this point, on review of attitudes towards 'extra-curricular' activities, I could see that many of those who expressed positive opinions worked in the private sector, and specifically within boarding schools.

Barbour (2014) recognises that study participants who overlap on the sampling frame can be crucial resources in charting data, as they can offer an insight into different aspects of the study. In my case, I found focus groups a valuable resource – particularly when they contained teachers with experiences of different school types. Teachers who had worked in both the state and the private education sectors were able to offer illuminating comparisons across sectors. In addition, private teachers who had worked in both day and boarding schools were able to collectively discuss and compare similarities and

differences with colleagues in order to co-construct an explanation of the different expectations within such environments.

Through charting, it was possible to identify commonalities across different sub-categories of teachers. Furthermore, it became easier to identify typical experiences which I could then use to cross-validate quantitative findings using Morgan's (2019) cross tabulation method. As previously explained (section 3.4.2), where findings from different data types diverged or contradicted each other, I sought an explanation for this. I arrived at these explanations by considering weaknesses in question structure or format, and by theorising reasons as to why teachers might have identified one thing in the questionnaire, but then suggested something different in interviews/focus groups.

Mapping and interpretation

The mapping process links together with the interpretive phase of analysis because at this point, the researcher begins to search for structures underlying the data. The researcher must also seek explanations for these structures, how they came into being, and how they shape the participants' experiences of their work (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). These interpretations were informed by a Foucauldian perspective and led to the development of meta-inferences (section 3.4.2) – insights that related to all three research questions and interpreted trends in teachers' work in connection to their wider contexts.

In order to interpret data and build these meta-inferences, I considered the concepts outlined in *Chapters 1* and *2*. This consideration included a review of the teachers' qualitative accounts in relation to the understanding that teachers' work is framed by a macro-level hegemonic discourse. During analysis, I considered the truths that teachers propagated, and the way in which this interacted with their experiences of their work and identities. Furthermore, I examined their experiences to build an understanding of the systems within which they operated, and the values that these systems espoused and maintained through power techniques such as disciplinary or pastoral power. Focus group data were particularly valuable in supporting interpretations because the very explanations that I sought were often deliberated and constructed by the research participants as the discussion unfolded. The groups also offered insights into alternative explanations and a variety of cases.

Through interpreting data through this lens, I was able to arrive at a deep insight into the reasons as to why there were quantitative and qualitative differences between teachers' experiences across sectors. Furthermore, from these multiple teacher-level accounts, I was able to identify the commonalities in teachers' experiences, explanations, and interrelation with their framing contexts.

As a final comment on the overall framework analysis procedure, Bryman and Burgess's (1994) comments resonated with my experience. They note that analysis is 'not a separate phase' in qualitative research (p.217); instead they see it as an ongoing process. With regards to my own work, I would argue that the phases of framework analysis were not as distinct or linear as my description of this process might suggest. I did not complete interpretation as the final part of analysis. Rather, from the first interview, I had begun to theorise, interpret, and seek explanations for the phenomena that I had witnessed. However, these preliminary analyses were not cemented until I had completed the process of data integration and the development of meta-inferences.

4.4. Data quality

The sample, from both the state and private sector, were subject to an unavoidable response bias. Private school headteachers who responded to my communications to say that they could not participate in the study offered the greatest insight into the nature of this bias. Two headteachers replied to my recruitment letters to explain that they could not participate in the study as their schools were in a period of turbulence because working conditions were undergoing re-negotiation. These responses emphasised the problems of accessing participants via a gatekeeper. It was possible that headteachers were happy to distribute the questionnaire if they were confident of achieving responses that reflected favourably on their school and/or sector. Those with potentially stressed or dissatisfied staff may have preferred not to survey that dissatisfaction through a third-party researcher.

To counter this concern, I conducted telephone interviews with senior leaders and teachers who had not identified their schools in the questionnaire. They were reassured about anonymity and the manner in which the data would be used and communicated. Overall, I felt that phone interviewees encouraged narratives that focused both on the positive as well as less enjoyable aspects of teaching. Perhaps interviewees felt more enabled to talk on the phone as I could not see their face to visually identify them.

Furthermore, as both the questionnaire and interviews required time out of the teachers' working or personal lives, it is possible that only those with the time available would respond to the study. Such teachers might reasonably be expected to feel less stressed and more satisfied than those who worked longer hours. Alternatively, as suggested by TWS 2016 analysts, it could be that such a questionnaire would attract teachers who worked unusually long hours and wanted to express this fact (Higton, Leonardi, & Richards, 2017). The following sections detail the ways in which I responded to and accounted for bias in the study.

4.4.1. Questionnaires

Who participated?

In this section, I outline the demographics of my participants in order to help evaluate the extent to which the sample reflects the characteristics of the overall teaching workforce. This information helps to identify the extent to which questionnaire findings are generalisable and to evaluate the dependability of the qualitative sample.

The Schools Workforce Census (SWC) collects data annually on all teachers employed in state funded schools, and so I compare my state sector sample to the SWC data. As there are no comparable data for the private school sector, I use the ISC (2018) census to benchmark the representativeness of the sample population. It is possible that the demographics of private school teachers working in non-ISC schools will differ to those in ISC schools, but this was an unavoidable study limitation.

In the following sub-sections, I detail my sample according to gender, job role, teaching experience, contract type, school phase, school type, and school region.

Table 4.4: *Gender of participants by sector*

	State		Private		Total
Gender	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq
Female	401	87	184	55	585
Male	55	12	135	41	190
Other	1	<1	0	0	1
Prefer not to say	3	<1	13	4	16
Total	460	99*%	332	100%	792

*Does not total 100% because percentages have been rounded up

In England, 75% of teachers in state primary and secondary schools identify as female (Department for Education, 2016b). While there are no statistics available for the private sector as a whole, the ISC reports that 64% of its teachers are female and 36% male (ISC, 2017). Compared to the overall teaching population, there is an underrepresentation of male teachers in my state school sample, and an underrepresentation of women in the private school sample.

Role

Table 4.5: Job role of participants by sector

	State		Private		Total
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq
Classroom teacher	314	67	153	46	467
Middle management	87	19	114	34	201
Senior leadership team	35	8	44	13	79
Other	29	6	23	7	52
Prefer not to say	1	0	2	1	3
Total	466	100%	336	101%*	802

*Does not total 100% because percentages have been rounded up

A larger proportion of participants from the private sector worked in management roles (47%) compared to the state sector (27%). There are no data available to suggest the percentage of teachers who hold middle or senior management posts in either the private or state sectors, so I could not speculate as to whether or not the sample was representative of job roles in the wider teaching population. However, I afford consideration to the relatively high proportion of SLT in the private sample throughout the study because there was some evidence to suggest that SLT's experiences of their work differed to that of classroom teachers and middle leaders.

Experience

Overall, participants from the state sector had an average of 11 years teaching experience (SD =10.07) and the private school teacher sample had an average of 16 years of teaching experience (SD =8.65). These data could not be benchmarked against other sources.

Contract type

Overall, 81% (377) of the state school sample worked on full-time contracts compared to 80% (272) of private school teachers. DfE statistics show that 77% of state school teachers work full-time (Department for Education, 2016b), whereas ISC reports that 76% of its teachers work on full-time contracts (ISC, 2017). A request for information under the FOIA suggests that 70% (23,925) of a headcount of 78,703 private school teachers in ISC and non-association schools are employed on a full-time basis (Department for Education, 2018c). According to these statistics, full-time teachers are slightly overrepresented in this sample for teachers in both sectors.

Some of the analysis is relevant only to full-time, or part-time workers in this report. Where this is the case, it is clearly specified throughout the thesis.

School phase

Table 4.6: Participants by school phase

	Private (n)	%	State (n)	%
Multi-phase	214	63	21	5
Primary	46	14	220	47
11 to 18	64	19	223	48
Other	13	4	1	0
Total	337	100	465	100

In England, 49% of state school teachers work in primary phase education and 51% in secondary or sixth form establishments (Department for Education, 2017a). My questionnaire captured responses from an appropriate proportion of primary and secondary/sixth form phase teachers in the state sector.

It was difficult to compare the number of teachers working in private schools by age phase because school phases differ to those in the state sector. Furthermore, a larger proportion of private schools operate across multiple age groups. However, from information supplied under a FOIA (Department for Education, 2018c), it was possible to calculate that 15% of private school teachers (11,967) worked in primary phase schools, 21% (16,838) worked

in secondary phase schools, and the remaining 63% worked in middle (age 7 – 13) or multi-phase schools. The sampled respondents broadly reflected these trends.

School type

Table 4.7: Participants by school type

State school teachers			Private school teachers		
Type	n	% of sample	Type	n	% of sample
State maintained	215	46	Day school	188	57
Academy converter	141	30	School with boarders	150	43
Academy sponsored	82	18			
Other	25	5			
Free school	3	1			
Total	466	100	Total	338	100

Recent statistics show that at January 2018, 35% of state-funded schools were free schools or academies. In total, 72% of state secondary schools compared to 27% of primary schools had academy status, and there was significant regional variation. As data concerning the proportion of teachers in each state school type are not freely available, I could not judge the representativeness of sample by this variable. There were, however, no statistical differences in findings when state school data were grouped by school type.

According to published statistics, when association and non-association private schools are considered together, 26% of these schools offer boarding facilities and the majority (64%) are day schools ('Department for Education, 2018c). However, the proportion of ISC schools that offer boarding is higher, with 36% accommodating at least one boarder. A disproportionate proportion of participants in this sample worked in boarding schools – this is considered throughout the reporting of the findings.

At times there were interesting variations between private day schools and boarding schools, where this was the case, these findings are reported. However, this is not a

central theme of discussion as the study focuses on comparing between, rather than within the education sectors.

Region

Table 4.8: Regional distribution of state school questionnaire participants compared to national distribution

Region	National % (FTE) *	Study sample (n)	Sample %
North East	5%	26	6%
North West	13%	60	13%
Yorkshire and the Humber	10%	45	10%
East Midlands	9%	29	6%
West Midlands	11%	57	12%
East of England	11%	39	8%
Inner London	6%	60	13%
Outer London	11%	20	4%
South East	16%	77	17%
South West	9%	49	11%
Total	100%	462	100%

*Data sourced from Regional, LA and school tables: Schools Workforce Census 2017

When considered by region, the state school data were broadly representative of the national distribution of teachers. There was a slight over-representation of Inner-London teachers and a slight under representation of outer London teachers. However, when inner and outer London teachers were considered together, the proportion of teachers from the capital city (17%) matched the national proportion (17%).

Table 4.9 displays the private school teachers sample by region. It was not possible to compare this to national statistics on the regional distribution of private school teachers because these data are not publicly available. That said, the data did reflect reports that private schools are disproportionately concentrated in the South East of the country (Green, Anders, et al., 2017).

Table 4.9: Regional distribution of private school questionnaire participants

Region	Study sample (n)	Sample %
North East	6	2%
North West	4	1%
Yorkshire and the Humber	24	7%
East Midlands	61	19%
West Midlands	15	5%
East of England	23	7%
Inner London	26	8%
Outer London	13	4%
South East	113	35%
South West	37	11%
Total	322	100%

4.4.2. Interview and focus groups

As explained, the phase 3 qualitative interview participants were selected from the questionnaire respondents. All interviewees had to fulfil the criteria of working as teachers within the English education system. Although sampling was largely dictated by those who were willing to engage in further discussion with me, I aimed to achieve a spread of interviewees who worked across phases, and in different roles.

In total, I included data from 22 interviews and eight focus groups. I included voices from teachers in 36 different schools: 22 state schools, and 14 private schools. Furthermore, I spoke to 31 female teachers (19 in the state sector, and 12 in the private sector), and 20 male teachers (five in the state sector and 15 in the private sector. Table 4.10 displays the methods through which these qualitative data were collected.

Table 4.10: Summary of qualitative participants by data collection method and sector

Sector	Interviewees (n)	Focus group participants (n)	Unique schools
State	11	13	22
Private	10	17	14

Table 4.11: State school one-to-one interviewees by gender and role

Role	Female	Male	Total participants
Classroom teacher	2	1	3
Middle manager	5	0	5
SLT	2	1	3
Total	9	2	11

*Includes HODs, HOYs, Phase Leaders and equivalent job titles

Four of the 11 interviewed state teachers worked in primary education, and the other seven in schools for pupils aged 11 - 18. Teachers worked in different regions from across the country, with at least one interviewee from each major region (East of England, London, Midlands, North of England, South East, and South West).

While it is clearly the case that a sample of 11 interviewees across a sector cannot represent the entire state school teaching workforce, I consider the sample successful in accessing a range of teachers' experiences from across the country and in different school phases and roles. I was less successful in achieving gender diversity in interviews. This limitation was simply because fewer men had completed the survey and very few responded to further invitation to interview.

Private sector: Interviews

While I was successful in recruiting teachers across different job roles in the private sector, the gender bias of the questionnaire respondents was also apparent in the interviewee sample. This imbalance happened because fewer women and classroom teachers had consented to be contacted again in the private sector. Although I tried to recruit from this demographic, I was restricted by the availability of contacts.

Table 4.12: Private school one-to-one interviewees by gender and role

Role	Female	Male	Total participants
Classroom teacher	1	1	2
Middle manager	1	1	2
SLT	0	6	6
Total	2	8	10

*Includes HODs, HOYs, Phase Leaders and equivalent job titles

Three of the interviewees worked in preparatory schools which is roughly equivalent to primary phase education. The other seven worked with 11- 18-year olds. I obtained at least one interviewee from each major region of the country with the exception of the South West of England.

Focus groups: State schools

Table 4.13: State school focus group participants by gender and role

Role	Female	Male	Total participants
Classroom teacher	6	1	7
Middle manager	4	1	5
SLT	0	1	1
Total	10	3	13

As with the interviews, fewer male teachers participated in the focus groups which reflected the lower national proportion of male teachers compared to female teachers.

Table 4.14: State school focus group participants by region

Group	Location	Total participants
5	London	3
6	North of England	5
7	North of England	5
Total		13

Two of the groups were held in the same region; this was because recruitment was conducted mainly via local union branches, and it was those in the northern counties that expressed a willingness to support the study by promoting a potential focus group.

Table 4.15: Private school focus group participants by gender and role

Role	Female	Male	Total participants
Classroom teacher	5	2	7
Middle manager	4	5	9
SLT	1	0	1
Total	10	7	17

Over half (10/17) of focus group recruits from the private sector were female. As such, I was satisfied with the focus group composition especially as the represented women were equally distributed across managerial and non-managerial positions.

Focus groups with private school teachers were located in different regions of the country:

Table 4.16: Private school focus groups by region

Group	Location	Total participants
1a	East of England	2
1b	East of England	4
2	South West	4
3	Midlands	4
4	London	3
Total		17

I undertook private school focus groups 1a, 1b, 2, and 4 on school premises on the invitation of the schools' headteachers. Groups 1a and 1b are named as such because they were conducted with staff from the same school, on the same day. The reason for splitting the group was that it was not possible to timetable all the teachers to be available at the same time as it was during a teaching day.

Focus group 3 was conducted in a community centre. This group was the only private school group discussion that included teachers from different schools. I conducted this group to ascertain if a neutral location and teachers from a mix of schools would yield a different type of conversation.

4.5. Analytical adequacy

4.5.1. Questionnaire bias

As explained, when the variable 'gender' was considered, the samples were not representative of the overall teaching population. As such, I needed to assess the impact of this over-representation on the variable averages. In order to achieve this, I calculated the descriptive statistics for each variable, and visualised data in standard box plots. Firstly, I did not impute data, and so observations that contained missing values were excluded from analysis. Secondly, before creating the box plots or calculating descriptive statistics, I rescaled the stress and workload perception variables (0 = lowest stress, 100 = highest stress, and 0 = most negative perception of workload, 100 = most positive perception of workload). At this stage, I had not started to determine the factors of stress, therefore for this variable, I proceeded by adding together each teachers' score for each of the 22 stress items before rescaling. The perception of workload variable was calculated in the same way.

Variable	M	SD
Stress	58.91	16.67
Workload perception	16.64	19.6
Working hours	55.24	12.62
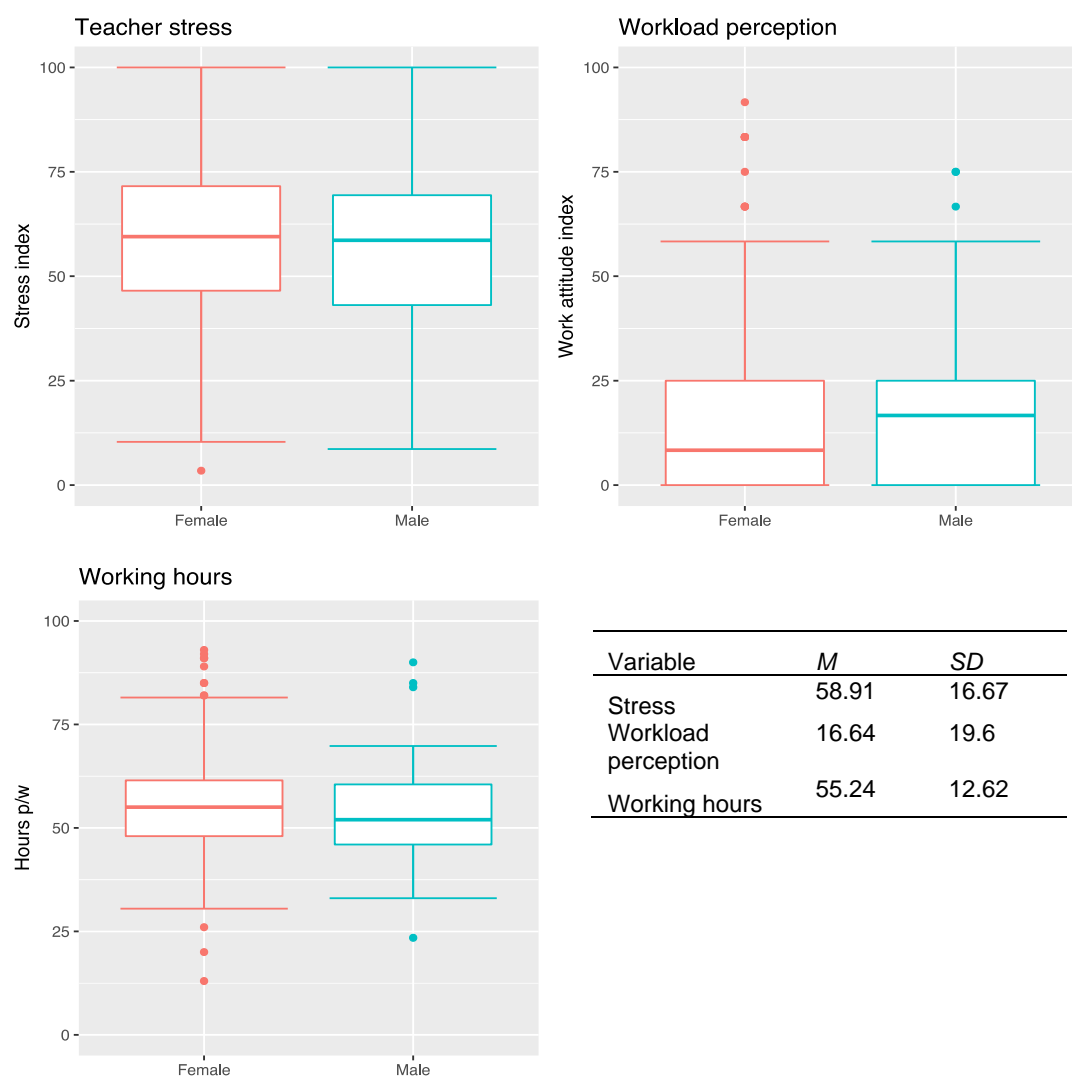
Teacher stress, n = 454; perception of workload, n = 453; working hours, n = 352 (full-time only)

Figure 4.2: State school stress, perception of workload, and working hours for all job roles by gender
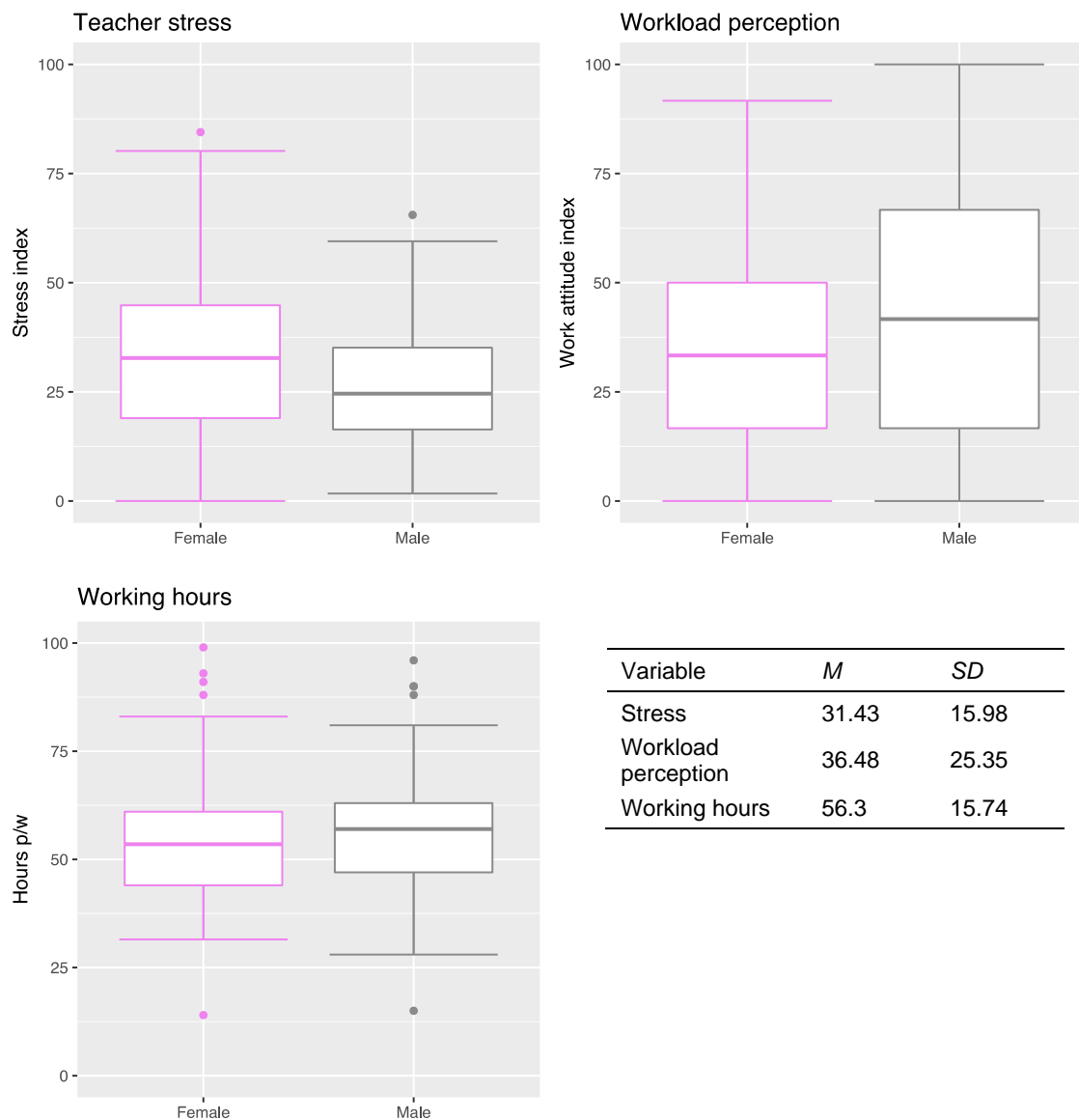
Teacher stress, n = 310; perception of workload, n = 308; working hours, n = 242 (full-time only)

Figure 4.3: Private school stress, perception of workload, and working hours for all job roles by gender

As demonstrated by the boxplots, women in the state sector had, on average, lower perceptions of workload compared to male teachers in the same sector. Similarly, in the private sector, on average men had better perceptions of workload compared to their female colleagues.

On closer examination of the data, the differences in working hours were partially explained by job role. In the sample, more men than women held senior leadership positions, and as depicted later, senior leaders worked longer hours than some of their

more junior counterparts (figure 5.1). Stress and workload perception could not be explained in this way because in both sectors SLT were more stressed than other teacher types, and held very similar perceptions of workload.

Clustering

Data in the sample were clustered to an unknown extent in the private sector, and possibly in the state sector. This imbalance was a function of both the study design and the organisational differences between the sectors. It was not possible to evaluate the extent of clustering in the state sector because only a handful of teachers had identified their schools. In the private school data, there were 16 schools where it was evident that two or more teachers had completed the questionnaire. The number of observations per known cluster is outlined below in table 4.17:

Table 4.17: Private school observations per school cluster

Cluster	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
n	164	40	35	18	13	12	10	8	8	6	5	4	4	3	2	2	2

Cluster A contains observations from both participants who preferred not to name their school and from schools with only one named observation.

It was important to consider as to whether or not any of the clusters significantly affected the variables averages. It could have been the case that there was one cluster of observations from a single school that educed significantly different responses compared to the rest of the sample. To assess if any of the clusters were significantly different from others, I ran an ANOVA test. Although an ANOVA test can flag that groups are significantly different, post-hoc tests such as the Tukey's honestly significant different (HSD) test are required to identify *which* clusters are significantly different from each other.

Prior to attempting to run ANOVA, I conducted Levene's test to evaluate the equality of variances between school clusters as homogenous variance is an assumption of ANOVA. As the Levene's test indicated homogenous variance across groups, I proceeded with the intended test. The ANOVA results indicated non-significant differences in variance for the stress and workload perception variables. However, a further ANOVA test indicated significant differences between clusters for working hours for full-time teachers ($p = 0.03$).

A Tukey's HSD test with 95% family-wise confidence level showed that cluster F (n = 12) differed significantly with cluster O (n = 2). As cluster O was small (n = 2), I did not adjust for this difference.

Reflexivity

I was aware that like the questionnaire data, qualitative data would contain bias. I recognised that my personal characteristics and professional history no doubt impacted on the kinds of rapport that I was able to build with participants, the lines of inquiry I chose to pursue, the narratives that the participants shared, and the manner in which I interpreted the data. Therefore, in order to identify bias in qualitative data interpretation, I engaged in reflexive methods. Berger (2015) defines reflexivity as:

> *'[The] turning of the researcher lens back onto oneself to recognise and take responsibility for one's own situatedness within the research and the effect that it may have on the setting and people being studied, questions being asked, data being collected and its interpretation.'*
>
> *(Berger, 2017, p.220)*

In order to encourage reflexivity, I maintained a research diary throughout the qualitative data collection phase. In this diary, I logged my thoughts, feelings, and initial responses to interviews and focus group discussions. After completing each stage of the qualitative data analysis, I re-read the log which illuminated my bias in selecting findings, analysing, and interpreting data. For example, I had detailed feelings of sadness after an early visit to a private school. Following the visit, I had perceived an impassable chasm between the opportunities and facilities afforded to private school pupils when compared to those in state schools. I recognised on reflection, that some of my qualitative findings could be informed by a view that private school teachers taught in positions of privilege and therefore must have easier (i.e. less stressful) working lives.

To address this clear interpretative bias, I returned to the data and engaged in divergent thinking. I deliberated if from the data it was possible to conclude that private school teachers in fact had more stressful working lives than state teachers. While I could not conclude this from a re-reading of the quantitative data outputs, the reflexive practices

enabled me to develop a more nuanced understanding of the topic. I started to identify the complex and interacting pressures evident in private school teachers' accounts of their working lives, and recognised that the sources and contexts of these stressors differed so considerably from the state sector that it prohibited direct comparison. Through the reflexive process, I could also more deeply consider the extent to which the gatekeepers to private education affected the sample. It was through this reflexive process that I recognised that I might have been offered a carefully constructed image of private education because headteachers who felt that their staff were in any way dissatisfied may not have wanted me to conduct questionnaires or surveys with their staff (section 4.4).

Access and positionality

In terms of positionality, prior to commencing the research, I created professional online profiles that were publicly available. I set-up profiles on Twitter, LinkedIn, Academia.edu. I did this because I hoped that by situating myself and my study aims in the public domain, it might encourage greater participation in the research because potential participants could be reassured by my public visibility.

In my profiles, I wrote that I was a former secondary school teacher. I wished to publicise this fact because I believed that it would help me to negotiate 'insider' status with potential participants. Merton (1972) defines an 'insider' as a researcher who shares some of the same characteristics as the participants. These characteristics include: social class, gender, sexual orientation, professional history, and age among others. This view, however, assumes that characteristics are fixed and thus insider status is secured by the presence or absence of similarities between the researcher and the participant (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006).

Contrary to Mercer (2007, p. 4) who also views some aspects of identity (such as gender) as 'innate and unchanging', I perceive identify as socially constructed, multiple and dynamic (section 1.6.2). Such a view is supported by Hall (2000, p. 17) who states that identities 'are the product of the marking of difference' within a discursive practice. This statement means that identities are negotiated, and that categories such as 'female' exist only in tandem with other identities such as 'male'. Such identities cannot be realised without comparison to another, as it is only through otherness and the marking of boundaries of who or what we are, or are not, that aspects of identity become defined.

Rabe (2003) perceives that the researcher's location as an insider/outsider is situated on a continuum. However, my own research demonstrated to me that such a positionality is not always linear – but can be multi-dimensional, like identities themselves – and thus identity negotiation proved a complex interaction. There were two particular events during the research process which foregrounded the dynamic, inter-sectional, and interactive nature of an insider/outsider positionality. Both of these instances concerned phone calls which I received after issuing recruitment communications for the project. The first of these phone calls was from a headteacher at a private school. He asked, in an indirect way, about my political leanings and views on private education. During this line of questioning, he mentioned an article which I had previously written – which assumed a Bordieuan analytical lens. While he expresses interest in the study and followed-up to ask for preliminary findings months later, to the best of my knowledge, he did not share the online questionnaire link with his teaching staff. From this conversation, I understood that my history as a mainstream state school teacher coupled with an article that adopted a class analysis approach, marked me as a potential outsider to some private school gatekeepers.

From here, after several unanswered letters, and a few polite rejections from other private school headteachers, I began to wonder if, as state school alumni and former teacher, I was excluded from access to some parts of the private school network. It is of course, impossible to examine the veracity of such a conjecture because as a sole researcher, I could not compare the ease at which I might have gained access to these institutions with a different set of characteristics. Furthermore, I have no way of evaluating the extent to which my positionality as a PhD researcher at an elite university (with historic ties to the private education sector) influenced my ability to gain access.

The second discussion of note which also emphasised the dynamic and interactive nature of identity, was with a regional trade union leader. I had contacted regional trade union organisers to ask them to promote the questionnaire. While most of the union leaders I spoke to appeared to be genuinely interested in the study, one conversation remains in my mind. My conversant phoned to ask about why I wanted to research the private sector alongside the state sector. I felt that the union representative considered my study to be naive or uniformed in some way as he began to explain the structure of the state education sector. I felt that the initial tone of the conversation was hostile – and in response, I chose to emphasise my background as a state school teacher as I wanted to renegotiate the identity that I felt was being constructed for me. The conversation ended with the union

representative agreeing to share the questionnaire link with some colleagues in their next meeting – although I could not know if he delivered on this promise. This event served as a reminder that it would be erroneous to assume automatic 'insider' status due to a particular characteristic. Identities, as this example illustrates, are socially negotiated, dynamic, and composed of intersecting of overlapping features that can be foregrounded or backgrounded by any of those involved in the identity construction process.

Although I have chosen to detail these two incidents, one relating to a trade union leader and the other to a private school headteacher – these situations are exceptional in that most of the positionality negotiation work was subtle and almost imperceptible at times. While I may have felt orientated towards an 'outsider' location when speaking to private school leaders and association representatives, many of these people's actions suggested that they were open and willing to offer me access to their schools and teachers. Whether they considered that they were permitting access to an outsider researcher, or sharing their experiences with a fellow educator, I cannot know with certainty. I do, however, remain unambiguously grateful for the contribution of all the participants across both sectors, and to the school leaders who invited me to their premises and generously shared with me their time, thoughts, and reflections.

4.6. Limitations

The limitations of the study and methodology have been detailed throughout the chapter. To summarise:

- Data between sectors were not collected in a symmetrical manner
- Data were clustered to an unknown extent
- There was some evidence that only private schools who were proud of their working conditions were willing to participate in the study
- Non-representative questionnaire sample according to gender

While I have made every effort to ensure the replicability and dependability of the research, there remain some threats to the quality of the data. With regards to the quantitative dimensions of the study, the major threats were the gender imbalance in the sample, and clustering. As explained, I accounted for these imbalances by exploring differences between groups according to gender and school cluster. Gender was not a grouping variable of interest, although it should be acknowledged that there was an

overrepresentation of women in the state sample, and an overrepresentation of men in the private sample. When I examined private school clusters, there were no significant differences between groups. That said, the data should not be understood as unambiguously indicative of the experiences of all teachers within England state and private schools.

There were some threats to the quality of the qualitative data. Most notably, there was evidence to suggest that the private school participants who wished to engage in interviews and focus groups may have worked in schools where conditions were superior to other school types. In order to manage this and fully consider the potential impact on the credibility of the study, data are analysed with this caveat in mind and, during analysis, I paid particular note to the job role of participants. From here, I was able to speculate about the potential motivations or nature of bias of the participants. I share these considerations with the reader throughout the findings and analysis chapters. Furthermore, I was able to conduct a private school focus group in a neutral space with teachers who had not necessarily participated in the questionnaire.

4.7. Conclusion

In order to provide methodological transparency, this chapter has detailed the way in which data were cleaned and processed. In addition, I explained the conventions used to report results and the reasons why these methods were selected. I made explicit the values which were considered as outliers, and how contradictory entries were handled. Furthermore, the explanation of the methods through which qualitative data were coded allows the methods to be repeated and thus improves the dependability of the study.

As explained throughout the chapter, collecting data in an asymmetrical manner was unavoidable due to the different structures of the sectors which made it challenging to access teachers through the same channels. The emergence of these challenges informed my understanding of the differences in operations between the two sectors. In response to the limiting factors, I checked for un-representative school clusters. Furthermore, as explained, where possible I visualise uncertainty around quantitative data.

As I believe that no study can be truly objective and free of bias, I have made my methods, data-manipulation techniques, and positionality as explicit as possible so that readers can

use this information to inform their own judgements about the data presented in the forthcoming chapters.

Chapter 5: Workload findings

5.1. Introduction to chapters 5 – 7

Chapters 5 – 7 report findings and a preliminary discussion of findings from each of the research questions: Research question 1 (workload), research question 2 (stress), and research question 3 (teacher monitoring). I divide findings into three chapters in order to facilitate the reader's navigation through each question. Additionally, to help the reader quickly distinguish between the source of the qualitative data, I make a visual distinction between state and private school teachers; contributions from the former are coloured blue, and the latter pink.

Individual interviewees from the state sector are afforded an identifying participant code ranging from P1 – P11. This simply identifies the participant by a number. Private school individual interviewees are distinguished in a similar way (e.g. P1a) whereby the 'a' indicates that this is a private sector participant. When relevant, information such as teachers' job roles, age phase taught, or gender are provided in-text. To protect participants' identities, I do not disclose the region within which they worked, and I occasionally withhold other potential identifying information such as gender. Focus group participants are not afforded a unique code within the text, and the region within which the group was held is usually not disclosed. Again this is to protect anonymity.

The structure of the findings chapters mirrors the data collection process, with each question addressed individually starting with quantitative data before moving to qualitative explanations of the data. Following this, I cross-validate findings from the questionnaire with qualitative data. The qualitative data are also employed to explain trends which emerged during questionnaire analysis, and these explanations are exemplified with quotations from focus groups and interviews. As this point, the explanatory aspect is pragmatic in nature – deep insight is not achieved until *Chapter 8: Meta-inferential discussion* when findings from across all research questions are considered in relation to the theoretical lens. As is reiterated at the beginning of *Chapter 6*, qualitative data are also used there for an evaluative purpose as they help to inform the adequacy of the proposed model of teacher stress. At the end of each chapter (5 – 7), the major findings from both data types are summarised.

Finally, there is significant overlap between each research question's findings. These overlaps are not discussed in detail in chapters 5 – 7, but are considered in *Chapter 8: Meta-inferential discussion*.

5.2. Questionnaire findings

RQ1: How and why do the characteristics and contributors to teachers' workload compare between sectors?

5.2.1. Characteristics of workload

The following section answers the research question by identifying and comparing the characteristics of teachers' workloads between sectors. As explained in *Chapter 3: Methodology* (section 3.3.3) 'characteristics' is defined as weekly working hours, the composition of teachers' workload (i.e. what they spent their time doing), and their perceptions of their workloads e.g. as manageable or burdensome.

Weekly working hours

Full-time state and private school participants reported an average weekly workload of 55 and 56 hours respectively. Compared to the state sample, there is a larger proportion of SLT members in the private sector sample (table 4.5), and so a more meaningful comparison can be drawn by grouping teachers by sector and job role. The small sub-group sizes (especially for SLT) and large confidence intervals should be emphasised, and the results interpreted cautiously. The recorded weekly working hours do **not** take into account school holidays.

Working hours by sector and role
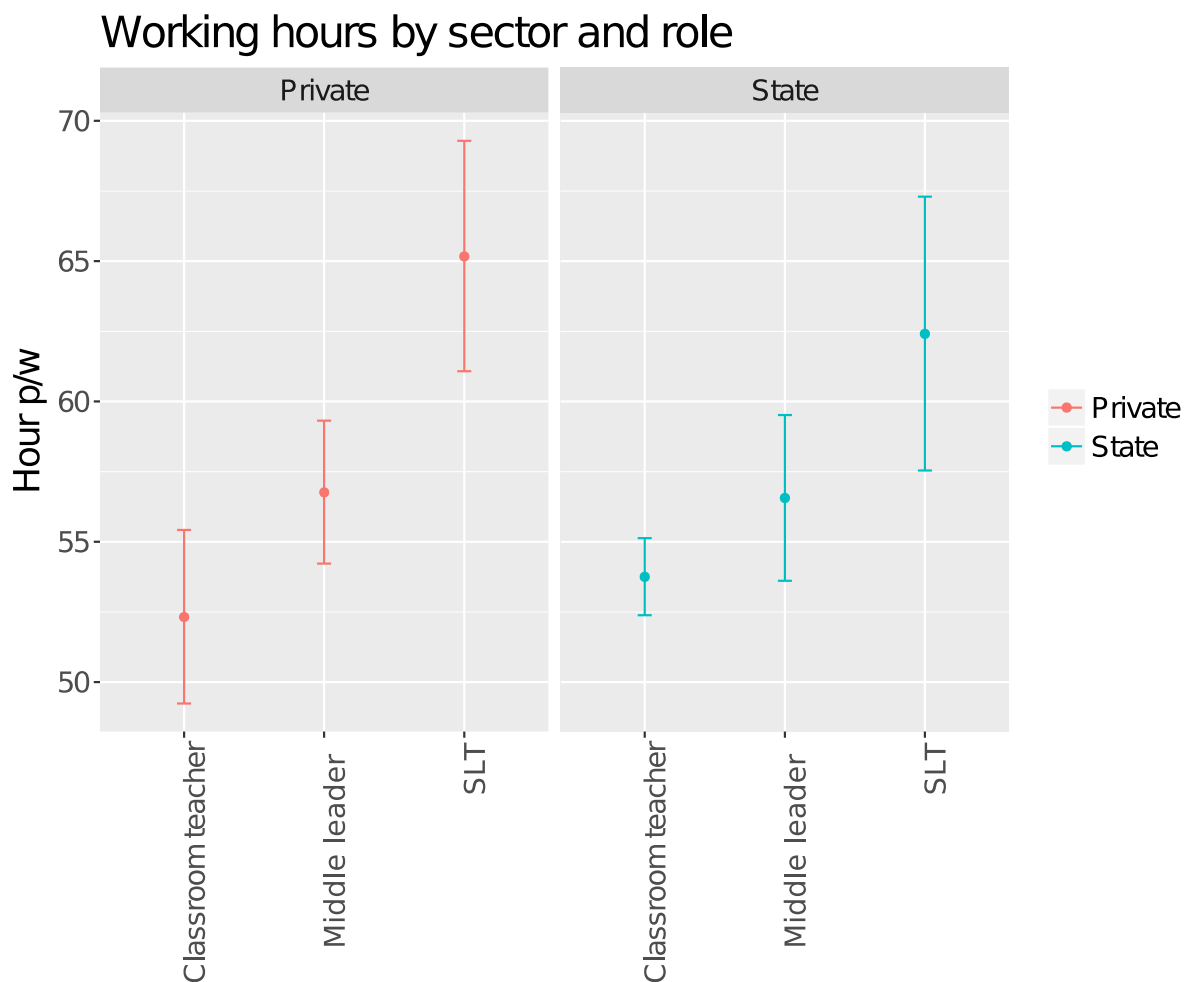
Error bars depict 95% CI around the mean | State: CT = 263; ML = 92; SLT = 38 | Private CT = 121; ML = 112; SLT = 52.

Figure 5.1: Reported weekly working hours for full-time teachers by job role and sector

As found in other reports, teachers appeared to work longer hours as their seniority increased (Jerrim & Sims, 2019). However, the differences between classroom teachers' and middle leaders' working hours were not clearly statistically significant for state school teachers (p = .465). However, in the private sector middle managers appeared to work significantly longer hours than classroom teachers (p = 0.001). Additionally, SLT in the private sector worked significantly longer hours than both middle leaders (p = .001) and classroom teachers (p <.001). In the state sector, SLT also worked significantly longer hours than classroom teachers (p < .001) and those categorised as middle leaders (p = .017).

Crucially, when compared by sector there were no clearly significant differences in teachers' working hours by any of the job roles (classroom teachers, $p = .047$; middle leaders, $p = .822$; SLT, $p = .4$). Although the difference between state and private school classroom teachers' weekly working hours was of borderline significance, there is some uncertainty around the data, especially as the findings diverge from other recent studies that suggest private school classroom teachers work longer hours than their state counterparts (Jerrim & Sims, 2019). These findings helped to answer the research question because they showed that state school and private school teachers' workloads were characterised by a similar number of working hours each week.

Composition of workload

Q2.2 asked teachers to record the number of working hours they spent on certain tasks in a typical full working week. Figure 5.2 displays the results for full-time classroom teachers and middle leaders. Headteachers, deputy heads, and assistant headteachers (SLT) were excluded from this analysis as their job roles were not comparable to middle leaders and classroom teachers who spend more time engaged in the face-to-face teaching of pupils (Jerrim & Sims, 2019).
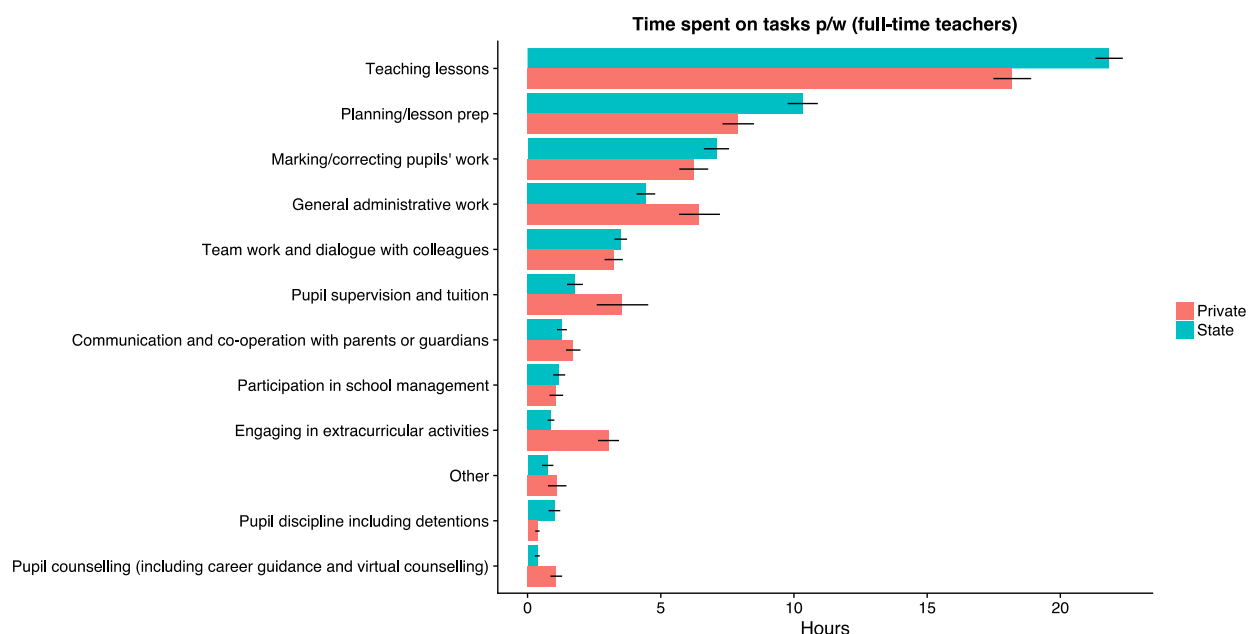
Error bars depict 95% CI around the mean; State, n ≥ 367; Private, n ≥ 242.

Figure 5.2: Weekly working hours spent on tasks for full-time classroom teachers and middle leaders by sector

There were core differences in the composition of teachers' work by sector. Compared to state school teachers, private school teachers spent significantly **less** time:

- teaching lessons ($p < .001$)
- preparing/planning lessons ($p < .001$)
- marking/correcting work ($p = .016$)
- disciplining pupils ($p < .001$)

However, the private school teacher respondents spent significantly **more** time on:

- general administration ($p < .001$)
- pupil supervision/tuition ($p < .001$)
- extra-curricular activities ($p < .001$)
- communicating with parents/guardians ($p = .008$).

Teaching lessons

Sampled full-time private school teachers reported teaching an average of 18.21 hours face-to-face teaching per week (SD = 5.65) compared to 21.84 hours per week in the state sector (SD = 5.02). The difference between sectors could be due to the enhanced resources of the private sector (Henderson et al., 2019). Private schools may be able to employ more teaching staff compared to state schools, as is reflected in the smaller pupil to teacher ratio (Department for Education, 2017a; ISC, 2017). More staff may mean that not only are private school teachers' class sizes smaller, but their timetables are lighter by comparison to state school teachers.

Planning and marking

Teachers in the private sector spent an average of eight hours (7.92) per week planning or preparing lessons (SD = 4.71) and 6.27 hours marking pupils' work (SD = 4.33). In comparison, state school teachers spent significantly more time both planning and marking: 10.34 hours preparing or planning lessons per week ($p < .001$, SD = 5.55) and 7.05 hours marking per week ($p = 0.016$, SD = 4.64). Greater direct teaching time in the state sector compared to the private sector could explain why state school teachers spent more time preparing lessons and marking work i.e. they had more classes to plan and hours of pupils' work to mark. Alternatively, there could be other factors at work such a differences in school level planning and marking policies. Reports from the state sector

have indicated that some schools have arduous policies that require extensive input from the teacher (CooperGibson, 2018a; Gibson et al., 2015; Teacher Workload Review Group, 2016); although speculative, it could be the case that such policies are not operational in the private sector.

Extra-curricular

Private school teachers reported spending significantly more time on extra-curricular activities than their state counterparts: three hours per week (3.03, SD = 3.13) compared to 53 minutes per week (SD = 1.25). Based on the literature, these findings were unsurprising because many private schools promote extra-curricular opportunities and teach a co-curriculum which distinguishes them from British state schools (Forbes & Weiner, 2008; Mannion Watts, 2017).

General administration

The finding that private school teachers spent significantly more time on administrative tasks compared to state school teachers was unexpected (6.35 hours per week, SD = 5.86, compared to 4.41 hours per week, SD = 3.36). Henderson et al (2019) report that the private education sector has three times the resources of the state-funded sector, and with this in mind, I had expected that additional resources would enable private schools to employ support staff to relieve any administrative burden from teachers. However, this did not appear to be the case.

Pupil discipline

State school teachers spent significantly more time on pupil discipline compared to private school teachers (1.01 hour per week, SD = 2.15 compared to 22 minutes, SD = 0.65). The result was unsurprising because previous research has suggested that perceptions of pupil behaviour are better in the private sector compared to the state sector (Allen & McIntyre, 2019; Micklewright et al., 2014). Furthermore, the additional time spent on pupil discipline could be a function of larger class sizes in the state sector, as teachers have more pupils to manage (Department for Education, 2018b; ISC, 2017).

Communicating with parents

Private school teachers spent significantly more time cooperating or communicating with parents compared to their peers in the state sector ($p = 0.008$). State school teachers spent an average of 1.29 hours on this activity each week (SD = 1.83), whereas private school teachers reported an average of 1.74 hours per week cooperating of communicating with parents (SD = 2.15). The relatively large standard deviations could reflect that there is variation within classroom teachers' and middle leaders' job roles, with Key Stage leaders or form tutors assuming more responsibility for communicating with parents compared to those with fewer pastoral responsibilities.

5.2.3. Burdensome workload

This section compares the tasks that teachers identified as burdensome. Tasks which were classified as 'burdensome' were identified through question 2.3 which asked: 'Tell us about any unnecessary and unproductive work-related tasks which take too much of your time. Which tasks (if any) are burdensome?'. This open question helped to understand the characteristics of teachers' workload. The question produced a variety of responses which were coded into categories in accordance to those used in analysis of the Workload Challenge consultation (Gibson et al., 2015) (*appendix 5*). The results are visualised in figure 5.3.
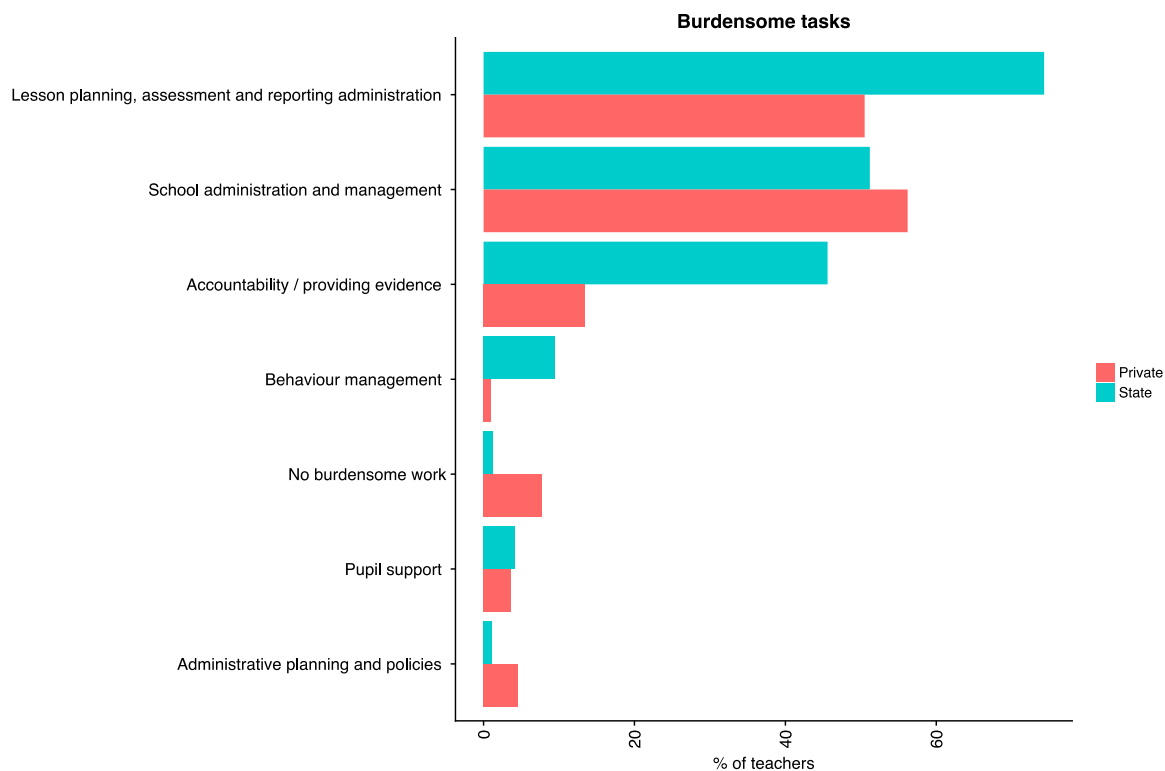
Burdensome tasks

State, n = 377; Private, n= 194.

Figure 5.3: Tasks perceived as burdensome by job role for state and private school classroom teachers, middle leaders and SLT

Lesson planning, assessment, and reporting

State sector comments in response to Q2.3 identified lesson planning, assessment, and reporting tasks as 'burdensome'. Example comments included: **"Marking too much and in too much depth – I teach 5 year olds who cannot read what I write"**, and **"marking too in depth – not useful for children but looks good for parents"**. These tasks were 'burdensome' because they were unnecessary in that they did not appear to benefit pupils or the teacher, and they were 'unproductive' because the participants did not perceive a link with pupil outcomes.

'Lesson planning, assessment, or reporting administration' was the second most cited category of 'burdensome tasks' (after 'school administration and management') for private school teachers. In a key difference to state school data, teacher responses from the private sector largely focused on 'reporting', rather than 'assessment' or 'planning'. Overall, there were 98 responses from private school teachers who made comments that related to the 'lesson planning, assessment, or reporting administration' category. Of these 98 comments, 55% (54) specifically mentioned 'reporting' as a burdensome aspect of

work. Typical comments included: **"Too much redundant reporting to parents"**, and **"report writing twice a term since many parents don't appear to read them"**.

Compared to private school teachers, a smaller proportion of state school teachers identified 'reports' as burdensome. In total, 198 state school teacher responses were coded into the 'lesson planning, assessment, and reporting administration' category. Of these 198 observations, only 14% (27) related to 'reporting'. Unlike the private sector responses, many of these comments were concerned with reporting to managers, or governors rather than reporting about pupils to parents.

In summary, teachers in both sectors felt that 'lesson planning, assessment, or reporting administration' could be burdensome, particularly when these tasks were undertaken for audiences other than pupils e.g. for school managers, or in the case of private school teachers, for managers falsely misguidedly believing that they were meeting the needs of parents.

School administration and management

Tasks related to 'school administration and management' were identified as 'burdensome' by 109 private school teachers. References to data collection, communications with parents, general administration, and meetings all came under this category. Out of the 109 comments from private school teachers, 21% (23) were fitted into the 'communications with parents' sub-category. Typical responses included: **"over-communicating with parents"**; **"dealing with a large amount of unnecessary emails from parents"**, and **"dealing with parents who have too much time on their hands and worry/interfere needlessly"**. By way of comparison, 193 state school teachers identified 'school administration and management' tasks as being burdensome. Of these answers, 15% (29) related to 'communications with parents'. Some of these communications were initiated by parents (e.g. **"parents who demand time"**) and others were a function of the school planning (e.g. **"two parents' evenings a year for each year group"**). The findings helped to answer the research question because they indicated that dealing with parents was a slightly more dominant feature of burdensome workload for private school teachers compared to state school teachers. However, teachers from both sectors identified that some of their burdensome work related to communicating with or reporting to parents.

Accountability / providing evidence

Data-related tasks were a primary concern for state school teachers. In total, 46% (172) of teachers from the state sector identified tasks relating to 'accountability / providing evidence' as burdensome. Across all these observations, there were 173 uses of the word 'data' from 155 unique respondents. In contrast, 13% (26) of private school teachers identified tasks related to 'accountability / providing evidence' as burdensome, and there were only 17 references to 'data' across 15 unique respondents. The finding informed the research question because it suggested that data-oriented tasks characterised private school teachers' workloads to a lesser extent compared to state school teachers.

Behaviour management

Only two (1%) of the private school respondents considered that behaviour management was a burdensome feature of their work. This finding compared to 10% (36) of state school teachers. The finding converged with previous research which suggests that teachers' perceptions of pupil behaviour are better in the private sector compared to the state sector in England (Allen & McIntyre, 2019; Micklewright et al., 2014). The findings led to the consideration that managing pupil behaviour was a minor, but relatively more prevalent characteristic of state school teachers' workloads compared to those of private school teachers.

No burdensome work

In total, 8% (15) of private school teachers responded that they had no burdensome work. This finding compared to just 1% (5) of state school teachers. These data were helpful in addressing the research question because they indicated that a proportion of private school teachers did not experience any aspect of their workload as burdensome. On the other hand, only 1% of state school teachers responded that they did not have any work that was unnecessary or unproductive.

5.2.4. Contributors to workload

Where do burdensome tasks originate?

School policies, school leaders, and the demands of accountability were the three major contributors to workload for teachers in both sectors.

Contributors to burdensome workload
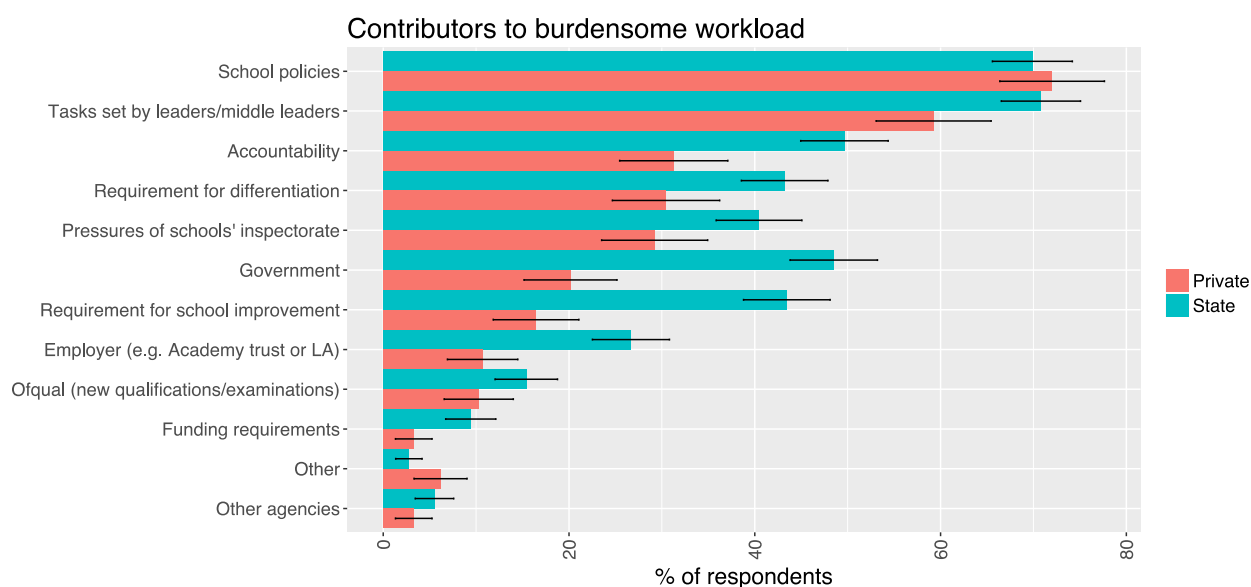
Error bars depict 95% CI around the mean; State n = 417; Private n = 267.

Figure 5.4: Perceived contributors to workload for state and private school classroom teachers and middle leaders by sector

For state school teachers, these data matched the Workload Challenge findings which reported 'accountability / perceived pressures of Ofsted', 'tasks set by senior/ middle leaders' and 'working to policies set at a school-level' as the three most commonly identified 'drivers' of workload. Although my study refrains from implying causality through the use of the term 'drivers' at this stage, my findings were substantially similar to those of Workload Challenge.

As was found in the Workload Challenge, the fourth most commonly identified contributor to burdensome workload was 'government – national policy change (e.g. curriculum change)'. As expected, fewer private school participants identified 'government' as a source of burdensome workload. The finding was expected because the sector is largely

independent from government, and so is not required to respond to national curriculum and policy changes.

5.2.5. Perceptions of workload

As the research question invited a comparison between teachers' perceptions of workload by sector, I measured these perceptions through a set of three questions loaned from the TWS 2016 (figure 5.5). Results showed that private school teachers had more positive perceptions of their workload compared to state school teachers.
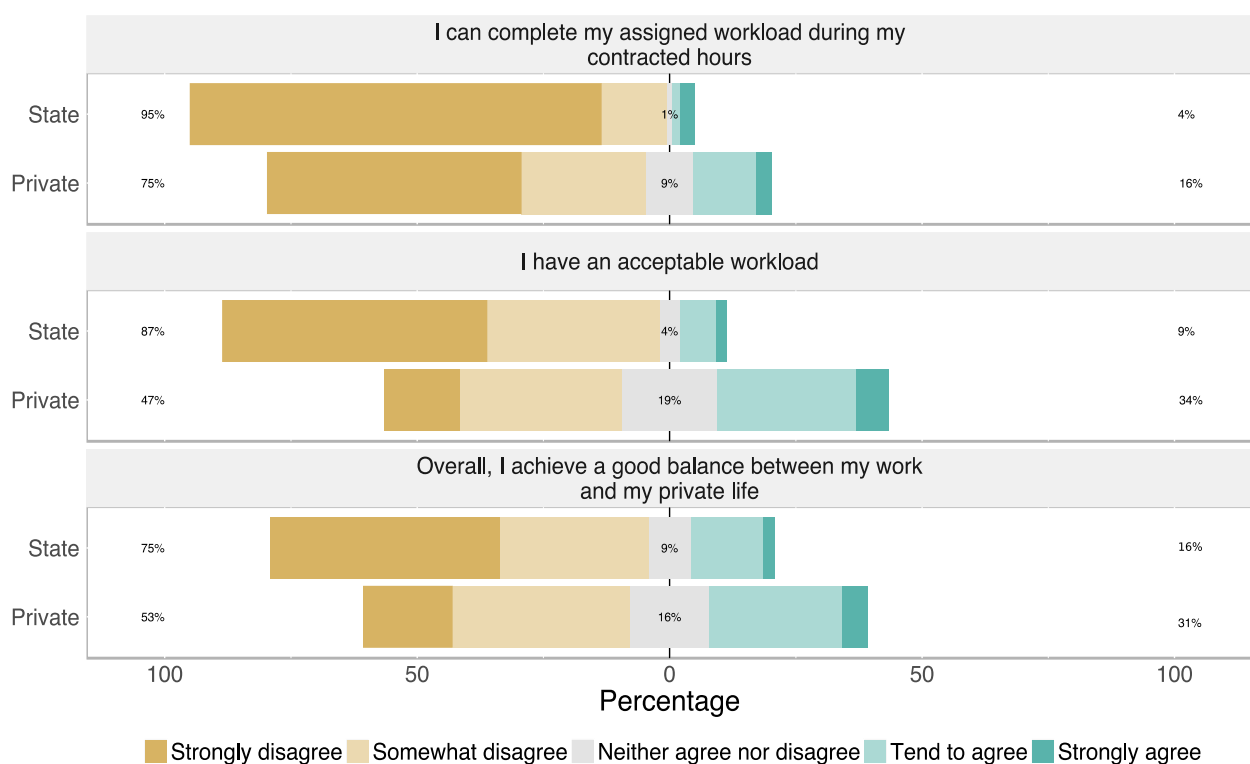
State, n = 483; Private, n = 343.

Figure 5.5: Classroom teachers, middle leaders, and SLT workload perceptions by sector

With regards to state school teachers, my findings are consistent with the TWS 2016 which found that the overwhelming majority of state school teachers held poor perceptions of their workload (Higton, Leonardi, Richards et al., 2017). Workload perceptions were more polarised in the private sector compared to the state sector, but on average the results suggested better overall views.

5.2.6. Quantitative summary

Quantitative findings suggested that although teachers in both sectors worked a similar number of hours each week, there were differences in the composition of teachers' workload. Specifically, private school teachers spent more time on general administration, supervising pupils, communicating with parents, and extra-curricular activities, whereas state school teachers spent more time face-to-face teaching, disciplining pupils, preparing/ planning lessons, and marking pupils' work. Furthermore, although the average number of hours worked by teachers was similar between sectors, private school teachers reported comparatively more positive perceptions of their workload.

Finally, while the majority of respondents from both sectors agreed that school policies and senior/ middle leaders contributed to workload, a higher proportion of teachers from the state sector attributed their burdensome workloads to 'accountability' and 'government'.

5.3. Qualitative data findings

5.3.1. <u>Why did teachers' perceptions of the characteristics and contributors to workload differ by sector?</u>

I cross-validated questionnaire findings with qualitative data collected in interviews and focus groups. In addition, I used qualitative data to provide preliminary explanations as to why the characteristics, contributors, and perceptions of workload differed by sector.

Characteristics

Class size

Interviewees and focus group participants suggested that there was a link between workload and class size. As the questionnaire did not collect data on class sizes, this link could not be cross-validated with quantitative data. Nevertheless, state school interviewees perceived that very large classes, or many classes, led to an increase in workload. A state school drama teacher, for example, detailed that she taught 500 children a week across 17 different classes and that this led to a **"gruelling"** workload as she had many exercise books to mark. The idea that large classes led to an increased workload for

those working in the state sector was also supported by private school teachers, some of whom had worked in both sectors. A private school focus group member recalled that in the state sector he had taught **"GCSE groups of 34 or 35"**. The groups completed **"practice papers every fortnight"** which led **"hours and hours"** of marking for the teacher. Like other participants, the teacher believed that workload was a function of class size – although it also appeared to be a function of school policy in this case, as fortnightly exams are not necessarily typical across all state schools. Another private school focus group participant stated that in terms of face-to-face teaching time, she had **"exactly the same [number of hours] as my colleagues in the state sector"**. Despite this relatively heavy load of teaching hours, the participant explained that she felt compensated by **"small class sizes"** and concluded that there were **"definitely advantages"** to working the private sector in terms of workload.

Private school cultures

Qualitative data suggested that private school teachers spent more time on extra-curricular activities compared to state school teachers because this was part of private school cultures. Sports, arts, and the cultivation of social skills and qualities such as **"self-esteem"** were integral to schools' 'co-curriculums' and formed a central part of private school teachers' job roles. P11a, a senior leader, stated that he was **"very honest"** with prospective teacher recruits **"about what the expectation is from a co-curricular point of view"**. He wanted teachers who would be **"involved"** with these activities rather than **"disappearing"** at the formal end of the school day. Similarly, P6a a senior leader with responsibility for recruitment explained that **"the most paramount"** consideration of recruitment was finding a candidate who was **"going to get involved in the whole school ethos"** which entailed **"doing games"**. P3a expressed a similar point of view and stated that during the recruitment process he sought **"holistic people who can add to the pastoral and the co-curricular life of the school"**. From the qualitative data it became clear that participation in co-curriculum activities was a formal expectation of classroom teachers' roles in some private schools, and this explained why more time was dedicated to this area compared to state school teachers.

In direct contrast to private school participants, state school teachers perceived activities which occurred outside of formal school hours as 'extra' to their role. P7, a secondary school drama teacher, explained that extra-curricular activities were burdensome to

teachers. She observed that **"nobody wants to touch a school production with a barge pole anymore"**. She believed that this was because teachers were **"so pushed and squeezed by this data driven system"** that staff could not afford the additional workload of contributing to a school production. Her comments contrasted with those of private school teachers who through the language of co-curriculum suggested that they afforded equal weighting to academic and extra-curricular activities. One classroom teacher in a focus group believed that **"there's a whole dimension that's missing if you don't do other things in addition to your classroom teaching"**. Her remark emphasised the discrepancy between the **"data driven system"** (P7) which many teachers felt was operative in the state sector and the type of co-curricular education private schools offered. Quantitative data supported the private school teachers' claims that the sector allocated more of teachers' time to extra-curricular pursuits (figure 5.2) – their description of the value of the co-curriculum helped to demonstrate that the timetabling of these activities was prioritised alongside academic lessons.

Structural differences in state and private school timetables helped to understand why private school teachers spent more time on 'pupil supervision/ duties' compared to those in state-funded schools. Private school teachers explained that they were required to supervise 'prep', which is time allocated to pupils (outside class teaching hours) to complete homework. In addition, boarding school teachers who acted as housemasters/mistresses (in charge of a house of boarding pupils), were 'on-duty' through the nights. 'Prep' and boarding house duties are not commonly found in state schools, and so this could largely explain why private school teachers spent more hours on supervisory duties compared to state school participants.

<u>Contributors to workloads</u>

Parents

Qualitative data corroborated the questionnaire finding that private school teachers spent significantly more time on 'general administration' compared to state school peers. While this finding was surprising at first, interview and focus group participants explained that providing a customer service to parents was a time-consuming and paperwork rich activity. Although P5a was a senior leader, rather than a classroom teacher, he explained that **"meeting and greeting parents and dealing with the parents' problems, meeting new**

parents" required **"a lot of time"**. These tasks were not necessarily burdensome, but they comprised a large proportion of the senior leader's working day. Another senior leader, P11a, explained that there were many bureaucratic processes in his school. These processes had been introduced because it made it **"much easier to deal with parents"**. P11a felt that **"a process that's transparent"** protected teachers from complaints from parents because parents **"can see what's going on"**. Although senior leaders appeared to undertake most of the workload arising from communicating with parents, classroom teachers also felt that parents added to their administrative workload. One stated that **"email just makes it so easy for [parents]"** to communicate with teachers, and another concurred **"email is the issue"**. Other participants spoke of emails from parents **"all times of day and night"** and explained that responding took up **"a lot of time"** and thus contributed to their administrative workloads.

Although state school classroom teachers spent significantly less time communicating with parents compared to their peers in the private sector, there were some reports of this being a time consuming activity. For example, one primary teacher (P6) spoke of exceptional circumstances whereby a parent required **"a ten minute interview"** with the teacher **"at the end of every day"** alongside a **"written report at the end of every week"** about their child's progress and behaviour. The teacher perceived this as **"an impossible request"**. However, experiences of this kind were rare within the state sector sample. Overall, through an evaluation of both qualitative and quantitative data, I drew the conclusion that compared to state school teachers, private school teachers regarded parents as a bigger contributor to workload.

School inspectorates, accountability, and school polices

There was some divergence within private school data: classroom teachers and middle leaders did not consider ISI to be a contributor to their workload, whereas senior leaders believed that the inspectorate added to workloads because it generated burdensome administrative tasks. Senior leaders explained that evidencing compliance with the Independent School Standards (ISS, 2014) and, where relevant, the Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards (BSNMS; 2015) for inspection created an administrative burden. Interviewees referred to this kind of workload as 'compliance'. A headteacher explained:

"Health and safety has to be checked. […] It is a lot more time-consuming in terms of having to constantly think about it, having to produce the evidence for it, your risk assessments all the time. So everything has to be risk assessed. […] And that, the proper paperwork, the paper trail, the evidence, always has to be there. That is quite a burden."

(Interview with private preparatory school headteacher, P5a)

The **"paperwork"** and **"paper trail"** was necessary documentation to **"evidence"** compliance during inspection. This evidence could also include copies of detailed school policies which inspectors would ask to view. The accumulation of this **"paperwork"** led to an administrative workload which was **"quite a burden"** on senior leaders.

Contributions from other participants concurred with the view that ISI inspections were excessively bureaucratic and that this added to SLT's administrative workload. A focus group member, who was a classroom teacher, recalled his managers being **"up to the eyeballs the whole term"** in anticipation of a compliance inspection. He felt that **"there's still a lot of pressure on people getting the paperwork right rather than seeing what's going on in practice"**. The opinion that ISI spent more time scrutinising paperwork than they did inspecting classroom practice was shared by other private school participants. P1a, a classroom teacher, relayed that inspections were **"massively paperwork heavy"** but that classroom teachers **"barely saw"** inspectors because they were **"too busy reading reports and scrutinising governors' compliance documents"**. A further classroom teacher reflected that ISI inspections were centred around asking: **"have you got this bit of paperwork in place?"**. There was a sense that private school inspections contributed to workloads, but that this bureaucratic workload was concentrated with SLT members who assumed this duty as a core component of their job. Classroom teachers, however, implied that the act of inspection itself did not add to their workloads because they **"barely saw"** inspectors and so did not need to prepare special resources for them.

In contrast to the sampled teachers from the private sector, state school participants across job roles perceived that Ofsted contributed to their workloads indirectly via school policies. For example, a secondary school drama teacher (P7) spoke about the burden of maintaining exercise books for all her pupils. She felt that this task was unnecessary and

time-consuming for her subject – which she perceived as primarily practical. She explained that **"the books"** had been introduced and retained for the purpose of pleasing Ofsted:

> *"[SLT] were desperate to get 'good' in Ofsted and they got it. They'd introduced the books as part of this process of wanting to get a 'good' Ofsted and then they introduced books for everybody and Ofsted said they liked the books, so well obviously that's the magic wand then so we're keeping the books."*
>
> *(Interview with middle leader in state secondary school, P7)*

For P7, school policies were devised with Ofsted in mind. She reported that school leaders introduced exercise books for some subjects in the hope that it would help them obtain a 'good' grade during inspection. In this instance, school policies were influenced by the perceived demands of Ofsted. During inspection, the inspection team commented that they **"liked the books"**, and Ofsted's approval was like a **"magic wand"**. From this point, senior leaders **"introduced the books for everybody"** because Ofsted had seemingly legitimised the practice. Her narrative illuminated the manner in which school leaders might devise and implement school policies in the belief that they are instrumental to obtaining or retaining a good inspection grade. However, these policies might be maintained regardless of the unintended consequences to teachers' workload. In this way, Ofsted indirectly contributed to teachers' workloads because school policies, which encouraged burdensome workloads, were developed in response to the perceived requirements of the inspectorate.

Another teacher helped to illuminate the manner in which Ofsted, school policies, and workload were part of the same process. She explained that her school leaders sometimes implemented policies that were not proven to be effective because they perceived that it would help the school to secure an acceptable Ofsted grading:

> *"I've researched it before what Ofsted expect to see in terms of marking. It could not be further than what I'm expected to do, but my SLT are so frightened because they need to get back to 'good' that they cannot dare to let me not do feedback marking in every single lesson."*
>
> *(Focus group with state school primary school classroom teacher)*

The teacher identified the chasm between what **"Ofsted expect"** and the policies her SLT implemented. She perceived a disjuncture between the two because in fact, the school's marking policy **"could not be further"** from Ofsted's outlined expectations. The teacher posited that SLT held onto unhelpful polices which did not meet Ofsted's criteria because they were **"frightened"** of inadvertently failing to adhere to these accountability requirements. In this scenario, over-preparation for inspection was preferable to under-preparation regardless of the impact on teachers' workload. Consequently, the teacher felt frustrated that she had to do **"feedback marking in every single lesson"** under the belief that this was not, in fact, what Ofsted wanted.

In contrast to the state sector, private school teachers did not perceive that the schools' inspectorate wielded a formative influence over school-level policies. One focus group member remarked:

> *"I think it's noticeable now that [ISI] inspections are not really on the radar day-to-day at all, whereas both of the state schools I worked in, a week wouldn't go by without somebody mentioning Ofsted."*
>
> *(Classroom teacher focus group member in private senior school)*

The comment summarised the contrast between the influence of the inspectorate in each sector. This participant had worked in state and private schools, and found that in her state school roles, Ofsted was a pervasive concern. In her role at a private school (inspected by ISI), inspections were of little concern to classroom teachers and thus made no discernible contribution to their workloads.

To summarise, through combining the data sources, I was able to identify that while both state and private school teachers considered 'accountability' to be a key contributor to their workloads, this accountability originated from different sources. Private school classroom teachers were preoccupied with meeting the demands of parents rather than ISI, while state school participants' workloads arose from efforts to meet the demands of Ofsted. Although private school senior leaders linked ISI to an administrative workload, classroom teachers and middle leaders did not share this experience.

Questionnaire results indicated that 49% (204) of state school teachers considered that 'government – national policy change (e.g. curriculum change)' added to their workload compared to 19% (51) of private school teachers. The finding was unsurprising as private schools are not obliged to teach the national curriculum, enter pupils for regulated national assessments, or publicly report pupil progress/attainment data. State school teachers, on the other hand, explained that they found changes on a policy level to be disruptive and to contribute to their workloads. A primary teacher explained the expansion of her workload:

> *"Every time you hear a government initiative, well suddenly it's two hours of PE a week because of all the children in the country who are obese and that's – schools have got to deal with that. […] Nothing goes. Nothing goes. In a primary school curriculum, nothing ever goes. And then children's mental health is obviously a big thing at the moment as it has been for a few years. So, they bring in initiatives […] It's just piled more and more and more on top. Each new curriculum that is invented asks for more but takes nothing away."*

> *(Interview with state primary school classroom teacher, P6)*

In line with the intensification thesis, the teacher perceived that her workload had become increasingly complex and overwhelming (Apple, 1985; Easthope & Easthope, 2000; Valli & Buese, 2007). She positioned herself as a subject to **"sudden"** whims of government which manifested in the form of **"more and more"** initiatives which needed to be implemented on a school-level. The participant provided the example of **"mental health"** and **"children […] who are obese"** – societal problems which she perceived must now be addressed within **"a primary school curriculum"**. The teacher stated that such initiatives added to her workload because **"nothing goes"** to create time for developing and implementing new curriculum initiatives. Consequently, the teacher felt overloaded by the volume and complexity of content and skills which she needed to address within a working day (Gewirtz, 2002).

A secondary school teacher mirrored the concerns of P6 by identifying policy change as a contributor to intensified workload:

"I think what's changed is certainly since 2010 is a huge amount of workload, the accountability measures that we are working under and the fact that all the curriculum has changed in one go. […] I ended up having to do […] new Key Stage 3, new GCSE, new AS, combined with all the accountability measures – marking expectations and all the rest of it. […] I'd say it has become very very hard to be a teacher."

(Interview with state secondary school middle leader, P9)

P9's temporal reference to 2010 refers to the year in which the Conservative-led coalition government was elected. Michael Gove, former Secretary of State for Education, oversaw a series of reforms to the national curriculum, the national grading system for pupils, school governance and financing, and teachers' pay. The interviewee was explicit about her political leanings and her desire for **"a change of government"**, and so she may have associated 2010 with a turning point in her experiences as a teacher. She considered that after this point, her job became characterised by **"a huge amount of workload"** which she linked to the need to prepare for a new curriculum. In her experience, workload pressure had been compounded by **"marking expectations"** and **"accountability measures"**. The example demonstrated the way in which a combination of national level changes, school-level **"marking expectations"**, and overall **"accountability measures"** can contribute to the feeling of an intensified workload which is **"very very hard"** for some teachers.

Although many of the interviewed private school participants taught similar curriculums and qualifications to state school counterparts, there were no instances of classroom teachers identifying government-level policy changes as a direct contributor to their workloads. In fact, one deputy head in a private senior school (P11a) hypothesised that the private sector as a whole enjoyed improved autonomy compared to the state sector because teachers and school were not **"subject to the same government regulation and Ofsted process"** as state teachers. Private school classroom teacher, P12a, envisaged that interference from government must be **"off-putting"** for state school teachers. He perceived that arduous marking policies arose in the state sector **"just because someone from government has decided that's a good idea"**. He suggested that **"autonomy"** from government in the private sector **"is leading to better satisfaction"** for teachers. However, as the teacher had not worked in the state sector,

the comparisons were drawn from his impressions of state-school working rather than direct experience.

In summary, findings relating to the theme of 'policy change' helped to answer the research question because they illustrated that some state school teachers felt that their workloads had intensified as a result of policy changes, whereas this factor did not affect private school teachers' experiences of their workloads.

5.3.2. <u>Why did private school teachers have better workload perceptions compared to state school teachers?</u>

Qualitative data supported the finding that private school teachers held better perceptions of their workload compared to state school teachers. Teachers from the private sector spoke of their passion for their work. A teacher near retirement stated that he had **"had a very much more satisfactory working life than an awful lot of people"** who had not taught, an experience for which he felt grateful. Another commented that **"being with a class is easily the best part of teaching".** Others echoed this sentiment and stated that it was **"enjoyable working with students"**. These views were mirrored in the state sector where teachers also identified working with pupils as the most fulfilling aspect of their work. Some spoke of the fulfilment they found in having an **"impact"** on pupils' **"life chances"**, and others about the **"the relationships you get with the children"**. Despite enjoying the same core components of the job, state school teachers recorded worse perceptions of their workloads in comparison to private school teachers – and as one focus group member explained – **"that's nothing to do with the kids"**. Focus group members in a discussion in the North of England described their workloads as **"frustrating"** due to **"last-minute"** demands from managers. Furthermore, their workloads were comprised of **"long hours"** which were **"increasing"** and **"unacceptable"**.

Meaningful work

The difference between teachers' perceptions of their workload by sector related to non-teaching activities. For state school teachers, data-related tasks, and **"working to scrutiny"** (P2) of managers and inspectors overshadowed the joy of teaching. State school teachers spoke at length about **"overwhelming"** workloads and the feeling that teachers **"spend the same amount of time every day doing admin and marking [as]**

160

they do teaching". Another focus group member in the state sector spoke about **"the workload put upon you by leadership [and] by middle management"** as the least enjoyable aspect of his job. He claimed that this kind of workload caused him **"anxiety"** on Sunday nights before returning to work.

In addition to feeling overwhelmed and placed under undue pressures by managers, state school teachers held poor perceptions of non-teaching tasks when they did not believe that they were of any benefit to the pupils or to themselves. Teachers gave many examples of such tasks, which can be defined as 'meaningless'. Participants reported completing tasks such as copying reading ages onto the front of exercise books to comply with school policy, or 'deep marking'[5] work for children who were still learning the basics of reading (P10). Teachers were clear that these activities were conducted for an adult audience. Example comments included:

> *"When you are marking children's work you are marking it for the adult who is going to be looking in the books, rather than necessarily the benefit of the children. It is surely for somebody else to read and not the children and it is those kinds of – it is those kinds of low-level pointless tasks multiplied by 100."*
>
> *(Interview with state primary school classroom teacher, P6)*

P6 identified tasks which were **"for the adult who is going to be looking"** as **"pointless"** because she did not value evidencing marking to fulfil an accountability requirement. This kind of marking became a mere surface display of competence which bore no purpose other than to evidence compliance with a school policy, whereas P6 would have preferred to mark work with the **"benefit of the children"** in the forefront of her mind. The teacher's negative perceptions of aspects of her workload centred around her perception of a high volume of work which was comprised of **"low level pointless**

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[5] According to the Independent Teacher Workload Review Group (2016, p. 6) deep marking is: 'a generic term used to describe a process whereby teachers provide written feedback to pupils offering guidance with a view to improving or enhancing the future performance of pupils. Pupils are then expected to respond in writing to the guidance which in turn is verified by the teacher.'

tasks multiplied by 100" which demonstrated that she felt overwhelmed by mundane and meaningless work.

The perception that some tasks were meaningless prevailed among state school teachers regardless of their years of experience. A primary school NQT, for example, commented:

> *"In my school, at least, we've just got so much marking to do all the time and it's just completely unrealistic. Studies have shown that it doesn't affect the children in anyway and that they don't make progress with marking."*
>
> *(Focus group with state primary school NQT)*

The NQT objected to her school's marking policy on the basis that it was not supported by research. She felt that she was required to undertake tasks that didn't positively **"affect the children"**, and that the level and volume of these marking-related tasks was **"completely unrealistic"**. It is possible that she would have held a more positive view of marking-related tasks if she had considered that they were of benefit to the pupils. The teacher's comment strongly resonated with the government's series of Workload Challenge reports which recommend that arduous marking and assessment methods such as 'deep marking' should be discouraged from school practice because they have not been proven to be effective (CooperGibson, 2018a; Gibson et al., 2015; Teacher Workload Review Group, 2016).

By way of contrast, teachers in private schools found their work to be fulfilling and meaningful as exemplified by a teacher in a focus group:

> *"I think equally with our colleagues as well, our staff body, we all give such a huge amount to this community both through our professional working day-to-day life, but also in our free time and in our social lives as well. It's more than just a job. It's a lifestyle and that pays dividends for both the pupils and the members of staff I believe."*
>
> *(Focus group with senior leader in private senior school)*

The teacher found meaning in her work because it was situated within a perceived school **"community"**. In this way, work became **"more than just a job"** and it morphed into a **"lifestyle"**. The teacher was willing to **"give such a huge amount"** professionally, personally and socially because she considered that this work **"pays dividends for both the pupils and the members of staff"**. As the teacher felt that her work benefited pupils and colleagues, she found it purposeful and enjoyable. Her highly positive view of her workload allowed her job to become more than a profession, it formed part of her identity and provided a way of living in community.

Other participants supported the finding that teachers held positive perceptions of workload when they found it meaningful. A private school teacher in a boarding school described it as **"the best job in the world"** because she worked with pupils on **"an academic front"** and the **"pastoral side"**. Her colleague agreed that she found teaching a **"powerful"** experience because she saw pupils **"grow"** which was **"rewarding"**. These comments contrasted dramatically with those of the disillusioned state teachers in this study and other studies who had joined the profession to have an impact on children's lives only to find that much of their workload consisted of empty and meaningless evidencing tasks directed at adult audiences (Perryman & Calvert, 2019).

Compensation

Holiday periods compensated private school teachers for long term-time working hours. This factor partly helped to explain why perceptions of workload were better in the private sector compared to the state sector even though teachers undertook a similar number of hours each working week. A teacher in a private day school explained her perception of workload:

> *"The way I see it is that we have, you know, short, but intensive terms, but we get the holidays. I feel that that, kind of, work suits me because I'm at a stage where I don't have to rush home for anything, so I'm quite happy to work till eight, nine, ten o'clock at night."*
>
> *(Interview with private sixth-form school middle leader, P8a)*

In this instance **"holidays"** compensated the teacher for **"intensive terms"**. Furthermore, she found the structure of her working life suited her lifestyle because she was **"at a**

stage" where her personal commitments did not require her to be at home by any particular time. In this way, the participant framed her hours as a choice. She had chosen work that suited her, and this made her **"quite happy"**. The narrative contrasted sharply with the state school teachers who felt anxious about long hours and the impact that this had on their home lives.

State school teachers were not willing to trade intensive term-time working for longer holidays. One secondary school middle leader reflected on the perceived differences between state and private school working. She concluded: **"I know that independent schools have longer holidays […] but I feel like the kind of extremes between term times and holidays are so much greater"**. At this point, a fellow conversant suggested: **"I wouldn't like to be doing Saturday mornings or evenings"**. The initial contributor agreed: **"Saturday matches – that doesn't to me lend itself to a normal life or existence. Although there's longer holidays, I don't think it will be worth it, it wouldn't for me"**. Instead teachers were explicit about their desire to retain the **"possibility of leaving at 3:20pm"**. It seemed that they preferred to work within set hours that did not expand into late evenings, or weekends.

As suggested above, unlike private school teachers who spoke about **"buying into"** the **"lifestyle"** of teaching, state school teachers expected to be able to maintain a boundary between work and home. They developed negative perceptions of their workloads when they considered that this boundary had been breached. P2, a senior leader illustrated this point in her assertion that SLT **"haven't got a specific contract in terms of hours"** and therefore they **"can just be loaded up with lots and lots and lots [of work]"**. Consequently, **"school work-life balance and well-being [was] quite hard to manage"** for the senior leader. P2's comments contrasted with those from the private sector where perceptions of workload were comparatively better because teachers did not necessarily expect a separation between home and work.

The finding that private school teachers did not always desire a work-home boundary was particularly pertinent to boarding school teachers. A participant who had worked in private day and boarding schools articulated the term-time commitment of a boarding teacher:

164

"It's a lifestyle, isn't it? I mean, my last job [in a private day school] was very much I had my work life and my home life and that was, kind of, 365 […] This is complete lifestyle and I totally bought into the fact that, you know, I work for 12 weeks and then I have really good holidays."

(Focus group with private boarding school housemaster)

"Work life" and **"home life"** were articulated as distinct spheres in private day schools. However, the spheres merged when the teacher joined a boarding school. At this point he **"bought into"** the **"complete lifestyle"** which entailed complete immersion in the school community during working weeks. In fact, the idea of a work-life balance was irrelevant during term-times because the participant, on accepting his job, recognised this as a false dichotomy. Instead, he was content to allow work and life to merge for the duration of term-time on the understanding that he would be compensated by **"really good holidays"**. Therefore, for this participant – like others in the private sector – good holidays informed his positive perceptions of his work.

To an extent, private school teachers expected their work to play a dominant role in their lives, and they accepted this as a condition of their employment. In return, they enjoyed long holidays, and fulfilling work which included plentiful opportunities to engage directly with pupils within and beyond the classroom. By way of contrast, state school teachers expected a boundary between work and home, and for workloads to fit within formally contracted hours. They found it **"unacceptable"** when meaningless workloads pervaded weekend and after school hours, or time reserved for non-work related activities. Some teachers tried to maintain a boundary through a series of techniques. P10, for example, explained that he had **"closed [his] door"** on a mock-inspection because he felt that such inspections would have caused him **"further stress"** and would not have offered any **"benefit to [him]"**. Other teachers spoke of leaving exercise books at work or refusing to assume additional duties or work late into the evenings. Despite their best efforts, when this boundary could not be maintained due to perceived workload increase, expansion or intensification, it was regarded as problematic.

5.4. Research question summary

The data showed that private school teachers worked a similar number of hours each week to their peers in the state sector. However, there were key differences in the composition of these workloads, with private school teachers spending more time on extra-curricular activities, communicating with parents, pupil supervision/tuition, and general administration. State school teachers spent more time each week teaching lessons, planning/preparing classes, marking/correcting work, and disciplining pupils.

Overall, state school teachers' burdensome workloads were characterised by the need to evidence their work for adult audiences. They found marking, planning, reporting and data-related tasks which were conducted for adult audiences to be unnecessary and unproductive. On the other hand, private school classroom teachers described workloads that were focussed around engaging with pupils in a co-curricular capacity, whereas senior leaders stated that they had heavy administrative workloads partly generated by the need to comply with legal standards. Although private school participants felt that demanding parents could add to workloads, 8% stated that all their work was necessary and productive. State school teachers, on the other hand, perceived that Ofsted influenced school policies which generated burdensome preparation/planning, and marking/assessment requirements.

Despite a similar measurable number of hours of weekly workload, participants from the private sector held significantly better perceptions of their work compared to their state counterparts. Qualitative data suggested that this was the case because private school teachers found their workloads more meaningful as unlike state peers, they did not need to complete activities for the benefit of external audiences such as Ofsted. Instead participants felt embedded within a school community, and school policies appeared to be relevant to the needs of the community members: pupils, parents, and teachers. In addition, there was a sense that participants viewed their workload as acceptable because they were compensated by long holidays and unlike state school participants, they did not expect a work-life balance during term times.

Chapter 6: Stress findings

RQ2) How and why do teachers' experiences of stress compare between sectors?

This chapter, which addresses research question 2 (RQ2), is organised slightly differently to the other two findings chapters. Quantitative data are reported first to propose a factor model of stress arrived at through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) in section 6.1. After identifying a model, I quantitatively compare teachers' experience of stress according to sector in section 6.2. Following this, in section 6.3, I evaluate the proposed model through an exploration of qualitative data, and these data are also used to suggest explanations for the quantitative differences between teachers' reported stress. I summarise findings relating to this research question in section 6.4.

6.1. Confirmatory factor analysis

To facilitate a comparison of teachers' experiences of stress by sector, as detailed in *Chapter 4: Data handling and quality* (section 4.3.1), it was necessary to identify the sources of that stress. As explained, I identified the factors of stress by conducing Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) in collaboration with Vaughan Connolly, PhD candidate, University of Cambridge. While Connolly was instrumental in developing our methods, conducting analysis, and interpreting results, any errors or weaknesses evident here remain my responsibility.

We conducted CFA with observations from classroom teachers and middle leaders split into two data sets (state and private). Senior leaders were excluded from this part of the analysis because they were disproportionately represented in the private sector questionnaire sample compared to the state sample. Therefore, we filtered out headteachers, deputy heads, and assistant heads from the data set. This left 421 observations in the state sector, and 278 observations in the private sector.

At the start of the process, I aimed to confirm Boyle et al's (1995) five-factor model of teacher stress. Furthermore, I wished to test the hypothesis that the addition of an 'accountability' factor would improve the model. Based on the methods detailed in section

4.3.1, we refined and re-specified models in order to arrive at the best fitting and theoretically coherent option.

The research question was focused on comparing between sectors, so it was important that we attempted the same procedure on data from each sector. Therefore, we took the steps outlined below, firstly with the state school teachers and secondly with private school teachers:

1. Fit Boyle et al.'s (1995) five-factor model to data
2. Add accountability dimension to Boyle et al's five-factor model (see section 3.5.1)
3. Fit data to a two-factor model
4. Add accountability items to two-factor model
5. Fit data to a three-factor model

At each stage (1–5), we evaluated the model and refined or re-specified it based on these findings. Overall, following these procedures, we tested the following models:

- Model 1a: Boyle el al's (1995) five-factor model
- Model 1b: Model 1a with accountability factor added (could not be identified)
- Model 2a: Two-factor model – Workload and Pupil behaviour
- Model 2b: Model 2a refined (indicators deleted)
- Model 3: Two-factor model – Workload and accountability + Pupil behaviour
- Model 4: Three-factor model – Workload + Accountability + Pupil behaviour

In the final event, we selected model 3 which was comprised of two factors: Workload and accountability + pupil behaviour. We selected this model by comparing it to other models. As explained in *Chapter 4: Data handling and quality*, we based these judgements on the model fit indices (table 6.1), an examination of the local areas of strain, and a later consideration of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) by the factors.

Table 6.1: Summary table of model fit statistics

Sector	Model	X2	DF	Probability level	SRMR	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
State	1a	188.617	67	<0.001	0.066	0.918	0.939	0.062
Private		185.002	67	<0.002	0.086	0.883	0.914	0.080
State		Model could not be identified						
Private								
State	2a	171.61	85	<0.001	0.054	0.942	0.953	0.049
Private		159.09	86	<0.001	0.056	0.937	0.949	0.055
State	2b	63.12	41	0.015	0.041	0.981	0.986	0.036
Private		70.79	43	0.005	0.057	0.964	0.972	0.048
State	3	55.90	40	0.049	0.045	0.985	0.989	0.033
Private		59.33	41	0.032	0.047	0.979	0.985	0.038
State	4	64.92	41	0.010	0.044	0.981	0.986	0.037
Private		60.30	40	0.021	0.051	0.974	0.981	0.043

The following sections detail each of the specified models and our evaluation of its suitability. The latent variables (factors) are represented as ellipses and the observed variables (indicators) as rectangles. Figures present the standardised factor loadings which is the path from the latent variable to the indicator. The factor loading is a weighting that suggests the amount of variance that the factor explains for the observed variable. In instances whereby the loading is ≤.30, it suggests that the item is not a good indicator of the factor, as such the researcher may consider dropping it from the factor if this appears to be theoretically justifiable. *Appendix 7* displays models with unstandardised loadings. The in-text figures also illustrate the correlation between factors and these are depicted by a curved double headed arrow with an associated value (-1 to +1; -1 = perfect negative correlation, 0 = no correlation, 1 = perfect positive correlation). Additionally, the error variance for each indicator is displayed.

These findings are reported in order to make explicit the rationale behind selecting the two-factor model of stress (model 3) as this is later used as a basis for comparing stress between sectors (section 6.2). Furthermore, the findings help to illuminate the underlying factor structure of teacher stress for participants in each sector.

Model 1

Boyle et al's (1995) model was the first specified model. As explained, firstly we fitted state school teacher data to the model before testing it with private school teacher observations. As illustrated this model was comprised of five factors.
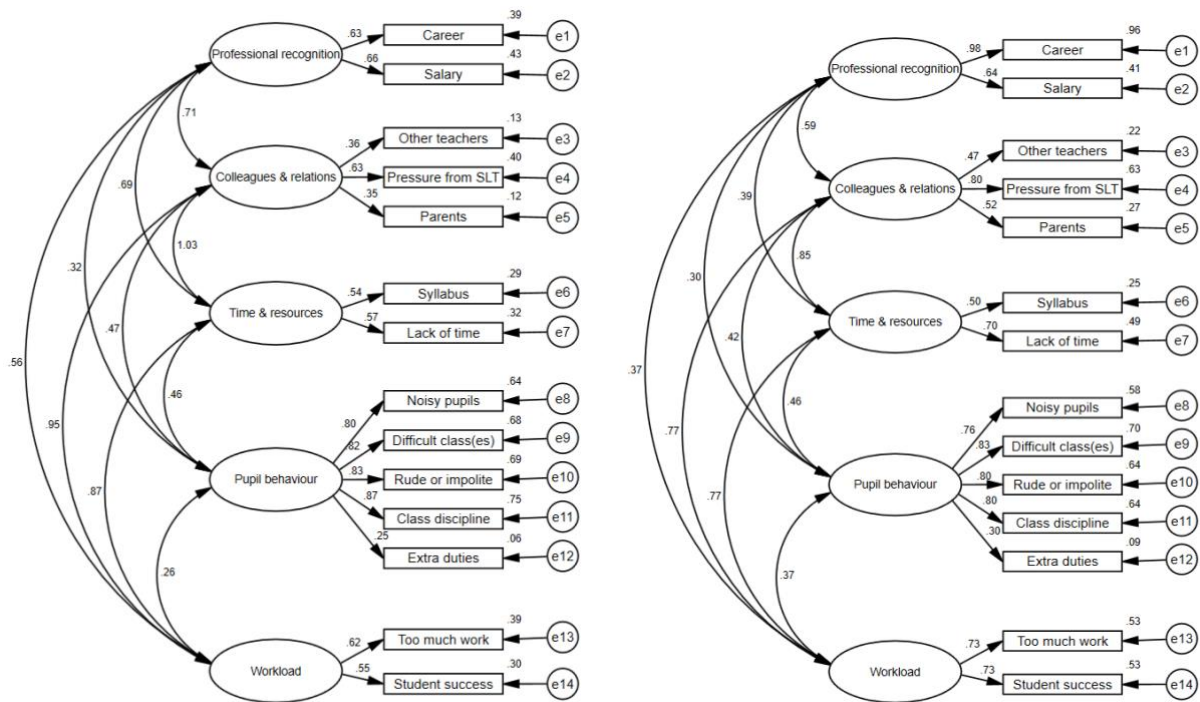
State (left, n = 421) and private (right, n = 278) school teachers (standardised loadings)

Figure 6.1: Model 1a – replication of Boyle et al's (1995) five-factor model

Following our outlined methods, we reviewed the model. We noted the high correlation between the 'colleagues and relations' and 'time and resources' factor in each sector. We considered the reasons for these high correlations and posited that poor relations between colleagues could mean that teachers do not share resources thus contributing to increased 'time and resource' stress. Furthermore, in target-cultures whereby teachers are held to account for pupils' exam grades, individuals may feel under pressure to obtain particular outcomes and this could link to a feeling that there is a 'lack of time to spent with individual pupils'. However, we considered that factor correlations ≥.85 were problematic, and so looked at the model in more detail in order to identify aspects for refinement (Hair et al., 2014).

Connolly examined the equation level goodness of fit (prediction and residual variance), and calculated that the residual variance was greater than the prediction variance for several items:

- Poor career structure (e.g. lack of promotion opportunities)
- Inadequate salary
- Ill-defined syllabus (e.g. not detailed enough)
- Extra duties/ responsibilities due to absent teachers
- Lack of time to spend with individual students
- Too much work to do
- Responsibility for students' success (e.g. exam results)
- Pressure from headteacher/ leadership team
- Attitudes and behaviour of other teachers
- Dealing with parents

As such, these findings clearly indicated a poor model with very weak indicators for each of the factors with the exception of pupil behaviour. Furthermore, the correlations between factors meant that the model was inadequate on the grounds of poor discriminant validity (Kenny, 2016).

Model 1b

As planned, we next added 'accountability' as a distinct factor of stress to model 1a. However, before attempting this, we examined the MI of model 1a for suggestions of ways in which to obtain a better fit. We identified two indicators emphasised by the MIs for which the error terms correlated strongly across factors. These two indicators were also theoretically incongruous with their factors: 'Extra-duties/responsibilities due to absent teachers' and 'pressure from headteacher/ leadership team'. Therefore, we moved 'extra-duties/responsibilities due to absent teachers' from 'pupil behaviour' to the 'colleagues and relations factor' where it represented a better theoretical fit. Additionally, as planned and as supported by empirical research from the UK Government's Workload Challenge (Gibson et al., 2015), we moved 'pressure from SLT' to the newly proposed 'accountability' factor.

After making the amendments described above, we re-specified the model with 'accountability' a sixth factor of stress. However, this model (named model 1b) could not

be identified with data from either sector, and therefore we rejected it. In addition, we could now reject Boyle et al's (1995) five-factor model because the highly correlated factors clearly suggested fewer factors would be more appropriate.

We returned to the literature and explored our qualitative data to identify alternative models to test. We decided to proceed with a two-factor model because recent research and policy has foregrounded workload and pupil behaviour as the two key stressors for teachers. Yet little emphasis has been placed on the stressful potential of other aspects of teachers' work such as colleagues and relations. For example, Klassen et al (2013) measure only stress from workload and behaviour in a study of beginning teachers in Canada, Hong Kong, Thailand, and England. Additionally, the most recent TALIS 2018 survey measured only these two factors in its exploration of teacher stress. Furthermore, qualitative data from this study also supported the idea that fewer factors of stress were preferable (section 6.4); our participants focused broadly on accountability-driven workloads and to a lesser-extent, pupil behaviour as key stressors.

From here, we were led to examine further models:

- Model 2a and 2b: Two-factor models based on Boyle et al (1995): Pupil behaviour + workload
- Model 3: Respecified two-factor model: Pupil behaviour + workload and accountability
- Model 4: Three-factor model: Pupil behaviour + workload + accountability

With the exception of the 'extra duties' indicator, we retained Boyle et al's (1995) suggestion of the pupil behaviour factor. We made this decision because this was the only factor that had proven consistently strong.

Model 2a

In order to arrive at two factors, we retained the pupil behaviour factor proposed by Boyle et al (1995) and collapsed the other four factors into a single factor. We did this because the previous models had indicated strong correlations between these factors which led to the consideration that there were in fact describing the same underlying factor. In addition, we added 'large classes' to the newly formed factor as this was suggested by Klassen and Chiu (2010). Thus, model 2a had two-factors: pupil behaviour, and one we termed 'workload'.
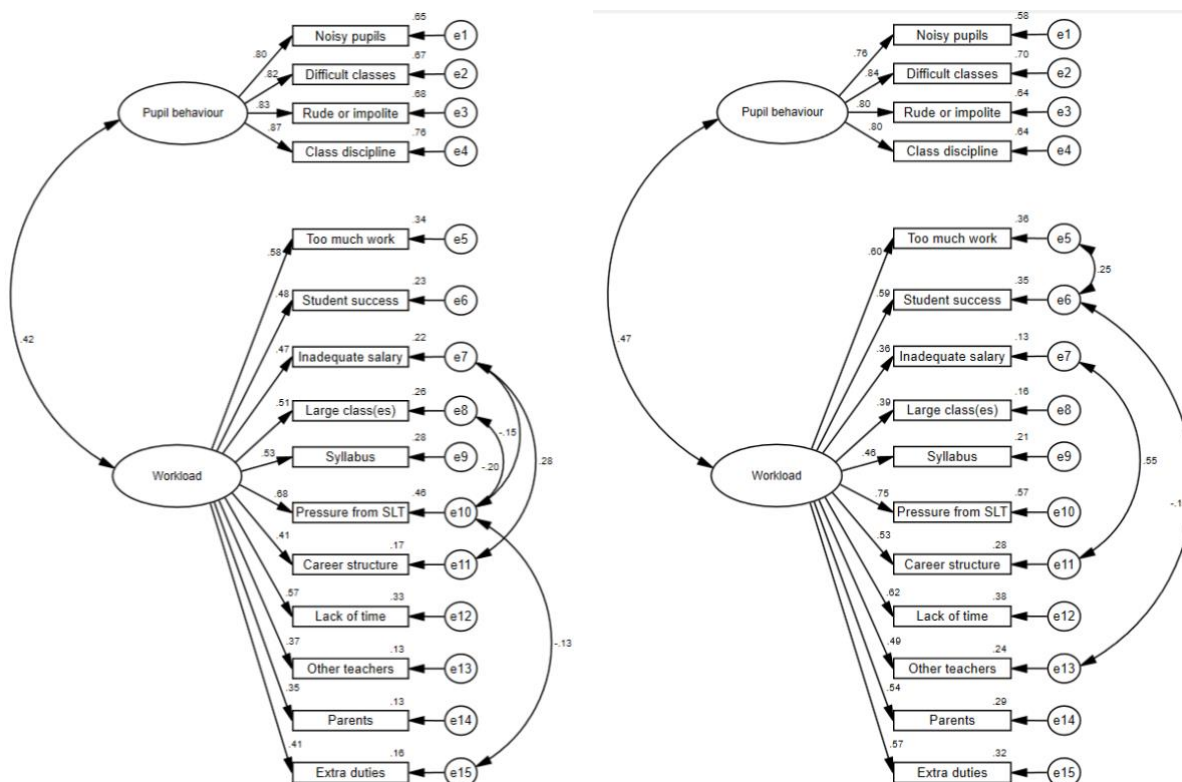
State (left, n = 421) and private (right, n = 278) school teachers (standardised loadings)

Figure 6.2: Model 2a – Two-factor model from combining Boyle et al (1995) factors

We refined this model according to our methods which resulted in the removal of:

- behaviour/attitude of other teachers
- dealing with parents
- extra duties/ responsibilities due to absent teachers
- poor career structure

The deletion of these ill-fitting items allowed us to proceed with a two-factor model comprised of a total of 11 indicators (figure 6.3). We named this refined version as 'model 2b'. After allowing for error covariances in the state sector model, these refinements resulted in good global fit statistics for state school teachers and private school teachers (table 6.1).
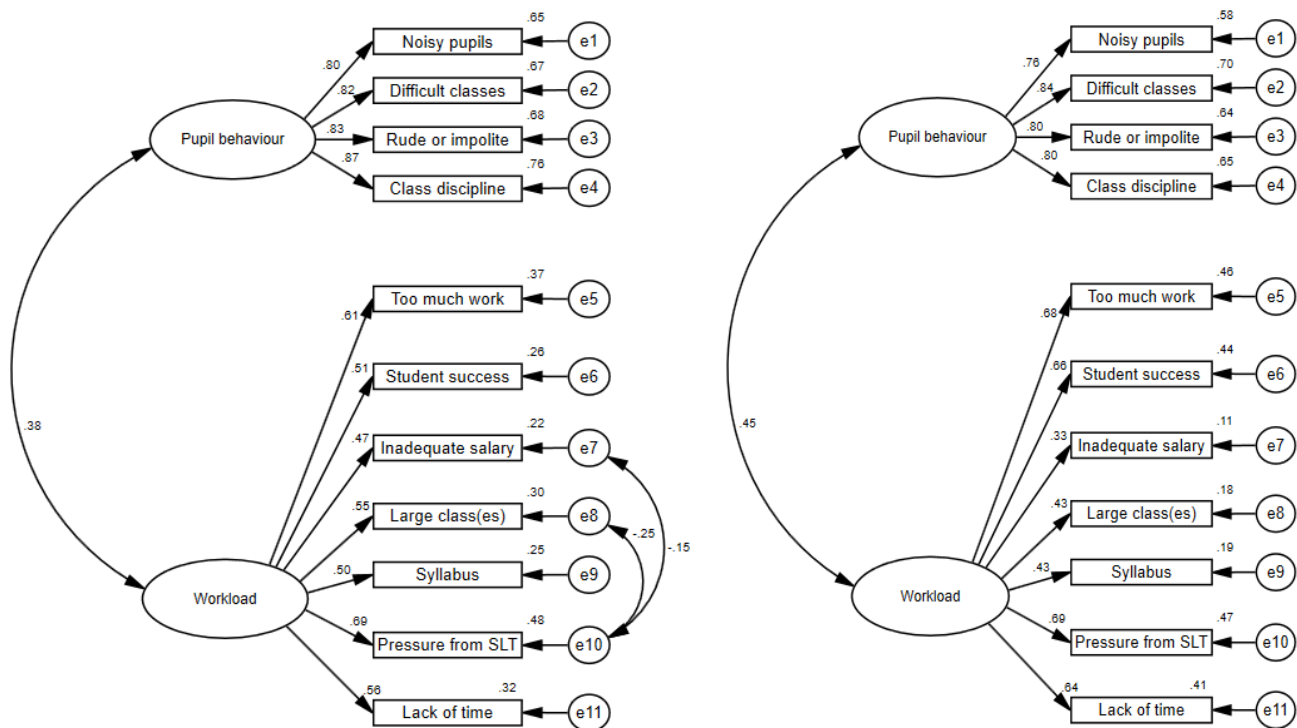
State (left, n = 421) and private (right, n = 278) school teachers (standardised loadings)

Figure 6.3: Model 2b – Refined two-factor model based on Boyle et al (1995)

Model 3

Although model 2b achieved a good fit, we wished to identify as to whether or not the addition of accountability indicators would improve a factor model of stress. Therefore, before testing 'accountability' as a distinct dimension, we added the two newly developed accountability items (stress from 'performance related pay', and stress from 'internal monitoring processes e.g. booktrails /learning walks' to the two factor model proposed above (figure 6.3). Accordingly, we renamed the factor 'workload and accountability' to better describe the latent factor. Initially, we ran model 3 with nine items of the 'workload and accountability' factor. However, after examining the standardised residual matrix, we identified that 'inadequate salary' and 'lack of time to spend with individual pupils' were areas of local strain and were removed to allow for a more parsimonious model.
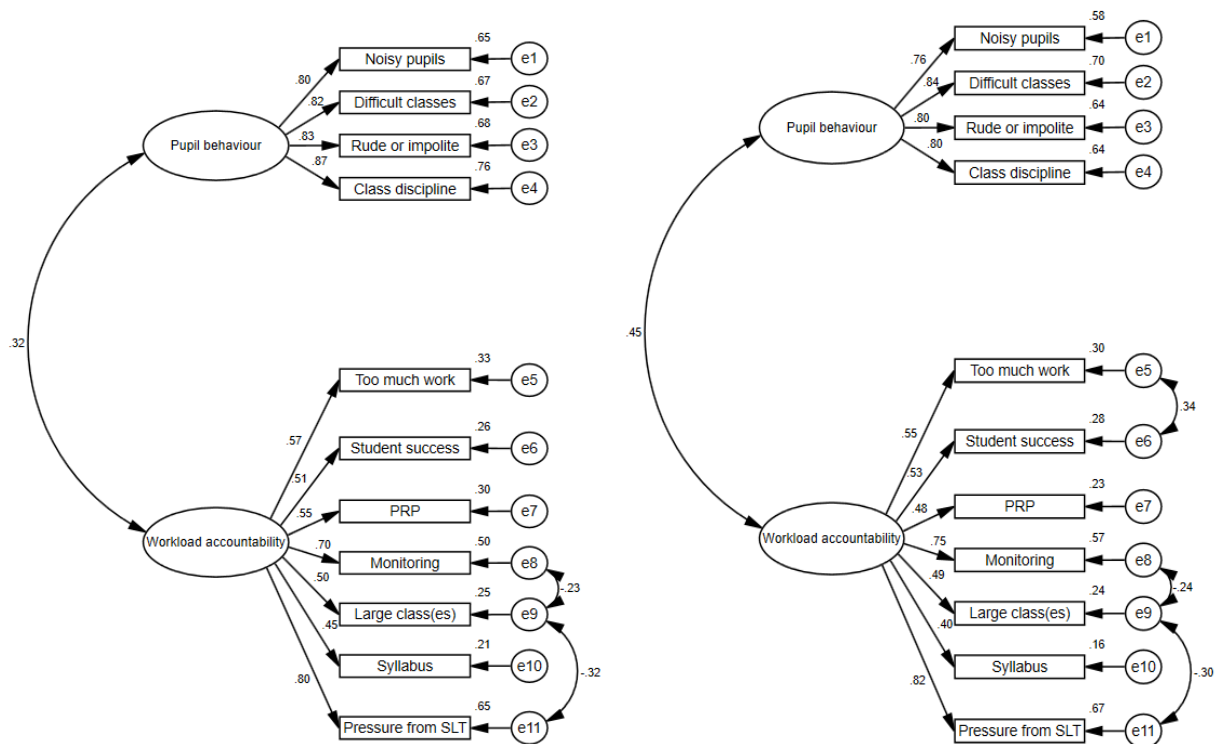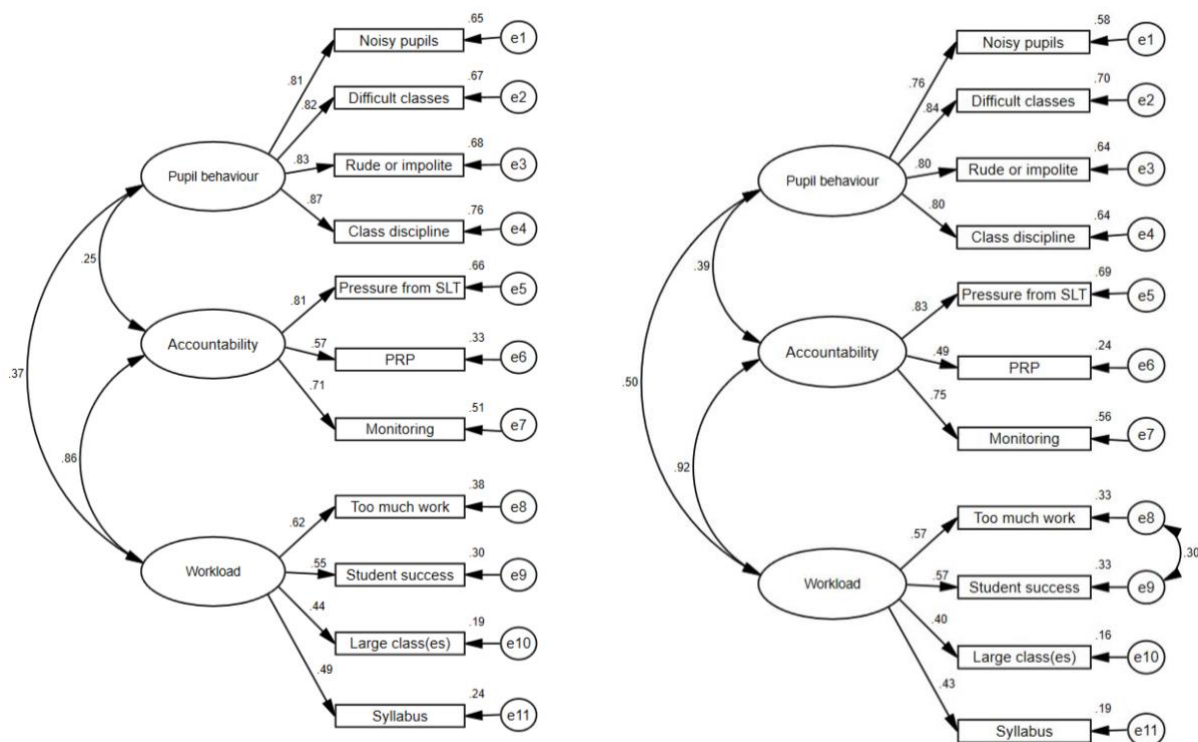
State (left, n = 421) and private (right, n = 278) school teachers (standardised loadings)

Figure 6.4: Model 3 – Two-factor model: Workload and accountability + pupil behaviour

The model indicated good fit after allowing errors to covary for state and private school teachers. It was reasonable to allow these errors to correlate as more pupils in larger classes could mean that teachers felt greater pressure from SLT as they essentially have higher numbers of pupils to achieve particular targets with. Additionally, it could be that stress from internal monitoring was associated with stress from large classes because a greater number of pupils in a class might mean that teachers feel more stressed by monitoring as observers could essentially judge them against more parameters (pupils). Furthermore, 'too much work' and stress from 'responsibility for students' success' could be related because teachers who feel under acute pressure to obtain certain results with pupils may thus assume additional tasks in order to attempt to obtain these outcomes. For example, they may voluntarily run catch-up or revision sessions, communicate more frequently with parents/carers, or offer one-to-one support for pupils outside of teaching hours. Overall, the model 3 fit statistics indicated that it was a better model compared to model 2b which did not include the new accountability indicators (table 6.1).

Model 4

Although model 3 achieved a good fit, we wished to test the hypothesis that accountability was a distinct factor of teacher stress. In section 3.5.1, I theorised that an accountability factor could be comprised of four indicators: performance related pay; internal monitoring processes, pressure from headteacher/ senior leaders, and responsibility for students' success. However, the modification indices suggested that 'responsibility for students' success' was a better indicator of the workload factor. I recognised that the pressure to obtain success with pupils could also relate to teachers' workload as they might spend time preparing special lessons/ additional resources to help pupils to achieve certain levels or grades. Alternatively, they might be required by management to run revision classes for under-achieving pupils, or be expected to routinely scrutinise data to provide evidence of pupil progress. Therefore, in consideration of this, I placed the 'responsibility for students' success' onto the workload factor and fitted the data to the model proposed in figure 6.5.

State (left, n = 421) and private (right, n = 278) school teachers (standardised loadings)

Figure 6.5: Model 4 – Three-factor model state (left) and private (right)

The model achieved a good global fit in both sectors after allowing an additional parameter in the private sector model. However, the global fit statistics were slightly inferior to the two-factor model (model 3) for both sectors (table 6.1).

In addition, model 4 showed a very high correlation between the 'workload' and 'accountability' factors in both sectors (state, r = .86; private, r = .92), which indicated that the two factors were in fact measuring the same construct. The reason for this high correlation appeared theoretically clear: some of the items spoke to both 'workload' and 'accountability' stress. 'Pressure from headteacher/ senior leaders', for example, could relate to workload if senior leaders required teachers to complete a certain volume of tasks within a certain amount of time (Higton, Leonardi, Richards et al., 2017; Walker et al., 2019). It could also refer to 'accountability', if the 'pressure' was to produce evidence that teachers and pupils were performing to expected school standards (CooperGibson, 2018).

Model 3 and 4 evaluation

Although model 3 had good composite reliability, the 'workload and accountability' factor did not meet minimum requirements for Average Variance Extracted (AVE) – which should be ≥ 50% to indicate good convergent validity (Hair et al., 2014).

Table 6.2: Composite reliability and AVE for stress subscales

	Model 3	**Model 3**	**Model 4**	**Model 4**
	State	Private	State	Private
AVE	Pupils: 0.69 WRK +ACC: 0.34	Pupils: 0.64 WRK +ACC: 0.34	Pupils 0.69 WRK:0.28 ACC: 0.5	Pupils:0.64 WRK: 0.33 ACC: 0.5
Composite reliability	Pupils: 0.9 WRK+ACC: 0.78	Pupils: 0.88 WRK+ACC: 0.78	Pupils: 0.9 WRK: 0.61 ACC: 0.74	Pupils: 0.88 WRK:0.63 ACC: 0.74

With regards to model 4, the 'accountability' factor had better AVE compared to 'workload'. Improved AVE indicated that the 'accountability' items provided a better measure of the intended factor compared to the workload items. For model 3, the low AVE pointed to the need for the factor to be improved by adding or refining items to better describe 'workload and accountability' stress.

On balance, we identified model 3 as the best model. We determined that it was a better model than model 4 because in model 4 'workload' and 'accountability' were so highly correlated that they were the same factor. Indeed, recent research which has documented

the interrelation of workload and accountability lent support to a two-factor model, and suggested that my hypothesis that 'accountability' was a distinct factor of stress was not accurate (section 3.5.1) (CooperGibson, 2018; Gibson et al., 2015).

Although we selected model 3, we recognised that it could be improved as indicated by the low AVE. Better or additional indicators which could be added to the model are discussed in section 6.3 with the aid of qualitative data. By using qualitative data in this way, it was possible to improve the answer to RQ2 which asked about the ways in which stress compared between sectors.

6.2. Comparing stress by sector

Figure 6.6 compares the indexed factor scores of teacher stress. I calculated factor scores by summing the raw scores for each item, using a listwise deletion method. The method was selected because it preserves the variation in the data (DiStefano et al., 2009). The factor scores were then indexed 0 – 100 (0 = lowest stress, 100 = highest stress).
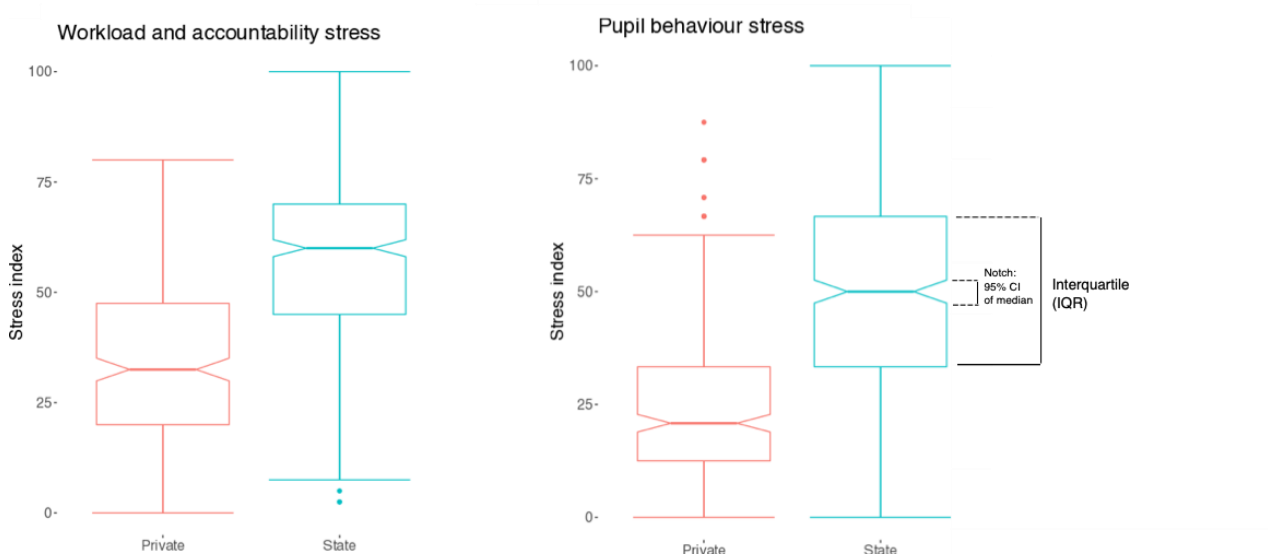
State = 421; Private = 278 | p value < .001 for both factors

Figure 6.6: Accountability and workload stress and pupil behaviour stress for classroom teachers and middle leaders by sector

As the notched boxplot visualises, teachers in the private sector were less stressed by 'workload and accountability' and 'pupil behaviour' compared to state school teachers (p < .001). The factor scale can be divided into a subjective measure, with 0 – 25 representing

low stress; 25 – 50 moderate stress; 50 – 75 high stress, and 75 – 100 extreme stress. With this point of reference, private school teachers were moderately stressed by workload and accountability, and experienced low stress from pupil behaviour. In comparison, state school teachers were highly stressed by workload and accountability and moderately stressed by pupil behaviour. The finding helped to answer RQ2 because it provided a quantification of private school teacher stress compared to peers in the state-funded sector.

6.3. Quantitative data summary

Questionnaire data contributed to answering the research question because it confirmed two core stressors for teachers: 'workload and accountability' and 'pupil behaviour'. By identifying these two factors of stress, it became possible to compare the expression of stress between sectors. Results showed that workload was so highly correlated with accountability that they were in fact one factor. In terms of comparison, teachers in the private sector were significantly less stressed by both factors compared to state school teachers. However, teachers in both sectors found workload and accountability relatively more stressful than pupil behaviour. Before discussing these findings in more detail, section 6.4 offers a full evaluation of the model with the aid of qualitative data.

6.4. Model evaluation

Questionnaire data have purported a two-factor model of stress. From here, the qualitative data served three purposes:

- cross-validate the findings from the questionnaire
- provide data through which to evaluate proposed stress model
- help explain the trends identified in the questionnaire data

Cross-validation is woven into the ensuing discussion which outlines qualitative themes. In terms of model evaluation, qualitative themes helped to confirm which aspects of work interviewee and focus group participants found stressful. These findings are compared to the quantitative findings, and this comparison helps evaluate the adequacy of a two-factor model of stress.

Furthermore, qualitative data help to explain the overall quantitative trends i.e. 'why were private school teachers significantly less stressed by 'pupil behaviour' and 'workload and accountability' compared to their state peers?', and 'why was 'pupil behaviour' less stressful than 'workload and accountability' for teachers in both sectors?'.

Finally, both CFA and qualitative data indicated that workload and accountability were interlinked. As this finding has been discussed under RQ1 and will be discussed again in *Chapter 8: Meta-inferential discussion*, it is not explored in detail here in order to avoid repetition.

6.4.1 Workload and accountability

'Workload and accountability' was significantly less stressful for private school teachers compared to state school teachers: Qualitative data strongly supported this finding. The language used by state school teachers to describe their responses to workload was noticeably more extreme compared to private school teachers' language. A focus group member developed a war metaphor and spoke of teachers being **"shell-shocked"** and suffering **"post-traumatic stress"** from their accountability-driven workloads. His comments referred specifically to **"older teachers"** who struggled **"to deal with the requirements"** of a new accountability policy environment. P9 spoke of **"anger"** at the volume of her workload, while a primary school focus group member described her workload as **"absolutely overwhelming"**. Participants in a different state school focus group concurred that their workload was **"completely and utterly unacceptable"**. Although private day school teachers sometimes described their working days as **"intense"** and boarding school teachers characterised their days as protracted, these hours were not linked to extreme emotional reactions as they were in the state sector. Instead, as explained under RQ1 teachers concurred that they worked long hours but felt compensated for these by long holiday periods and meaningful work.

In terms of stress from accountability, participants' responses to teacher monitoring are detailed in RQ3. Suffice to say that compared to teachers' in the state sector, private school teachers perceived intra-school or external accountability procedures to be less stressful. State school teachers, on the other hand, described work that was characterised by heavy scrutiny; they experienced this as profoundly stressful because it was an affront to their autonomy. While these processes are described in more detail under RQ3, as

indicated by the low AVE of the 'workload and accountability' factor, there is potential for the teacher stress instrument to be improved through the development of more nuanced questions. For example, it could be the case that teachers find 'book trails' more stressful than 'lesson observations', or that the way in which these activities are conducted (e.g. by prior arrangement or without notice) determines the teachers' experience of them as stressful or not. Additionally, an improved measure of teacher stress could ask participants about the uses and purposes of monitoring activities i.e. are collected data used to support teacher development, or is it recorded and filed without further use? Similarly, the factor could be enhanced by making further distinctions between the types of workload that teachers undertake. A revised questionnaire could, for example, ask teachers to identify their stress related to planning, marking, data-related tasks, or undertaking extra-curricular activities.

6.4.2. Pupil behaviour

Private school teachers were active in mentioning pupil behaviour and/or engagement as a positive aspect of their work. They sometimes made unfavourable comparisons with their experiences or perceptions of behaviour in state schools. For example, a private preparatory school classroom teacher suggested that the most stressful behaviour she experienced was when pupils did not **"cross their legs"**, whereas she projected that in the state sector **"most people get chairs thrown at them"** or were **"sworn at"** by pupils. Another private school focus group member concurred that good pupil behaviour was "**a massive benefit [of working] in the independent sector"**. In the same discussion, another teacher explained that she was **"no good in the tough schools"**. She suggested that in **"tough"** state schools **"some teachers were better at managing behaviour than the actual teaching"**. However, she wanted to **"just teach"** pupils who were **"ready to learn"**. Therefore, she considered that the private sector was a more suitable place for her to focus on pedagogy and subject knowledge rather than the skill of behaviour management.

These comparisons portrayed pupil behaviour as better in the private sector compared to the state sector. Analysis from TALIS 2013 matched this finding and suggested that private school teachers have better perceptions of pupil behaviour compared to those working in state-funded schools (Micklewright et al., 2014). There was one exception to this finding in the current study, which was a private school teacher (P3a) who believed

that the idea that behaviour was better in the sector was **"a bit of a fallacy"**. He explained that **"teenagers are teenagers and they always sort of challenge"**. Nevertheless, this view was not supported by other private school interviewees who, although they occasionally mentioned **"lazy"** pupils, upheld the perception that behaviour was better in the private sector compared to the state sector.

Although I did not ask participants for examples of extreme pupil behaviour (e.g. violence towards teachers or other pupils), some state school teachers reported experiencing this kind of conduct. For example, a teacher in a state school focus group spoke about being assaulted by a pupil while pregnant. Another primary school teacher (P10), explained that he had dealt with **"extreme behaviour"**, but did not specify the kinds of incidents to which he was referring. Another referred to difficulties in managing behaviours associated with particular learning needs. While also not asked explicitly, there were no reports of extreme behaviour in the private school data. It could be that such incidents, which are intensely stressful, are more likely to occur in the state sector. A detailed consideration of this suggestion lies beyond the scope of the present study because the data are unsuitable to afford insight into this area.

Pupil behaviour emerged as a strong factor during CFA, but it was not a dominant theme of qualitative data from either sector. A state school teacher in a focus group suggested that pupil behaviour was overshadowed by workload and accountability concerns. At the end of the discussion, she reflected:

> *"We didn't really talk about students, which is weird because surely that's what we are, teachers, but actually it's because of all the paperwork and all the scrutiny. "*

> *(Focus group with secondary school classroom teacher)*

The teacher identified that pupil relationships were at the core of **"what we are"**. However, in a meta-reflection of the focus group discussion, she recognised that the participants had largely discussed **"paperwork and all the scrutiny"**. Her reflection afforded insight into the way in which **"scrutiny"** and workloads comprised of **"paperwork"** had become dominant concerns for teachers. The prioritisation of these areas meant that the **"students"** were largely absent from discussion, even though working with pupils should

have been at the core of teachers' work. Interview and focus group data collected from state school teachers followed this trend and so supported the questionnaire finding that workload and accountability were more stressful compared to pupil behaviour for state school teachers.

6.4.3. Supporting teachers with stress from pupil behaviour

State school teachers explained that they did not perceive pupil behaviour to be a direct stressor. Instead, they believed that stress from behaviour only arose in certain circumstances. They believed that teaching experience helped to manage this kind of stress. For example, a focus group member who taught in a secondary school explained that when she undertook the Teach First[6] training programme behaviour was **"a massive stress"** but that **"it's just not relevant […] now"** because she had gained experience and expertise.

Teachers also suggested that adequate resources could help to manage pupil behaviour stress. For example, one teacher stated **"[pupil behaviour] can be significant when it's poorly managed and there's no money to manage it currently"**. A fellow focus group member from a different school built on the speaker's suggestion and stated that a lack of financial resources meant that pupils with SEND were not receiving necessary one-to-one support from Teaching Assistants[7]. She described one of her SEND pupils **"having massive meltdowns in the middle of lessons"**; a behaviour that she attributed to the withdrawal of Teaching Assistant support.

Other state school teachers believed that stress from pupil behaviour arose as a consequence of poor leadership. One teacher explained: **"I honestly see pupil behaviour as a direct result of how SLT help their teams"**. To exemplify her point, the teacher who had been assaulted by a pupil while pregnant, described how a member of SLT had returned the pupil to her classroom shortly after the incident **"without saying anything"** to the teacher. The participant felt disappointed in her manager and regretted that in her **"old school"** SLT took behavioural incidents seriously. Other teachers' comments corroborated the idea that good leadership could help with pupil behaviour

[6] Teach First is a salaried route into teaching. Trainees are deployed to schools in areas of educational disadvantage for the duration of their 2 year training contract.

[7] Teaching Assistants are classroom support staff

stress. For example, a focus group participant from another state secondary school indicated that behaviour was not a significant stressor because she was **"so well supported"** and felt confident that incidents would be **"followed up"** by senior leaders.

Some interviewees acknowledged that while some students could exhibit poor behaviour, it was a condition of the job that they accepted as inevitable. P7, a middle leader in a state secondary school explained that she entered teaching with her **"eyes open"** knowing that **"the kids are going to be difficult at times because teenagers are".** P7's comments concerning pupil behaviour were typical of the state sector participants in that while they could recognise pupil behaviour as a stressor, it was not a source of complaint if teachers were well-supported by leaders. In this way, data from the state sector matched previous research that suggests that stress from pupil behaviour can be mitigated almost entirely by good working conditions which include supportive leadership (Burke Johnson et al., 2012). Therefore, while pupil behaviour was a clear factor of stress, future questionnaires or models may wish to include a scale that measures perceptions of supportive leadership as this could prove to moderate pupil behaviour stress for state school teachers in England.

6.4.4. Dropped or unmeasured factors

Although qualitative data supported workload and accountability as a factor of stress, other factors were dropped out of the model proposed by Boyle et al (1995). Specifically, professional recognition needs, colleagues and relations, and time and resources did not appear in our model.

The subsequent sections consider two hypotheses with the aid of qualitative data: firstly, that 'workload and accountability' alongside 'pupil behaviour' superseded all other factors of stress, and secondly that the stress questionnaire did not identify additional stress factors because the items on the questionnaire were not sufficient to achieve this end. The discussion of dropped factors addresses RQ2 because it helps to identify stressors which might have been missed by the model.

Professional recognition needs

In relation to salary and career prospects, there were some instances of state school teachers discussing these factors in qualitative data. However, in such instances, the

teachers typically stated that salary was a reason to remain in teaching. P7 considered that she would be unable to find a job outside of teaching which offered equal or better pay and conditions. A further two teachers explained that they were **"trapped"** at the top of a pay scale (P6 and P9). This was because their schools' pay structures prevented them from applying for a pay rise unless they accepted management responsibilities which they did not want to assume. In this minority of cases, poor career structure was linked to feelings of frustration, but overall it did not emerge as a dominant stressor.

Pay for private school teachers was mentioned only as a positive or unimportant aspect of work. Some explained that salaries were superior to the state sector. P4a explained that he had moved into the sector partly because improved pay was **"a definitely a positive, but not the main reason"** for joining the sector. Instead he stated that his main reason for moving into a private school was superior equipment that facilitated an adventurous approach to teaching his practical subject, and the opportunity to be involved in extra-curricular activities. A focus group participant similarly reflected that teaching **"isn't particularly well paid"**, but that **"we've chosen to go into it because we really like our subjects and we enjoy working with the children"**. A colleague concurred with the statement and claimed that: **"I made a wonderful decision in deciding to do a job I was going to enjoy doing even though I wasn't going to earn as much doing that"**. These comments reflected an overall trend: professional recognition needs were not identified as a stressor by teachers in either sector. The suggestion diverged from teacher union materials which have emphasised the need for state school teachers to be awarded a pay rise, and it also diverged from current policy foci which concentrates of improving teacher retention by improving teachers' career structure possibilities (National Education Union, 2018; Department for Education, 2019b). In fact, on the basis of overall findings from the quantitative and qualitative data, professional recognition needs (career structure and salary) appeared to be of minor concern to the sampled teachers. Therefore, the qualitative data supported the decision to drop the factor from the model. Overall, the findings helped to address the research question because it informed the effort to identify and compare the sources of stress for teachers in each sector.

Colleagues and relations

Qualitative data suggested that pupil relationships could be a source of stress for private boarding school teachers. Some teachers described struggling with the intense demands of acting **"in parentis locus"**. Focus group participants described boarding schools as

"immersive" and **"absorbing"** environments which were **"closed worlds".** While caring for children across all facets of their lives brought a great sense of fulfilment to most, the emotional strain of these intense environments could be stressful. For example, a boarding school focus group member spoke of feeling **"deeply hurt"** by a complaint about her lessons which was brought about by the **"children [she] loved".** Her colleague explained that **"we bring a lot of emotion to our jobs"** and it was sometimes a struggle not to **"internalise"** any **"rebukes"** from parents or pupils. As found in prior research, it was clear that teaching had an emotional aspect for the practitioners (Ball, 2008; Jeffrey & Woods, 1996; Nias, 1996). As teachers had made an emotional investment in this work, perceived criticism could become stressful when it was internalised and interpreted as an affront to teachers' identity as competent and caring practitioners.

Interactions with pupils rarely emerged as a stressor for private school teachers in day schools. It could be that boarding school teachers experienced more acute stress from pupil relationships compared to day school counterparts because there were no clear boundaries between work and home for teachers who lived onsite with pupils. Housemaster and housemistress roles in particular require teachers to care for pupils throughout the day and night during term time. As suggested by the participants themselves, it was easy to comprehend how stress from pupil relationships could be amplified in a **"closed world"** whereby the teacher and pupils spent the majority of their time onsite together.

Collegial relations did not emerge as a direct stressor for state school teachers in the qualitative data. Instead, state school teachers blamed Ofsted, national policy, and the DfE for stressful working conditions. They perceived that managers were victims to these higher order pressures. By way of example, a middle leader explained:

> *"[Pressure comes from] the government ultimately, I guess, and then of course that's then filtering down to heads who are filtering it down and down the system, so that we're all being squeezed."*
>
> *(Interview with state secondary school middle leader, P7)*

The image of stress **"trickling"** or being **"filtered down"** was prominent in the state school data. Teachers recognised that their managers were subordinated to wider and

higher accountability demands, and classroom teachers were perceived as located at the end of the chain of **"filtered down"** stress. This finding suggested that accountability and relationships with colleagues were conflated which could explain why the 'colleagues and relations' factor did not sustain in the factor model of stress.

Overall, there were very few instances of teachers from either sector discussing departmental relationships, or individuals with whom they had stressful relations. However, one set of private school focus group teachers suggested that there was a **"silo mentality"** among colleagues in their school which was **"unhelpful"** in working well together. Teachers in another private school focus group agreed that it was **"not fair"** when colleagues tried to **"sneak out"** of work to avoid activities or cover lessons. The same group of teachers, who worked in the same school, also felt that **"work not being shared out equally"** was a source of stress for them. While important to the teachers in the groups, on the whole qualitative data supported the finding that workload and accountability essentially overwhelmed other factors of stress such as collegial relations for teachers in both sectors. Similarly, there were very fewer instances of state school teachers discussing school-level intra-personal relations with colleagues as a stressor. Instead, they appeared to be more focused on systemic sources of stress: Ofsted, and the entailing school policies which are explored under the RQ3 findings.

Time and resources

'Time and resources' was dropped from the stress factor model. The questionnaire data indicated that this was not a significant stressor for teachers in either sector. The factor was weak because it included only two indicators and it correlated highly with the 'workload'/ 'workload and accountability' and 'colleagues and relations' factors (figures 6.1 – 6.4). Even though the factor was dropped, item level responses suggested that state school teachers were relatively more stressed by 'time and resources' compared to their private school peers. By way of example, state school teachers attributed a mean stress rating of 4.54 out of seven (1 = no stress, 7 = extreme stress, SD =1.88) to stress from 'shortage of equipment/poor facilities' (*appendix 8*)*.* The item was the 7_{th} most stressful out of the 22 listed items for state school teachers. As such, the item was relatively less stressful for private school teachers who rated this as an average of 2.45 out of seven (SD =1.64), which made it the 15_{th} most stressful item on the 22 item list. The difference between the item means by sector was statistically significant ($p < .001$).

Qualitative data suggested that school funding was an emergent stressor for state school leaders. While only one classroom teacher mentioned the theme, three senior leaders described the pressure placed on staff as result of an inability to recruit and/or retain adequate staff numbers. One focus group participant, who was a senior leader in a state school, explained that **"a lack of resources compounded by completing ridiculous tasks to satisfy Ofsted"** led to **"teachers being spread very very thinly"**. He said that in his school **"this all leads to large amounts of teachers being signed off with stress"**. In this way, resource stress interlinked with workload and accountability as existing staff were under pressure to assume a greater volume of work. Stress from role increase was then **"compounded"** by **"ridiculous"** tasks motivated by accountability demands. Another state school headteacher (P5) spoke of the emotional stress of closing down a breakfast club for vulnerable children and the inability to replace retiring staff due to budget constraints. He regretted that he was now **"relying on an awful lot of extra from staff"** who were **"run ragged"** by the additional demands placed on them.

Education budget cuts in the state sector have dominated recent headlines (Coughlan, 2017; Marsh & Adams, 2017). Since the point at which data were collected, it may be that stress from funding cuts has proceeded to be experienced more acutely by teachers across all levels of seniority as its effects have deepened. Indeed news reports, which were written after the study's data were collected, suggested that this could have been the case (Marsh & Adams, 2017; Weale & Adams, 2019). Therefore, while the stress factor model proposed in this research does not include a resources factor, future research may wish to examine this as a potential stressor for those working in state education.

Parents

The stress scale included in the questionnaire contained an item that asked teachers to score the level of stress related to 'dealing with parents'. Although this item did not load onto either of the identified factors, it was interesting to observe that the mean score was similar for the state sector and private sector observations (private = 3.44, SD =1.49; state = 3.5, SD =1.5). This meant that for private school teachers, out of 22 items in total, 'dealing with parents' was the third most stressful, whereas for state school teachers it was 18th most stressful. Furthermore 'dealing with parents' was the only questionnaire item that was not significantly less stressful (p = 0.57) for private school classroom teachers and middle leaders compared to state school participants (*appendix 8*). This finding led to the consideration that 'parents' were relatively more stressful for private school teachers

compared to state school teachers. Furthermore, as the examples below will illustrate, it appeared than parents' attitudes towards the school could potentially moderate stress from pupil behaviour.

Qualitative data supported the hypothesis that parents were a stressor for private school teachers, and that teachers' experiences of parents linked to the stress that they felt from pupil behaviour. Specifically, teachers found the following stressful: unreasonable demands from parents; parents who infringed on teachers' autonomy; excessive communications from parents, and inadequate support from leadership in managing difficult parents. Participants framed these stressors as by-products or results of an increasingly consumerist approach to education. Private school participants were, however, careful to emphasise that challenges with parents arose from the minority. A focus group participant stressed that **"most of our parents are lovely"**, while P6a explained that difficult parents were **"a small but significant minority"**. Overall, I developed the impression that while the majority of private school parents could be relied upon to support teachers' judgements, teachers believed that some parents viewed education through an instrumental lens: as a means to achieve academic outcomes. Stress emerged as a consequence of this disjuncture between teachers' values and parents' values.

Consumer-parents sometimes had unrealistic expectations of the exam results that their children could achieve. This concern was particularly pertinent for senior school or sixth form private school teachers as they entered pupils for national exams. P6a suggested that parents who had **"purchased a product"** believed that the school should deliver **"[academic] results"** (P6a). The understanding of education as a **"product"** led to a **"client and business person relationship"** (P12a). When parents or pupils viewed the teacher as a service provider, it could pose a threat to teachers' autonomy. For example, a focus group member explained that she had once been told by a pupil: **"I pay your salary"**. She elaborated on the way that she felt in response:

"It's that thing of freedom, we are free, very intelligent, very skilled individuals and yet we give all of ourselves, we give so much of ourselves in this setting for the youngsters. And, just because they are paying money does not mean they can expect, or that the parents can expect them for them, particular results."

(Focus group with private senior school classroom teacher)

The teacher felt insulted because she felt that her **"freedom"** was threatened by the positioning of a consumer and service-provider relationship. She felt affronted by the pupil's view that her work was part of a transaction, when she positioned it to be altruistic and vocational. In her view, teaching was a self-sacrificial act in which **"very intelligent, very skilled individuals"** chose to **"give all"** or **"give so much"** of themselves to **"youngsters"**. The pupil's comment had threatened the participant's value system whereby she was an autonomous individual who had chosen to apply her skills and offer her entire self to the role. She linked the pupil's behaviour to parental attitudes, and she felt that some parents and their children might expect **"particular results"** because the family were **"paying money"**. The transactional nature of the exchange debased the teacher's value system and posed a threat to her identity as autonomous and altruistic.

Value conflict with parents emerged as a dominant stressor for other private school teachers. As shown by the focus group member quoted above, parents who adopted a transactional perspective to education could contribute to teacher stress when these views came into conflict with teachers' value systems. P3a, for example, spoke of:

"[A] subsection of pestiferous, pushy, not terribly reasonable parents who want us to basically do all their parenting for them and provide extremely high academic results regardless of whether their children are putting in the relevant efforts or not."

(Interview with private middle school senior leader, P3a)

The senior leader experienced negative emotions in response to parents that he perceived to demand more than a school should provide. He positioned **"pestiferous"** parents as requiring the school to do **"all their parenting for them"** whilst not paying attention to

190

"whether the children are putting the relevant efforts". In P3a's view, these kind of **"pushy"** parents were interested only in **"extremely high academic results"** and believed that it was the school's sole duty to achieve this outcome; as such, teachers might experience stress from both the parental pressure and from the lack of support from parents in dealing with disengaged pupils. He subsequently explained that he was disappointed because in his view parents were not **"buying outcomes"** but **"paying fees for what we would say were 'enhanced opportunities'"**. His views echoed those of the aforementioned focus group teacher who rejected the idea that **"paying money"** entitled pupils to **"particular results"**. She too believed that academic success was relational and thus dependent on parent and pupil participation.

Private school teachers sometimes felt stressed by the way in which managers responded to complaints from parents. They did not always feel adequately supported by managers and they attributed this to school leaders' need to provide a customer service to fee-paying parents. By way of illustrative example, a teacher in a focus group explained that she had been **"investigated"** following a complaint from a parent and that this experience was **"deeply unpleasant"**. She felt that it was unreasonable for her managers to commence an investigation into her conduct on the grounds of **"a single isolated complaint"**. Consequently, the teacher had been left with a feeling of **"paranoia"** although she acknowledged that it was challenging for management **"to reassure parents that actions have been taken"** even though she felt the **"investigation"** was unwarranted.

A senior leader in a different school (P6a) explained that it could be **"uncomfortable"** managing parents' complaints. He described a tension between adhering to **"the old saying 'the customer's always right'"** and a recognition that **"they're normally not right"**. The participant felt that parents had purchased a **"bespoke education"** which meant that they wanted meetings with the headteacher **"at the drop of a hat"** and to feel vindicated when complaining. He explained that school senior leaders had to negotiate these expectations carefully, especially in **"a relatively small school"** where a child leaving **"financially has quite a big impact"**. The comments helped to show that complaints from parents could be stressful for private school teachers and school leaders partly because the financial security of a school could depend on satisfying these fee-paying customers.

Alongside complaints, private school teachers found parental communications stressful. As detailed under RQ1 findings, participants spoke of parents who **"email at all times of**

day and night" and **"obviously expect replies"**. This statement was indicative of the teacher's understanding of the power dynamics in the relationship. The parent was a customer who has purchased a package which **"obviously"** included responses to their communications. This finding was unsurprising given the wider contextual shifts that have recast education, and in particular private education, as a commodity (Peel, 2015). A value-for-money prerogative may be especially important for fee-paying parents who have made a financial choice to invest in their child's education, and so they may expect a level of communication and overall service which exceeds that of state schools (ATL, 2014). State school teachers, on the other hand, rarely referenced parents, or parental complaints, and the theme of parents as consumers was far less prevalent. This point of comparison suggested a different power dynamic whereby the teachers did not feel as directly accountable to parents compared to their private school colleagues.

The succeeding sections have evaluated the proposed two-factor model of stress. In summary, qualitative data:

- Confirmed workload and accountability + pupil behaviour are factors of teacher stress
- Confirmed that workload and accountability overwhelmed other stressors for state school teachers
- Suggested the model could be amended to add more indicators of stress from parents (private school teachers), or stress from resource poverty (state school teachers)
- School leadership quality could moderate stress from pupil behaviour

6.5. Qualitative explanations

This section aims to explain *why* there were quantitative differences in teachers' experiences of stress. In brief, I propose that state school teachers were more stressed compared to private school teachers because they were dissonant with the values underpinning state education, whereas private school teachers worked within a sector that propagated a different discourse. Teacher in the private sector aligned with the discourse of the co-curriculum as a fulfilling way to educate pupils.

Value consonance/ dissonance

Questionnaire data indicated that private school teachers were on the whole less stressed compared to state counterparts, and qualitative data strongly supported this finding. While private school teachers experienced some sector-specific stress from consumer-parents, on the whole they aligned with the value system of sector, unlike state school teachers – who felt disillusioned by economic discourses of education that left them feeling morally compromised.

Private sector teachers aligned with the discourse of co-curricular education. The discourse taught that by valuing sports, arts, and music alongside academic studies, pupils could develop intangible skills such as **"confidence"**, **"self-belief"**, **"self-esteem"**, and **"connections"** which would be otherwise unavailable in the state sector. P11a suggested that **"those skills and behaviours absolutely support and enhance what goes on in the classroom"**, whereas P6a stated that the co-curriculum led to the development of **"a well-rounded child"**. P12a, a classroom teacher explained that he was attracted to teaching in the private sector by the co-curriculum which promised a **"lifestyle"** whereby he could **"do some sport as well as teaching the subject"**. A focus group member from a different school suggested that he liked the **"informal"** atmosphere created by a co-curriculum; in fact, this teacher said that he **"moved from state to private because [he] really like rugby and sports"** and these opportunities were not on offer in the state sector.

Alongside the co-curriculum, it became evident that boarding school teachers aligned with a discourse of **"family"** and **"community"**. Participants felt that boarding environments lent themselves to this kind of community. A focus group member suggested that **"students gain a lot"** from seeing teacher living onsite and that this contributed to a **"community"** and **"family"**. Similarly, P6a, felt that **"our school is very much like a family"**; a feeling which he attributed to the co-curriculum which allowed him to **"see the whole child"** in the **"games field"** as well as the classroom. The family feeling was cemented by P6a's boarding house commitments which meant that he **"educated the whole child"** across all facets of their lives. Teachers like P6a who felt part of a community, or family, were largely consonant with their school environments. As Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011) have suggested, such consonance could be important because it links to lower levels of stress.

The desire to be immersed within the school community jarred with some of the state school teachers' narratives. By way of example, P8, a state school middle leader had left teaching shortly before interview. It emerged that she had been unable to separate the self, as a socially constructed identity, from the domain of her work. She detailed her anxiety in response to managers that she considered to be unsupportive:

> *"With my partner - it was just going round and round and round. It was conversations about my job. And it just started eating away. I thought I just have no control. Everything I try to do is just not good enough."*
>
> *(Interview with state secondary school middle leader, P8)*

In this case, P8's work became stressful when it permeated the boundaries of her mind, and home and started to dominate conversations with her partner. Once the barrier between home and work had been breached, the teacher became subsumed by negative affective feelings which began to **"eat away"** at her and led her to experience a loss of control. She felt that no effort would ever be **"good enough"**, and faced with the futility of trying in a seemingly impossible situation, she felt a loss of agency, and a loss of self.

The teacher (P8) explained later in the interview that she **"needed to be [herself] again"** and that this sense of loss of identity led her to leave the profession. Her interview testified to the extent to which a work-related narrative of inadequacy and failure can invade the individual's home, mind, and sense of self. As Ball suggests, the teacher had become 'alienated from [herself]' as she struggled to displace the internalised values which had become the locus for auto-control and self-judgement (1997, p.334). Her experience stood in stark opposition to the private school teachers who welcomed the elision of the professional and private domains of their lives. The private school teachers expressed no need to construct protective psychological boundaries between work and home because their work did not typically cause emotional or psychological distress. The exception to this statement was complaints from parents, as such instances appeared to contribute to stress particularly when the teacher felt unsupported.

Despite occasional disturbances from parents, private school teachers' general consonance with the co-curricular belief system was clear. P2a, for example, stated that

the co-curriculum created **"a value system that [was] perceptible"** and **"tangible"** to the school community. In a focus group, one teacher described the co-curriculum as an essential **"dimension"** of schooling. She made her alignment with the discourse explicit as she explained **"fundamentally we are all in [teaching] for exactly the same reason, and we all have the same views on life"**. The participant elaborated to explain that teachers taught because **"we really like our subjects and we enjoy working with the children"** in different capacities. Through the provision of the co-curriculum the private sector implicitly offered more opportunities to work **"with the children"** compared to state schools. As suggested by previous research, first-order teaching-related activities are linked to reduced stress for teachers and greater feelings of work engagement (Lawrence et al., 2018; Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2014).

While private sector participants spoke of **"rounded"** pupils and developing the **"whole child"**, state school teachers were stressed by a value disjuncture with national policies that view education as serving an economic purpose. Several of the interviewed state school teachers regretted that the emotional needs of pupils had been subordinated to the neoliberal drive to produce exam results. P9, a middle leader in a state school, stated that she told pupils: **"You are not statistics. You are human beings"**. Other interviews and focus groups echoed the view that the state education system was stressful and dehumanising in its relentless pursuit of quantifiable outcomes. As suggested by Gewirtz (2002, p. 75), some participants perceived themselves to be 'repositories of accumulated stress' for pupils; one contemplated that there was **"only so much shock that we can keep absorbing"** on behalf of pupils who were in **"flood of tears"** on a **"daily basis"** because of exam and target pressures (P7). Some state school teachers feared for their pupils' mental health. In one particularly poignant interview, a teacher spoke of a child who had died by suicide[8]. The teacher recalled the event during a discussion about pupil responses to the pressure of target grades. As a whole, the interview data suggested that some teachers considered that competitive and high pressured environments were stressful for both pupils and teachers.

Some state school teachers felt complicit in creating what a focus group member described as **"pressure cookers"** which were **"soul destroying"** for the pupils and teachers. A state primary classroom teacher in a focus group explained that the drive to

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[8] Interviewee details withheld to protect teacher and school identity

obtain certain grades with pupils had **"squeezed out"** the **"real joy"** of **"working with children"** from the profession. State school teachers' emotional distress foregrounded the ongoing battle over the political space which Gewirtz (2002, p. 49) and Ball (2003, p. 217) respectively term 'the new moral environment' and the 'struggle over the teachers' soul'. In essence, they could not align with the dominant market discourses which encouraged disciplinary mechanisms, cultures of competition, and idealised visions of continual growth and improvement (Gewirtz, 2002). By way of contrast, private school teachers were eager to dispel ideas that they were stressful places for pupils or teachers to study and work. Instead, they emphasised the co-curriculum and pastoral systems as a way of mitigating and balancing academic pressures. A focus group member, for example, suggested that in private schools teachers could work with pupil **"on all their fronts not just the academic front, but the personal front"**. Another teacher in a different focus group made a similar claim, and explained that as a teacher the **"pastoral side"** of her work was **"equally enjoyable"** as **"the academic stuff"**. Although teachers acknowledged the tension between parental demands for results and the ambitions of the co-curriculum, most felt that they achieved harmony between the economic and socio-cultural imperatives of education through the co-curriculum and extensive pastoral provision.

There was only one dissonant voice from the private sector, which was from a headteacher (P7a) in a school which was directed towards achieving exam outputs. The headteacher explained that his was not **"a traditional school"** because it focused on teaching **"exam technique"** in order to achieve **"the best results"**. As such, sporting and musical activities were of peripheral concern and not offered as **"part of the package"**. Instead the school filled a gap in the private education market by presenting as unashamedly academic in its outlook. In this way it appealed precisely to the consumer-parents who provided a source of stress to other school teachers. P7a suggested that his school offered attractive employment opportunities to those who wanted to **"come in, teach, go home"**. Subject teachers' timetables were comprised only of academic lessons, which meant that unlike peers in **"traditional"** private schools, they did not need to participate in extra-curricular activities or even parents' evenings. From the collected data, I could not verify if the school's teachers found this mode of working more or less stressful than a traditional approach whereby they would be immersed in a co-curricular environment which would expand beyond regular working hours.

With the notable exception of P7a, private school teachers aligned with a co-curricular discourse that celebrated the education of the whole child. The understanding that private school teachers felt consonant with sector-wide values helped to explain their lower levels of stress. State school teachers, however, felt conflicted and distressed by the manifestations of the neoliberal policy context and its effect on their work. They felt that state-system values were skewed towards an economic way of thinking, and this contrasted with the way in which the private sector positioned itself as educating the 'whole child' rather than focusing on academic outputs.

6.6 Research question summary

In direct response to RQ2 ('how and why do teachers' experiences of stress compare between sectors?'), I found the following in response to the '*how*':

- The underlying factor structure of stress was similar for state and private school teachers
- State school teachers are significantly more stressed than private school peers
- Teachers in both sectors are relatively more stressed by workload and accountability compared to pupil behaviour

I suggested a two-factor model of stress which fitted data from both sectors reasonably well. However, a review of qualitative data suggested that the model could be improved with additional factors and indicators. Specifically, parents could be a factor of stress for private school teachers, and resource poverty could be a stressor for state school teachers. As such, the questionnaire items could be adapted to capture these potentially unmeasured stressors. Future researchers also may wish to develop scales which are specific to private or state school teachers in order to facilitate a more nuanced comparison. For example, a stress instrument for private school teachers might develop a 'parents' subscale. It could aim to measure various kind of stress from parents (e.g. unreasonable expectations, or frequency of communications).

RQ2 also asked '*why*' experiences of stress differed between sectors. With regards to stress from pupil behaviour, the chapter has suggested that private school teachers might have been less stressed by this factor compared to state peers because they had smaller class sizes and fewer direct teaching hours. These two elements could have enabled teachers to experience their work with pupils as less intense compared to state school teachers.

With regards to 'workload and accountability' stress, the chapter has suggested that state school teachers felt more stressed than private school peers because they felt that their workloads were comprised of many meaningless accountability motivated tasks. These tasks were stressful because they aimed at pleasing an adult audience rather than benefiting children. In direct comparison to the state sector, private school teachers did not feel that their workloads were comprised of accountability orientated tasks. Instead, they found their workloads meaningful and thus less stressful because they worked to the direct benefit of pupils and parents. Furthermore, teachers who participated in the co-curriculum felt that they had meaningful opportunities to work directly with pupils, and this linked to feelings of fulfilment.

While the research focused on school-level stressors, qualitative data strongly indicated that state school teachers experienced a value dissonance with their macro-contexts. Specifically, they felt distressed by exam and target cultures because they perceived that these behaviours damaged pupil and teacher overall wellbeing. This value dissonance with the macro-context was an indirect stressor for state school teachers because it was experienced through school-level policies and practices which mirrored and responded to national policy and ideology. On the other hand, teachers from the private sector did not express the same value dissonance with national discourses and policy. In contrast to their colleagues in the state sector, these practitioners aligned with discourses that valued the provision of opportunities to pupils across a co-curriculum.

Chapter 7: Teacher monitoring

RQ3) How is teacher monitoring experienced by teachers in each sector?

7.1. Questionnaire data

In order to understand how teachers experienced intra-school monitoring, it was first necessary to understand which activities they experienced. Q3.1 asked teachers to record the presence or absence of particular monitoring practices (figure 7.1). The findings showed that teachers experienced many of the same surveillance and monitoring technologies and processes regardless of sector.

Monitoring activities experienced by teachers
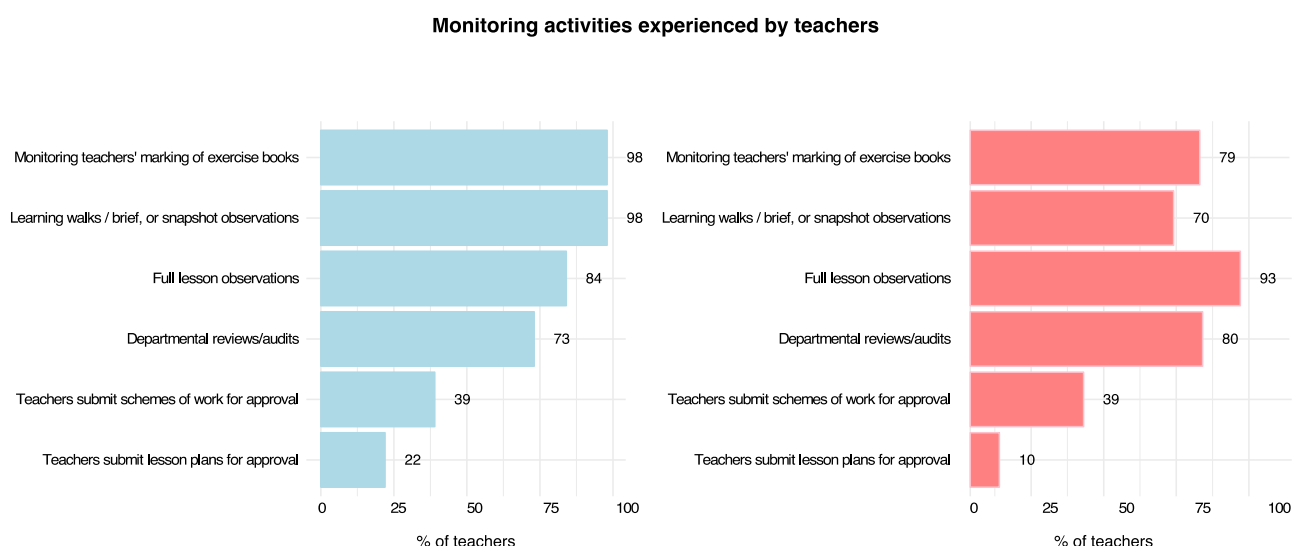
State (left), n = 473 | Private (right), n = 341

Figure 7.1: Monitoring activities reported by classroom teachers, middle leaders, and SLT by sector

The findings indicated the ubiquity of surveillance technologies such as learning walks and book marking inspections among state school participants. In fact these activities were experienced by 98% of the sampled state teachers. As depicted in figure 7.1, more state school teachers reported learning walks and book trails compared to traditional lesson observations. The finding could reflect a shift towards 'normalised visibility' in state schools, whereby teachers can expect to be surveilled by observers at any given time and without prior notice (Page, 2015, p. 1032). Senior leaders may prefer to observe teachers without warning, believing that this technique will provide a 'true' picture of the teacher's competence, as they will not have had the opportunity to prepare a performance prior to

the event (Page, 2015). As casual or unannounced observations have become the normality for teachers, these methods may have displaced traditional pre-arranged lesson observations as a way of gathering data concerning teacher competence.

On the other hand, data from the private sector showed that full lesson observations were experienced by 93% of the sampled teachers. Observations of entire lessons are usually carried out by prior arrangement; therefore, the finding could indicate the private sector's preference for this traditional mode of observation over unannounced practices such as learning walks. Despite this finding, the majority of private school teachers in the sample experienced learning walks (70%), book inspections (79%), and audits (80%), and as well as full lesson observations (93%). However, it must be recalled that private school data were clustered and therefore may not represent teachers' experiences of monitoring in other private schools.

Participants were asked to identify 'other' monitoring practices that were undertaken by their schools. The most frequently cited 'other' practice related to methods of evaluating pupil progress through data tracking software, teacher report, or meetings. This method was identified by 28 state school and 11 private school participants. Although outside the remit of the study (section 2.5.4), 'pupil voice' was also identified as a monitoring mechanism by 11 state school teachers and five private school teachers. One interpretation of this finding is that it indicated the normalisation of surveillance as all stakeholders, including parents and pupils, were invited to participate in the act of monitoring and reporting on teacher performance (Page, 2017b). Additional monitoring techniques, which were categorised as 'other' included managers checking the homework set by teachers, and managers monitoring teachers' use of photocopying or printing.

As planned, I developed a rudimentary accountability score by summing up the number of monitoring activities reported by each participant. A comparison of average accountability scores between sectors indicated that state school teachers experienced a slighter higher average number of monitoring practices within their schools compared to private school teachers. State school teachers reported 4.10 practices in their schools (SD =1) and private school teachers 3.65 practices (SD =1.28).

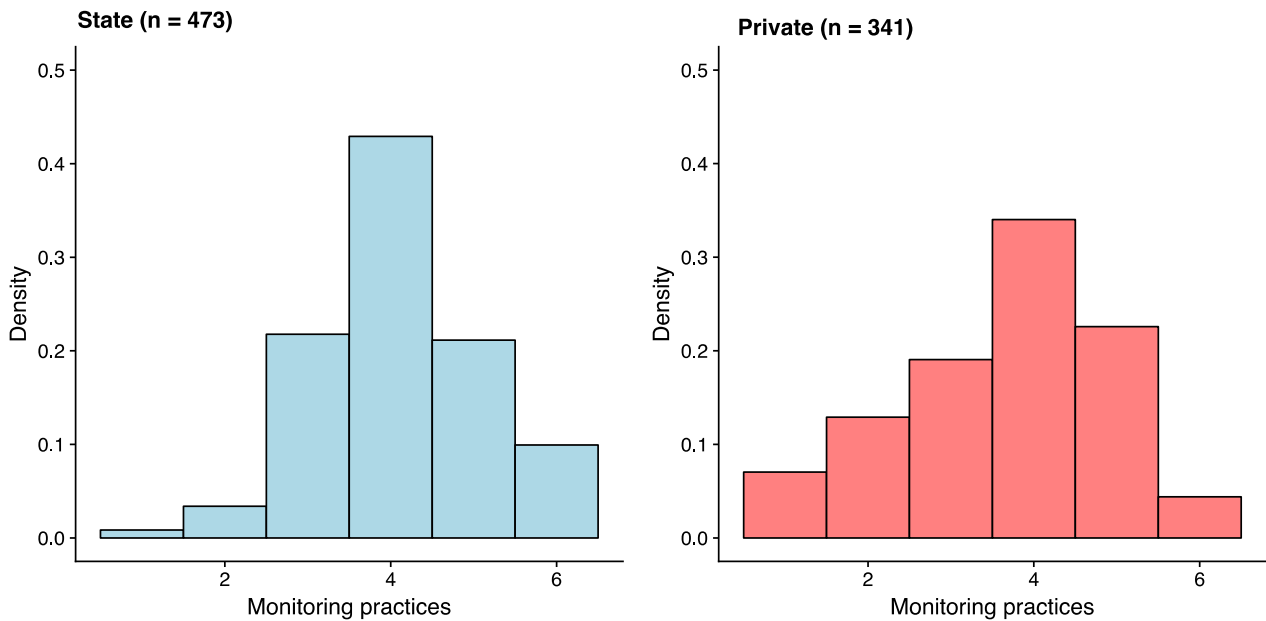### Histograms of teacher monitoring by sector

Figure 7.2: Density histograms of monitoring practices for all teachers by sector

As the histograms demonstrate, the state school sample was more homogeneous compared to the private sector sample. The finding suggested that in terms of the number of practices recorded, there was a wider range in the private school sample compared to state school teacher sample with the largest proportion of teachers experiencing four methods of monitoring. However, the data were limited in that they did not provide any information about the frequency with which teachers were monitored or surveilled. Although participants were also asked to rate the frequency with which they experienced each monitoring practice, these data do not form part of the results. I omitted these data because it was not clear from answers if teachers had recorded the frequency with which *they* experienced a practice (e.g. daily book inspections), or the frequency with which they believed the practice was conducted across the school regardless as to whether or not they experienced it personally.

7.2. Qualitative findings

While quantitative data suggested that state school teachers experienced a greater average number of monitoring activities, they could not inform about the way in which these practices were enacted or experienced. Qualitative data afforded this insight and demonstrated that the mode of enaction, method of monitoring, and perceived justification for monitoring were more important that the number of practices experienced *per se*. As the following sections demonstrate, teachers' perceptions of monitoring were contingent on their understanding of its purpose and utility. I demonstrate this by firstly examining teachers' perceptions of the frequency and purpose of monitoring. Thereafter, I report a disjuncture, apparent in both sectors, between senior leaders' rationales for monitoring and teachers' perceptions of these activities. From here, I proceed to consider nuance in the data – specifically, I identify particular methods or modes of monitoring which were positively or poorly perceived by participants.

7.2.1. Frequency of monitoring

In direct response to the research question concerning how teachers experience monitoring at a school-level, state school teachers experienced it as regular and/or excessive, whereas private school leaders suggested monitoring happened infrequently. A focus group member from a secondary school explained **"we are checked regularly"**. A teacher from a different school empathised stating: **"We definitely get scrutinised a lot"**. Others suggested that teaching **"suffered"** from **"judgement"** (P1) and that there were no other professions which were subject **"to so much scrutiny"** as teaching (P2). In the private sector, however, P12a, a classroom teacher stated that **"there's an open door policy where technically people could just wander in"** to classrooms, but that **"it [didn't] seem to really happen"**. Instead the teacher had **"observed lessons"** which formed part of an annual appraisal. In another interview, P1a perceived that learning walks had become **"less frequent"** and that she hadn't experienced one recently.

It was an interesting feature of focus groups and interviews that private school teachers often perceived that teachers in state-funded schools were subject to intense scrutiny by way of comparison to their experiences of the private sector. For example, a private school teacher who had worked in both sectors commented: **"comparing the state to independent [sector] we have an awful lot more responsibility and trust put in us**

[in] that I don't think we get observed nearly as often". Other teachers advised that unannounced lesson observations were uncommon in their schools. P12a, a classroom teacher, remarked that he would be **"surprised if someone just wandered into my lesson"** without prior arrangement. These comments contrasted to those of state school teachers who worked within environments whereby observation appeared to have become normalised.

Interviewed private school leaders suggested that they monitored staff less intensively and more purposefully than state school SLT because they trusted teachers to a greater extent. P6a explained:

> *"I think my feeling is always I prefer to trust my colleagues and I think they probably appreciate that rather than constantly being checked up on, which is what one of my friends who left state education after a very, very unpleasant experience, and that's part of his reason – you almost feel like you've got the Gestapo on your back judging everything you're doing."*
>
> *(Interview with private school senior leader, P6a)*

The link between low trust and scrutiny abounded across the qualitative data. For this participant, intra-school monitoring processes were linked to suspicion, and fear as was evident through the image of **"the Gestapo on your back"**. The teacher also linked low trust environments to his friend's decision to leave state education. P6a pitched his school's monitoring methods as a system which **"people can participate in"**. The implication was that the private sector offered an alternative domain to the Orwellian dystopia of the state sector. Similarly, P11a, a senior leader in a private senior school suggested that there was **"less regulation and control"** because private schools are not **"subject to the government regulation and Ofsted process"**. As a consequence, he felt that teachers were **"left to get on with it"**. Most participants from the private sector held the view that private school monitoring systems were preferable to the state sector brand of heavy scrutiny.

There were some private school teachers who felt that they were not monitored at all, and this was perceived negatively because these participants felt that they were denied professional development and pay rise opportunities. A middle leader in a private school

focus group perceived that her school was **"three or four years behind the state sector"** where there was **"probably too much"** emphasis on observing teaching. However, she had found it surprising that her manager had advised her that she **"probably [wouldn't] get around"** to observing teachers' practice during the academic year. The teacher was concerned that she would not be able to move up the pay scale without an opportunity to evidence her performance. Other teachers in the group felt that the absence of monitoring interlinked with CPD opportunities that were **"not good"**. They identified this as a **"gap"** in their school, and one of the middle leaders advocated strongly for the introduction of performance related pay rather than a system of automatic progression. In this group, teachers experienced monitoring as lacking; it was desirable to some extent so that teachers' efforts could be recognised by managers.

7.2.2. Purpose of monitoring

<u>Inspection and improvement</u>

The interviewed state school leaders perceived monitoring as necessary. They explained that they monitored staff for two main reasons: they did not trust them, or they believed monitoring prompted school improvement. For P11, a secondary state school leader, these purposes were interlinked. She explained:

> *"[T]here are people in my team who wouldn't do what I need them to do if I wasn't monitoring them, so they wouldn't be marking their books if there weren't book scrutinies. They probably wouldn't be doing really tailored differentiation for their classes if there weren't learning walks regularly happening. So, I know exactly who's doing what and who's not doing their job, so I think that helps me as a manager to hold people to account."*
>
> *(Interview with state school senior leader, P11)*

The interviewee was concerned that staff would not be **"doing their job"** without regular scrutiny. The projection was built on a mistrust of teaching staff; the senior leader felt that teachers needed the promise of scrutiny in order to perform in line with her expectations. Without the watchful eye from above, they might lapse into incompetency. Furthermore, surveillance allowed her to identify **"who's not doing their job"** so that she could 'weed

out the bad apples' (Skerritt, 2019, p. 570). The data gathered served as evidence which she could then use to **"hold people to account"** for the extent to which the marked their books, or delivered **"really tailored differentiation for their classes"**. The participant felt that regular marking and evidence of differentiation were important considerations in a school that was under external pressure to improve the standard of teaching and learning following what she termed a **"terrible Ofsted"** report.

The reference to 'Ofsted' made it clear that for P11, monitoring was motivated by mistrust of teachers as well as a belief that it prompted school improvement. In a high-stakes system, improvement was critical. P5, a primary headteacher in the state sector exemplified this point. He spoke of being in a **"hole"** after receiving a poor Ofsted report. He enacted **"heavy monitoring"** to **"get out of the hole"**. His **"Draconian"** systems included frequent observations, regular book inspections, and continual pay appraisal. The headteacher explained these activities were **"linked to school improvement planning"**, as the school aimed to improve on its Ofsted grading. Furthermore, evidence from these monitoring practices informed **"staff evaluation processes"** whereby he would rhetorically ask **"are you good enough to teach?"**. Those who were found to be underperforming were dismissed from employment. These findings showed that state school leaders perceived monitoring to be an essential mechanism for prompting both teacher and school improvement.

P5 revealed a further reason for monitoring teachers: this behaviour had become normalised. He stated that **"heavy monitoring"** had **"become a part of the system that cannot be extracted now – [teachers] should expect it"**. His claim that monitoring methods **"cannot be extracted"** testified to the extent to which the operations of the school were enmeshed within codes of accountability. Accountability mechanisms provided the scaffolding for the school's identity and for P5's actions as a school leader. If these norms and codes of practice were extracted, the system would fail. Although the headteacher made visible the power structures within which he operated, he saw them as inevitable and unavoidable; like the classroom teachers he monitored, he too had suffered a loss of agency through the process of being made accountable by and to Ofsted. Overall, P5 revealed that some senior leaders perceived monitoring systems as integral to the operations of a school; the school was unthinkable without these practices.

By way of contrast, in the private sector, there was only one school leader who perceived that monitoring was a way to prepare for ISI inspection. It should be noted that P7a had already explained that his school was **"not typical"** because, as previously explained, it proudly focused on securing exam results for pupils rather than on a co-curriculum. The headteacher conducted mock inspections and learning walks because **"an inspector will just walk in and look at [teachers'] lessons"**. As such, he perceived unannounced learning walks as a method of preparing for inspection. However, in an interesting comparison to the fuzzy criteria of the state school learning walk, the headteacher had a clear focus on 'compliance':

"It's all about checking things, like, safeguarding and health and safety".

(Interview with private senior school senior leader, P7a)

The example was particularly interesting because it appeared that the headteacher had created a system which would encourage panoptic performativity through surveillance. He expected that his school's teachers should work on the understanding that they could be inspected against health and safety, or safeguarding criteria at any moment – and to that end, they should always be demonstrating compliance with these requirements and regulations. Just as the state school leaders evoked Ofsted as a justification for monitoring policies, this headteacher positioned himself and the school as subject to the threat of an ISI compliance inspection. Therefore, he justified school policies as responsive to the demands of ISI compliance inspections.

In more typical examples from the private sector, there was a sense of ambiguity about the purpose of teacher monitoring. The ambiguity spanned across interviews with senior leaders and classroom teachers. While there were many descriptions of monitoring processes, participants seemed reluctant to make comments on the purpose or utility of these systems. That said, P3a, a senior leader suggested that learning walks and book marking inspections were **"standard kind of activities"** intended to play a role in **"developing departments"**, which suggested that he saw these practices as normalised and as a component of school improvement. He proceeded to explain that **"quality control"** mechanisms held a secondary purpose of allowing managers to **"check up"** on teachers. P3a specified that book marking inspections provided an opportunity for managers to **"make sure that enough work is being set, marking it along the right**

lines, it's frequent enough". In this example, P3a's motivations were strongly reminiscent of those of state school leaders in that monitoring aimed at both ensuring teachers were compliant with policies and prompting school improvement. However, the participant was emphatic that these procedures were **"an opportunity for professional learning"** and **"more friendly and less judgemental"** than the school's previous **"shrouded"** system whereby books were reviewed by managers alone rather than teams comprised of managers alongside classroom teachers. Through this statement it appeared that the school leader aimed to render teachers' work 'visible to all' in that it was opened to both horizontal scrutiny from peers and vertical scrutiny from managers (Courtney, 2016).

Focus group data illustrated private school teachers' uncertainty about the reasons for teacher monitoring. By way of example, some focus group members (from two different schools) deliberated the purpose of monitoring technologies (specifically learning walks) in their respective schools:

> M1: *I don't know where the phrase ['learning walks'] came from, but it seems to have spread like some kind of virus […] I do think sometimes [SLT] don't necessarily understand really what they are doing. I think it provides evidence for inspectors.*
>
> *[..]*
>
> F1: *I think sometimes independent schools they pick up, don't they, on what the government are doing. Like you say, they hear about something and they're like, 'We need to do this.' So they just thrust it in.*

The teachers identified a range of reasons for learning walks, none of which were particularly satisfactory for the participants. They considered that the private sector might be influenced by the state sector: M1 described learning walks as **"a virus"** that had **"spread"** through schools, whereas F1 speculated that the sector had **"pick[ed] up"** this trend from the state sector. After the implied explanation that the **"virus"** was transmitted from the state sector, M1 suggested that these activities **"provide[d] evidence for inspectors"**. However, the activity lacked integrity as the teacher felt that senior leaders **"don't […] understand what they are doing"**. F1 held a similar viewpoint. She considered that intra-school inspections were lacking in any real purpose and were

207

"thrust in" carelessly by management looking to imitate the latest trends in education without an evaluation of the potential risks of benefits of such an activity. During this discussion, the justification and presumed purpose of learning walks appeared to mirror state discourses of the need to preparing for inspection – however, teachers perceived that careless and incompetent managers were responsible for **"thrust[ing] in"** these practices. This finding differed from findings related to state school teachers because some participants from the state sector identified Ofsted as the culprit for unnecessary monitoring practices, whereas private school teachers suggested that senior leaders were to blame for thoughtlessly introducing these practices. It is possible that the attitudes expressed in the focus group were more widespread in the private sector than the gathered data suggested. However, as the qualitative private data were mainly collected within schools, it could have restricted my ability to obtain this kind of information.

7.2.3. Methods of monitoring

<u>*Surprise observations*</u>

Unannounced observations were poorly perceived by teachers in both sectors because they created uncertainty. State school teachers explained that they were given windows of time during which a learning walk could occur, but that this mode of monitoring merely led to a prolonged period of stress. One focus group member explained that she had engaged in **"intensive planning"** for every lesson during a two week 'learning walk window'. She was frustrated by an incident whereby her observers failed to arrive, and she had only learnt afterwards that the learning walks had been cancelled. In this case, her preparation had been **"wasted"** and her best efforts to prepare successfully disrupted.

Another focus group member described the novel process of undercover observers. He also experienced **"learning walk windows"** as time periods of several weeks during which his lessons could be observed by senior leaders. He complained that there was **"no focus"** for such observations which hampered his ability to prepare. This idea of a 'fuzzy' or shifting criteria mirrored the processes of Ofsted and spoke to the idea that inspectors aim to prevent prepared or fabricated performances through the cultivation of unclear success criteria. Such hazy criteria means that teachers do not know what or how to prepare for inspection (Courtney, 2016). The teacher's state of uncertainty was heightened because he was never sure when he was being observed. He gave the example of when

"somebody from the leadership team just floats in your room and just stands around, because they do that". He would be left asking, **"that wasn't my learning walk, was it?"**. The teacher reported that subsequently he would **"get an email telling you that somebody's come and seen you"**, but could not identify with certainty when this observation had occurred. The senior leaders in this example had become 'eyes that […] see without being seen' because the subject of the gaze did not know when the lens of surveillance was operative (Foucault, 1977, p. 171). As Courtney (2016, p. 623) argues, such mechanisms create 'ontological uncertainty' as the subject's base for understanding what is and is not an act of surveillance is disrupted. As such, the teacher was left in a place of doubt and uncertainty as he struggled to comprehend whether and when he should or should not perform. Authenticity and undercover surveillance became indistinguishable in this strange state whereby the fuzzy boundaries between fabrication and reality had dissolved, leaving the teacher to consider that he truly was under omnipresent watch.

There were suggestions that private school teachers experienced similar systems of surprise observation. P1a, for example, noted that **"we tend to get a notification that it is a day for a learning walk"** although she had previously explained that these activities were infrequent and uncommon. While P1a suggested that she **"[didn't] care"** if **"people come in and out"** because she felt confident in her practice, there was more diversity of opinion in a teacher focus group whereby some members objected to surprise observations. One described a recent learning walk:

> F2:   *[The deputy head] burst into my class and decided he wanted to watch Year 8. Again. I think what is the point? Honestly, what is the point of all that? But, that's him ticking boxes and that's him doing that, but I don't know…I don't find it particularly helpful because he isn't in a position to give me any actual advice on [subject] teaching […] I just play the game and smile, 'yes, yes'.*
>
> *[…]*
>
> M1:   *Personally, I think there is a necessity for it to a point, but I think the way it's done needs to…it's very important because I actually genuinely think we are on the same side. I certainly know within our department everybody's open to have those discussions of how we could do things better […]*

F2's description of the deputy head who **"burst into"** her class made it apparent that she experienced the observation as intrusive. The learning walk was particularly unwelcome because F2 perceived that it fulfilled the purpose of **"ticking boxes"**. Here, her comments echoed those of state school teachers who felt that monitoring was conducted purely for an accountability purpose. To compound her feelings of annoyance, she could not perceive a developmental purpose to the observation because the deputy head could not offer **"any actual advice"** as he was not a subject specialist. At the point of feedback, F2 embarked in a performative **"game"** whereby she adopted a **"smile"** and agreed with the unsolicited advice from her manager. M1 challenged F2 with his suggestion that **"there is a necessity"** to teacher monitoring. He found fault in the enactment whereby teachers and managers did not feel they were **"on the same side"**; however, he held the view that if monitoring was enacted supportively then it could help teachers **"do things better"** through **"discussion"**. The focus group discussion as a whole helped to address the research question because it demonstrated that teachers in the private sector could also perceive monitoring as intrusive when the purpose and benefit to the teachers was not clearly established.

Peer-observation

Although not the focus of the study, peer-observation proved popular among teachers from both sectors. A focus group middle leader suggested that **"peer observations are a nice thing and they do work"** because **"you pick up things"**. A participant in the same group agreed that these activities could be beneficial to teachers. However, the teacher lamented that **"it's a lot of extra-work"** to provide online evidence of the peer observation. At the point of evidencing, the process turned from useful to burdensome.

Some private school teachers also found peer-review systems helpful. Classroom teacher P12a appreciated the opportunity to **"try new things"** without judgement as to whether or not **"you're a good teacher, or not a good teacher"**. In a focus group, a classroom teacher from another private school spoke about **"shifting the paradigm"** of lesson observations. She spoke of a local school where learning walks were conducted by senior leaders in conjunction with early career teachers. She considered that such a practice could enable all teachers to recognise that **"observations are part of the learning process"** for the observed and the observer and therefore dissolve the perception that

monitoring served a **"purely punitive"** purpose. The comment was an interesting interpretation of peer-observation teams. In previous research, these mechanisms have been understood as characteristic of post-panoptic systems which render the teacher 'visible to all' from all levels of the school hierarchy (Courtney, 2016). Far from feeling threatened by the potential shift towards normalised observation, the teachers here welcomed the move, but only so long as it was pitched as a supportive activity with a developmental purpose.

7.2.4. Wider contexts

Research question 3 was concerned with teacher monitoring processes on a school-level. However, through data analysis it became clear that teachers' perceptions of school-level processes mirrored their perceptions of national-level accountability procedures. Therefore, although not directly relevant to the initial research question, I outline teachers' perceptions of Ofsted and ISI. These findings become highly relevant in *Chapter 8: Meta-inferential discussion* when they are used to inform an understanding of the way in which teachers' experiences of their work are informed by their wider contexts and social structures.

Perceptions of Ofsted

In the qualitative data there were no examples of positive attitudes towards Ofsted. Teachers were unanimous in their view that it was a body intended to find fault in the operations of a school. The inspectorate was described as a **"horror word"** and a **"political monster"** by a headteacher (P5), whereas another senior leader claimed it had created a **"culture of fear"** (P2). A focus group member from a state primary school used the same phrasing ("culture of fear") to describe the effects of Ofsted on her school community.

Participants characterised Ofsted's framework for inspection as unfair, or unable to capture the context of a school. For example, one secondary classroom teacher considered that Ofsted inspectors were interested only in the quantitative outputs of schools rather than striving to achieve an understanding of the skills of practitioners:

"Sometimes there's a feeling that [Ofsted have] already made up their mind before they come to your school based on your exam results. And then it really doesn't matter what you're doing for the students in front of you."

(Focus group with state secondary school classroom teacher)

As in the example above, state school teachers usually spoke of Ofsted as an abstract and faceless entity. There was a sense of futility in trying to impress inspectors who had already **"made up their mind[s]"** about a school based on nationally available exam data. The view that Ofsted judgements were largely informed by quantitative data was reflected in other interviews and focus groups. Many respondents considered this to be unfair not least because it relegated pupils' experiences of their education to statistical data.

A primary school classroom teacher believed that her school's most recent Ofsted had been conducted by **"shambolic"** inspectors who were unable to create nuanced judgements based on qualitative context:

"[The inspectors] really didn't have a clue about our school, not a clue about the context. They couldn't understand anything to do with the children. They just came to battle the school basically and they did pretty much. […] 'We want hard facts. Those levels of progress'."

(Focus group with state primary school classroom teacher)

The image of Ofsted as confrontational and seeking **"battle"** recurred in the data. The teacher in the above extract suggested that the inspectors were unable to consider nuance and **"context"** when arriving at a judgement. This view resonated with the previously given example where the teacher perceived that Ofsted was searching only for quantitative outcomes rather than a qualitative evaluation of school quality. In the process of **"the battle"**, the teacher perceived that the inspectors had failed to **"understand anything to do with the children"** because they were excessively focused on quantitative evidence, or **"those levels of progress"**. Furthermore, the teacher recognised the primary role of **"hard facts"** in building truth discourses about school quality. The teachers' consideration of Ofsted as an unfair judge of a school's quality are supported by academic reviews of the progress and attainment measures which inform judgements on school quality. Leckie and

Goldstein (2009, 2017, 2018) argue that current progress metrics are flawed because they do not adequately account for context. In practice, this means that current accountability systems 'are likely to reward and punish the wrong schools' (Leckie & Goldstein, 2018, p. 2); this reality was felt acutely by some state school participants.

The importance of an Ofsted judgement was a clear theme throughout all the state school interviews and focus groups. By way of further example, another senior leader[9] detailed the material and symbolic consequences of a poor Ofsted judgement:

> *"We're losing numbers rapidly because of our appalling Ofsted, so unless we can claw back some kids the funding will get smaller and smaller and smaller. […] We're using a lot of that money as well to recruit a marketing company, so an external professional marketing company who are marketing the school to try and change the people's perception of it and get some more kids through the door."*

In the quasi market of state education, reputation is important. A school with an **"appalling Ofsted"** will experience a reduction in pupil enrolment, and so is likely to experience a reduction in funding because some school funding is allocated per pupil. In a perverse recognition of the interrelation between school quality judgements and material rewards (funding) – the school in this example had engaged the services of a private marketing company to enhance the school's image in the community. Essentially, state funds were used to finance private enterprise, which would attract more pupils, which would in turn attract more funds from the state. In this example, the state school sought private market solutions to a problem generated by a state sanctioned service – Ofsted.

Perceptions of ISI

School branding was important for both sectors. In the private sector, the inspectorate was sometimes perceived as providing marketing services for its schools which could be used to strengthen the school brand. Focus group members discussed the purpose of ISI inspections:

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[9] Details about interviewee withheld to protect identity

"[ISI inspections are] more for the marketing of the school, isn't it, if you've got a good inspection report and you can put quotes from that here, there and everywhere. I think it's more used for that really. It has a different use perhaps in the private sector."

(Focus group with private preparatory school classroom teacher)

This discussion indicated that the private school teacher did not regard an ISI inspection as an event to fear. Rather she saw it as a supportive exercise that could provide useful marketing materials for the school to attract more business. She considered that ISI had a **"different use"** compared to Ofsted because she perceived that the latter was intended to hold schools to account for their use of public funds, and to check the quality of education, whereas ISI was a supportive body that would provide promotional quotations for its service users (schools) to use **"here, there, and everywhere"**.

In addition to this, private school teachers considered that ISI aimed to identify the best aspects of a school, rather than seeking to find fault in its practices. One participant explained that she perceived ISI to have a broad understanding of school quality:

"They're looking across the board, I think, at the range…the reason why as an independent school we are…you know, what's our unique selling point, what is it about it that makes people want to come to us? […] They're interested in the extra dimension of what else is it that this school does and what else does the school offer."

(Interview with private senior school senior leader, P8a)

For P8a, ISI's success criteria was bound to market success. She believed that the inspectors were interested in what makes a school a market success i.e. why is it attractive to parents?. As ISI worked to identify the **"unique selling point"** of their schools, the inspection report could easily become promotional materials which provided external affirmation of schools' claims to offer a unique or high quality product. In addition, P8a considered that the **"extra dimension"** of school life, the provision of activities and education beyond the formal classroom environment, informed judgements on school quality. In this sense, just as state school practices and interviews with teachers reflected

the exams-orientated focus of Ofsted, teachers considered that ISI inspections measured school success by exploring co-curricular provision.

For P8a, ISI Education Quality inspections were akin to peer review. She explained that inspectors were **"members of staff in independent schools who are doing the same job as us"**. Therefore, she considered that the inspectors were supportive of the industry and well placed to advise on the **"business"** of private education. The relationship was conceptualised as a dialogue of equals. The participant contrasted this to her experiences with Ofsted who she felt were prone to **"stare at you"** in intimidating silence before an inspection commenced. Essentially, participants perceived that Ofsted's objective was to 'expose failure' (Courtney, 2016). ISI on the other hand, as an organisation stemming from the ISC, had no interest in diminishing the efforts of schools. It sought instead to affirm and to rubber stamp the schools' marketing claims.

7.3. Research question summary

The qualitative data validated the quantitative findings that some private school teachers experienced a narrower array of surveillance technologies compared to state school peers. However, the core differences lay in teachers' perceptions of such activities. Participants from the state sector were clear that they were monitored as part of an accountability process which was disassociated from the intention of improving teachers' practice, or pupil outcomes. At best it was annoying, at worst teachers were imbued with fear and anxiety as they awaited or experienced observation. State school teachers perceived this monitoring as a consequence of national level high-stakes accountability systems, whereas few private school participants believed that teacher monitoring linked to ISI's demands.

Private school data contained more variation in comparison to state school data. Senior leaders typically perceived that monitoring supported teachers' professional development, whereas classroom teachers and middle-leaders were ambivalent about its purpose. Similarly, to state school participants, private school teachers developed poor perceptions of poorly justified monitoring activities. At times they interpreted monitoring as indicative of a lack of trust with some even expressing concern that private schools were starting to resemble state schools in this respect. Nevertheless, teachers from both sectors

advocated for horizontal modes of monitoring which were geared towards teacher development without entailing punishment or hard judgement.

Overall, data indicated that there could be an optimal form and frequency to teacher monitoring because those who experienced very little monitoring felt neglected, and those who perceived that monitoring was excessive felt that they were not trusted as professionals. However, while frequency and form were important, teachers' views of their schools' monitoring systems pivoted on their perceptions of its purpose and utility.

Chapter 8: Meta-inferential discussion

8.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I propose and discuss meta-inferential study findings. Meta-inferences are conclusions drawn from the data which relate to all the research questions. As this is a 'quants +QUAL' study, meta-inferences are constructed largely from qualitative data. They help to frame an understanding of the different contextual forces which shape teachers' experiences of workload, stress and monitoring.

Section 8.2 synthesises the findings from chapters 5 -7 to propose how the variables interact. Thereafter, section 8.3 provides further qualitative insight into the findings. To support my analysis, I interpret data through a range of concepts which stem from the Foucauldian tradition. These concepts include, normalisation/hegemony, performativity, and panopticism. Furthermore, I explore modes of disciplinary and pastoral power which operationalise (post-)panopticism (see section 2.5.5 for definitions). As suggested by other studies, I consider that these different modes of power can operate within the same space, and that schools may exhibit both panoptic and post-panoptic techniques. Based on these analyses, I posit reasons as to why private school teachers maintain lower levels of stress and more positive attitudes towards their workloads compared to state school teachers, despite both groups being monitored in the workplace through similar methods and working the same number of hours each week.

Section 8.4 concludes the chapter by drawing together the discussion to propose an overall meta-explanation as to how and why teachers' experiences of workload, stress, and accountability vary according to sector. This meta-explanation is informed by a detailed consideration of the complex systems within which the state and private education sectors, schools, and teachers operate.

8.2. Process

Figure 8.1 depicts my meta-finding of the process behind teachers' experiences of their work. In brief, I suggest that accountability stakeholders contribute to the formation of school policies and practices, and that the quality and enactment of these inform teachers' experiences of workload, stress, and monitoring.

The main premise of my argument is that the mechanism through which stress arises is similar between sectors, but that the major agents of accountability differ. To be precise, state school teachers are primarily subject to the perceived accountability requirements of Ofsted inspection which is located on a national/macro level, whereas private school teachers are primarily answerable to parents at a community level. The different location of the accountability agents has reverberations for the kinds of policies that schools develop and implement, as well as for the types of views that teachers form about their work.
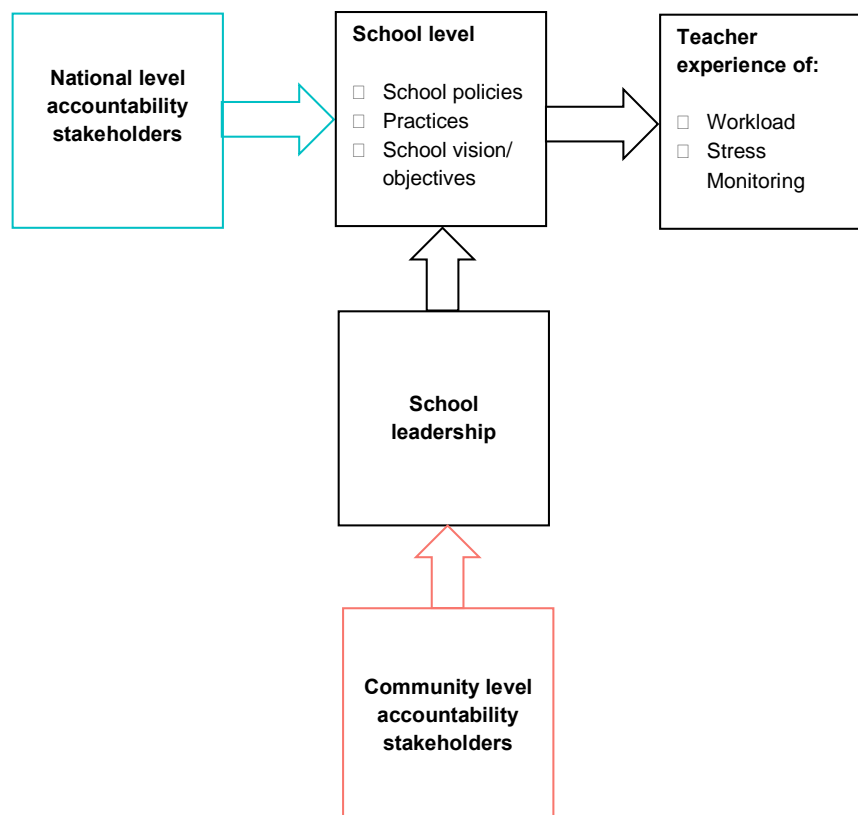

Figure 8.1: Conceptual model built from findings

The conceptualisation depicted in figure 8.1 differs from my initial conceptual framework (figure 2.1) because it suggests that national contexts inform state school operations to a greater extent than they do private school operations. The 'national level accountability' box is coloured blue to signify that this form of accountability is of primary concern to state school teachers, whereas the pink box depicts that school community level accountability is of primary concern to private school teachers. Policies and practices within private schools have the potential to be influenced by parents, who are the major accountability stakeholders for the sector. Parents, who are located on a community level, are depicted as influencing school-level policies via school managers.

8.2.1. The major accountability agent differs according to sector

Qualitative analysis demonstrated that the dealing with parents was stressful for private school teachers. Participants believed that if a school promised a wide range of sporting opportunities, parents would expect their child to be selected for a sports team. Alternatively, if a school marketed itself as an institute based on excellent academic outcomes, parents might hold the school to account for their child's attainment. Dissatisfied parents could exact material or symbolic sanctions by withdrawing their child from the establishment, or by damaging the school's reputation on what one participant (P1a) termed "the dinner party circuit". With these considerations in mind, private school leaders and teachers were eager to fulfil their marketing promises and to meet parental expectations.

For state school teachers, Ofsted was perceived as a much more imminent source of stress compared to parents. Indeed, the influence of Ofsted was so strong that teachers spoke of operating within a "culture of fear" – an expression that has been echoed in other recent research (Perryman & Calvert, 2019). When I probed further, it emerged that teachers feared the outcome of a poor batch of results or Ofsted grade. Overall they perceived that the net effect of a such an event would be that the school would be unable to attract and retain pupils and teachers due to its tarnished reputation (Perryman, 2002). As such Ofsted emerged as a primary agent of accountability because of its role in forming school identities.

For private school teachers, however, parents could potentially influence a school's financial stability. There were reports from the sector that parents held certain expectations

regarding the results and opportunities that the school should afford to their child and type and frequency of communications that they expected to receive from teachers and managers. If these expectations were not met, it might lead to complaint and the potential withdrawal of the child from the school. Withdrawing a pupil was the ultimate sanction for some private schools as it could lead to financial difficulties for the institution. With these considerations in mind, quality became defined by the school's ability to satisfy customers – participants believed that they could do this by meeting parents' demands for regular communications from home, 'good' academic results, and offering a range of social, cultural, and sporting opportunities to pupils. While most participants identified a similar set of success criteria, individual schools preferred to foreground different aspects of their provision according to the perceived wants of the local market. P7a, for example, prioritised academic provision, whereas other schools emphasised the co-curricular opportunities that they offered pupils. Overall, parental demands for pastoral care, academic and/or co-curricular provision proved to be a far more stable criteria than that imposed by Ofsted with its ever shifting goal posts (Perryman et al., 2018).

8.2.2. Accountability stakeholders influence state school policies and practices

Teachers' and school leaders' fear of a poor Ofsted judgement led them to invest significant time and resources into preparing for inspections. As other studies have found, school leaders justified teacher monitoring and surveillance on the premise that it was a way of practising for the possibility of inspection (Perryman et al., 2018). However, it became clear that the proximity or likelihood of impending inspection was irrelevant to the fervour with which school leaders geared efforts towards becoming inspection-ready (Perryman, 2009). Participants spoke of whole school improvement plans being defined by the ambition to achieve or maintain a particular Ofsted grade; this pursuit becomes illogical when it is considered that post-panoptic regimes are aimed towards exposing failure rather than facilitating success (Courtney, 2016).

State school teachers found themselves complicit with policies that encouraged excessive marking, detailed lesson planning, or regular reporting on pupil progress. Although these policies have been discouraged by Ofsted and the DfE, participants' narratives were peppered with mistrust of these sources (Independent Teacher & Workload Review Group, 2016; Ofsted, 2018; Teacher Workload Review Group, 2016). Thus it seemed that school leaders continued with ineffective policies because they did not trust the fuzzy school

quality criteria set out by government or Ofsted (Courtney, 2016; Perryman et al., 2018). Alternatively, school leaders may continue to implement unhelpful policies which do not benefit pupils, in a bid to create stability in a transient and ever-shifting environment. Such policies may provide structure to the operations of a school by generating a set of habits which create continuity in its identity and functioning.

Unlike Ofsted, ISI did not have a clear influence over school marking, planning, assessment, or data-related policies. Senior leaders indicated that evidencing compliance with the ISS (2014) was a time-consuming task. However, these concerns did not filter down to classroom teachers who were unphased both by the need to show 'compliance' or the prospect of an external inspection. Private classroom teachers accepted marking and planning lessons as a core component of their role. Sometimes they suggested that this was burdensome because of the volume of books to be marked. However, there were no instances of school leaders or classroom teachers implying that school-level marking, planning, assessment, or data-policies were burdensome because they were designed with the requirements of ISI (rather than pupils) in mind.

As parents were the major accountability stakeholders for private schools, it might be expected that they would shape school policies and practices in the same that that Ofsted did for state schools. Indeed, some policies, such as the frequency of report writing and the regularity of parents' evenings were likely to have been developed with the desires of parents in mind (Peel, 2015). In addition, there was some evidence to suggest that school leaders developed rigorous documentation processes in order to provide 'evidence' of having followed a process to parents in the event of a complaint. While school leaders acknowledged that they needed to be responsive to parental concerns or demands, they felt their schools had established brand identities which parents chose to 'buy into'. Private school leaders suggested that they would not radically alter their 'product' on the request of a minority of parent-customers. State school leaders, however, needed to exhibit flexibility in order to keep pace with policy changes. They needed to do this because their 'product' was a public service, which as Courtney (2016, p. 639) suggests, is necessarily defined by the 'transient exigencies of the state'.

8.2.4. School policies contribute to workload

Processes of monitoring and scrutiny added to the volume of workload because teachers needed to spend time preparing for the possibility of an intra-school inspection. Other research has suggested that teachers have now entered a state of post-performativity whereby they are continually acting as though they are under observation (Wilkins, 2011). This was not the case in my study as some state school teachers spoke of preparing specific performances for 'learning walks windows' or for one-off observations. As these performances were intended to be different to their usual behaviours, ongoing performance had not yet become normalised for them. This discrepancy in findings between my study and Wilkins' (2011) research suggests there is some variation in state schools' operations and in teachers' responses to those operations. However, it also appeared that many state-funded schools were united by their common goal, to appease Ofsted, and that variation in their operations may have been different routes to working towards the same desired outcome.

ISI wielded little discernible influence over school policies and workload, however parents seemed to contribute to private school teachers' workloads. Participants characterised some parents as demanding and time-consuming – especially when they made complaints. However, private school leaders interpreted this aspect of their workload as part of their job: to deliver good customer service. As the work was considered necessary and important, it did not meet the definition of 'burdensome' workload as that which is 'unproductive' and/or 'unnecessary'. Tasks related to appeasing parents were perceived as meaningful for school leaders because the audience of these tasks (parents) was more immediate than that of Ofsted or ISI. Furthermore, parents' demands were concrete in nature – for example, they wanted particular exam results, regular communications from school, an investigation into teacher conduct, or specific extra-curricular opportunities for their child. In some respects, the clarity of these demands meant that teachers and schools could succeed against these criteria. For state school teachers, the instability of Ofsted criteria made success elusive, and thus the pursuit of success became a futile and unsatisfying endeavour.

8.2.5. School policies and practices contributed to stress

School policies and practices contributed to state school teacher stress. These teachers felt overwhelmed by heavy workloads which were comprised of unfulfilling tasks mandated by school policies which were inspired by Ofsted's demands. Private school teachers were qualitatively less stressed by their school's policies, partly because they found the resulting workloads meaningful because they served customers' wants and thus contributed to the success of the school. While participants spoke of the majority of parents as reasonable and pleasant to work with, some identified that there were occasions when parents' expectations of the school or teacher were unrealistic or unreasonable – they experienced this as stressful as they felt that the success criteria imposed by these parents was unobtainable.

Despite finding communications with parents stressful, private school teachers were on the whole less stressed than state school teachers. In particular, they experienced monitoring practices as less stressful because they perceived that they were monitored less frequently than their state peers. However, methods of surprise surveillance (such as the learning walk or learning walk window) were potentially stressful for teachers in both sectors because those eager to demonstrate their best practice might prepare intensively for every lesson in anticipation of being observed. Preparation could involve creating special resources, arranging a particular constellation of activities, or enacting a certain pedagogical method. In the state sector, stress from preparation sometimes gave way to feelings of despondency, annoyance, or bemusement when the teacher did not witness the observer. Failure to observe the observer occurred for one of two reasons: either the inspections were cancelled, and teachers not informed, or the observation was conducted in such a way that the teacher did not know when it had occurred. The latter finding extends on previous work by Courtney (2016) and Perryman et al (2018) who explore the role of uncertainty in the post-panoptic era. They identify that schools are subject to 'fuzzy' national success criteria and 'shifting goal posts' which are purposefully elusive in order to prevent schools from preparing for inspection. Now, in a full expansion and realisation of the surveillance state, classroom teachers contend with the 'ontological uncertainty' of undercover observers (Courtney, 2016, p.623).

Uncertainty also linked to stress in the sample of private school teachers. Specifically, teachers felt stressed when they were unclear about the purpose or rationale for

monitoring practices. As explained, unlike state school teachers, they did not perceive monitoring as a method through which to prepare for or simulate inspection. Instead, they understood poorly justified monitoring methods as a failure on a local level; it was a manifestation of poor management.

8.2.6. Managers as filters

The questionnaire results suggested that state school participants considered that burdensome workloads resulted from both school-level and national-level factors. As previously explained, the data provided insight into this finding. In interviews and focus groups, state school participants articulated the indirect process via which their work became burdensome. They identified that such workload arose from 'school policies' and 'tasks set by senior / middle leaders', who were in turn responding to beliefs about the demands of Ofsted and/or enacting national policy.

State school classroom teachers understood that managers were motivated by a wider accountability system. Here the research findings diverged from some other studies that have identified schisms between school management and classroom teachers (L. Brown et al., 1996). Rather than blaming school managers for enacting policies that encouraged burdensome and stressful workloads, classroom teachers explained that managers conformed to Ofsted's requirements or perceived pressures by developing performative tasks and policies. In this way, participants positioned school leaders as victims to a wider accountability system and they contravened Foucault's (1982, p. 780) consideration that during times of struggle 'people criticise instances of power which are closest to them', preferring to blame the 'immediate enemy' rather than the 'chief enemy'. The strength of Ofsted's disciplinary power made it possible for classroom teachers to view managers as fellow subjects rather than enemies. Managers also shared the view of themselves as beholden to the demands of a hierarchical pressure. They recognised that they set performative tasks, and some acknowledged that these activities held little value beyond 'ticking a box' for accountability purposes – and yet they felt powerless to resist these pressures.

By way of comparison, the sampled private school leaders were free to develop policies in response to the school community's needs. This was because ISI was not perceived as a major threat to a school's viability; it was considered to be a supportive body which

checked the school against its marketing promises and essentially affirmed its quality. As such private school practitioners celebrated their autonomy from government and spoke of comparative 'freedom' – a condition that was facilitated through the free market of private education. The finding reinforced my interpretation that private school actors conceptualised the sector as ancillary to government. This detachment allowed them to distance their practice from messy political discourses and so they were liberated, as P11a suggested, to 'get on with it' i.e. proceed with the core business of the profession – teaching children. However, the perceived independence from government meant that classroom teachers located the source of workload and accountability stress directly on this school community level and with managers.

In summary, the data indicated that private school policies were dictated at this school community level; developing policies at this level linked to better perceptions of workload in the private sector compared to the state sector. In part this was because workload arose from policies and practices which were developed with the needs and wants of the school community in mind – rather than in response to a distant and external accountability stakeholder. As state school teachers shared the conceptualisation of Ofsted as the meta-agent of accountability, teachers were united by this common threat to their professionalism. On the other hand, private school leaders perceived that they were annexed off from mainstream policy concerns, and therefore they perceived community level stakeholders such as parents and school leaders to be the primary sources of stress. Neither state nor private school teachers conceptualised pupils as a key stressor. For state school teachers, workload and accountability concerns overshadowed any stress from pupil behaviour, and for private school teachers, pupil behaviour stress was eclipsed by stress from parents.

8.3. Discussion of meta-themes

In chapters 5- 7 qualitative data were used primarily to explain the trends that emerged through questionnaire analysis. As such, they were reported mainly in a way that directly responded to the 'why' aspect of the research questions and explained questionnaire findings. This pragmatic informative approach was chosen over thematic reporting because it facilitated a direct response to the research questions and topic; it offered the benefit of allowing a focus within an extensive research topic. While I chose this approach, powerful qualitative themes are woven within and across the findings chapters. State

school teachers spoke of crises of professional identities; performativity; mistrust of inspection systems; the positioning of pupils and teachers as products; disillusion and despondency; trauma, and resistance and resilience. Their private school counterparts spoke of pressures from parents; community accountability; co-curriculums; performing the 'good teacher' through participation in school life; professional autonomy; the emotional intensity of their work environments, and fulfilment through working with children. While the following section does not discuss each of these themes as a distinct topic, it draws together findings from across the research questions in order to build a more coherent understanding of the structures within which such experiences emerged.

8.3.1. School identity

State school leaders constructed school identities around Ofsted. Interview and focus group participants invariably mentioned the grading of their school as 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement', or in 'special measures', whereas none of the private school participants volunteered information about their ISI grades. Some state school participants emphatically explained that children had been displaced as the centre of school aims by numeric targets, or ambitions to achieve a particular Ofsted grade. For some state school practitioners, this led to a hollow practice which was detached from the reasons why they chose teaching as a profession. As Ball (2003, p. 225) suggests, the 'heart' of education had been 'gouged out and left empty', or perhaps it had been replaced by the reductive judgements that had come to define state school quality.

In line with other studies, my data showed the hyper-focus on Ofsted created moral conflict for practitioners (Ball, 2003; de Wolf & Janssens, 2007). Teachers made decisions that they perceived were unethical. P5, the primary school headteacher, spoke at length about the sadness with which he had narrowed his school's curriculum to focus on English and Maths in the hope of appeasing Ofsted. He also reflected on how "awful" his "Draconian" monitoring methods were, but he felt compelled to scrutinise teachers in this way as part of a school-improvement effort. Therefore, P5 continued to side-line his beliefs about what was best for his pupils and teachers because in the post-panoptic regime, beliefs and values have no place as they are displaced by the hollow pursuit of inspection accolades (Page, 2017a). All that mattered was predicting the methods and behaviours which would secure a 'good' Ofsted grade in order to save the school from the "hole" of its inadequacy.

As P5 exemplified, performative practices, behaviours, and policies enacted through disciplinary mechanisms were a fundamental component of state school identities. Schools could not or would not cease unhelpful policies that burdened teachers because these policies were the manifestation of their ambitions to achieve or maintain a good Ofsted grade. In this way the participants had come to regard Ofsted as the 'absent presence' in schools in that it directed policy and workloads from a distance (Troman 1997, p.349). Through enacting these policies, school leaders hoped that they would be duly recognised as 'good' or 'outstanding' providers; school identities and their constituent policies and practices were thus shackled to Ofsted.

As Ofsted's success criteria were unstable, the pursuit of its praise led to an instability in school identities. As Courtney postulates, post-panoptic regimes are purposefully unstable. Unlike a panoptic regime, schools or their teachers are not intended to come to achieve 'good' or 'outstanding' practice; instead the aim is to 'expose' leaders' and teachers' efforts as 'inadequate' (Courtney, 2016, p. 632). In the current context, leaders' efforts to prepare adequately for inspection have been disparaged by Ofsted and the DfE who have blamed school leaders' preoccupation with inspection for the crisis of teacher workload (Department for Education, 2019b). Private school identities, on the other hand, were formed within a different context that positioned itself as independent from the instability of national policy and Ofsted criteria. Furthermore, in a crucial difference to state school participants, private school teachers perceived that ISI was a benevolent institution which aimed to support rather than diminish the best efforts of the school.

Private school identities were constructed around the notion of independence and completeness. In fact, to some extent the sector found its identity through discourses of deficiency: The state sector stood as a cautionary tale about the consequence of depending on government for direction and identity, and of the consequences of an education system based largely on neoliberal competitive market values. In other instances, private school teachers pathologised pupil behaviour in the state sector imagining daily instances of violence and normalised disruption which were not paralleled in the private sector. Private schools thrived on the deficiencies of the state sector as they could step into the breach to offer 'more than' the state sector. Parents and teachers alike were offered an alternative discourse of the well-behaved, 'ready to learn', and 'well rounded child' who would leave school with 'more than' a batch of qualifications at the end of her schooling. The 'more-than' could be cultivated through the development of

intangible 'socio-cultural inventions' such as pupils' self-esteem and confidence (Meadmore & Meadmore, 2004, p. 379). Teachers could derive enjoyment from contributing to this programme which provided the basis for the school community. The discourse gained its momentum and its strength through the contrast with state sector conditions and this comparison validated participants' decisions to work privately.

Paradoxically, the private sector depends on the market-values that its teachers sometimes sought to redress. Private education is legitimised on free-market principles of consumer choice and improvement via competition, and its superior working conditions could only be identified as such by contrast to the state-funded sector. In this ancillary sphere, the independent sector's schools were free to develop products and brand identities that would appeal to consumer-parents, and attract staff. In some cases, the brand identity of the school was so compelling that the teachers themselves wanted to 'buy into' it. In fact, for some private school teachers – and particularly those working in boarding school – employers won their loyalty and dedication by offering a 'lifestyle' to staff who could become completely immersed in the school 'community' and its 'family' feel.

8.3.2. Teacher identities

Private school teachers could comfortably negotiate their identity as caring and committed practitioners within the prevailing hegemonic discourse. State school teachers on the other hand struggled to form identities within a radically unstable system with which they fundamentally disagreed. Such value dissonance proved to be a destructive and stressful experience for state school teachers, whereas value alignment allowed private school teachers to develop secure identities as committed and competent practitioners.

The private school teachers who worked in harmony with their schools' values and the co-curricular ethos described positive attitudes towards their workloads, and low levels of stress. They saw their work as worthwhile and so they were motivated to perform the role of the dedicated teacher, perhaps because, as Ball (2003, p.138) suggests, performative systems work at their best 'when we want for ourselves what is wanted from us'. In contrast to the brutal disciplinary mechanisms of state school behaviours, participants from the private sector wanted to be a 'good' teacher who participated in community life through engagement with the co-curriculum. Indeed, some of the private school teachers believed so completely in the value of the product that they offered, that they sacrificed themselves

for this work. They demonstrated sacrifice through welcoming work as an all-consuming "lifestyle" that saw engagement with activities at weekends and in the evenings.

Participants from the private sector were harmonious with the value systems of their schools and sector and they were content to self-regulate to upkeep their identities as committed teachers. Stress arose when these soft modes of pastoral self-regulation conflicted with consumer parents who tried to exact disciplinary power over teachers. These parents complained and made unreasonable demands, all the time hovering the threat of withdrawing their child from the school unless they were appeased. Disciplinary techniques, such as the complaint, were stressful for teachers because they compromised the teachers' autonomy in a way that self-regulation did not. Teachers were content to perform the good teacher through total dedication of the self to the job; however, this was contingent on the belief that this act was a choice and an expression of autonomy – the very principles with which neoliberal education policies make claims to legitimacy.

8.3.4. Hegemonic rejection or acceptance

Teachers in the state sector rejected the market values of their schools and macro-contexts because they were enacted through disciplinary regimes which operated through visible methods of coercion. These disciplinary regimes cultivated uncertainty and terror in an endeavour to normalise unhelpful marking, planning and teaching practices. Participants exposed these norms as inefficient, performative, stressful, and damaging to themselves and pupils. In the act of exposure, they made visible the systems within which they were enmeshed although anger and distress arose when teachers considered that they could not transcend the exercise of disciplinary power.

In the private sector, school leaders legitimised monitoring techniques through the cultivation of pastoral power. According to Perryman et al (2017, p. 753), this softer mode of control repositions 'training' as 'self-improvement' and 'judgements' as 'advice'. In this study, monitoring became an opportunity for 'development' or 'teacher learning'. By way of contrast, state school leaders wanted to collect evidence on teachers' performance in order to hold them to account for the extent to which they complied with school expectations – although these 'expectations' were sometimes undefined. Managers anticipated that monitoring teachers in this way would lead to school improvement because incompetent staff would be intimidated into better performance. It was clear that

these participants retained panoptic lines of reasoning: that they could discipline staff into improvement (Courtney, 2016). However, panopticism was operationalised alongside post-panoptic rationalities which de-prioritised teacher improvement and aimed instead to expose the 'artifice of [teachers'] performed identities' (Courtney, 2016, p. 634).

Practitioners in both sectors found pastoral modes of power more palatable than disciplinary regimes. For example, peer-observations were a popular concept among participants, and some teachers welcomed observations from less experienced members of staff, or self-reflective exercises. I conjecture that these activities were popular because they positioned the observed as 'good' teachers. Either they were 'good' teachers because they supported junior staff to develop, or because they were participants in reflective professional dialogues (Perryman et al., 2017).

Although private school leaders positioned their monitoring practices as 'developmental', classroom teachers did not always share this perception. Some private school teachers suggested that managers monitored them without clear purpose or reason. It became clear that these objections were in fact protestations about the exercise of disciplinary power; a face of governmentality strongly associated with public sector services. Teachers' comments made apparent the differing natures of pastoral and disciplinary power. Subjects were acutely aware when they were being acted upon by another, and they interpreted such events as judgemental and intended to cow them into a specific sort of behaviour. Teachers who perceived that they were subjects to the exercise of disciplinary power rejected the judgements of their managers. They branded managers as 'incompetent' or suggested that they were unfit to offer a critique of teachers' lessons. Conversely, in systems of 'developmental' monitoring, teachers were invited to deliver judgements on the self through the process of reflection, and this subjectification proved harder to resist – such is the persuasive power of pastoral control (Perryman et al., 2017).

Pastoral power arguably had a particular appeal in the private sector. It appeared complementary to discourses of professionalism. Through the softening of judgements on teachers' practice and through the elimination of the disciplinary hierarchy, it could present as harmonious with teacher autonomy. The concept of autonomy was greatly valued in the private sector; it was mentioned by several participants as a marker of difference between working in state and private schools. Therefore, the most effective modes of power were likely to be those which adhered to the teachers' own value systems and desires to be

recognised as autonomous practitioners who operated independently from the heavy hand of the state.

Territorialisation

Hegemonies territorialise every domain of human life (Hall & O'Shea, 2015). As explained in *Chapter 2: Concepts and constructs*, the neoliberal truth came to define the operations of public services, inter-personal relationships, and even understandings of the self. A core difference between state and private school teachers was that the majority of private school participants negotiated their identities within the sector-specific discourse of the co-curriculum, whereas state school teachers resisted the neoliberal territorialisation of their teacher identities.

Even if they could not fully resist disciplinary regimes, state school teachers enacted freedom through the construction of boundaries. These boundaries allowed them to protect their sense of self from pervasive market-orientated discourses. Boundaries could be physical, emotional, and/or psychological. For example, the teacher who closed the door on a mock-inspection created a physical boundary, as did those who refused to take exercise books home to mark. Others created psychological and emotional space from their work by leaving the school building at a set time, or refusing to take the troubles of the day into their homes. In the case of P8, whose work-related stress invaded her relationship and home-life, the absence of boundaries contributed to her resignation from the profession.

In direct contrast to state school teachers' rejections of overarching value systems, research participants from the private sector did not recognise their underpinning value systems as hegemonic. They aligned with the discursive truth that a mixed-methods education system which aimed to educate the "whole child" inside and beyond the academic classroom was a moral pursuit. The teachers were satisfied because they aligned with these values; they wanted to achieve within this paradigm. However, throughout data analysis it was evident that the discourse of the "whole child" was never recognised as such by participants. Instead, like the neoliberal truths that underpinned private education as a whole, the discourse pervaded conversations as a 'definitive, untouchable, obvious, and immobile' truth (Foucault, 1982, p.1). It was 'obvious' that educating a child in this way was desirable – a judgement that was validated by the

consumer sovereignty of parents who continued to purchase places in schools which promised to enact the philosophy of the co-curriculum.

For the private school teachers, the sector that they inhabited was insular and disconnected from wider socio-economic or political discourses. They did not need to respond to the whims of policy makers, and their school polices were not informed by wider systems of excessive scrutiny and hard accountability procedures. Teachers positioned themselves as separate from government interference and by virtue of operating in this ancillary sphere they were largely detached from the domineering truth discourses, surveillance and chaos of the state sector. Instead, they had the privilege to develop an alternative discourse which directly contrasted with the economic positioning of state education.

8.3.5. Views on inspection

Teachers' perceptions of their work were interrelated with their wider contexts. For state school teachers who objected to market oriented discourses and cultures of monitoring and accountability, these views were reflected strongly in their discussion of Ofsted – which they perceived as a disciplinary arm of government. By way of contrast, interviewed private school teachers talked about their immediate school communities and expressed neutral or favourable views when invited to discuss ISI or their wider political contexts.

These differences in perceptions of the inspectorate can be understood both structurally and historically. Firstly, the lack of an overarching judgement on schools allowed ISI Educational Quality Inspections to emerge as low stakes. In addition, as teachers perceived that inspectors were peers from within the sector, they regarded the process as supportive. The idea of a supportive inspectorate may have its roots in the 1990s, when ISI first became a formalised and licenced inspectorate. As it was derived from ISC, an organisation which fiercely protects the brand identity of private education, there was little to fear (ISI, 2018; Rae, 1981). Furthermore, participants trusted ISI to review the educational quality of their schools fairly. This trust was based on an understanding that ISI was founded by sector actors for the sector's schools, and in the absence of historically-motivated fear, school leaders were free from the compulsion to direct school behaviours towards preparing for or simulating inspection.

State school participants, on the other hand, resented working towards the demands of Ofsted because it came into direct conflict with their professionalism. Participants positioned Ofsted as a confrontational force which intended to expose their inadequacies using unfair and unfit criteria. It had become viewed, as Perryman et al (2018, p.16) suggest, as the 'external enemy' against which the teaching profession could rally. In direct contrast, there were no examples in the data of private school practitioners considering that ISI Educational Quality Inspections were confrontational or intended to 'wrong-foot' leaders (Courtney, 2016, p. 623). As explained in the literature review, due to the circumstances and rationale of Ofsted's introduction, teachers perceived Ofsted as an antagonistic force with an 'aggressive watchdog' attitude towards schools (Grek et al., 2015, p. 132). Despite subsequent revisions to its frameworks, this research and previous research finds that state school teachers continue to perceive a chasm between Ofsted and the teaching profession (Chapman, 2002; Wilkinson & Howarth, 1996). These historic attitudes resonate in the present and remain in the collective memory of teachers. As such, resentment and suspicion of Ofsted abounded through interviews and focus groups. Furthermore, in the act of its utterance and the identification of the theme through analysis, the discourse was renewed. It was a keystone of discussion and it emerged as a tenement of the collective identity for many of the interviewed state school teachers.

Although private school teachers did not consider that ISI was a major influence over school policies and practices, it was an unexpected feature of the data that participants characterised ISI as excessively promoting a "tick box agenda". Participants suggested that ISI focused more on checking 'compliance' with legal standards than they did on observing classroom teaching and learning. One possible explanation for this approach was simply that schools were not accountable to ISI for their use of funds to provide 'quality' education, as such the ultimate judgement of a school's quality resided with parents who voted with their expenditure as to whether or not it was a quality establishment. Therefore, ISI fulfilled a largely regulatory role. It checked that the school's marketing promises resembled its daily operations and it audited schools' compliance paperwork. The mechanical process of health and safety/ safeguarding auditing may have led teachers to interpret ISI inspections to be "tick box" and bureaucratic in focus and nature.

8.4. Chapter conclusion

Level of stakeholder

Typically, state sector teachers' concerns were pitched at a systemic, or national level. Many teachers perceived that unhelpful school polices were derived from management's misapprehensions about the demands of Ofsted. When they believed that workloads were motivated by the need to fulfil an accountability purpose, they experienced these as meaningless and thus stressful. Crucially, it was the motivation and purpose of individual tasks, or task types that explained teachers' responses to these activities. Tasks were not in themselves inherently stressful or meaningless, but when they were understood as fulfilling an accountability-motivated purpose they became experienced as such.

While private school teachers' experiences of monitoring were more heterogeneous, the narratives of state school teachers were startling in their similarities. Their schools deployed similar policies and practices often under slightly different guises with different names. Nevertheless, these common experiences, and the united front against the enemy of Ofsted and mercenary market discourses allowed state school teacher identity to be broad, sweeping, and national – it was not rooted in or localised to a particular setting or institution.

In contrast to this, the private school teachers' concerns were located on a school or community level. Where they had criticism, it was of school policy, management style, or demanding consumer-minded parents. Discussions of consumer-oriented parents were rarely linked to wider economic trends, or neoliberal discourses; this discovery supported the interpretation that private school teachers believed that they operated in a domain that was detached from its macro-context. The detached stance and independence of the sector was justified by comparison to state education. Private school participants perceived that state school teachers contended with high-stakes accountability, excessive scrutiny, and extreme pupil behaviour. Although state school teachers did not agree that pupil behaviour was an important stressor, for private school participants, the difference that they perceived between sectors reinforced views that the private sector provided better conditions for teachers.

Pressures

With regards to pressures from the inspectorate, private school SLT members understood the compliance demands of ISI to add to workload. However, in contrast to the state sector, this perception did not trickle down to a classroom level. The perceived demands, or indeed existence of ISI was absent from the daily consciousness of classroom teachers in a way that Ofsted was not. These teachers were also detached from policy and pitched the sector against government interference. They closely guarded their independence and asserted that it was only through this autonomy that they were able to enjoy their work so thoroughly.

In the private sector, parents wielded consumer sovereignty, and as such they were the most pertinent judges of a school's quality. While these judgements could be informed by an ISI report, participants felt that they were more likely to be informed by an alignment of the school's offerings with the parent's idea about what was valuable – be it character education, sporting opportunities, or level of personalised care that their child received.

Performing

Overall, teachers supposed that Ofsted judged, and ISI advised; these truths manifest in their understanding of school-level expectations of their performance. State school teachers were required to perform against quantitative targets which mirrored national level accountability systems, whereas private school teachers were required to perform against the criteria implicit in the 'co-curricular' discourse. Private school participants expected themselves and each other to "buy in" to the private school lifestyle. Commitment to this lifestyle could be demonstrated through the input of long hours, participation in extra-curricular activities and events, and the willing undertaking of weekend and evening work. Teachers who performed these tasks in line with school expectations performed the role of the 'good' private school teacher. The ultimate act of commitment could be performed through the dissolution of all physical and psychological boundaries between work and home; in this way, the self-sacrificing teacher could invite the territorialisation of the self.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

9.1. Original contribution of the study

The thesis has provided a novel overview and insight into the working conditions of private school teachers in comparison to those of state school teachers in England. Through the use of mixed-methods, the study has addressed a gap in academic literature by adding to a limited number of studies – such as Green et al (2008) – which have explicitly compared teachers' work between sectors. Furthermore, the research offers fresh insight into the kinds of teacher monitoring practices which are in operation in England's private schools, and through comparison with the experiences of state school teachers, it was possible to link teachers' responses to these practices to their wider contexts. Furthermore, I have proposed an updated factor model of teacher stress which builds on previous research (Borg & Riding, 1991; Boyle et al., 1995). This model recognises the contemporary role of accountability as a source of stress for teachers in both sectors. Finally, through the development of this model, it has been possible to provide an original comparison of teacher stress between the sectors and thus identify trends for deeper qualitative investigation.

9.2. Summary of findings

Through undertaking this work, I found that teachers in the private sector worked a similar number of hours to state school teachers each week (not accounting for holidays), yet they had better perceptions of both their workloads and school-level teacher monitoring processes. The findings concerning the number of hours worked each week diverged from TALIS 2018 which stated that private school teachers work five more hours each week compared to state school teachers (Jerrim & Sims, 2019). However, it matched earlier findings from TALIS 2013 data which appeared to show no significant differences between state and private school teachers' workloads as measurable in hours.

Private school teachers also indicated lower levels of stress from pupil behaviour and workload and accountability. While there are no studies that explicitly compare stress for state and private school teachers, my findings support previous large scale survey work that indicate private school teachers have better overall perceptions of their work compared to their state peers (Jerrim & Sims, 2019; Micklewright et al., 2014).

In this study there was some evidence to suggest that private school teachers' comparatively better experiences of their work were in part informed by longer holidays and smaller class sizes, although further investigation is needed to better understand variation within the private sector. However, I also found that the strength of teachers' alignment with the value systems of their macro-context was a crucial element in determining their overall perceptions of their work. In this respect, the findings mirrored the rich body of education research which has explored state school teacher identity within and across changing policy contexts (Ball, 2008; Gewirtz, 2002). This study has extended upon this existing work through the consideration of private school teachers' interactions within these contexts, and through comparison with the experiences of state school teachers.

I found that private school teachers generally aligned with a sector-specific discourse of the 'co-curriculum'. They felt that this model of education allowed them to work in a meaningful capacity with pupils in a range of contexts, both within and beyond a classroom setting. Although state school teachers also enjoyed their direct engagement with pupils, their joy was thwarted by meaningless workloads which were informed by the exigencies of a wider political system that encouraged high-stakes accountability. Instead of focusing on the core component of their jobs, which they felt was to support pupils to learn, teachers felt morally compromised by target-driven systems that privileged evidencing teacher/pupil performance above all else. They considered that these meaningless workloads were derived from the demands of Ofsted and the need to meet or anticipate the inspectorate's criteria.

9.3. Conclusions of the research

In response to one of my early overarching questions 'is it better to teach in the private sector?', the initial resounding answer was affirmative. On the face of it teachers could enjoy longer holidays, smaller classes, greater autonomy, less intensive surveillance, lower levels of stress and better perceptions of workload compared to their state peers. However, by the end of the research process, I recognised that in this context meaningful work was a matter of values rather than conditions. The state school teachers had the potential to find their work meaningful in the most expansive sense. They could contribute to social justice, improve the life chances of society's most disadvantaged pupils, or find great joy in sharing in the learning of children in any kind of school. During the time period

of this study, many of the teachers were experiencing a value dissonance with the state sector which prevented them for experiencing their work to its greatest potential. They were teaching on the edge, or perhaps in the midst, of a great policy rupture. Narratives about the economic imperative of education had run their course for the sector's docile bodies who had woken up to manifest their freedom through meta-reflection of the conditions that guided and bounded them. The majority of the participants no longer believed in the economic imperative of their work, as such the system had reached a tipping point – a stage at which change is not only desired but required. As the abiding truth discourse dissolved, there was space for a new truth to flow. At the time of writing, the nature of the emerging truth which may replace old value systems is still uncertain.

9.4. Limitations

Through the research process, I realised that the structure of the sectors differed greatly – and this had implications for the routes through which I sought access to teachers, and ultimately for the data that I collected. As explained in *Chapter 3: Methodology* and *Chapter 4: Data handling and quality*, private school data were clustered by schools, and a greater proportion of senior leaders were included in the sample compared to the state sector sample. Similarly, it remained a possibility that state school data contained an overrepresentation of trade union members – although this could not be verified.

Although I am satisfied that I accounted for and made visible the nature of the bias within the data, the structure of the data in each sector reflects the structure of the sectors from which they were gathered. As previously explained, in the state sector, teachers were best recruited individually through vast online and union networks, whereas in the private sector, sector specific organisations and headteachers regulated access thus compelling clustering. The presence of the private sector gatekeepers led me to consider the possibility that I could only access a carefully curated image of the private sector. While I believe it is accurate to suggest that in interviews I was sometimes met with an overly positive view from the private sector, this in itself provided me with a vital insight into the structure and operations of this domain for research. Private education was necessarily a self-regulating and self-promoting product which was marketed to potential teacher recruits as a calmer and more fulfilling environment to work in compared to the state sector where there were relentless pressures to manage exam targets and extreme pupil behaviour compounded by excessive scrutiny from managers. Despite this consideration, I retain the

conclusion that private school teachers had better perceptions and experiences of their work because they were more likely to be aligned with the truth discourse of the sector at a time when state school teachers were faced with pending policy rupture.

9.5. Implications for practice and policy

Through comparison with the private sector, it became apparent that many state school teachers were excessively stressed, in particular by workload and school-level accountability. As these factors have previously been linked to teachers' decisions to leave the profession, they are important to address (CooperGibson, 2018b; Perryman & Calvert, 2019). Therefore, in line with the pragmatic intention of the study, I developed a series of recommendations from the data and its analysis. I present these recommendations across each layer of the social ecology, starting with the inner-most level of the teacher, before considering how schools can improve teachers' experiences of their work, and finally moving to look at the national level components that contribute to high levels of stress and poor quality workloads.

9.5.1. Teacher level

State school teachers' discontent was linked to perceptions of a high volume of low quality tasks and feelings of being under a disciplinary regime which aimed to surveil and judge teachers' competence. The data suggested that teachers could mitigate or block stress from workload and/or monitoring through the construction of psychological boundaries. In practice, this meant engaging in acts of resistance against school policies or implicit expectations placed on the teacher by colleagues or the self. Resistance could include leaving exercise books (unmarked if necessary) at work, adhering to strict working hours, refusal to complete unnecessary tasks, and refusal to engage with supernumerary observations. Creating such boundaries may support teachers to exercise their freedom as they resist the discourse that threatens to territorialise the self and to define their worth as a teacher. Indeed, Ball (2013) recognises that freedom can only be maintained through rendering visible the power structures within which one participates, and this onerous task may be made easier if enacted as a collective rather than an isolated individual.

9.5.2 School-level

Policy review

Government documentation has recognised the role of school leaders in shaping teachers' workload through school policies and practices (Department for Education, 2019b). As such, the DfE funded a series of research reports aimed at developing practical recommendations and support for school leaders to help reduce workloads. For example, the 'School Workload Reduction Toolkit' includes staff questionnaires to identify workload problem areas, and provides examples of streamlined policies relating to various areas including teacher monitoring, marking / feedback, and data collection (Department for Education, 2018d).

The data gathered for this thesis included a very small number of state school interviewees/focus group participants who explained that their schools had overhauled marking, assessment and reporting policies. Although it is not possible to extrapolate from these individuals reports, the teachers suggested that these approaches had helped to reduce workload from some aspects of their job roles e.g. burdensome marking. These anecdotal findings converged with the latest TWS 2019 study which reported a reduction in teachers working hours since 2013. As it is possible that reduced working hours are associated with schools' efforts to address burdensome workloads, state school leaders looking to improve conditions for staff may wish to engage with the publicly available resources.

Alternatively, Allen and Sims (2018) recommend a more radical approach to reducing low quality workloads. They suggest that schools with a perceived workload problem abandon all school policies for a short period of time (e.g. two weeks); from here, school leaders can ascertain which policies are in fact fundamental to the running of the school, and which are superfluous and thus burdensome. While these recommendations are aimed at state school leaders, those working in the private sector may also wish to survey teachers' perceptions of their work in order to identify any areas with the potential for improvement.

Managing stress

School leaders in both sectors may wish to consider the extent to which teacher monitoring practices contribute to teacher stress. The thesis found that while teachers

could welcome activities which were clearly aimed at supporting them to improve their practice, surprise observations contributed to anxiety and a more profound ontological uncertainty for some participants. Therefore, school leaders might review the purpose of surprise observations and assess the value of the data collected from these practices alongside classroom teachers' responses to these observational methods. Further research could help to identify if pre-arranged observations are measurably less stressful than the 'walk though' cultures synonymous with contemporary state school environments (Courtney, 2016; Page, 2015).

Additionally, school leaders might wish to reflect on the modes through which teachers are monitored. While I hold the view that the faces of power are neither *a priori* 'good' or 'bad', teachers in both sectors conceptualised disciplinary manifestations of power that aimed to judge and punish/ reward the teacher as stressful. Indeed disciplinary practices were associated with curtailed teacher autonomy and poor perceptions of monitoring. Teachers expressed a preference for monitoring practices delivered through mechanisms of pastoral power. Peer review was one such mechanism which purported to work for the good of the individual, as well as the good of colleagues and pupils (Foucault, 1982). This kind of monitoring was positioned as less of an affront to teachers' professional identities compared to overt disciplinary mechanisms.

While poorly justified instances of monitoring were ill-received and stressful for teachers in both sectors, parents emerged as a greater source of stress for private school teachers compared to monitoring. With this in mind, private school leaders who have reason to believe that parents add to staff stress could consider the best ways in which to manage parental complaints, or demands on teachers' time. From the data collected for the study, I could not yield specific insights into the most effective ways for teachers to manage stress from parents – and thus, this area invites further investigation.

9.5.3. National accountability structures

While parents were the primary accountability stakeholders for private school teachers, I was surprised at the extent to which concerns about Ofsted impacted on the daily lives and operations of state school teachers. Although other research has emphasised the pervasive nature of Ofsted and the manner in which it shapes school policies and even teacher identities (Jeffrey & Woods, 1996; Perryman, 2009; Woods & Jeffrey, 2002), it was

only through the contrast with the private sector that I recognised the extent of the Ofsted-effect. I reflected that this had previously been invisible to me because as a former state school practitioner, the fixed gaze on Ofsted outcomes had become normalised. I had recognised that whole school policies were devised around preparing for or simulating inspection, and school identities pivoted on Ofsted grades. However, it was not until I reflected on the private school teachers' relationship with ISI, that an alternative mode of operation became thinkable. It was, therefore, through the process of the research that I recognised the 'common sense' assumption that underlay my own thinking – that state school teachers' work had to be judged and defined by national agents of accountability (Hall & O'Shea, 2015).

Data from the private sector illuminated the degree to which state school teachers' work and perceptions of that work were informed by a fear of the hard disciplinary power of Ofsted. As found by other researchers, my study participants considered that the inspectorate aimed to trick and punish them (Perryman et al., 2018). Yet this view was unparalleled in the private sector where better perceptions of the inspectorate linked to a greater sense of teacher autonomy and more a positive perception of workload. These findings invited a consideration of the way in which national level accountability mechanisms could be amended in order to enhance state school teachers' experiences of their work. Indeed, this is an area that has received considerable scholarly and political attention in the past. While many of the suggestions made here are not new but are based on prior research, through comparison with the private sector, this study has foregrounded the damaging effects of high-stakes accountability on state school teachers' experiences of their work. However, hope can be extracted from this narrative because through this comparison it becomes possible to imagine a different kind of national inspection system within England – one that is lower stakes and thus less detrimental to teachers' and school leaders' ambitions to work meaningfully in the best interests of the pupils they serve.

Judgements

Participants in this study perceived ISI processes as low stakes and supportive, and it could be the case that state school teachers' 'fear' of Ofsted could be diluted by adopting some of the practices of ISI. For example, unlike Ofsted, ISI refrains from affording summative judgements on a school's quality. While there were likely other factors in operation, unlike their state school counterparts, private school participants did not seem

fixated on inspection grades. Replacing umbrella judgements in favour of detailed reports with no singular judgement could benefit state schools as it could help to end their fixation on achieving/maintaining Ofsted grades, an ambition that sometimes overrode concerns about teacher and pupil wellbeing in importance. Furthermore, as some academics have argued, a single headline indicator of 'quality' represents a profoundly flawed and over simplified measure of the concept (Leckie & Goldstein, 2009). Therefore disbanding overly-simplistic headline judgements in favour of more granular information could have the added benefit of offering more rounded information about schools to parents.

Peer-accountability

While some state school teachers considered that the inspection process was unfair, ISI was considered to be a supportive body that worked to protect the image and interests of the sector. A participant from a private school suggested that one of the reasons for this differing attitude was that the sector's teachers perceived that ISI inspections were conducted by peers. By extension, it could be the case that the dissolution of an inspection hierarchy in favour of more horizontal modes of inspection would be welcomed by disenchanted state school practitioners who have lost trust in Ofsted's processes.

Researchers have proposed various models of the manner in which such a peer accountability system could operate. McLaughlin (2001), for example, has previously advocated that while some degree of accountability is 'important and necessary' (p.650) that this could be delivered through a system of 'self-review' whereby schools are inspected by 'professional peers' (p.653) and findings published in a public report. To be more specific, in line with ISI practice, state school headteachers within a region could be trained and paid to inspect other schools in the area. In the absence of overarching summative judgements, school inspections could assume the form of a professional dialogue geared towards collaboratively devising strategies to sustain good practices. Indeed, other researchers have suggested that a shift away from the panoptic top-down inspection models towards horizontal methods could end the tyranny of Ofsted as well as encourage schools to develop localised solutions to problems (Janssens & Ehren, 2016).

Although there are some challenges associated with such proposed reforms, as long as pupil numbers continue to rise and schools struggle to recruit and retain a sufficient

number of teachers, it seems that a radical review of the *status quo* is worthy of greater consideration than can be afforded within the constraints of this thesis.

9.6. Future research

Looking to the future, there is clear need to continue the study of the topic adopted by this thesis. Specifically, future researchers may wish to develop the factor model of teacher stress proposed and evaluated in *Chapter 6: Stress findings*. Additional research in this area could develop a more nuanced understanding of the specific monitoring practices or workload tasks that contribute to teachers' stress. Other researchers may be interested in pursuing the line of comparison and consider developing a stress measurement instrument specifically designed for private school teachers.

In addition, it would be valuable to ascertain the extent to which private school teachers' experience of inspection differ by inspectorate. It would be interesting to identify if teachers in non-association private schools experience Ofsted in the same way as state school practitioners. Such further research would help to understand the extent to which other features of the private sector (beyond inspection services) inform teachers' experiences of their work.

Finally, I believe that a large-scale overview of the teaching workforce in the private sector could prove a valuable study for government and school leaders, as this could help identify movement between sectors. With this insight, leaders across the sectors and country could understand the ways in which the private school workforce interacts with the state school workforce on a regional or national basis.

9.7. Closing statement

This thesis was framed by the contexts of its production and by the networks which, I, as a researcher and former teacher, could access and navigate. Data were collected within these framing sectoral structures, and subsequently analysed in full consideration of the organisational features of state and private school sectors.

The thesis was undertaken at a time of significant educational reform with both the 'Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy' (Department for Education, 2019b) and the

Ofsted (2019a) framework for inspection being launched during the final year of my academic writing. As is the nature of dynamic systems, the operations and capillaries of the sectors' channels shifted with every given moment, at a rate which far superseded my ability to edit. As such, I invite the reader to view the thesis as an attempt to trace a socio-cultural period in time, which has since evolved into a new moment. Like the truths I present, contexts fluctuate and are subject to redefinition and evolution – if not revolution at the point of crisis. Although the thesis necessitated an end point, and a point at which the window of the moment was to be closed, traces of the trends and phenomena identified here may resound in future efforts to understand teachers' experiences in each of the education sectors.

After the conclusion of this thesis, the public sector will continue to work towards finding solutions to the crisis conditions with which it is faced. As it shifts towards a redefinition of 'quality education' as a concept which encourages more than purely quantitative outcomes for its students, I hope that this mixed-methods thesis will contribute its small part.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Key features of school inspectorates

Inspectorate	Usual length of inspection	Frequency	Criteria	Judgement	Reporting
Ofsted 2015	3 days	Boarding provision: every 2 years Standard inspection: every 3 years Re-inspection: within 2 years for schools that are less than grade 2 Monitoring visits: for schools that are less than grade 2	ISS (2015) Common inspection framework (same as state schools): overall effectiveness effectiveness of leadership and management quality of teaching, learning and assessment personal development, behaviour and welfare outcomes for pupils	Private schools only: ISS (2015): pass/fail Common framework (CF) for inspection: Overall school grade (1 - 4) Judgement on (CF) sub-criteria (1-4): Grade 1: outstanding Grade 2: good Grade 3: requires improvement Grade 4: inadequate	Report published on Ofsted website Report published on school website
ISI	Educational quality: 2 days or 3 days with compliance element	Educational quality inspection: 3 years Re-inspection: within 2 years for schools that are unsatisfactory in one or more area Monitoring visits: for schools that are unsatisfactory in one or more area	ISS (2015) Educational quality: Achievement of pupils (including academic) Pupils' personal development	ISS (2015): pass/fail Educational quality: No overall school judgement on school effectiveness Education quality sub-criteria: Excellent Good Sound Unsatisfactory	Report published on ISI website Report published on school website Report copy must be given to every guardian/parent
SIS	3 days	3 years Re-inspection: within 2 years for schools that are less than graded as requires	ISS (2015) Education quality: The quality of education	ISS (2015): pass/fail Educational quality: No overall school judgement on school effectiveness	Report published on SIS website Report published on school website

| | | improvement

Monitoring visits: for schools graded less than 2 in one or more areas | The quality of pupils' personal development
Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety
The effectiveness of leadership, management and governance
The effectiveness of the Early Years provision (where relevant) | Education quality sub-criteria:

Grade 1: outstanding
Grade 2: good
Grade 3: requires improvement
Grade 4: inadequate | |

Questionnaire items included in analysis

Q0.1. Are you currently employed as a teacher in **England**?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q0.2. Which sector do you work in?

- ☐ State
- ☐ Private

SECTION 1a: State school teachers

1.1._a. What phase is your current school?

☐ Primary	☐ Secondary	☐ Secondary and sixth form
☐ Sixth form	☐ All through	☐ Other: ………

1.2_a. What type of school do you work in?

☐ Academy converter	☐ State maintained	☐ Other: ………
☐ Academy sponsored	☐ Free school	

OR
SECTION 1b: Private school teachers
1.1_b What phase is your current school?

☐ Pre-preparatory	☐ Preparatory	☐ Middle school
☐ Sixth form	☐ All through	☐ Other: ………

1.2_b. What type of school do you work in?

☐ Day	☐ Boarding	☐ Other: ………
☐ Day and boarding		

ALL PARTICIPANTS

1.2. Where is your school located?

☐ East of England	☐ East Midlands ☐ South West England ☐ Yorkshire and the Humber
☐ Inner London	☐ West Midlands ☐ North East
☐ Outer London	☐ South East England ☐ North West

1.3. What is your current job role?

☐ Classroom Teacher	☐ Deputy or Assistant Headteacher
☐ Head of Department	☐ Headteacher / Acting Headteacher
☐ Head of Year	☐ Second in Charge of Faculty/Department
☐ Prefer not to say	☐ Other …………………………….

1.4. How many years teaching experience do you have? Please round to the nearest year.

_____years

1.5. Do you work full-time or part-time?

☐ Full-time

☐ Part-time

    ---------- If **part-time**, how many hours a week are you contracted to work?

Appendix 2: Questionnaire items included in analysis

SECTION 2: WORKLOAD

2.1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your working hours?

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree
I can complete my assigned workload during my contracted hours					
I have an acceptable workload					
Overall, I achieve a good balance between my work and my private life					

2.2. In a full working week, how many hours do you spend, on average on the following tasks? Please round to the nearest half hour. If the answer is 'zero' please enter 0.

Activity	Time spent in hours e.g. 30 minutes = 0.5
Teaching lessons (please include only actual teaching time)	
Individual planning or preparation of lessons either at school or out of school	
Team work and dialogue with colleagues within this school	
Marking/correcting pupils' work	
Pupil supervision and tuition (including lunch supervision)	
General administrative work (including communication, paperwork, work emails etc)	
Participation in school management	
Communication and co-operation with parents or guardians	
Engaging in extracurricular activities (e.g. sports and cultural activities after school)	
Pupil counselling (including career guidance and virtual counselling)	
Pupil discipline including detentions	
Other activities	

2.3. Tell us about any unnecessary and unproductive work related tasks which take too much of your time.

2.3.1 Which tasks (if any) are burdensome?

2.3.2. Where do these tasks come from? Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Government - national policy change (e.g. new curriculum
- ☐ School policies
- ☐ Ofqual (new qualifications/examinations)
- ☐ Accountability
- ☐ Pressures of school's inspectorate
- ☐ Requirement for individualised learning and differentiation
- ☐ Requirement for school improvement
- ☐ Tasks set by leaders/middle leaders
- ☐ Other agencies
- ☐ Funding requirements
  Employer (e.g. Academy trust or Local Authority)
- ☐ Other ……………………………

SECTION 3: ACCOUNTABILITY

3.1. What kind of practices does your school have?

	Does your school have these practices?		IF YES: How frequently?				
	Yes	No	Daily	Once a half term or more	One a term or more	Twice a year or more	Yearly
Monitoring teachers' marking of exercise books							
Learning walks/brief, or snapshot observations							
Teachers submit lesson plans for approval							
Teachers submit schemes of work for approval							
Full lesson observations							
Departmental reviews/audits							

3.2) Does your school have any other accountability practices, other than the ones listed above? If so, please list them and their frequency.

SECTION 4: STRESS

What are the greatest sources of teaching stress for you?
Please select the number that best answers the question (1 = no stress and 7 = extreme stress).

Appendix 2: Questionnaire items included in analysis

	No stress	Mild stress		Moderate stress	Much stress		Extreme stress
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Too much work to do (e.g. lesson preparation and marking)							
Responsibility for students' success (e.g. exam results)							
Noisy pupils							
Difficult class(es)							
Pupils' impolite behaviour or rudeness							
Maintaining class discipline							
Having extra duties/responsibilities because of absent teachers							
Poor career structure (poor promotion opportunities)							
Inadequate salary							
Ill defined syllabus (e.g. not detailed enough)							
Lack of time to spend with individual students							
Pressure from headteacher/leadership team							
Attitudes and behavior of other teachers							
Dealing with parents							
Performance related pay							
Internal monitoring processes e.g.booktrails, learning walks, lesson observations							

Lack of recognition for good teaching							
Too short rest periods (lunch, break)							
Pupils' poor attitude towards work							
Large classes(s)							
Administrative work (e.g. filling in forms)							
Shortage of equipment and poor facilities							

SECTION 5: DEMOGRAPHICS

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. We really appreciate your response.

To help contextualise your experiences as a teacher, we have a few more questions about you and your teaching experience.

5.1. How old are you? Please round to the nearest whole number.

 ………………

5.2. Which gender do you identify as?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Other………………..
- ☐ Prefer not to say

5.3 Which school do you work in?*

*This information might be used to provide a report to your school/school's association so they can see what it's like for teachers to work there in comparison to other schools. Your answers will remain confidential and anonymous. We will only use them if we are sure you cannot be identified.

You can choose to leave this box blank if you do not want us to use your answers in this way.

Interview schedule (45 - 60 mins)

Classroom teacher

Part 1: What made you want to become a teacher?

Prompt: What did you do before teaching?

Probe: Can you tell me more about why you applied for x promotion/ why you left x school?

Part 2: Teachers' experiences (for state and independent teachers)

Workload:

What are the best and worst bits of the job?

Prompt: What is teacher workload like in your experience?

Probe: How do you manage your workload?

How do you think teachers get stressed?

What are the most stressful times of year (if any)?

Where does the stress come from?

Accountability:

Tell me about the ways in which your performance is monitored?

Prompt: Do you have lesson observations, book inspections, review meetings?

Probe: How do you feel about these processes? Do these things benefit your pupils?

Closing

What advice would you give to someone considering a career in teaching?

Opening	**Tell me who you are and why you went into teaching?**
T	**What are the best bits of the job?** **And the worst bits?**
T	**What is workload like at your school?**
K	**Can you tell me about the sources of stress for teachers?** Prompt: what would you like to see? Why is/isn't it a problem? Probe: What can schools do to help?
K	**Can you tell about how teacher performance is monitored at your school?** Prompt: Books trails? Learning walks? Probe: What is the purpose of these activities? Would you like to see any changes to the ways that schools and teachers are monitored? If so, what? If not, why not?
K	**Can you tell me about your experiences of inspections?** Prompt: Have they been enjoyable experiences? Probe: What would improve them? Which aspects are essential? What does Ofsted do correctly?
Ending **x**	**What advice would you give to someone considering a career in teaching?**
Summary	- We discussed…diff points of view… - xx wasn't discussed, I'm assuming that's not important -Is this an accurate summary?

Appendix 5: Coding categories for question 2.3 (burdensome workload)

From: Gibson, Oliver and Dennison (2015).

2.1: Tell us about the unnecessary and unproductive tasks which take up too much of your time.

1. Accountability / providing evidence e.g. for inspection
a. Recording, inputting, monitoring and analysing data
b. Providing written evidence and reports (to Governors/ Parents' Association)
c. Liaising with Governors/ Parents' Association
d. Monitoring teaching and learning (incl. observation)
e. Pressures on newly qualified teachers to provide evidence

2. School administration and management
a. Maintaining records
b. Absenteeism (including chasing absenteeism and contacting parents)
c. Communications with parents (e.g. queries, complaints)
d. Basic administrative and support tasks
e. Supervising lunch/break times
f. Arranging school trips, attending/running evening events/clubs
g. Arranging/ordering materials and resources
h. Liaising with external agencies
i. Performance management
j. Staff meetings
k. Recruitment and management of staffing issues

3. Administrative planning and policies
a. Writing, updating policies and action plans
b. Working within policy remits and completing paperwork (incl writing local offer)
c. Risk assessment
d. Training (e.g. health and safety)

4. Lesson planning, assessment and reporting administration
a. Lesson/weekly planning – detail & frequency required
b. Curriculum and qualification change/implementing new initiatives
c. Pupil targets – setting & continual review
d. Excessive/depth of marking – detail and frequency required
e. Reporting on pupil progress
f. Parents' evenings and providing feedback to parents
g. Moderating marking and cross referencing
h. Logging homework and teacher/class test scores

5. Behaviour management
a. Discipline and investigating discipline issues
b. Reporting / managing detentions
c. Completing behaviour monitoring forms for class/school

6. Pupil support
a. Pastoral care
b. Completing incident reports
c. SEN issues – referrals/liaison with external agencies/ meetings
d. SEN issues – reporting/evidencing requirements
e. EAL pupils – reporting evidence requirements

Qualitative coding

As the study concerned three major variables (workload, stress, and teacher monitoring), I identified with of these variables comments referred to and the coded them appropriately according to the template displayed below. Cross-categorisation (across variables) was permitted.

Workload:

1	2	3
Identify dimension of workload	**Code under relevant sub-code**	**Explanations**
Composition	**Task**	
	Administration	Paperwork/ general emails / consent forms / arranging trips
	Marking	Assessments / exam scripts / exercise books
	Evidencing	Gathering evidence of teacher or pupil performance
	Reporting/data	Inputting data into systems / writing school reports
	General	Non-specific reference to workload e.g. volume / working patterns
	Teamwork	
	Planning individually	
	Direct teaching	
	Meetings	With colleagues, management, or parents
	Extra-curricular	Or co-curricular
	Management	Departmental or whole school management tasks e.g. target setting for staff / developing school policies
	Responding to parents	Via email, letter, texts, homework diaries, or telephone
Contributors	Senior leadership teams	
	Inspection	Includes references to: ISI Ofsted Ofqual/JCR Inspection associated paperwork
	School policies	Marking

		Evidencing
		Planning
		Monitoring/observations
		Management/colleagues
		Reporting
	Resources	Budget cuts / lack of Tas / reduced PPA time / covering more or new subjects
	Other	Self-driven
		National policy changes
		Societal/cultural
Workload perception	Pragmatic	Reduction strategies
		Quality
	Affective	Stress/exhaustion/burnout
		Attrition
		Indifference

Teacher stress:

1	2
Identify source of stress	**Identify sub-code**
Workload	- Volume - Quality - Low quality
Monitoring	- Surprise methods - Unclear criteria - Fear of judgement/ consequence
Pupil behaviour	- Low level disruption - Violence - Not a core source of stress - Distressed pupils e.g. by exam targets / bullying
Resources	- Lack of resources e.g. teaching assistants - Large classes - Teachers purchasing own items - Unreliable equipment
Parents	- Unsupportive of school - Demanding of time - Unrealistic explanations - Parental complaints
Colleagues	- Unsupportive - Incompetent - Absence - Social exclusion
Time	- Structure of day e.g. short rest breaks - Working hours - Holiday periods
Other	- Personal factors - National factors (e.g pressure from inspection)

Teacher monitoring:

| 1	2	3	Explanations
Identify level of accountability agent	**Identify monitoring mechanism**	**Identify perceived purpose or response to monitoring**	
• School • Community • National	• Learning walks • Book trails • Observations • Audit/ review • Other	Improvement/CPD	Accountability procedures help or aim to help improve teachers/departments/schools. Findings from accountability procedures used to establish CPD/ developmental agendas, or to 'match' teachers together for peer support. Also covers reviews of policies meant to improve impact of tasks such as marking.
		Overview	Accountability procedures serve purpose of allowing stakeholders (usually SLT) to gain overview of practices within institution.
		Inform performance management	Outcomes from monitoring practices determine/partially inform PM process.
		Inform pay/ tenure decisions	Evidence gathered from accountability procedures used to inform decisions about teachers" pay.
		Quality (Consistent/realistic/fair/clear)	Participants cannot explain purpose of accountability (on any of the levels), or feel that judgement criteria is unclear/unfair. Covers instances when participants do not know how PRP or pay decisions are made, or do not know where info from monitoring goes.
			Accountability procedures follow clear steps and guidelines/ Procedures and subsequent judgements are fair.
		Box ticking	Accountability procedures fulfil an administrative function.
		Review/report/judge	Accountability procedures used to prepare performance reviews, or reports - or used to inform a quality judgement about teachers, departments, or schools.
		Descriptive	Describes process of accountability. Informative. Devoid of clear value judgements/opinions.
		Ofsted/ISI	Appease Ofsted/ISI. Prepare for inspection.
		Quality	References to the clarity, fairness, utility, reliability, or validity of monitoring processes within schools. Please note 'inspections' has its own node.

|			Safeguard/compliance	Evidence gathered to prove compliance with legal standards/regulations
			Pragmatic	Data manipulated in response to perceived demands of accountability systems, or managers.
			Affective responses to monitoring	Feeling of being 'on show'. Changing behaviours/practices when under observation/scrutiny from another person. Teaching 'to the test' in order to comply with perceived demands of accountability/assessment systems.
				Self-worth, validation of work, enhanced efficacy.
				Stress, burnout, anxiety, depression.
				Indifference to accountability procedures or associated tasks (e.g. lesson observations or Ofsted inspections)

State

Private

Model
1a

Model
2a
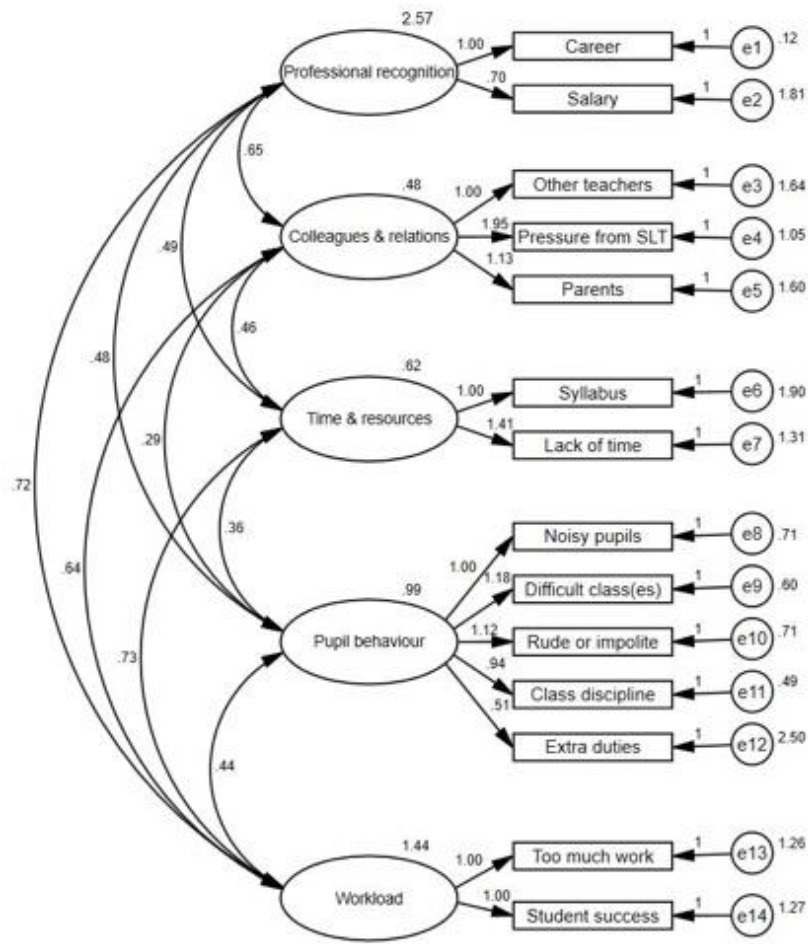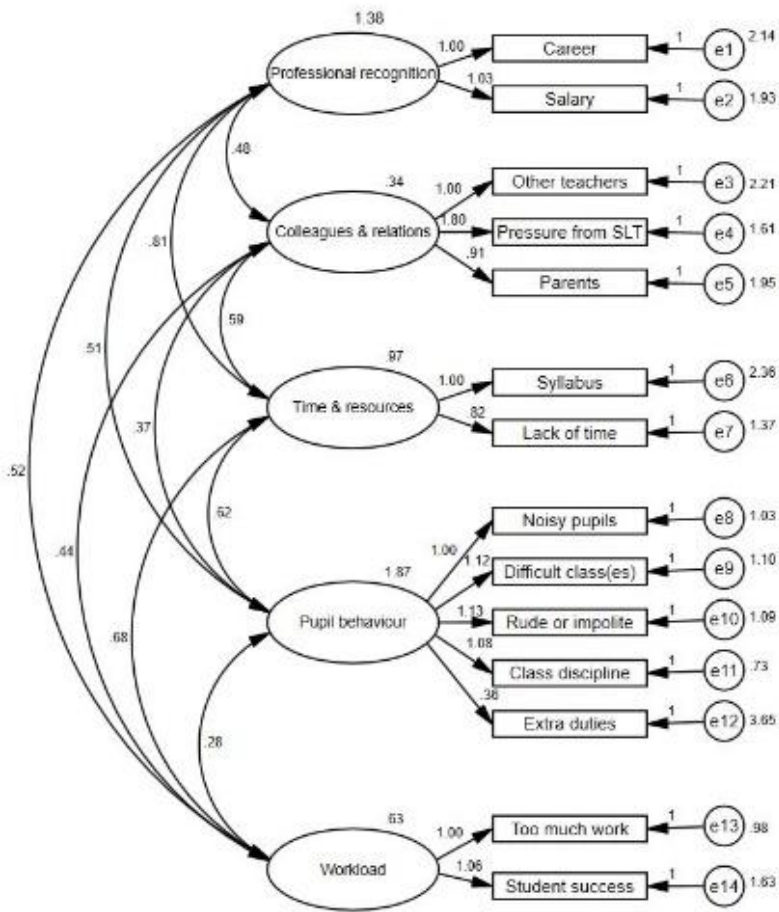
Model
2b
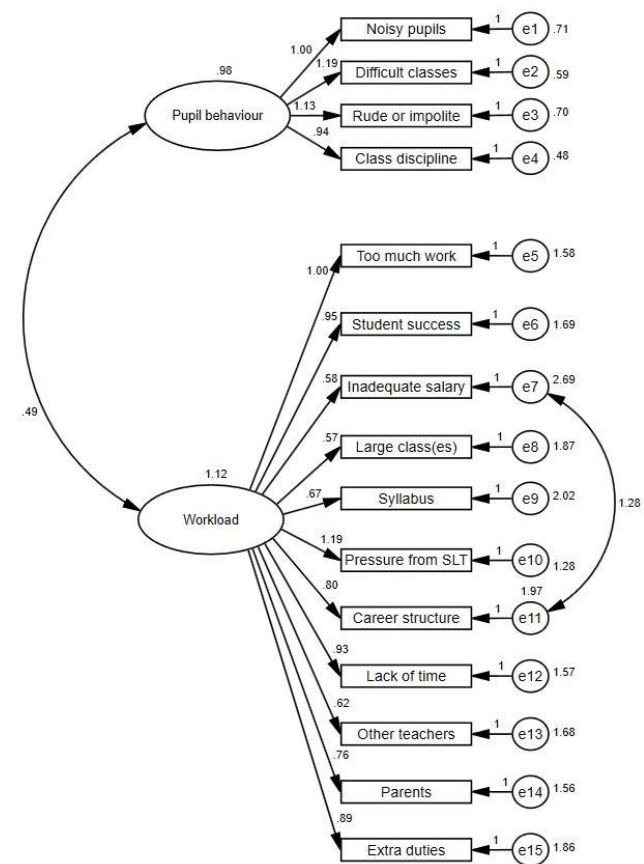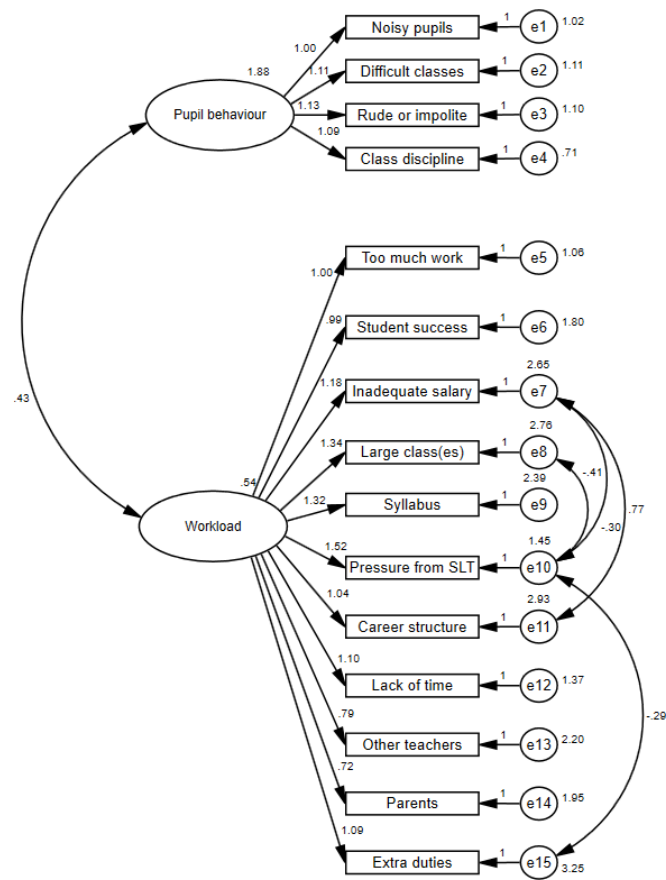
Model 3

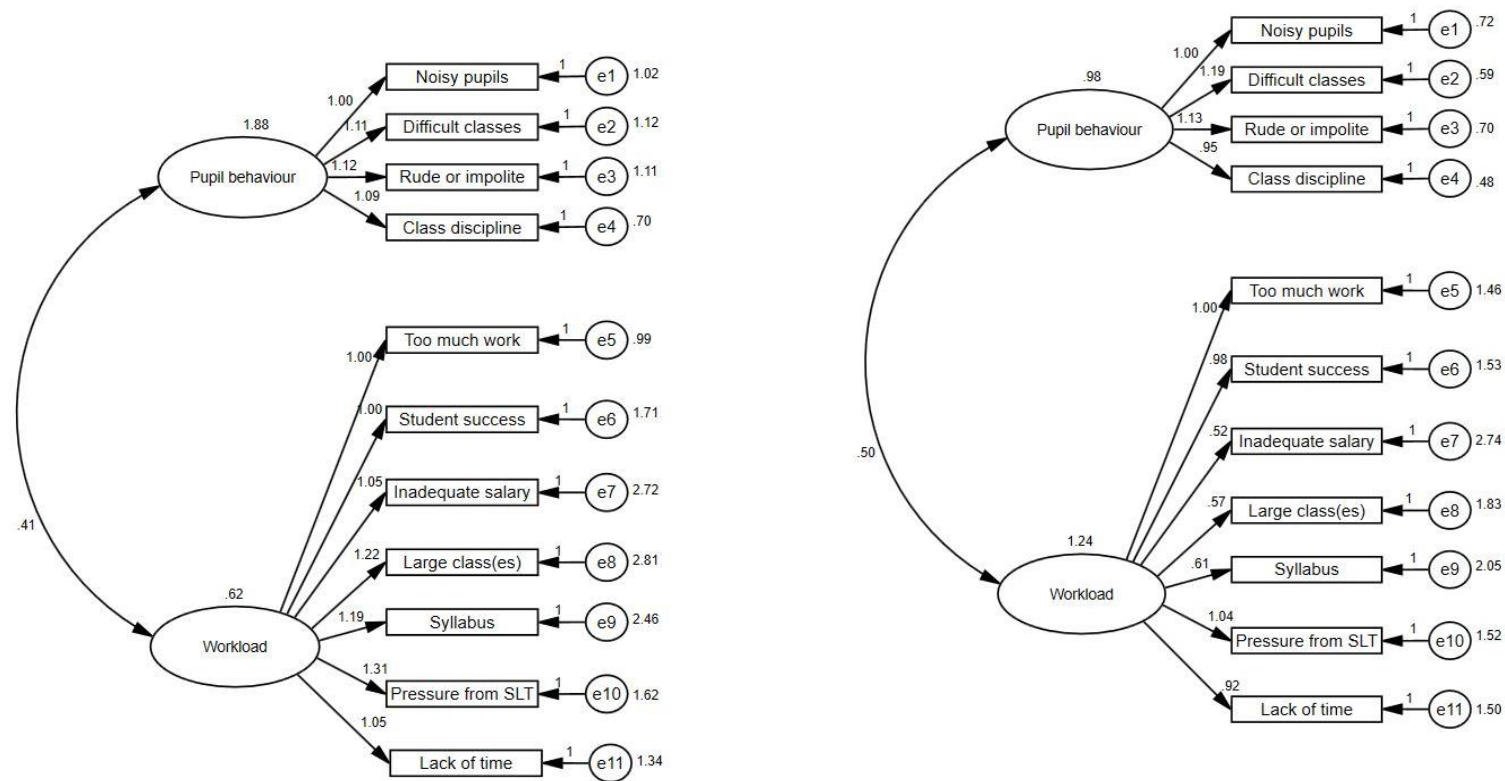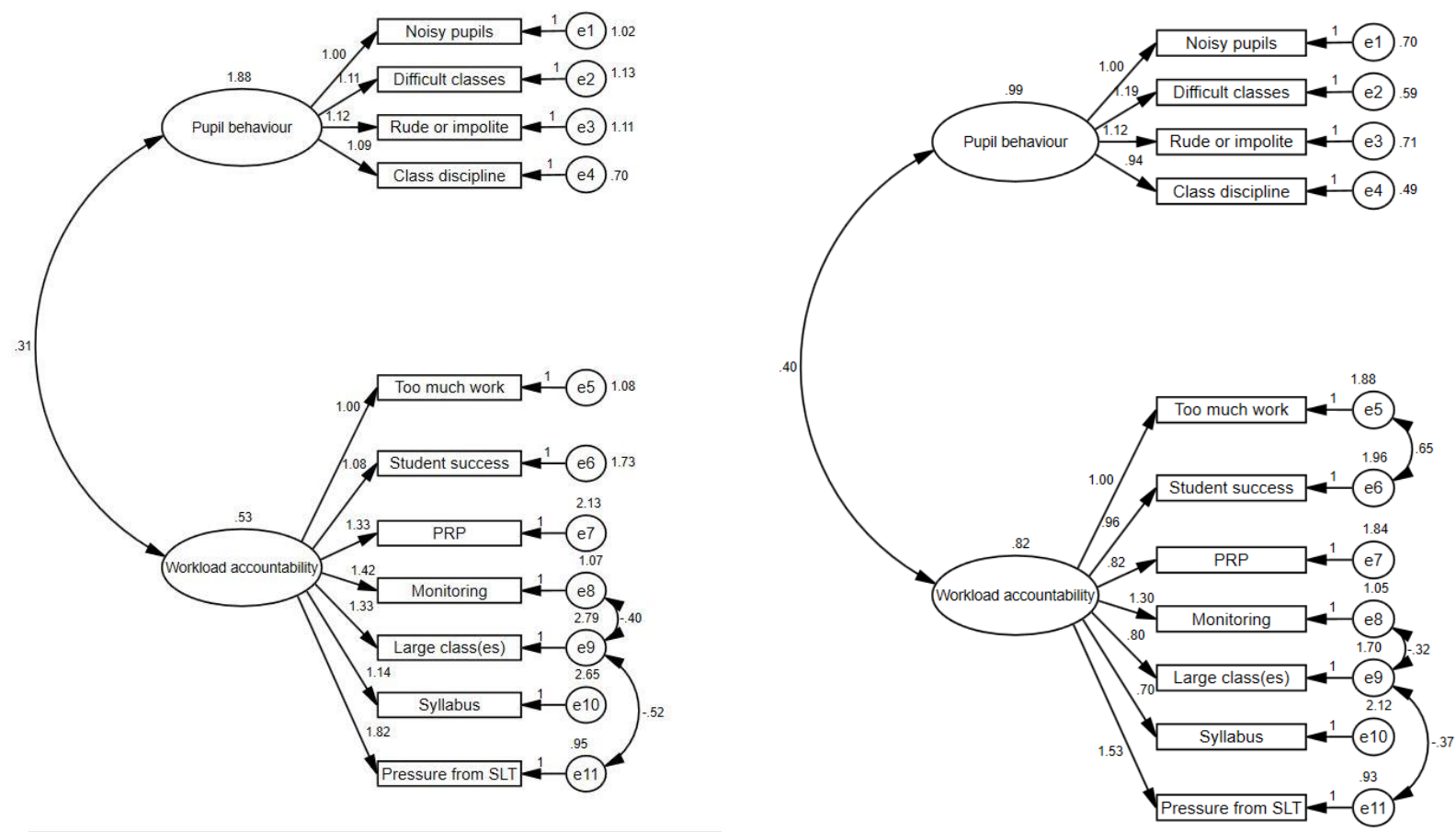Model 4

Appendix 7: Unstandardised factor models of teacher stress and standardised residual covariance matrix for final model (3)
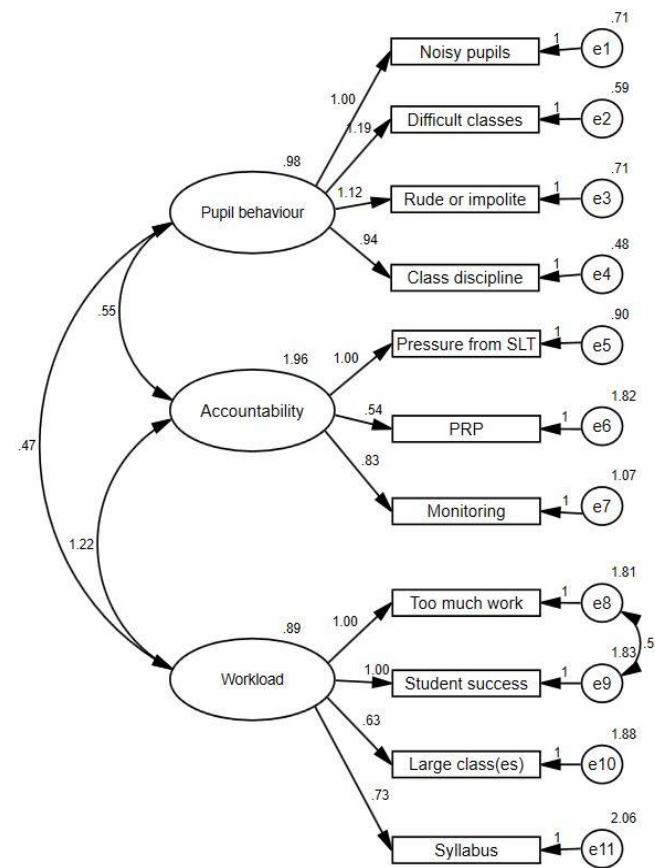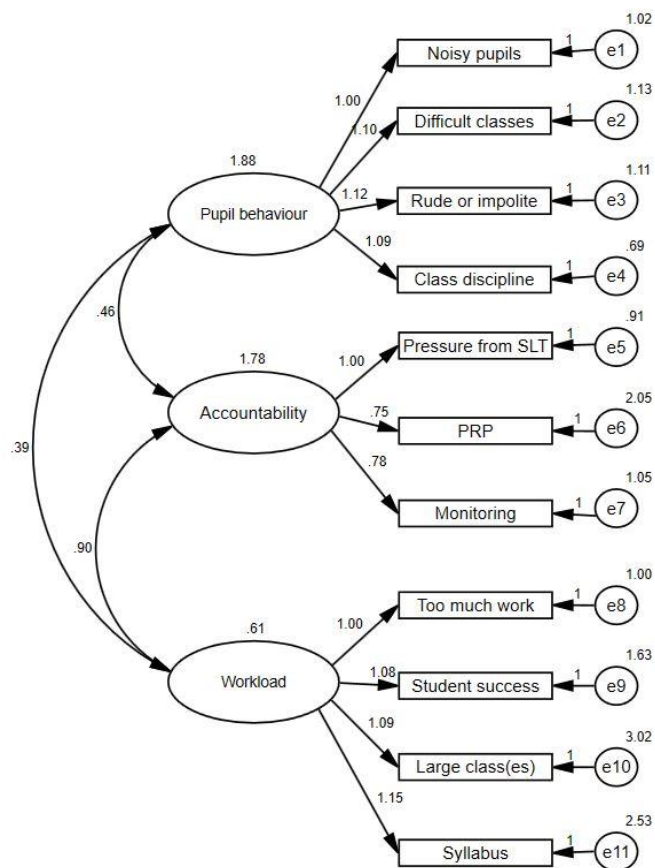
Model 3: State school teachers	**Model 3: Private school teachers**
Standardised Residual Covariances (Group number 1 - Default model)	*Standardised Residual Covariances (Group number 1 - Default model)*

Model 3: State school teachers

Standardised Residual Covariances (Group number 1 - Default model)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	.000										
2	-.008	.000									
3	-.153	.473	.103								
4	-.559	1.838	2.183	.000							
5	-.633	1.996	1.456	-.049	.000						
6	-.442	1.830	3.094	-.072	.192	.000					
7	-.818	2.058	1.930	.120	-.069	-.126	.000				
8	.483	-.977	-.252	-.687	-1.624	-1.184	-.229	.000			
9	.117	.392	-1.054	-.877	-.379	-.397	-.902	.140	.000		
10	-.245	-.061	-.419	-.563	-1.048	-.999	.240	-.240	1.720	.000	
11	-.488	.150	.891	.268	-1.100	-.363	.145	-.292	-.057	.985	.000

Model 3: Private school teachers

Standardised Residual Covariances (Group number 1 - Default model)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	.000										
2	.514	.000									
3	-.018	-1.920	.012								
4	-1.134	-.267	2.670	.000							
5	-1.257	-1.345	2.113	-.085	.000						
6	-1.143	-.337	1.686	.016	.099	.000					
7	-1.049	.229	1.610	.057	.042	-.136	.000				
8	.049	.211	-.025	-.284	-.599	.491	1.429	.000			
9	.067	1.029	-.337	-.141	-.168	-.242	.910	.149	.000		
10	.356	1.437	-.679	.775	.308	.139	-.501	-.290	-.333	.000	
11	.161	-.258	.612	.603	-.031	.054	-.356	-.493	-.558	.000	.000

1= Pressure from headteacher/senior leaders

2 = Ill-defined syllabus

3 = Large class(es)

4 = Maintaining class discipline

5 = Pupils' impolite behaviour or rudeness

6 = Difficult class(es)

7 = Noisy pupils

8 = Internal monitoring

9 = Performance related pay

10 = Responsibility for students' success

11 = Too much work to do.

Appendix 8: Descriptive statistics for stress items

Question	Private			State			Compare
	Rank (1-22)	*Mean*	*SD*	*Rank (1 - 22)*	*Mean*	*S.D*	*p value*
Too much work to do (e.g. lesson preparation and marking)	2	4.32	1.65	1	5.82	1.27	<0.001
Responsibility for students' success (e.g. exam results)	1	4.37	1.65	2	5.53	1.53	<0.001
Internal monitoring processes e.g. book trails, learning walks, lesson observations	9	2.99	1.56	3	5.09	1.46	<0.001
Administrative work (e.g. filling in forms)	4	3.41	1.62	4	5.01	1.61	<0.001
Lack of time to spend with individual students	5	3.18	1.6	5	4.88	1.43	<0.001
Pressure from headteacher/leadership team	6	3.09	1.69	6	4.73	1.64	<0.001
Shortage of equipment and poor facilities	15	2.45	1.64	7	4.54	1.88	<0.001
Lack of recognition for good teaching	7	3.08	1.92	8	4.5	1.87	<0.001
Too short rest periods (break, lunchtime)	10	2.89	1.72	9	4.46	1.88	<0.001
Inadequate salary	11	2.83	1.76	10	4.34	1.85	<0.001
Large class(es)	21	2.12	1.5	11	4.32	1.94	<0.001
Pupils' poor attitude towards work	13	2.63	1.59	12	4.12	1.8	<0.001
Difficult class(es)	16	2.45	1.41	13	4.08	1.85	<0.001
Performance related pay	22	1.88	1.55	14	4.06	1.75	<0.001
Pupils' impolite behaviour or rudeness	19	2.3	1.4	15	3.75	1.87	<0.001
Ill-defined syllabus (e.g. not detailed enough)	17	2.42	1.59	16	3.71	1.83	<0.001
Maintaining class discipline	20	2.16	1.17	17	3.54	1.71	<0.001
Dealing with parents	3	3.44	1.49	18	3.5	1.5	0.57
Having extra duties/responsibilities because of absent teachers	8	3.07	1.66	19	3.49	1.98	0.002
Noisy pupils	18	2.37	1.3	20	3.46	1.7	<0.001
Attitudes and behaviour of other teachers	12	2.76	1.46	21	3.44	1.6	<0.001
Poor career structure (poor promotion opportunities)	14	2.57	1.64	22	3.44	1.88	<0.001