



Perceptions and practices of parental involvement in Omani Basic Schools before and during the COVID-19 pandemic

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Abstract

This thesis explores the perceptions and practices of parental involvement (PI) in Omani Basic Schools, which serve students aged 10–15 years. The main focus of this study was on the perceptions and reported practices of parents, teachers, and headteachers (HT) regarding parental involvement in their children's formal learning immediately before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study adopted a two-phase mixed-methods explanatory design frame. Phase one was a survey of parents (N=1,429), teachers (N=655), and HTs (N=212). Phase two involved semi-structured interviews with a total of 25 participants: 11 parents, 8 teachers, and 6 HTs from Basic Schools Cycle Two (C2). The interviews and survey collected data from across eleven different Omani governorates.

Through semi-structured surveys and interviews, the research aimed to capture the range of perceptions and practices of parental involvement, and to consider the cultural nuances and socio-economic factors that might influence these perceptions.

The findings of this study indicated that educators and parents perceived limited PI before the pandemic. It identified a perceived increase in PI in children's learning during the pandemic, alongside a heightened awareness of the role technology can play in fostering communication and collaboration between schools and parents. It also highlighted how barriers such as family income, parental education level, and parents' employment status seem to influence and mediate this practice.

Given the strong support from academic literature on how PI can improve learner outcomes, this study underscores the need for educational stakeholders to adapt to evolving dynamics, recognising the significance and potential benefits of a more inclusive and flexible approach to PI in the Omani educational system. As Omani schools navigate the post-pandemic landscape, understanding the nature and range of perceptions and practices in the sector is imperative for fostering a collaborative and supportive environment that maximises student development and academic success.

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List of Abbreviations

BEC:	Basic Education Curriculum
BERA:	British Educational Research Association
C2:	Cycle Two in Omani Basic School (from grade 5 to grade 10)
CPD:	Continuing Professional Development
EdTech:	Educational Technology
ESL:	English as a Second Language
GCC:	Council Cooperation Countries
GES:	General Education System
HLE:	Home learning environment
ICT:	Information communication technology
ITE:	Initial teacher education
MoE:	Ministry of Education
OECD:	The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PBEC:	Post Basic Education
PE:	Parental engagement
PI:	Parental involvement
PISA:	Programme for International Student Assessment
SES:	Socioeconomic status
TA:	Thematic analysis

Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own independent work, except where otherwise stated, and the views expressed are my own. Other sources are acknowledged by explicit references. The thesis has not been edited by a third party beyond what is permitted by Cardiff University's Use of Third-Party Editors by Research Degree Students Procedure.

Statements:

This thesis is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

This work has not been submitted in substance for any other degree or award at this or any other university or place of learning, nor is it being submitted concurrently for any other degree or award (outside of any formal collaboration agreement between the University and a partner organisation).

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This introduction presents the key concept of parental involvement (PI) in children's learning, underscores its growing importance in the field of education, and defines how the term is used and understood throughout this thesis. It outlines the original rationale, aims, and research questions for this study. It also provides a brief overview of each of the subsequent chapters.

1.1 Importance of the topic

According to Epstein (2001), three forms of influence work together to help children learn and develop: school, parent and community. The positive impact of PI and the role of family involvement in relation to the school have been well acknowledged by theory, research, and policies (Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2001; Jeynes 2003; Hill and Tyson 2009; Epstein 2010; Goodall and Montgomery 2014). This focus on the positive impact of PI on children's learning at school and at home has emerged since the 1960s and has been a feature of much educational policy and practice internationally since this time (Desforges and Abouchar 2003; Epstein 2010). For example, the 2001 'No Child Left Behind' Act, introduced in the US and signed into law in 2002, articulated increasing PI as a goal for schools in an attempt to close social class and racial achievement gaps (U.S. Department of Education 2004, p. 13). In the UK, policymakers have emphasised increasing PI to narrow class disparities and increase social mobility (Antony-Newman 2019). The Scottish Schools Act in 2006 is one of the few stand-alone legislative documents on PI, and the Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools in 2010 in Canada put forward policies to increase parental participation (Antony-Newman 2019).

These educational reforms and policies were informed by a recognition that parental and family involvement could increase children's learning and close demographic gaps in achievement (Desforges and Abouchar 2003; Hill and Tyson 2009; Goodall 2017). Much work in the literature supports the view that parents have considerable influence on their children's education. For instance, PI in children's education is considered essential to give them a strong foundation for independent effort and future success (Goodall and

Montgomery 2014; Epstein 2018). Additionally, PI has positive impact on the cognitive and social development of children (Driessen et al. 2005). It has also been linked to improvements in attendance, behaviour and academic achievement (Gorard et al. 2012; Jeynes 2012; Jeynes 2022). Indeed, it has been argued that PI has a more significant impact on primary school students' outcomes than school quality (Desforges and Abouchaar 2003) or socioeconomic status (SES) (Jasso 2007).

These positive effects of PI on students' academic results are acknowledged by school headteachers (HTs), teachers, and policymakers, many of whom are engaged in new initiatives and educational reforms to promote it (Wilder 2013). However, despite the potentially positive impact of PI on the learning process, there is still a lack of such involvement, which can affect a learner's academic outcomes (Jackson 2022). Additionally, many school staff members focus on the relationship between parents and the school, as well as on parents demonstrating their support for the school (Hornby and Lafaele 2011; Goodall 2022a). This can be described as parents being involved with the school itself, rather than being engaged in their children's learning (Goodall and Montgomery 2014), which has little effect on achievement (Henderson and Mapp 2002; Goodall 2022a).

Furthermore, notwithstanding the recognition of PI as part of a remedy for low levels of children's attainment in schools, there are some inconsistencies in the findings regarding the effect of PI on increasing academic achievement (Fan and Chen 2001; Domina 2005; Jeynes 2005). For instance, the literature suggests that the size of the PI effect varies according to the education level, as PI at lower learner grades (elementary level) can be expected to have a greater impact than PI at higher levels (middle school) (Kim and Hill 2015). Furthermore, Fan and Chen's (2001) study indicated that there can be both a positive and negative impact, and to some extent, there is an absence of direct relationship between some types of PI and students' learning achievements. Singh et al. (1995) identified that certain PI indicators influence students' academic achievement more significantly than others. For example, they found that parental aspirations for their children's education have a strong positive impact on grade 8 students' achievements. In

contrast, home structure has a slight negative effect, while parent-child communication and parental participation and in school-related activities show no significant impact.

In addition, the value of PI in terms of improved outcomes for children is not well understood or communicated to many parents and educators in practice (Fan and Williams 2010). Even though both parents and teachers perceive that PI, family, and community support positively affect students' learning progress, there are significant differences regarding their understanding of what is required in terms of high-quality PI (Miretzky 2004; Zhou 2014). Understanding how all stakeholders perceive, and practice PI can help develop a better appreciation of how educators and policymakers might shape PI levels, influence the success of implementing PI, and improve learner outcomes (Ng 1999; Barge and Loges 2003; Desforges and Abouchaar 2003; Goodall and Montgomery 2014).

From a school's perspective, a key element within this perception is the recognition of families' social and cultural contexts. Central to this is the rejection of deficit understandings in relation to PI with the school (Sarjeant 2020; Dermott and Pomati 2016). Emphasising the social dimension, Gorski (2013) highlights the need to consider the socio-economic context of families in PI. He suggests that educators should use inclusive and equitable methods to engage parents, especially those from marginalised communities. This approach addresses socio-economic barriers and offers strategies to improve PI, enhancing educational policies and practices.

1.2 Rationale for the study

While there is increasing awareness of the value of PI globally, in practice, this varies according to education systems, culture, and individual settings (Boonk et al. 2018). There has been increasing awareness and research in terms of supporting PI to improve learner outcomes within the Gulf region, for example in Saudi Arabia (Al-Sharari and Al-Jamal 2013), Qatar (Ihmeideh et al. 2020), and Kuwait (Almazeedi 2009). However, the studies conducted in this field in the region are limited. This is also the case specifically in the Omani context, where there have also been limited studies on PI in children's education (Al-Qaryouti and Kilani 2013; Al-Harrasi and Al-Mahrooqi 2014). In addition, while there have been recent studies on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on

education generally (Aznar et al. 2021; Kolak et al. 2021), there have been no studies specifically examining PI in children's education during the pandemic within the Omani context.

This study has chosen to research PI for this specific phase in education (students¹ aged 10-15 years) for several reasons. These include the well-established positive influence of PI on academic achievement in elementary school (Jeynes 2005; Lee and Bowen 2006). There is also evidence of increased positive effects on children's educational process if the involvement has been established at an early age and is sustained (Epstein 2001), particularly in reading and mathematics (Boonk et al. 2018).

In addition to these academic reasons for investigating PI in children's learning in Oman, there are also very personal reasons for the choice of this subject. As both a mother and a teacher, I have experienced PI in Oman from both a school and parental perspective. Having worked as a primary teacher for more than 10 years, I have witnessed the effect of different levels of PI on children's learning. I have experienced both positive and negative aspects regarding the affordances and constraints/barriers of PI in improving my children's learning. These personal experiences have also been supplemented by numerous conversations I have had with other parents, teachers, and educators. It is these experiences and conversations that sparked my interest in this research field, which was further developed by spending an extended time supporting my children at home with online learning during the pandemic.

1.3 Research aims

At the outset, this study aimed to investigate the perceptions and reported practices of parents, teachers, and HTs regarding the role of PI in supporting learners in Basic Education Schools C2 in Oman. When the study began in 2019, its primary aim was not to examine the impact of the pandemic. However, the unforeseen COVID-19 pandemic provided a unique opportunity to understand PI both before and during the pandemic within the Sultanate of Oman.

¹ The term 'student/students' in this study refers to children aged 10–15 who are studying in Omani Basic Education School-Cycle Two (grades 5–10), as this term is commonly used in the literature.

Additionally, this study aimed to explore the relationship between parents' perceptions and experiences of PI in light of the influence of variables such as parents' social and economic status (SES) in the Omani context before and during the pandemic. The study was conducted in 11 Omani governorates to provide in-depth insights into various manifestations of PI in schooling in Oman before and during the pandemic.

In this study, the use of the term 'parental involvement' (PI) in the research question was intended to capture the broad spectrum of practices in the sector, while also noting reported instances of parental engagement (PE) as referred to in Goodall's works. Goodall (2023) explored the concept of PE in children's learning through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching and broader church teachings, which emphasised the importance of supporting parents in their role in their children's education. Goodall (2023) suggested that faith schools, particularly Catholic schools, are often located in disadvantaged areas; however, these schools are linked to higher student achievement often attributed to the quality of education, close-knit community, and strong parental partnerships. Catholic schools often foster a strong sense of community, with parents and schools sharing common values and a mission centred around faith and moral development, nurturing students' academic, moral, and spiritual growth (Goodall 2023). Importantly, Goodall's work distinguishes between PI (which often means parents supporting school activities) and PE (which focuses on parents actively supporting their children's learning at home), clearly highlighting the educative value of the latter (Goodall and Montgomery 2014; Goodall 2023).

This study was undertaken within the Islamic context of Oman. According to Islamic principles, parents are seen as their children's primary educators and influencers, playing a crucial role in their learning and overall development, and are responsible for nurturing their children's moral, ethical, and spiritual growth (Syed 2014). Despite sharing many of these values, Omani society lacks a strong tradition of PE that places a value on high-quality parent-child interactions related to school-based learning (Al-Harrasi and Al-Mahrooqi 2014).

1.4 Research questions

- 1) What are the perceptions and practices of PI for children aged 10–15 years for teachers and HTs in Oman?
- 2) What are the perceptions and practices of PI for children aged 10–15 years for parents in Oman?
- 3) How do parents, teachers, and HTs perceive the role of technology in facilitating PI for children aged 10–15 years?
- 4) Did the above change due to the COVID–19 pandemic?

1.5 Organisation of the thesis

This thesis is organised in nine chapters. Chapter 1 offers an introduction to the study as a whole and sets out the background, the research questions and the contribution to the existing body of knowledge.

Chapters 2 and 3 review the literature related to PI in learning. They start by examining and questioning the concepts of parenting and good parenting, followed by a discussion of different factors that can affect parents' practices with their children's learning. Then, definitions and the background history of PI are presented, followed by the theoretical framework on which this study draws. The following section discusses some evidence, debates, practices, and perceptions of PI and investigates some barriers to PI. These chapters conclude by presenting background information about the Omani context, considering what is known regarding the impact of distance learning on parents' educational support for their children.

Chapter 4 presents the mixed-methods approach to research on which this project is based. First, the philosophical assumptions behind the choice of methodology are presented. This chapter also provides the rationale for utilising a mixed-methods approach. This is followed by a description of the research procedures for gathering and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data. This chapter ends by describing the ethical considerations and quality of the research.

Within the next sections, the data gathered in this study is presented. The findings are divided into four chapters. Chapter 5 draws particularly on the survey data and presents findings according to parents', teachers', and HTs' perspectives. The findings from a thematic analysis of the interview data are integrated with data from the survey in three chapters to give more insights into the quantitative data. Chapter 6 presents parents', teachers', and HTs' views of what PI in children's learning means to them, and how the participants experienced the practice of PI in children's learning before and during the pandemic. Chapter 7 explores how the use of technology (ICT) influenced participants' reported practice of PI during the pandemic. Chapter 8 presents how the participants shared their views on how they would like PI practice to be in the Omani context and the reasons why this ideal is challenging to achieve in practice.

Chapter 9 discusses the findings holistically and situates them within the current literature and research on PI, relating these directly to the research questions. It considers the conclusions that can be drawn and the limitations of what can be known from this study. It ends by presenting areas for future research and investigation and highlights clearly what lessons might be learned from parents' and educators' experiences before and during the pandemic to develop effective PI strategies and policies within Oman.

Chapter 2: Literature Review 1

The literature review in this thesis is organised in two chapters to present a narrative review of the relevant literature. This first chapter highlights the concepts and beliefs related to parenting practice, the history and definitions of PI in children's learning, the theoretical framework used in this study, and some debates concerning PI, considering both parents' and educators' perspectives.

2.1 Parenting and good parenting

It is parents who take responsibility for their children's social, emotional, and educational success or potentially failure (Dermott and Pomati 2016). Parenting can be viewed negatively or from a deficit viewpoint and children's poor results are often attributed to their parents, rather than any other external circumstances (Goodall 2019). Indeed, much of the present political and policy world seems to concentrate on the benefits of 'good parenting' as a remedy for a variety of issues in terms of the behaviour and the achievement of young people (Goodall 2019, p. 11). Research on home-school relationships has extensively examined the role of parents in bridging the gap between socioeconomic disadvantage and future academic success (Vincent 2017). Siraj-Blatchford and Mayo (2014) underscored the critical role of both emotional and practical PI in enhancing children's educational achievements, particularly in low SES families. Their research emphasised that activities such as helping with homework and creating a supportive home environment significantly affect children's academic success. Another study by Hill and Tyson (2009) found that academic socialisation, including parents' communication of educational expectations, fostering aspirations, and discussing learning strategies, had the strongest positive impact on middle school students' academic achievement, more so than other types of home and school-based PI such as attending parents' meetings or ensuring homework was undertaken.

Gillies (2008) viewed good parenting as a mainstay of civil society, fostering and transmitting crucial values to children, and thus protecting and reproducing the common good. Therefore, improving parenting skills has been a policy focus in the UK for over two

decades; however, to truly benefit children's educational outcomes, it is necessary not only to provide training and resources to parents but also to implement mechanisms that evaluate and ensure these skills are effectively applied and meet certain standards (Goodall 2019).

This is related to the UK studies, while some research has been done in this field in Arab countries, for example in Oman by Al-Barwani et al. (2012) and Al-Harrasi and Al-Mahrooqi (2014), and in Kuwait by Almazeedi (2009), which all investigated the parenting aspect in children's learning.

Parenting involves complex decisions, behaviours, and emotions, far beyond just providing basic needs such as food, shelter, and love, as especially evident in affluent countries (Vincent 2017). There has been a transition in the focus on parenting, represented by the use of terms like 'intense mothering' or 'deliberate parenting' (Vincent 2017, p. 543). Furthermore, other contemporary practices of parenting like 'Tiger moms', 'helicopter parents', model of 'positive parenting', the 'resilient child' (Dermott and Pomati 2016, p. 2), and the concept of 'concerted cultivation' (Lareau 2002, p. 748), reflect the evolving nature of PI. Notably, the practice of 'over-parenting' can lead to anxiety, narcissism, entitlement, dependency, lack of motivation, and inability to solve problems independently among children (Garst and Gagnon 2015, p. 9). The reasons for this practice may be related to the pressures parents feel they need to put on their children to achieve academic success or could be attached to parents' anxiety, possibly stemming from their own childhood experiences (Garst and Gagnon 2015). Equally, by over-protecting children and denying them formative, risky experiences, adults contribute to problems rather than solving them (Connolly and Haughton 2017).

Lareau's (2003) concept of concerted cultivation describes affluent middle-class parenting techniques, contrasting the active 'concerted cultivation' approach with the passive 'sustaining natural growth' approach of working-class parents (cited in Siraj-Blatchford 2010, p. 473). Furthermore, Lareau (2003) found that many parents would choose to adopt the concerted cultivation practice if the resources were available; in contrast, in the case of parents who suffer from multiple disadvantages and poverty, 'sustaining natural growth' and the effort to keep it can be a significant achievement in

itself (cited in Siraj-Blatchford 2010, p. 473). According to Lareau (2003), concerted cultivation involves a variety of practices, for example communications between children and parents through involvement in dialogue (rather than directives), parental encouragement, and rewards such as monitoring classroom effort, support with homework (provision of desk space, sharing/extending the challenge), additional home curriculum provision, provision of supplementary tuition and schooling where required, other extra-curricular activities (sport, music, drama, etc.), and selective peer encouragement (including overnight 'stop-overs') (cited in Siraj-Blatchford 2010, p. 473).

However, there have been concerns that the policy focus on parenting is moving away from the consideration of wider social factors and can in some cases promote a cultural deficit discourse, which concedes underachievement among the poor is the fault of individuals, families, and communities (Dermott and Pomati 2016). Various factors affect good parenting practices and make parenting more difficult, such as changes in contemporary family relationships and a decline in traditional values of duty and responsibility (Gillies 2008). Poor parenting is one of the most significant causes of childhood problems, while good parenting is represented as a remedy for all social ills (Dermott 2012). Critiques of poor parenting, highlighting its negative effects, have extended to include poor parents and have portrayed a negative image of working-class families (Gillies 2008). However, as Dermott (2012), Gorski (2013), and Lewis-Durham and Saastamoinen (2022) highlight, this can result in parenting being viewed through a deficit lens, and what they highlight as the pervasive creep of deficit perspectives. This pervasive creep of deficit perspectives refers to the gradual and often unintentional adoption of deficit-based perspectives by educators and administrators (Lewis-Durham and Saastamoinen 2022).

School policies and practices often define a 'responsible parent' by middle-class standards, leading to misrecognition and misunderstanding of working-class parents' efforts and capabilities (Wyness 2020, p. 162). This is particularly unhelpful and concerning because there is evidence that parents can significantly improve the education of children who are considered disadvantaged (Siraj-Blatchford et al. 2013). Similarly, Wyness (2020) found that many parents strive to do their best despite

challenging circumstances and emphasised the need for a more nuanced understanding of parental responsibility, as well as the importance of supportive educational structures considering parents' varying socio-economic conditions. Gorski (2013) further supports this by arguing that educators must move beyond simplistic stereotypes and develop a deeper, more empathetic understanding of the effects of poverty and class bias on students' educational experiences. He advocates for an 'Equity Literacy' approach, which requires recognising and addressing the systemic inequities that affect poor and working-class families (Gorski 2013, P. 17).

2.2 Educational disadvantage and the socioeconomic status (SES) of parents

Building on the discussion of educational disadvantage and SES, it is necessary to explore how different forms of capital, as conceptualised by Bourdieu, interact with these factors. Bourdieu's concepts of economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital provide a foundational framework for understanding how various resources and assets influence individuals' social positions and opportunities. These notions of capital apply when viewing the social world and all behaviour is placed within a field of action that has its own practice and system of valuation (Lareau and Horvat 1999). All these types of capital interact with the role of parents and educational disadvantage can be a part of them (Healy 2008).

Lareau and Horvat (1999) expanded on Bourdieu's work by applying these concepts to educational inequality, demonstrating how different forms of capital interact within the educational system. Their work is important in framing this study because it provides a detailed analysis of how parents' SES and forms of capital influence their perceptions and practices of PI.

The first type, economic capital, refers to the financial resources available to communities and families; these resources can be used to pay for various educational services (e.g. distance learning, private education courses) and associated resources (e.g. childcare, books, transportation, ICT equipment) (Healy 2008).

The second component is cultural capital, based on which children from high SES backgrounds are more likely to achieve a high level of schooling, as they are more often

exposed to highbrow cultural activities at home (Lareau and Weininger 2003). Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital refers to the non-financial social assets that promote social mobility, such as education, intellect, style of speech, and dress (Lareau and Weininger 2003). As Crozier (1997) contends, middle-class parents are generally better endowed with cultural capital than working-class parents, particularly in terms of educational knowledge and understanding of how the education system works. For instance, working-class parents often lack the confidence to be proactive in their children's education, which may be related to their own past experiences with schooling (Reay 1998). Working-class parents often believe that teachers are more knowledgeable and do not see it as their responsibility to educate their children, whereas active parents recognise the importance of education in enhancing their children's opportunities for success and act as 'active consumers' on behalf of their children, overseeing their educational progress (Crozier 1997, p. 188). However, this representation of cultural capital has been criticised for presenting a cultural deficit narrative of parenting, portraying some parents, especially those from poor social backgrounds, as being disinterested in their children's education and learning (Goodall and Montgomery 2014).

The third component of educational disadvantage concerns social capital, which affects educational outcomes as it refers to the social networks accessible to parents that can enhance a student's ability to benefit from educational opportunities (Healy 2008).

These concepts are crucial for analysing educational disadvantage because they help explain how different forms of capital affect educational outcomes (Costa and Murphy 2015). Parents' educational disadvantage can create a ripple effect, affecting how they raise their children, the children's environment, skill development, school progress, and adaptation, potentially leading to challenges in school and academic success (Healy 2008). For instance, when parents have not had the opportunity to complete their education, they may not be aware of certain educational resources or strategies that could benefit their children, or they might not be able to provide their children with books, educational toys, and learning activities at home (Healy 2008).

Moreover, there is a new perspective that views technology as a form of capital, which can be exchanged similarly to cultural and social capital (Osorio-Saez 2022). Parents are

seen as agents who interpret and perceive the world in specific ways and act to promote social order, with technology being one example (Osorio-Saez 2022). Applying a Bourdieusian framework, parents possess and create various forms of capital, such as technological capital (digital skills) and PI, both at school and at home. This framework also highlights the obstacles parents face in acquiring these types of capital (Merisalo and Makkonen 2022; Osorio-Saez 2022). There have been numerous comments on the deficit view of educational disadvantage, which suggests a link between home and school success; however, the nature and reasons for this relationship remain unclear, with some claims reflecting deficit perspectives (Cairney 2000). One such perspective is the 'family deficit explanation', which blames families for lacking skills. Another perspective is 'educational inadequacy', which faults institutions for not enhancing student skills (Cairney 2000, p. 165).

In this deficit understanding, parents are labelled as 'hard-to-reach' when they do not engage in expected ways and are considered disinterested in their children's learning (Boag-Munroe and Evangelou 2012, p. 209). Some studies suggest that policymakers, educators, and researchers tend to adopt this deficit model, particularly when parents are not visibly engaged with school or are unable to meet all the expectations established by the schools (Goodall 2015; Wyness 2020; Goodall 2022a). However, not all parents are the same and there is no one-size-fits-all approach, as parents have different needs and face various barriers (Crozier 2001; Kim 2009). Moreover, not all parents have the same level of ability to get involved in their child's education (Sarjeant 2020).

To address these challenges, it is essential to shift from a deficit model to asset-based approaches. Asset-based approaches focus on the strengths and resources that families and communities already possess, rather than viewing them through a deficit lens (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence n.d.). These approaches aim to empower marginalised families by recognising and building upon their existing cultural wealth and capabilities (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence n.d.).

In line with this perspective, Ladson-Billings (1995) introduced the concept of culturally relevant pedagogy, which emphasises the importance of incorporating students' cultural backgrounds into their education. This approach helps students see their culture as an

asset, fostering a positive identity and improving academic success (Ladson-Billings 1995).

Moreover, Yosso (2005, P. 77) developed the 'Community Cultural Wealth model', which identifies various forms of capital that marginalised communities possess, such as aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital. Yosso's (2005) framework challenges traditional views of cultural capital and highlights the strengths and knowledge that students from marginalised backgrounds bring to their educational experiences. By adopting asset-based approaches, schools can create more inclusive and supportive environments that empower marginalised families and enhance their children's educational outcomes (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence n.d.).

In contrast, Payne (2005, p. 37) emphasises that individuals from generational poverty have different 'hidden rules' compared to those from the middle class, which can affect their behaviour and understanding in educational settings. In her 'Poverty Mindset' framework, Payne illustrates that individuals from generational poverty adhere to different rules compared to those from the middle class (Payne 2005, p. 61). While Payne's work helps educators support students from poverty, it has been criticised for suggesting cultural causes rather than systemic issues like racism and economic inequality, which critics believe are more effective to address (Gorski 2008).

To better understand these views of deficit parenting in schools, it can also be beneficial to consider the work of Bourdieu and Lareau regarding the key ideas of 'cultural capital' (cited in Lareau 1987, p. 74) and 'concerted cultivation' (Lareau 2002, p. 748). These concepts suggest that cultural capital plays a role in social reproduction, focusing on the relationship between education, family, and social class, which many scholars interested in the educational field, especially in how schools replicate social inequalities, find useful (Lareau and Horvat 1999).

Lamont and Lareau (1988) argued that the concept of cultural capital, as originally defined by Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), was confusing and inconsistent. To address this, they redefined cultural capital as exclusion from high status, rather than exclusion from jobs, resources, and high-status groups, which were key aspects of the original concept. Later, Lareau and Weininger (2003) offered another interpretation, suggesting that cultural

capital should not be limited to elite-status cultures and should not be separated from human capital or technical skills.

Lareau and Horvat (1999) highlighted that Bourdieu's constructs offer a flexible understanding of the relationship between individual actions and social structures. However, they noted that Bourdieu did not focus enough on how institutions exclude individuals or respond to their efforts to use resources. Emphasising the importance of understanding social inclusion and exclusion, Lareau and Horvat (1999) argued that considering context, individual efforts, skills, and institutional responses is crucial since they can lead to social reproduction, challenges, and social change. They defined a moment of inclusion as when various factors come together to benefit a child's life trajectory, while moments of exclusion can include being placed in a low reading group, being held back a grade, being placed in remedial courses, or failing to meet college-preparation requirements.

Additionally, Lareau and Horvat (1999) highlighted two critical distinctions from Bourdieu's (1984) theory on social reproduction: first, everyone has social capital to use in various fields, but the value of social and cultural capitals varies by field; second, Bourdieu did not adequately address the differences in possessing and activating cultural and social capital in specific settings.

Bourdieu (1976) used the analogy of a card game to illustrate how activating cultural and social capital affects the value of such capital in a field of interaction (cited in Lareau and Horvat 1999). In this analogy, the card game represents the setting or field of interaction, where players (individuals) are dealt cards (capital). Each card and hand have different values, demonstrating that the value of capital can vary depending on how it is used and perceived in different contexts. In addition, these values change according to the rules of the game being played (the field of interaction) (Lareau and Horvat 1999). Each individual (player) has a different set of capital (cards) and relies on different habitus skills. These individuals can choose whether to activate their forms of capital (play the cards) or not (fold the hand), according to the rules of the game. However, in another game with the same individuals (players) and the same hands, they might play poorly due to a lack of knowledge of the game's rules. Therefore, to analyse social settings, researchers must

consider the different forms of capital each individual has in a given field, as well as their skills and abilities to activate the capital (Lareau and Horvat 1999).

Lareau and Horvat (1999) suggested three modifications to Bourdieu's approach to social reproduction, as follows:

1. Researchers should pay attention to interaction, including both explicit and implicit rules for interaction in the given field.
2. Individuals should activate capital in the social environment, where they have different levels of skills.
3. Individuals should activate capital or play cards in their hands using their skills.

To gain a better understanding of individual differences, this study considers Bourdieu's and Lareau's theories to examine how different types of capital and parenting practices influence the perceptions and practices of PI among parents and educators. Building on Bourdieu's concepts, scholars like Yosso and Gorski have expanded the understanding of educational equity. Yosso's (2005) Cultural Wealth Model highlights the diverse forms of capital in marginalised communities, while Gorski (2013) emphasises addressing structural inequalities and promoting social justice in education. This study takes into account the broader social and economic contexts that shape these practices and their implications for educational equity, which will be further presented in the theoretical framework (see 2.5). The next section discusses definitions of PI and its historical background.

2.3 Defining parental involvement (PI)

Several terms are used to indicate the collaboration among schools, teachers, and parents, for example PI, parental participation, school-family relations, educational partnership, and others (Driessen et al. 2005). Many studies conducted on PI describe varied views about the different stakeholders. For instance, Grolnick and Slowiaczek's (1994) study mentions three categories: parent behaviour (participating in school activities), personal involvement (child's affective environment), and cognitive/intellectual involvement (exposing the child to cognitively stimulating activities) (cited in Huntsinger and Jose 2009, p. 399). In contrast, Baker and Soden's (1997) study showed that there

are four broad groups of categories for different definitions for PI: the first group of researchers concentrated on 'attitudinal components', such as parents' aspirations and expectations of their children; another group focused on 'behavioural components', such as parental assistance with homework or parental attendance at parent-teacher conferences; the third group focused on 'general parenting style' or 'parent-child interactions'; the fourth group of scholars has not successfully engaged with PI (cited in Abdul-Adil and Farmer 2006, p. 2).

The reasons for the differences in defining the various types of PI have been examined in some studies. For instance, Harris and Goodall (2007) related these variations to the different understandings of PI among parents and schools. This suggests a fundamental issue in the alignment of expectations and definitions, which can lead to inconsistencies in implementation and outcomes (Boonk et al. 2018). Moreover, Conteh and Kawashima (2008) suggest that parents and schools see PI activities differently. This divergence highlights the need for a more unified approach to defining and practising PI (Boonk et al. 2018). PI is a complex concept, as noted by Wilder (2013), and is one that should be clearly articulated and understood by parents, schools, and even the community. Such complexity necessitates a critical examination of how PI is conceptualised and operationalised across different contexts (Ndwandwe 2023).

Hill et al. (2004) defined PI as interactions between parents and their children that help children benefit from educational outcomes and achieve future success. These contributions and practices may contain home-based PI, for example, supervision of homework and supporting children's reading, as well as school-based PI, such as attending parents' meeting and educational workshops (Hornby 2011). Importantly, Hornby (2011, p. 1) identifies the word 'parents' as anyone carrying out the parental role for the children, which can be a mother, father, grandparents, or any family member, or anyone acting as guardians.

As Connors and Epstein (1995) pointed out, there are three broad theoretical perspectives concerning school and family connections: separate influences, embedded influences, and overlapping influences of schools and families (cited in Healy 2008). The separate influences theory contends that families are in charge of their children's social

development and schools are in charge of the children's education (Healy 2008). The theory of embedded influences relies on the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1992), which recognises 'the more complex and dynamic realities of the effects of multiple contexts on human development' (Connors and Epstein 1995, p. 441) (cited in Healy 2008). The overlapping theory 'recognises the interlocking histories of institutions that motivate, socialise, and educate children, and the changing and accumulating skills of individuals in them as the basis for studying connections that benefit children's learning and development' (Connors and Epstein 1995, p. 442), further, applying this theory leads to the development of a typology of family/school partnership (cited in Healy 2008).

Epstein (1995) identified six types of involvement in this typology: (1) parenting (obligations of families), according to which it is parents' duty to engage with their children's learning, referring to parenting in general and including the basic obligations of families (e.g. helping families to establish home environments that support children's academic achievement); (2) communicating (basic obligations of schools), including communication with the families about the school programme and children's progress (e.g. designing effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication; (3) volunteering (involvement at school) – recruiting parents to help; (4) learning at home (involvement in learning activities at home) – providing information and ideas to families regarding how to help children with homework; (5) decision-making (involvement in decision-making) – involving parents in school decisions; (6) collaborating and exchange with the community – integrated services and resources from the community to strengthen schools, families, and children's learning (Epstein et al. 1997). However, Epstein's model has been criticised for oversimplifying family–school interactions and suggesting that PI is easily achieved (Baquedano-López et al. 2013; Goodall 2022a).

Evidently, the concept of PI remains multifaceted and complex. Based on Harris and Goodall's (2007) study, PI can be defined as a multidimensional concept encompassing various parental activities related to children's education. These activities can take many forms, such as helping with homework, attending school events, communicating with teachers, providing learning resources, and encouraging educational aspirations. Musengamana (2023) further supports this by highlighting that dimensions like learning

at home, homework assistance, and school–family communication positively affect children's academic outcomes.

Furthermore, regarding Epstein et al.'s (2018) study, the term PI can be replaced with family, school, and community partnership, which recognises that children's learning and development is the responsibility of parents, educators, and others in the community. Here, the term partnership includes concepts such as engagement, involvement, collaboration, and participation, highlighting that everyone from the school, family, and community works together to improve schools and enhance students' success (Epstein et al. 2018). Roy and Giraldo-García (2018) also emphasise the importance of parental behaviours in both home and school settings to support the development of children's social/emotional skills and educational success.

Furthermore, Epstein et al.'s (2018) study found that how schools care for children will be reflected in the way that schools care for children's families. If educators view the children as students, they are likely to view families as separate from the school, such that parents' responsibility is to fulfil parenting duties and leave the education of children to the school. In contrast, if educators view the students as children, they are likely to view families and communities as partners in the children's education and development. They all share the responsibilities and interests of the children, which can help to create better programmes and opportunities for students. Additionally, there are four factors that can support the partnership between community and school: high commitment to learning, HTs' support, a welcoming climate, and two-way communication between school and community partners (Epstein et al. 2018). A meta-analysis by Erdem and Kaya (2020) further supports the positive impact of both home-based and school-based PI strategies on academic success.

The coming section will present a brief introductory history to the concept of PI in the UK.

2.4 The history of the concept of parental involvement (PI)

The role of parental involvement and its outcomes in educational forms has been acknowledged by The Department of Education and Science (DES) in 1967 and is identified by many governments in different countries (Hornby 2011). For example, the

2001 'No Child Left Behind' policy in the United States (US), the 2007 'Children's Plan' in the UK, and the 2005 'Schooling Strategy' in New Zealand, all emphasised the importance of PI in improving teaching and learning quality (2011, p. 1). PI is not a new concept in formal education; it has been evolving across the world since the 1960s and studies and research have revealed substantial benefits of involving parents in their children's learning process. Attention to this concept has been reflected in and encouraged by legislation in the UK. For example, in Britain the Plowden Report (1967) reported on the influence of parental attitudes on educational performance. It pointed out that one of the essential elements to achieve an improvement in education is to make the partnership between teachers and parents closer to the child's learning. Additionally, the report stressed that increasing parental encouragement may enhance educational performance, in turn motivating parents to provide adequate encouragement and thus promoting a continuous relationship between home and school. Furthermore, the Warnock Report (1978) and the Taylor¹⁶ Report (1977) generated great interest in PI studies (Gillard 2018). Later, in 1980, The Education Act gave parents the option to choose the school for their children and they were given the right to be represented on the governing bodies of schools (Hornby 2000). In 1984, the British Government issued a 'Green Paper', which encouraged parents to be represented on school governing bodies; in 1989, the British Education Act highlighted the role of parents in their children's education and stressed PI in assessment and representation on governing bodies (Gezani 2009, p. 16).

In 1997, The White Paper 'Excellence in Schools' suggested that PI had three main key advantages: (a) providing parents with information, (b) giving parents a voice, and (c) encouraging parental partnerships with schools (Williams et al. 2002, p. 2). Moreover, in 2007 the British government issued guidelines for a provision to introduce a form of 'children's plan' for children and young people (Harris et al. 2009, p. 2). This plan aimed to encourage the involvement of parents in schools, seeking to secure greater well-being and higher attainments for young people (Harris et al. 2009). Starting in September 2009, Ofsted considered how schools could become more effectively engaged with parents, focusing on making 'a positive interaction with parents, the quality of communications, reporting to parents on the progress of the students' performance, and the mechanisms for helping parents to support their children's learning' (Goodall and Vorhaus 2011, p. 16).

Moreover, the Schools White Paper (Department for Education 2010) emphasised that parents needed to be more involved in education and build a proper learning environment at home (Goodall and Vorhaus 2011). This overview captures the evolution of policies and reports that have encouraged and formalised PI in the educational system in the UK, particularly in England. Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland have adapted these foundational ideas to suit their specific contexts, creating tailored frameworks and programmes as outlined below.

In Scotland, the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 aimed to involve parents in their children's education and learning, encouraging them to express their views on education (Education Scotland 2017). In Wales, the School Effectiveness Framework (2008) encouraged schools to work with all partners, including parents, with a particular emphasis on severing the link between poverty and underachievement (Estyn 2018). Moreover, family engagement is a key element of the Community Focused School guidance in Wales, ensuring families feel welcomed, listened to, valued, and supported to actively participate in their child's learning and enhance the home learning environment (Welsh Government 2023). Recently, the new curriculum for 3–16-year-olds in Wales (2024) emphasises two-way engagement with parents, carers, and the wider school community (Welsh Government 2024). In Northern Ireland, the Getting Ready to Learn (GRTL) programme supported pre-school education providers in encouraging PI in early learning (Education Authority 2023). Considering the attention paid to PI in policies and regulations, I now turn to presenting the theoretical framework that this study adopts.

2.5 Theoretical framework

This study drew on Epstein's typology (1995) as this seminal work has been so influential in promoting family and community involvement in education internationally and because more specifically, the way in which it can help to consider different practices of parents, teachers, and HTs of PI in children's learning in the Omani context. The framework is easy to understand and apply, dividing PI into clear categories, thereby aiding school staff in measuring their work against these criteria (Goodall 2022a).

However, there are some limitations and criticisms of Epstein's model (Baquedano-López et al. 2013; Johnson 2015; Goodall 2022a), including the fact that it oversimplifies the

complexities of family–school interactions, as it encourages a view that PI is something that can easily be accomplished (Jeynes 2014). In reality, PI is multifaceted and cannot be precisely classified into defined categories (Henderson and Mapp 2002). For instance, even though, Epstein's framework can easily be adopted by a school by making superficial changes to their practice, if these are only at surface level, they are unlikely to address deep issues of power, assumptions about parents, schooling, and learning (Goodall 2019). As noted by Epstein and Van Voorhis (2010), adopting the elements of this framework do not guarantee a successful school/parent partnership programme. In addition, Epstein's framework has little focus on equity and diversity because it does not address equity issues connected to school/parent partnership and does not consider the varying needs of families from various backgrounds, cultures, and socioeconomic positions (Johnson 2015; Goodall 2022a).

Furthermore, not all elements of Epstein's framework have been proven to be equally effective (Goodall 2022a). For instance, some studies have suggested that parents connecting with schools, doing volunteer work in schools and attending school events have little impact on educational achievement (Henderson and Mapp 2002), and for other elements, such as helping children with homework, effectiveness changes with age and becomes less effective as students grow older (Desforges and Abouchaar 2003).

Another concern regarding this framework is that it could be used in a reactive way highlighting what is already happening in a school rather than providing an approach to move forward (Goodall 2022a). Despite these limitations, Epstein's framework is used in this study because it provides a valuable starting point that can help to deal with identifying different types of PI, and the framework still holds an appeal for practitioners and researchers alike (Goodall 2022a).

Building on the foundation of Epstein's typology, this framework has evolved in various ways. One significant enhancement is through Gorski's (2013) equity-centred practices, which emphasise the importance of schools adapting to the diverse needs of families. Gorski's framework focuses on addressing equity issues in school-family partnerships, ensuring that families from different backgrounds, cultures, and socioeconomic positions are supported. This approach goes beyond Epstein's model by considering deeper issues

of power, assumptions about parents, and the broader social and economic contexts that affect PI.

To further explore individual differences, this current study was also informed by Bourdieu's (1977) theory of cultural and economic capital, which suggests that each individual possesses different resources that affect their practices in the social field (see 2.2). Bourdieu identified three types of capital: economic, cultural, and social (cited in Healy 2008). Economic capital refers to material assets and financial resources, while cultural capital encompasses non-financial social assets, such as education, intellect, style of speech, and dress, which promote social mobility beyond economic means (cited in Healy 2008). Social capital involves the networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively (cited in Healy 2008).

These ideas were developed and adapted by Lareau (1988) in her examination of parenting practices. Lareau introduced the concept of 'concerted cultivation', a parenting style commonly practised by middle-class families, which involves actively fostering and assessing a child's talents, opinions, and skills through organised activities and continuous PI (Lareau 2002, p. 748). This approach contrasts with the 'accomplishment of natural growth' observed in working-class and lower-class families, where children have more unstructured time and are given the independence to develop on their own (cited in Siraj-Blatchford 2010, p. 473).

Lareau's research (2002) highlights that concerted cultivation can lead to advantages in educational outcomes, as children from middle-class families often develop a sense of entitlement and confidence when interacting with social institutions. These children are more likely to succeed academically and professionally due to their familiarity with the norms and expectations of educational and professional environments (Lareau 2002). However, this approach has also been criticised for potentially leading to higher levels of stress and less creativity in children (Gauthier et al. 2004).

By integrating Bourdieu's and Lareau's theories, this study aimed to understand how different forms of capital and parenting practices influence parents' and educators' perceptions and practices of PI. These framings make it possible to consider the broader

social and economic contexts that shape these practices and their implications for educational equity.

Moreover, this study also drew on Goodall's (2014; 2022a) work, consistent with a holistic approach to education that focuses on the development of the whole student by taking into consideration cognitive, social, emotional, and spiritual components. Goodall (2014; 2022a) believes that schools should actively involve parents in meaningful ways, such as encouraging discussion, understanding cultural contexts, and promoting students' well-being. She acknowledges parents as important partners in achieving broader educational goals and emphasises collaboration between parents and teachers to improve students' outcomes.

This study fully acknowledges the value of her work in highlighting the importance of recognising the difference between PI and PE. PI involves parents participating in activities and requirements set by the school, including activities like attending parent–teacher meetings, volunteering at school events, or helping with homework, focusing on parents' physical presence and actions within the school (Goodall and Montgomery 2014). In contrast, PE is a broader concept that emphasises parents' active role in their children's learning and development, both at home and in collaboration with the school (Goodall and Montgomery 2014). These approaches have different levels of efficacy in supporting improved learner outcomes (Goodall 2022a). This study, which set out to scope the current levels of PI (and engagement) for parents in Oman, it aimed to explore all aspects of PI (of which PE was viewed as a subset).

2.6 Evidence and debates in relation to parental involvement (PI)

One of the most difficult challenges is to involve parents positively, especially when they come from different backgrounds with diverse cultures and perspectives regarding learning and education (Baquedano-López et al. 2013). Schools that provide effective support and encourage parents' or family members' engagement are considered the most effective schools in terms of students' academic attainment (Hornby 2011). Hence, schools play an essential role in motivating parents to communicate with teachers to allow students to be best supported to fulfil their potential.

Furthermore, parents' motivation levels are among the most significant reasons for the widely noted association between PI and child attainment (Axford et al. 2019). If parents do not have the will to be involved in their children's learning, PI will never be successful (Axford et al. 2019). If parents believe that their engagement in school is a part of their job, then they will be more likely to adopt this role as part of their day-to-day parenting responsibilities (Harris et al. 2009). Assessing the quality of the relationship between parents and school members can be challenging. However, researchers and policymakers, such as Hallgarten (2000), suggest that a positive partnership between home and school is a key factor in enhancing school efficiency.

The practice of PI in children's learning has been widely acknowledged (Goodall 2017), and there are multiple studies that suggest that PI has many benefits in terms of children's learning outcomes. For instance, PE in education can lead to several considerable outcomes for their children's achievement (Harris et al. 2009). Further, Van Voorhis et al. (2013) study demonstrates positive effects on literacy and improvement in mathematics skills, better school attendance (McConnell and Kubina 2014), and closure of the achievement gap (Goodall 2017).

Regarding school-aged children, two parental behaviours that have positive associations with children's school outcomes are home-school partnership and parental interest in children's academic activities (See and Gorard 2015). Further, Wilder (2013) suggests that PI has a significant impact on the primary level rather than in later grades, which can be because parents are more knowledgeable about subjects at these lower levels, and children at higher levels tend to become more independent. Conversely, the study by Ma et al. (2016) suggests that the learning outcomes with PI for younger children (up to about age nine) are weaker than for older children. This is attributed to young children's inability to articulate their needs to their parents, making it harder for parents to know how to assist them. Nevertheless, Gorard and See (2013) found that the most promising phase for PI is pre-school and preparation for primary school, while they found little evidence of promise for children of later primary age, secondary age, or across phases of schooling.

Hill and Taylor (2004) state that there are two major mechanisms by which parental school involvement promotes achievement, the first one is by increasing social capital and this

appears when parents obtain skills and information through their participation in schools and make them better in assisting their children in schools' activities. The second mechanism is social control, and this occurs when school members and families both work together to build a consensus about appropriate behaviour that can be effectively communicated to children at school and at home at the same time (Hill and Taylor 2004).

The positive impact of PI on academic achievement benefits not only children but also extends to all family members, regardless of their economic, racial, ethnic, or educational backgrounds (Harris et al. 2009). For instance, PI may bring benefits for parents as it may increase their confidence, satisfaction, and interest in their children's education (Hornby 2011; Hornby and Lafaele 2011). Moreover, PI practice can equip parents with both strategies and the confidence that they can positively impact their children's learning (Sarjeant 2020). Additionally, effective PI can benefit teachers by improving relationships with parents, boosting teacher morale through enhanced job satisfaction and well-being, and creating a more positive school environment (Hornby 2011). Further, Hallgarten (2000) indicates that engaging parents in schooling can even lead to great benefits for the whole community.

However, despite all these positive benefits of PI on children's learning, there was less recognition from schools or parents of the activities that are dialogic and support quality verbal interactions between parents and their children in the home (Mercer and Howe 2012). This lack of recognition suggests that schools and parents may not fully appreciate the importance of fostering meaningful conversations and interactions at home, which are crucial for maximising the impact of PI.

Notwithstanding, some studies demonstrate a positive association between greater PI and better academic results for students from kindergarten, primary, and secondary education, especially, if PI is defined as parental expectations for their children's academic achievement (Axford et al. 2019). However, the effectiveness of PI in pre-age and school-age children is often weak, and this is due to some issues with the quality of primary studies and conflicting evidence of effectiveness (Axford et al. 2019).

Additionally, Goodall (2013) states that, to make the practice of PI more effective it must be focused on the children's learning not just the interaction between parents and school

members. As some research has shown that the benefits of PI in schools are relatively minor, the true value is found in parents engaging with their children's learning (Jeynes 2005). As focusing on interactions with schools tends to favour parents who already possess the attitudes, dispositions, self-concepts, and skills that the system expects and rewards (Lareau and Weininger 2003), which is considered as an element of the deficit model. Therefore, Goodall (2022) suggested a framework that aims to support school staff to move away from a deficit model of PE, which avoids a concentration on families coming into school, but rather focuses on the home learning environment.

Goodall (2013) believes that there is no single activity that will increase children's achievement or that can be universally identified as good PE. Further, Goodall (2013) suggests six elements of PE that have been found effective in terms of children's achievement, which are authoritative parenting, learning in the home, beginning engagement with learning early, staying engaged throughout school, holding and passing on high aspirations, and taking an active interest in their children's learning and education; however, these elements all work together or there will be little or no effect or even an adverse effect.

1. Authoritative parenting

Authoritative parents are warm and involved with their children and their lives; also, these parents set clear guidelines and limits for their children and have appropriate expectations depending on the ages of their children (Goodall 2013). Regarding the results of research that contains preschool and secondary school children, they found that children of authoritative parents tend to be more mature, more independent, and more social and achievement-oriented than children of non-authoritative parents (Goodall 2013).

2. Home learning environment (HLE)

This term includes everyday- simple activities at home such as reading to and with children, teaching and singing songs and nursery rhymes, artwork of various kinds, taking children on visits out of the home, and having friends into the home to play, all these can have benefits for even very young children (Goodall 2013). Additionally, HLE is considered one of the most significant ways parents are engaged with their children's learning (Axford et al. 2019). Further, PI in children learning at home has a greater effect

on their learning outcomes than PI in school-based activities (Goodall 2013). Moreover, HLE can reflect the physical home environment and interactions with family members in and around the home (Axford et al. 2019).

Axford et al. (2019) found that aspects of the home learning environment (HLE) during adolescence and middle childhood positively impact secondary school outcomes, such as GCSE performance, and this influence is determined by parents' actions rather than their income, SES, or educational qualifications.

However, even though the positive outcomes of PI in children's learning, particularly within the HLE, are widely acknowledged, evidence shows that interventions aimed at improving attainment and learning outcomes through increased PI have produced mixed results (Ma et al. 2016). For instance, Axford et al. (2019) found that some programmes aimed at increasing PI are ineffective in raising academic attainment because they focus on encouraging parents to work with their children at home without providing direct support or skills training. As a result, even motivated parents from various socioeconomic backgrounds may struggle to effectively help their children improve their skills and academic outcomes.

3. Beginning engagement with learning early

It has been found that involvement in high-quality preschool provision supports children's academic achievement well beyond the preschool years and enhances child development across the board (Goodall 2013).

4. Staying engaged throughout school

PE is designed to help children become independent learners by providing them with the emotional, physical, and intellectual tools they need to learn on their own, however, this development takes time and is typically not fully achieved until the later stages of a child's schooling (Desforges and Abouchaar 2003; Goodall 2013).

5. Holding and passing on high aspirations

Parental aspirations are considered one of the strongest predictors of school grades and beliefs about their capabilities for young people (Yamamoto and Holloway 2010). This

means that if parents value education highly, their children are also more likely to do so (Goodall 2013) and thus more likely to try to achieve (Fan and Williams 2010).

6. Taking an active interest in children's learning and education

Having interest and active involvement in children's school-work is particularly important in helping children make a successful transition to secondary school (Falbo et al. 2001). However, this must not be seen as an isolated set of actions; and must be set within the atmosphere of authoritative parenting and arise out of a dialogue with the child to have the best benefits (Goodall 2013).

In terms of the effectiveness of PI, there have been mixed results based on which aspects of involvement and which educational outcomes have been measured (Domina 2005). To explain these uneven results about the effectiveness of PI, Domina's (2005) study suggests neglecting some considerations: the differential effects of students' age, conceptualising PI and its effects, separating the causes and effects of involvement, and a variety of causal effects.

1. Differential effects of students' age:

This appeared when the previous studies neglected the elementary level, and focused on high and middle levels, in which PI tends to decline. Therefore, the results will not be accurate if it depends on one particular age group.

2. Conceptualising PI and its effects:

The previous researcher involved the different activities as examples of PI. However, they posited that the implications of these activities are narrowly focused on children's cognitive and educational achievements, which will make the results variable because different types of involvement will have different effects on students' cognitive and behavioural achievements.

3. Separating the causes and effects of involvement:

Research that has revealed negative results from applying PI argues that the direction of the causal relationship between participation and educational outcomes is not always clear. This reflects the situation when children face difficulties, and their parents are more likely to be involved with teachers. Conversely, when children are succeeding, their

parents become more relaxed and less involved. This indicates that different causes of involvement have different levels of effects.

4. Variety of causal effects:

Practical research suggested that the efficiency of PI varies due to 'parents' race, ethnicity, and class background', for instance, if the parents are from the middle class, they may get a greater educational reward for their involvement, rather than the poor parents (Harris et al. 2009, p. 15). However, this may actually widen the gap of educational achievements, rather than enhance them.

Additionally, another reason for mixed results on the effectiveness of increasing PI can be found in the key findings of Gorard and See's (2013) study, which reveals that most of the studies with positive outcomes about increasing PI include complex interventions not only PI (e.g. additional classes at school). As a result, this will show the effect of the other interventions with PI that might have an even higher influence on the learners' achievements. Additionally, it is not clear if there is a causal relation between PI intervention and children's attainment; this means it is still vague whether increasing PI has the potential to raise children's attainment (Gorard and See 2013). They also noted a lack of high-quality research establishing a causal link between PI and children's attainment. Consequently, Gorard and See (2013) suggested and asked to invest in high-quality, rigorous research, which showed to what extent PI is effective in raising attainment and other outcomes.

Although evidence from different studies demonstrates the positive consequences of applying PI, some opinions from different policies and research show negative associations with students' outcomes (Domina 2005). Moreover, some negative effects of PI that deemed to stem from parents, schools, and communities taking action when children are at risk of academic failure (Axford et al. 2019). For instance, when the teacher pays more attention to the children whose parents are more involved, it may create a negative impact on children whose parents are not involved (Hallgarten 2000). Therefore, it depends on the teacher's perception to ensure equal attention for all children.

Harris et al. (2009, p. 15) suggest that PI is 'necessary', but it is not 'sufficient' to increase academic achievement in schools. This means that other factors can improve the students' achievements, even if there is less involvement of parents. On the other hand, another concern has risen in the concept of PI, which is excessive parental contributions when parents are over-focused on their children, which has many terms such as 'over-parenting' and 'helicopter parents' and others that have mentioned earlier (2.1.1) (Garst and Gagnon 2015, p. 8).

That was about considering different debates regarding the effectiveness of PI in learning. Next, will be about the term used in this study whether PI or PE.

2.7 Parental involvement (PI) or parental engagement (PE)

Despite the numerous studies that have been conducted on PI, there are still some noticeable difficulties and differences in defining PI (Harris and Goodall 2007). The reasons behind the variations in defining the different types of PI have been revealed in some studies. For instance, Conteh and Kawashima (2008) suggest that the activities have been seen differently by the parents and school. Consequently, PI is a multifaceted concept, as described by Wilder (2013), requiring a deep understanding and recognition by parents, schools, and the community. As such, Hill et al. (2004) defined PI as interactions between parents with their children, which allow the children to benefit from the educational outcomes and future success of the students. These contributions and practices may contain home-based PI, for example, supervision of homework, and support in reading, as well as school-based PI, such as attending the parents' meetings and educational workshops (Hornby 2011).

Further, Harris and Goodall (2007) state that PI was used differently across some previous studies as it meant good parenting at home while other studies took PI to be talking to teachers and link activities at the school, and in some cases, PI includes parents' learning.

Additionally, scholars have identified that the PI is a multidimensional concept that contains a multitude of parental activities regarding children's education, which can be categorised into three types: studies on the impact of family and community involvement

on student achievement; studies on effective strategies to connect schools, families, and communities; and studies on parent and community organising efforts to improve schools (Harris and Goodall 2007).

Moving to the concept of PE, Goodall and Montgomery (2014) differentiate between PI in the school and PE in terms of children's achievement. They distinguish clearly the difference between these two terms. They define PE as more than simply being involved such as parents being included in a school activity or event, e.g. going to a school play or attending a sports event. For PE to occur, they state that there needs to be some feeling of parental ownership and commitment to the joint activity with their child.

Moreover, Harris and Goodall (2007), Goodall and Montgomery (2014), and Goodall (2023) consider PE to be an active and meaningful involvement in children's learning. This learning can take place in many different settings including early learning and childcare settings, schools, the community, through family learning and learning at home. It is important to recognise that PE is a complex and varied concept; what works well evolves as children grow older (Jeynes 2005). Therefore, PE requires greater commitment and ownership of action than PI within educational settings (Goodall and Montgomery 2014).

According to this, and more specifically to Goodall and Montgomery's (2014) study, PE has a broad meaning. According to Barton et al. (2004), the term 'engagement', as opposed to 'involvement', refers to a more global and broader construct, and the process of engagement relates more broadly to parents' experiences and actions both in and out of the school community. Moreover, Goodall (2022) defined PE as a dynamic process that encompasses a network of relationships and actions, influenced by various individuals, circumstances, and events, all shaped by the context in which this engagement occurs. In addition, Goodall and Montgomery (2014) are clear that it is important not to equate PE in children's learning with PE in the school. Many parents, particularly those from ethnic minorities or those facing an economic challenge, find engaging with school difficult, but they are still willing to be involved in their children's learning (Kim 2009).

This thesis uses the term parental involvement (PI) rather than parental engagement (PE). This choice is based on the Omani context, where PI is more commonly understood

and easier to implement, especially in settings with limited existing practice or research. Additionally, in relation to the foundational typology of Epstein (1995), she used the term PI, defining six types of involvement within her framework: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. All these activities are generally initiated by the school and are more straightforward for parents to take part in. However, the concept of PE is also discussed in Epstein's typology, specifically in the broader context of family and community partnership, emphasising a more active and collaborative role for parents in supporting their children's learning and development. As defined by Goodall (2022a), PE involves a deeper, more collaborative relationship between parents and schools, requiring parents to be active partners in the educational process and emphasising a more mutual and proactive partnership.

Therefore, considering these definitions of PI and PE, and given the limited practice and research on this topic in Oman, PI will be the primary focus due to its practicality and feasibility in the Omani context. However, elements of PE will be incorporated when framing research questions and analysing data. This dual approach aims to build a foundation of trust and familiarity between parents and schools, ultimately paving the way for more in-depth PE in the future.

In light of earlier research, which found greater PI related to higher levels of achievement for children particularly in early childhood and elementary school years (Huntsinger and Jose 2009), this study aimed to investigate parents', teachers', and HTs' perceptions of PI in children's learning and search for factors that seem to influence the current practice of PI in the Omani context.

2.8 Parents' and educators' perceptions of parental involvement (PI)

School and home are two different worlds for many learners, but if learners find support and encouragement from parents and teachers, they will feel better and achieve more (Harris et al. 2009). Most parents wish to be involved in their children's learning, and this is even if they do not appear in the school (Kim 2009; Goodall 2013). Therefore, it is important that teachers do not assume that all parents are the same (Goodall 2013). As parents do not perceive PI in the same way, and there are often differences between what is perceived by the school as PE and between the real practice that takes place in the

children's home (Desforges and Abouchaar 2003; Harris and Goodall 2008; Kim 2009; Goodall 2013). Additionally, parents can value and consider some activities as PI, which may not even be recognised or valued by schools (Goodall 2013). Therefore, understanding how both schools and parents perceive PI can help to shape PI levels and can influence the success of implementing PI, which was one of the aims of this study. Further, exploring similarities and differences between these groups towards PI can help to inform policy makers in supporting PI programmes, and can help to avoid some possible conflicts that might arise from having different perceptions of parents and school personnel (Ng 1999; Barge and Loges 2003). Therefore, it will be beneficial to look at some of the previous studies that investigated the perceptions of parents and educators regarding PI.

One example is the study of DePlanty et al. (2007), whose results indicated that parents perceived doing homework as one of the most important elements of PI, and both parents and teachers rated observing classes and volunteering at school as the least important activities, while parent-teacher conferences were the activity that parents were involved in most.

Furthermore, a case study conducted in the UK by Jones and Palikara (2023) showed that almost all parents reported that they frequently engaged in home-based activities such as reading aloud, providing access to educational resources, and discussing their children's learning. While three-quarters of school staff conceptualised PE in relation to participation in school events and relationships with teachers, only one-quarter of school staff described PE in terms of the relationship between parents and their children's learning beyond the school gates. These school-centred conceptions are concerning, as previous studies showed that parents contribute the most to student success by interacting with their learning outside of school (Desforges and Abouchaar 2003; Harris and Goodall 2007). Additionally, Jones and Palikara (2023) found that most school senior leaders believed parents lacked the necessary skills to support learning. These leaders often adopt a deficit model when addressing parents who are not visibly engaged with the school, while parents may perceive that the issues primarily stem from the school itself. Similarly, Herman and Reinke (2017) found teachers' perceptions of PI were based on

the number of interactions between parents and schools, and the teacher's comfort level with parents, which again can be linked to school-centred conceptions.

In the same vein, Lawson's (2003) study indicated that teachers were more likely to be school-centric, focusing their attention on students inside the school setting, while parents tended to be community-centric, focusing their attention on children as members of the community and society.

Additionally, another perception that can be held by parents and educators is the separation of the roles of school and home. This perception adopts an independent model and embodies the theory of 'separate spheres of influence' (Epstein 2010, p. 83). In this model, the teacher is considered responsible for teaching students in school and parents are responsible for their children at home. Supporting this view, a study conducted in the southwestern US by Barge and Loges (2003) investigated parents, teachers, and students' perceptions of PI, and found that parents, students, and teachers all agreed on the importance of monitoring academic progress as a key form of PI. However, academic achievement is only part of PE in children's learning (Goodall 2013).

Further, another study conducted in Hong Kong by Ng (1999) indicated that parents wanted to know about the school and their children's academic progress. However, Ng (1999) found that even though teachers and HTs agreed on the importance of home-school cooperation, they were not welcoming parents to share decision-making power with them.

In terms of communication, Barge and Loges (2003) found that teachers indicated the importance of parents' good communication in which parents take an active role in contacting the teachers and not the opposite. However, Barge and Loges (2003) found that some parents perceived their active role in school as disrespectful and a sign of a lack of confidence in the school itself. Similarly, Epstein (2018) indicated that parents tended to have a traditional belief that the teacher dominates the relationship between home and school, as the teachers would contact them if their child was struggling.

Other studies (Miretzky 2004; Zhou 2014) revealed that even though both parents and teachers perceived that PI and family, and community support affect children's learning

progress, they had significant differences regarding PI. As parents tended to report more PI than teachers did, however, parents did not appear to think high expectations and decision-making for children's education linked with children's academic success as much as teachers did. As found in Baker's (1997) study, teachers indicated that parental expectations should be the first form of PI. The teachers tied high expectations of how parents should relate to their children.

Moreover, Herrell (2011) found that there were no statistically significant differences in teachers' opinions of effective parental participation across age, education level, teaching experience, or gender. However, the data revealed considerable disparities in parents' opinions of successful parental participation across age, education level, gender, and ethnicity. This is similar to Smith's (2016) findings that teacher perceptions of the meaning of PI can differ from the perspective of parents but remain consistent independent of their age, education level, teaching experience, or gender.

Throughout previous studies, discrepancies between the views of parents, teachers, and HTs concerning their relationships with each other have been recognised. Lewis-Durham and Saastamoinen (2022) argue that school leaders sometimes unintentionally adopt negative views about parents, which can harm efforts to build strong communities. Furthermore, it should be mentioned that the level of PI and participation in education varies depending on the type of activity and other characteristics. Thus, to improve the level of PI, it can be beneficial to investigate the factors and barriers that can affect parents' and educators' practices and perceptions of PI (Why they have different practices and perceptions) in the coming second chapter of the literature review.

Chapter 3: Literature Review 2

This chapter will start by investigating factors that can affect parents' and educators' practices and perceptions of PI, while considering the barriers and facilitators of effective PI practice. Then, an overview of the Omani context will be presented, focusing on parenting and PI practices. Additionally, the chapter will consider the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education.

3.1 Factors influencing parental involvement (PI)

Previous studies have identified several elements that influence the quality of PI, which can be divided into three categories: parent-related, school-related, and student-related factors (Jafarov 2015).

3.1.1 Parent-related factors

Studies have found that parent-related factors are diverse, encompassing socioeconomic, cultural, and personal issues (LaRocque et al. 2011; Benner et al. 2016). Socioeconomic status (SES) can be one of the elements that predict the level of PI (Payne 2006). Additionally, SES relates to the resources in the home that refer to parental income, parental occupation, and parental education, which can hinder or foster PI in children's education and development.

For instance, Goodall and Voorhaus (2011) found that middle-class families tend to have culturally supportive social networks and usually understand the school process better than lower-class parents, who are often disengaged from school participation. Furthermore, middle-class parents are more likely to engage with teachers as they perceive teachers as equals and feel confident in the school environment due to their shared social capital (Harris and Goodall 2008). However, some research indicates that what parents do with their children is far more significant than who they are (Dearing et al. 2006; Dermott 2012). According to Domina's (2005) study, parents with low SES may be more effective than parents with high SES. It is likely that SES does not simplistically determine the level of PI but rather mediates it through material deprivation and patterns

of parental behaviour patterns (Sacker et al. 2002). This can be linked to the previous section in relation to the SES of parents and educational disadvantage (2.2).

Harris and Goodall (2008) found that parents, regardless of their income, are interested in their children's learning, even when they face challenges in engaging with schools. Harris and Goodall (2008) found that even those who encounter hurdles to engaging with schools are interested in their children's learning. However, low-income families find it difficult to attend school at certain times due to a lack of childcare and transportation (Harris and Goodall 2008) and frequently feel stigmatised by teachers (Wilson and McGuire 2021). Additionally, parents who are struggling financially may prioritise their work environment over their children's education because they need money (Rached 2015). Additionally, another study by (Newman and Chin 2003) found that low-income parents may have trouble finding spare time to devote to their children's educational needs. Moreover, Schoon's (2006) findings demonstrated that parents with fewer financial resources have lower expectations for their children. However, all these considerations can fall into the deficit model that considers poor parents (who experience poverty) are also poor parents (who did not meet or attain the anticipated standard of parenting) (Goodall 2019).

Another variable related to SES is families' demographic residential area, whether rural or urban. According to Sun et al. (1997), parents who live in urban areas communicate and participate in school activities more than those in other communities, which can be attributed to parents' social and demographic characteristics. Research by Shao et al. (2022) found that parents in developed areas tend to have generally high levels of SES and education.

However, other studies have shown that families in rural areas are more involved in school environments. This can be linked to the notion of community attachment (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974), where there is a stronger sense of community and more personal relationships between people, alongside the presence of traditional values (Prater et al. 1997). As a result, parents in rural areas organise and promote community-wide activities that go beyond simply sharing opinions and supporting PI in their children's education (Ma et al. 2014). Regarding parents' educational level, several studies have claimed this

variable affects parents' level of skills and knowledge to support their children in school-work or contribute to discussions when they attend parent-teacher meetings (Peña 2000; Lee and Bowen 2006; Bæck 2010). Additionally, Davis-Kean (2005) suggested that parents' schooling can affect how they manage their home environment and how they interact with their children to enhance academic achievement. Parents with low literacy might likely feel less confident in supporting their children in some activities like reading and writing (Williams et al. 2002). To promote their children's learning, parents should have pedagogical knowledge and abilities to understand the rationale for engaging in this practice (Shulman 2013).

In relation to work commitments and family status, some parents might find it challenging to be available during working hours, requiring schools to seek alternate means of engaging with parents (Grolnick et al. 1997). Therefore, parents' work can be one of the major barriers to PI (Hornby and Lafaele 2011). Moreover, parents' employment conditions (e.g. working long hours) can influence their availability in school matters (Ludicke and Kortman 2012). Additionally, by the end of the day, parents might become too tired to help their children with their school-work (Green et al. 2007). Dual-family employment can also be one of the reasons for insufficient parental support (Shove et al. 2012). As Harris et al. (2009) found, most mothers with school-aged children are employed, which is considered a barrier to PI. However, working parents can support their children's learning even if they have a busy schedule, for instance through providing their children with private tuition or other extra-curricular activities after school. This is potentially related to concerted cultivation as a parenting approach, which, as highlighted by Lareau (2002), is mostly adopted by middle-class parents when the resources are available.

Moving to parents' beliefs and aspirations, several studies have found that parents' aspiration is one of the elements that affects the level and type of PI in children's learning (Catsambis 2001; Georgiou and Tourva 2007). Parents' thoughts and attitudes concerning themselves as parents and their beliefs about their role in their children's learning influence their participation in their children's educational process (Georgiou and Tourva 2007). Further, some studies found that parental aspirations can be one of the

great indicators of students' grades and their self-esteem (Catsambis 2001). When parents value education, their children are more likely to be the same (Harris and Goodall 2007). However, sometimes parents strongly avoid contacting schools, which could be due to having a negative experience, psychological problems, or difficulties dealing with the school environment (Harris et al. 2009).

An association has also been identified between parents' level of involvement and gender. A study in Turkey found that fathers are more involved with male teachers and less involved when the teacher is female (Unal and Unal 2010).

3.1.2 School and teacher-related factors

Barriers to PI in their children's learning are not exclusively tied to parents, as school-related variables can occasionally cause problems (Hornby and Lafaele 2011). For instance, a school's culture plays a key role if it is more autocratic in its management there will be less practice of PI (Hornby 2000). This becomes obvious when the school believes that there is not much need for the parents to get involved because of its high quality of teaching or because they do not want to consume lots of time and effort from parents.

Further, schools' location can be one of the factors that affect parents' level of involvement in schooling. When the school is in the middle of a residential area, it can facilitate more direct communication between parents and the school, which can help establish more PI by offering an easy means of communication (Hornby and Lafaele 2011).

Teachers' negative impression of parents is a factor that can reduce PI (Alobaid 2018). For instance, educators have been found to view parents' lack of attendance as evidence that they are uncaring (Sarjeant 2020), which appears to draw on a deficiency perception of parents as being disinterested and poorly equipped to help their children's learning at home. These misconceptions about parents' abilities and skills may result in a lack of engagement with some parents, neglecting that each parent has unique social and cultural capital (Epstein 2018). As Hornby and Lafaele (2011) highlighted teacher defensiveness or authoritative dispositions as factors impeding effective PI. This behaviour typically represents teachers as more educated than parents, which again

might affect parents' level of motivation to be involved in the learning process and to activate their roles in their children's learning.

Moreover, Ludicke and Kortman (2012) found that teachers' busy schedules and multifaceted responsibilities may reduce their time for active engagement with parents. This highlights the need for school-wide policies to support collaboration between parents and schools (Goodall 2022b). These challenges can be related to teachers' time poverty due to their numerous job responsibilities, unclear roles, and insufficient support from schools for PI.

Furthermore, a lack of trust between parents and schools can be a barrier to successful collaboration between parents and educators, emphasising the significance of communication in this relationship (Dunsmuir et al. 2004). Given all these challenges, scholars provide valuable insights and evidence supporting the need for initial training courses for educators on PI (Henderson and Mapp 2002; Hornby 2011; Mandarakas 2014). It is challenging to expect teachers who are not trained in this area to form effective partnerships with parents (Goodall 2022b).

3.1.3 Student-related factors

Students play a vital role in successful school, family, and community involvement; if they do not fulfil their responsibilities, it can hinder the effectiveness of this partnership (Epstein 1995). It is often the students' responsibility to deliver information and communicate with their parents about school programmes, activities, and events; teachers in high-engagement programmes assist children in understanding their position and the significance of actively participating in family, school, and community collaboration (Epstein 1995).

Additionally, when both students and teachers expect parents to be involved in this process, it can be a factor in determining the effectiveness of the learning process; however, a student might resent their parents' participation if they believe it interferes with their academic freedom (Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2001).

Another factor is students' age, which significantly influences parental participation, with higher involvement for younger children that decreases as they seek more independence

during adolescence, however, older students may still seek PI, and incorrect assumptions can reduce necessary engagement (Hornby and Lafaele 2011).

Additionally, children's performance can be another factor that affects PI. Generally, parents are especially communicative with schools if their child has disabilities or learning difficulties, which can give rise to disagreements between school and parents (Hill and Tyson 2009; Hornby and Lafaele 2011). For many parents, it is more comfortable and a pleasure to get involved if they have a child who is doing well in school. However, if parents consider that their child is gifted and the teacher has another view about it, this can raise a conflict between teachers and parents, which reduces parental confidence and decreases the level of PI (Hornby and Lafaele 2011).

Another factor linked to children's behaviour is the relationship between challenging behaviour and PI. As behavioural problems increase, PI tends to decrease. This suggests that parents may be less willing to visit the school to avoid hearing negative feedback (Hornby and Lafaele 2011). Having addressed some of the factors that can affect parents' and educators' perceptions and practice of PI, the next section discusses some of the facilitators of PI in children's learning.

3.2 Facilitators of effective parental participation in children's learning

There is no single approach to involving families in their children's learning. Generally, effective family-school engagement methods adjust programmes to match the individual needs and interests of families, learners, and schools (Aronson 1996). There are many ways to support PI, as suggested by previous studies, related to parents and school members.

In terms of parents, Avvisati et al. (2010) found that the parents' level of involvement increased when there were clear policy goals and parents' roles. Parents need to understand how they should participate in their children's education. Additionally, families that believe their schools honour and respect their contributions are more likely to participate in school programmes (Dyches et al. 2011).

However, even if parents want to be active in school programmes, they often fail because no one shows them how to support their children's learning (Epstein and Jansorn 2004).

This can be addressed by educating parents about parenting skills and supporting their children's education; collaborative educational programmes can change parents' beliefs and self-efficacy, leading to improved interactions with their children (Williams et al. 2017).

Parents may find ways to overcome any resource obstacles if directly invited by teachers, since such invitations mediate the relationship between parent resources and PI (Anderson and Minke 2007), or if parents value their role in education and have high self-efficacy (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler 1997).

Moving to other factors related to teachers, one of the key aspects to making PI work is teachers' attitudes. If teachers have a positive attitude toward working with parents, this will help to build a successful relationship with families (Hornby 2000). Indeed, developing a strong bond between parents and teachers is crucial for supporting many parents in engaging in their children's education most beneficially (Green et al. 2007). However, this requires time and effort from teachers, is hard to achieve and may make PI more challenging (Hornby 2000).

According to Hornby and Witte (2010), for government initiatives on PI to be successful, there must be well-informed teaching staff with the necessary abilities to engage parents. Therefore, high-quality continuing professional development (CPD) should be made available to school-based staff, so they can feel prepared to work well with the families in schools where they are placed (Epstein 2018). Additionally, professional discussions among other teachers, besides training courses, workshops, and lectures, are among the significant forms of development for teachers (Goodall et al. 2005; Harris et al. 2006). All these elements can raise awareness of the importance of PI in children's learning; however, they require effort, time, funding, and curriculum space.

Moving to the school setting, collaboration between the school and family regarding PI has been found to enable positive academic and mental health outcomes (Ackley and Cullen 2010; Suarez-Orozco et al. 2010). However, there is evidence that schools and parents have different beliefs regarding PI (Landeros 2010; Anastasiou and Papagianni 2020), which implies the need for cautious navigation of these distinctions to facilitate collaboration in PI. Thus, schools need to respond positively to families' unique cultural resources, rather than attempting to transmit school knowledge to them (Cairney 2000).

Researchers have noted that while schools can quickly gain knowledge about effective PI practices, implementing these changes in practice can take much longer (Latunde 2016). This discrepancy highlights the challenge of translating knowledge into action within the school setting. Schools must have clear policies and well-established procedures to deal with parents that will differ from one school to another (Hornby 2000). These policies can be developed collaboratively by schools and parents to make them more effective, because each school has unique requirements based on its specific circumstances.

Furthermore, schools need to establish a welcoming environment in which the school staff are respectful and responsive to parents (Wherry 2009). As argued in the literature, an environment of mutual respect and trust can help foster strong partnerships and successful parental participation (Deslandes et al. 2015). Consequently, this school environment may motivate parents to participate, particularly when the school provides opportunities for them to showcase their skills and areas of expertise, empowering them to contribute to the decision-making process (Knopf and Swick 2008). Additionally, school leaders play a major role in activating PI in a supportive way, by displaying enthusiasm and having a sufficient ability to build trust and understanding between parents and schools (Riley 2009).

Other suggested motivational factors that can be provided by the school are the use of bulletin boards, newsletters to parents, the school's website, school tours, open days, and phone calls to inform family members of events and programmes (Gu 2017). Additionally, home visits can be a promising strategy to promote home–school relationships. These are believed by teachers to improve communication, help learn more about the students and gain a better understanding of how a child's home affects his/her academic learning (Meyer and Mann 2006). Additionally, it might be advantageous to have parent involvement coordinators in schools to lead and manage PI activities and programmes throughout the system to overcome obstacles between the home and school (Epstein 2001).

As this study sought to investigate PI in schooling in Oman, the next section introduces an overview of Oman in general and considers PI in schooling.

3.3 Background information on the Sultanate of Oman

This section provides an overview of Oman in terms of its geography, demography, politics, economic and contemporary developments in education. Moreover, it deals with educational reforms with its philosophy and policy. Then, there will be a discussion about what has been done around PI in schooling more particularly in the Omani context.

The Sultanate of Oman is a thriving youthful developing country that was led by the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said from 1970 until his death on January 10th, 2020. The late Sultan Qaboos is the founder of Oman's modern state and renaissance, and he was the longest-serving leader in the Middle East and Arab world at the time of his death (Ministry of Information 2020).

Haitham bin Tariq, who succeeded his cousin Qaboos bin Said as the Sultan of Oman on 11 January 2020 and previously served as Minister of Heritage and Culture has committed to continuing his predecessor's peaceful policies while prioritising the modernisation of the education system, science, and development (Education Council 2024). He places a special emphasis on children, highlighting their crucial role in Oman's future, which includes fostering innovation and supporting research to create a progressive society (Education Council 2024). Additionally, Sultan Haitham introduces the concept of empowering children, a new approach in Oman's educational policy, aimed at providing them with the necessary tools, skills, and opportunities to succeed and contribute to the country's development (Education Council 2024).

3.3.1 Geography

The Sultanate of Oman is located in the south-eastern part of the Arab semi-peninsula, between latitudes 16.40 and 26.30 and longitudes 51.50 and 59.40, with its shore extending from Hormoz in the north to the Yemen Republic in the south, opening to three seas: the Arab Gulf, Oman Gulf, and Arab Sea (Ministry of Education 2020). Bordered by the UAE and Saudi Arabia in the west, the Republic of Yemen in the south, Hormoz Bay in the north, and the Arab Sea in the east, this location has given Oman its historical role in connecting Arab Gulf states with these countries by land, sea, or air, making it the third

largest country in the Arab Peninsula with an area of about 309,500 km² (Ministry of Education 2020).

Moreover, Oman is divided into 11 governorates, each of which has its own distinctive administrative, geographical, and economic significance and has a total of 61 wilayats (districts), this after Royal Decree 114/2011 was initially promulgated on 26 October 2011 (Ministry of Information 2019).

3.3.2 Demography

The estimated population of Oman is 5,281,538 as of Monday, August 19, 2024, based on Worldometer elaboration of the latest United Nations data. Oman's population equals 0.07% of the world population (Worldometers 2024).

Oman's official language is Arabic, and it is used in pre-tertiary education, while English, widely spoken as a second language, is used in post-secondary education; other languages spoken include Jabali and Mahri (in the south), Swahili (by Omani people and African immigrants), Balochi (in Muscat and northern coastal areas), and Urdu (Al-Ghatrifi 2016). Islam is Oman's official religion, among the spread of other religions like Christianity and Buddhism (Omanuna 2024).

3.3.3 Politics

The politics of Oman operate within an absolute monarchy, where the Sultan serves as both head of state and head of government, with the Albu Saidi dynasty ruling since the sixteenth century (Britannica 2020). Moreover, Oman is one of the six Gulf Council Cooperation Countries (GCC) (Oman, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar) formed in 1981 to achieve unity (Britannica 2020). The Islamic principle of shura (consultation) plays an important role, where the Shura Council has a strong influence in the decision-making process in Oman (Worrall 2012). The main ministries are health, economy, foreign affairs, and education. The latter has two ministers, one responsible for pre-university education and the other for higher education (Worrall 2012).

With its unique geographical location as a gateway to the Arab world from the south, it plays a vital role in shaping both the political and commercial sustainability of the region.

Its main political principle of not interfering with other countries' internal affairs (Ministry of Information 2015) enables it to form strong relationships with nations both within the region and beyond.

3.3.4 Economy

It is a country dependent on oil, considered a middle-income country compared with the neighbouring Arab Gulf countries (Al'Abri 2015). However, the oil price varies and results in some obstacles, therefore; Oman has adopted an economic policy called 'diversification of income', which mainly intends to curtail an over-reliance on oil (AlMaamari 2009). This strategy of diversification includes trade liberalisation and industrialisation, privatisation, and promotion of foreign investment (AlMaamari 2009). Furthermore, Oman has also tried to develop tourism as it has a significant impact in terms of the economy. Oman has been a popular destination for tourists for example, (Dhofar) the southern Governorate, because of its nature and temperate climate that created by the Khareef monsoon from June to early September; other regions such as Bahla, Nizwa, Ibri, and Sohar that attract tourists for their old forts, castles and traditional markets (Al Ghatrifi 2016).

Other sources of economy in Oman are agriculture and fisheries, especially in (Al Dakhilya Governorate) and the Batinah coast, which are very rich growing areas (Al Ghatrifi 2016). Additionally, Oman has tried to enhance the industry's contribution to the national economy by joining the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2000 to attract private foreign investment and integrate its economy into world markets (AlMaamari 2009).

Since the declaration of the Vision of Oman's Economy 2020, which considers education as a pathway and turning point for desirable sustainable development, educational reform has become one of the priorities in developing the Omani system in education (Issan and Gomaa 2010).

In summary, all these aspects Oman (e.g. geographical, economic, and others) have influenced the educational development in Oman since 1970. These political and social factors are important because they outline the vision moving forward. For instance, one

of the key visions is to have a developed environment that attracts talent in the labour market, which is required to have a strong source of knowledge that can be found in the educational field. Therefore, the coming section will be talking about educational reform in Oman to explore more about the main and basic changes that occurred in the educational field in Oman since 1970.

3.4 History of education and reform in Oman

Regarding the educational situation in Oman, before 1930, education was restricted to Islamic studies taught in mosques and Quranic schools, focusing on the principles of Islam, Arabic language, and mathematics, until this traditional system moved to a more formal system in 1930 (Nasser 2019). The schools initially offered multiple subjects with limited content and were unstructured, except for three boys-only schools with 909 students; however, a shift to an effective level of education occurred in 1970 after the late Sultan Qaboos became the ruler of Oman (Al-Ghassani 2010).

By 1970, Oman had started to view modernisation in all its systems, and related to this development, the Omani government established the first five-year plan, which aims to support social welfare and economic growth and is indicative of Oman's top-down, country-centric mode of governance (Al'Abri 2015). From that time, the Omani government took the responsibility to provide all the essential services for the Omani citizens, and education is one of these services.

As in many countries, the education system in Oman is divided into three levels: preschool, obligatory school, and higher education. Pre-schooling is only offered in private schools and is supervised by the Ministry of Education. Obligatory education spans 12 years of formal study, during which the Ministry of Education manages public schools and supervises private schools, and the Ministry of Manpower oversees vocational training for grades 10 to 12. Higher education consists of various public institutes managed by governmental organisations and private institutes, supervised by the Ministry of Higher Education (Al-Ghassani 2010).

According to the educational reform that Oman had since 1970, there were two main periods: the first period, from 1970 to 1998, when the Ministry of Education focused on

spreading access to education through the General Education System (GES) and then mainstream education; and the second period, from 1998 to 2007, which saw attentive efforts to improve the quality of education with the first establishment of the Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) (Nasser 2019). Then followed by the Post Basic Education Curriculum (PBEC), with a curriculum designed for secondary-level education (grades 11 and 12) (AlMaamari 2009). The following figure illustrates the basic stages of the development of Education in Oman, which is divided into two phases (before 1970 and after 1970).

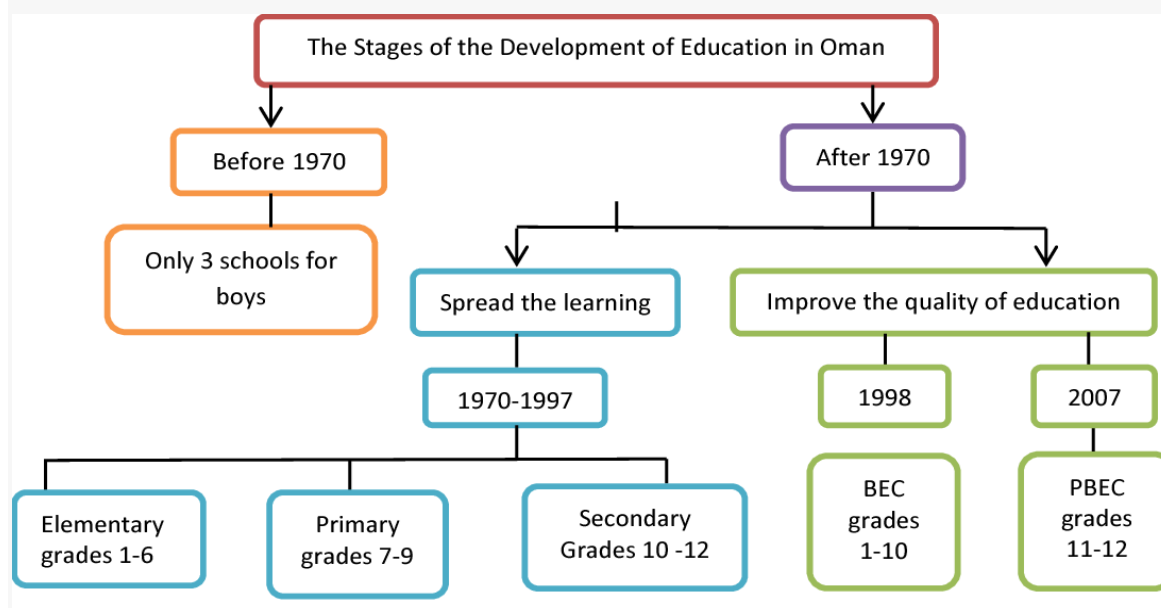


Figure 1: The development stages of school education in Oman (Adapted from Al Najar 2016).

3.4.1 General Education System (GES)

The GES consisted of three stages: the elementary stage from grade 1 until grade 6 (ages 6 to 11 years); the primary stage from grades 7 to 9 (ages 12 to 14); and the secondary stage from grade 10 to grade 12 (ages 15 to 17 years), with the first enrolment in the GES starting at the age of five years and ten months, while it was five years and four months in private schools (Al Najar 2016).

In the first three stages of the GES, the school year consisted of 160 days divided into two 16-week semesters, with the educational system primarily using traditional methods and activities, few student-centred activities, and assessments, mostly limited to tests

evaluating the minimum mental capacity of students (Al Najar 2016). Therefore, some studies revealed weaknesses in the GES, including deficiencies in English language, personal, communication, and study skills, as well as a gap between secondary education knowledge and higher education requirements (Al Najar 2016). To address these issues, the Ministry of Education created the Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) and Post Basic Education Curriculum (PBEC).

3.4.2 Basic Education Curriculum (BEC)

The BEC is divided into two cycles: the first cycle (Cycle One) covers grades 1 to 4 (ages 6 to 9 years), and the second cycle (Cycle Two) spans grades 5 to 10 (ages 10 to 15 years), after which students transition to the PBEC, a two-year programme designed to further develop basic skills for career planning and employment (Issan and Gomaa 2010). It is based on the Omani Philosophy of Education principles, which allows students to continue developing entrepreneurship skills that are tailored to address national and international expectations (Al-Ghassani 2010).

The shift from the GES to the BEC brought significant changes, such as mixed-gender classes for grades 1 to 4 and the hiring of women as teachers and directors, to enhance psychological and emotional bonds between children and teachers (Al Najar 2016). In the second cycle of the BEC and PBEC (grades 11 and 12), schools are single-sex, with boys taught by male staff and girls by female staff, but they all follow the same regulations, curriculum, educational materials, and textbooks prepared by the Ministry of Education (Shabibi and Silvennoinen 2018).

Moreover, there were noticeable changes made to the curriculum and the evaluation method that all focus on the student's needs and the future acquired skills. As a result, there was a need for additional time to achieve all this. Therefore, the BEC increased the number of annual school days to 180 and extended school days from four to over seven hours, but despite these changes, there are still weaknesses in Arabic and English language skills due to content and teaching methods (Al Najar 2016).

3.4.3 Post Basic Education (PBEC)

A secondary education curriculum was developed for grades 11 and 12 to provide students with various career options, aligning with national educational goals, whether graduates pursue a university education, professional training programmes, or enter the labour market (Al Najar 2016). In summary, the table in (Appendix A1) highlights some similarities and differences between the two educational systems (GES and BCE-PBCE). The next section will discuss the educational philosophy and policy in Oman.

3.5 The philosophy and policy of education in Oman

The first philosophy of education document, issued in 1978, was updated by the Ministry of Education in 2003 and 2009 during the sixth and seventh five-year plans to guide educational work in the state (Council 2017). Additionally, the educational philosophy aims to foster scientific thinking skills among Omani nationals, enabling them to contribute to sustainable development across various sectors of Omani society (Council 2017). Furthermore, this philosophy is based on ten main sources, which are: the Islamic Religion, the Thoughts of His Majesty the Sultan, the Basic Statute of the State, Omani Civilisation, Omani Society, The Future Vision of the State, Modern Educational Thought, Characteristics of Learners, International Conventions and Charters, Contemporary International Issues (Council 2017).

The Omani Philosophy of Education encompasses various principles, including holistic individual development, fostering national identity and citizenship, promoting ethical values and behaviours, emphasising human rights and responsibilities, encouraging consultation 'Al Shura', advocating for sustainable development, recognising education as a national responsibility and partnership, ensuring high-quality education for all, embracing knowledge and technology, fostering research and innovation, promoting entrepreneurship and initiatives, striving for peace and mutual understanding, and supporting lifelong learning (Kooli 2019).

In relation to the principle of education as a national responsibility and partnership, it emphasises that education is a collective societal duty involving families, schools, mosques, media, the private sector, and other entities, with collaboration fostering

educational goals, supporting families, promoting societal responsibility, and encouraging partnerships (Council 2017). Recognising the vital role of families and society in education is a key objective of Oman's educational philosophy, serving as a cornerstone and guiding principle for the development of education in the Sultanate (Council 2017). Therefore, based on this specific principle, it is worthwhile exploring the partnership between education and society in general and more specifically in the family.

That was about the philosophy of education in Oman. Regarding the Vision of Oman 2020, many policies were presented to achieve educational objectives and aims. The primary policy chosen is to change the old general educational system to (BEC) and (PBEC). This essential policy is at the top of other approved educational policies, which are:

- Early Education Focus: Strengthen education from the primary stage.
- Infrastructure and Curriculum Development: Develop the international education system with necessary resources, competent teachers, and suitable curricula.
- Optimising Secondary Education: Find the best formula for secondary education that aligns with future requirements.
- Extended School Day: Cancel evening periods to increase daytime learning hours.
- Customised Study Plans: Review study plans to enhance teaching in science, mathematics, humanities, and social sciences based on student preferences and abilities.
- Emphasis on Scientific Majors: Adjust curriculums to prioritise scientific subjects over literary ones.
- Computer Literacy: Introduce computer education as a core subject, especially at the secondary level.
- Support Staff: Provide necessary resources like teachers, mentors, secretaries, libraries, and social workers.
- Textbook Streamlining: Create annual textbooks to streamline learning materials.
- Teacher Well-Being: Improve teacher conditions.
- Early English Instruction: Start teaching English language subjects from the first primary class.
- Professional Development: Train educational workers through workshops and courses.

- Funding and Private Sector Involvement: Allocate funding for increased student numbers and encourage private sector support.
- Scholarships: Support students by offering scholarships based on established criteria (Education Council 2024).

While Oman's educational policies emphasise the right to basic education for all children and guarantee high-quality education, there appears to be a gap in explicitly addressing the role of parents or families in their children's education. Therefore, it could be beneficial to look closely at another Gulf country's policy recommendation (e.g. Dubai) as it is Oman's regional neighbour.

Given the increasing emphasis on PI in education globally, along with challenges related to parental impact on education, Dubai's educational policy includes these planned recommendations:

1. Parental Awareness: Increase awareness of parents' roles.
2. Parental Engagement (PE): Encourage active PI in their children's education.
3. School Engagement: Promote stronger engagement between schools and parents.
4. Information Access: Improve access to information about school quality.
5. Taskforce Leadership: Establish an intergovernmental taskforce to advocate for parents' interests in schools (Al Sumaiti 2012).

The next section focuses on parenting roles in Arab countries and PI in Oman.

3.6 Parenting roles in Arab countries

Parents are known to be the first teachers of their children, continuing to influence their learning and development throughout their lifetime by providing encouragement, support, and access to activities that enable the child to master key developmental tasks (Ceka and Murati 2016). However, families face significant and challenging responsibilities, including health care, physical development, overall education, fostering intellectual interests, instilling moral values, and promoting positive cultural interactions within the family and society (Ceka and Murati 2016).

In the context of Arab parents' roles, they remain actively involved in their children's lives regardless of age or educational level, as Islamic Arab tradition emphasises parental responsibility and often requires their approval for both academic and non-academic decisions, with the extended family also playing a significant role in major decisions concerning the child (Al-Barwani et al. 2012).

Despite the significant roles parents play in their children's lives in the Arab world, their influence in education remains limited due to challenges in the partnership between schools, families, and communities, necessitating a focus on enhancing this partnership and establishing localised family education networks (Nasser 2018).

3.6.1 Parental involvement (PI) in Oman

Lately, much attention has been given globally to family and PI, as researchers have shown that PI impacts the cognitive and social development of children (Driessen et al. 2005). The positive effects of PI on academic students' results are not only acknowledged by school HTs and teachers but also by policy makers who are engaged in new initiatives and educational reform in terms of parents' involvement (Wilder 2013). While family involvement positively impacts children's education, there are diverse opinions on what constitutes effective involvement and how it should be implemented (Van Voorhis et al. 2013). Despite the potential benefits highlighted in Western studies, applying these findings to the Arab educational context remains challenging due to differing expectations between Arab and Western parents regarding their children's independence and varying family decisions on involvement (Al-Barwani et al. 2012).

Therefore, while it is beneficial to conduct studies on PI in schooling in Arabic countries, only a handful of research has been done in this field. For instance, Moosa et al. (2001) examined teachers' perceptions of Arab American parents' involvement in elementary schools in the United States. The study aimed to address negative cultural stereotypes held by teachers about Arab parents and their misconceptions regarding obstacles that hinder Arab PI. Interestingly, Arab teachers who had spent many years in the US shared similar views on Arab parent involvement. The study highlighted the importance of effective interaction between teachers, students, and parents, emphasising that parents can better support their children with sufficient guidance from schools.

In Saudi Arabia, Al-Sharari and Al-Jamal (2013) found that using computers to teach English as a Second Language (ESL) along with PI was effective in improving students' English learning compared to traditional methods without computers and PI.

Moving away from the Arabic context and focusing on PI in schooling in Oman, which is not significantly different in terms of the number of studies. Omani schools have actively encouraged open communication channels with parents, addressing educational matters related to achievement, behaviour, and other aspects, a practice well-received by Omani parents who maintain a strong tradition of PI in elementary schools (Al-Barwani et al. 2012).

Despite these aspects, there are some critiques about PI practice in children's learning that have been found in a limited number of studies in the Omani context. As Al-Harrasi and Al-Mahrooqi (2014) stated, measuring PI in Omani society remains challenging due to limited research. Some parents perceive that decisions about their children's education should rest solely with knowledge authorities and teachers. This underscores the need for further exploration and understanding of PI in the Omani context. Additionally, some parents do not fully recognise the important role of their involvement (Al-Harrasi and Al-Mahrooqi 2014).

Al-Harrasi and Al-Mahrooqi's (2014) study examined Omani parents' involvement in their children's education, finding that parents primarily help with homework and discuss school matters at home. Unlike global trends, reasons such as large families, feeling unqualified, and long work hours do not hinder PI in Oman. This may be due to factors such as strong extended family support, cultural emphasis on education, flexible work culture, and supportive school communities.

Additionally, Al-Qaryouti and Kilani (2013) investigated PI in reading and writing among Omani parents, focusing on early childhood education. Their findings revealed that Omani mothers and fathers are equally engaged in their children's literacy development, regardless of sibling order or gender. Interestingly, parents with higher educational levels showed more involvement, while middle-class income parents were especially enthusiastic, exceeding both lower and higher-income groups.

Another study by Al-Barwani et al. (2012) explored Omani parents' perceptions and students' attitudes toward PI, but in higher education. Interestingly, factors such as parents' gender, education level, number of children, and SES did not significantly impact their beliefs about the importance of involvement.

Other studies have explored PI from the students' perspective. The first study aimed to identify two dimensions of academic PI as perceived by grade 10 students in Oman and examined their attitudes toward learning: home-based involvement and school-based involvement. It also sought to determine which dimensions were associated with academic achievement and attitudes toward learning. The study highlighted that students who perceived higher levels of PI at home tended to have better academic outcomes and more positive attitudes toward learning (Al-Riyami 2018).

The second study by Al-Said and Shabib (2018) focused on parental academic involvement, considering both fatherhood and motherhood. It compared secondary students (grade 10) with college students (second year), revealing specific factors related to parental academic involvement, which vary by type (fatherhood-motherhood) and educational stage (secondary-university). Thus, the impact of parenthood and age varies across different contexts.

Considering the existing studies and their findings, further exploration of PI in schooling is warranted. The current study aims to investigate both parents' and educators' perceptions of PI within the Omani context. Therefore, this research represents the first of its kind in Oman, addressing the scarcity of studies in this area. Given the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on educational systems, including Omani schools, understanding how PI practices have adapted during this time is crucial. The next section will therefore present COVID-19 in general and its impact on education, including parents' and educators' perceptions and practices of PI.

3.7 The COVID-19 pandemic

Everything has changed since the coronavirus started to spread around the world. The coronavirus pandemic affected the normal way of everyone's life and changed political, economic, social, educational, and domestic systems everywhere (Kolak et al. 2021).

Moreover, the pandemic of COVID-19 did not end at the national borders and has affected people all around the world regardless of their level of education, nationality, gender, or income (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] 2020). However, the consequences of this pandemic are not the same for more vulnerable people (OECD 2020). Looking on the bright side, the pandemic has provided us with research opportunities that we never expected and will undoubtedly offer our educational endeavours a new perspective (Pesnell 2020). Additionally, schools' closures and lockdowns have highlighted the lack of preparedness and low resilience of systems to support teachers, facilitators, and parents/caregivers in the successful and safe use of technology for learning (Dreesen et al. 2020). Therefore, this situation can be beneficial to give an opportunity for educational systems to be well prepared and to have a ready plan when any crisis appears in the future.

This novel coronavirus disease, which sparked an outbreak in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on March 11, 2020 (Gurses et al. 2020). This new virus, SARS-CoV-2, caused a respiratory disease outbreak that became a global pandemic (Kelty 2020). As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly impacted everyone's lives, there was upheaval across nearly all sectors, including the economy, society, culture, and education, leading to the closure of offices, schools, universities, and shopping centers, as well as the suspension of air, land, and sea transportation (Sari and Maningtyas 2020). Consequently, the primary concern of each nation has become to reduce the spread of the virus and to alleviate its effects on society in general and the most vulnerable communities (Osman 2020).

Regarding the situation in Oman, despite its small population, Oman was significantly impacted by COVID-19, leading to a rise in cases in March and April and the issuance of Royal Directives on March 10, 2020, which established the COVID-19 Supreme Committee and implemented restrictive measures to curb the spread (Ministry of Information 2020).

3.7.1 The pandemic and education

In the educational sector, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reports that over 1.5 billion learners were affected by school and campus closures due to COVID-19 (Dreesen et al. 2020). The pandemic indeed caused a significant disruption in education globally.

Institutions shifted to fully or partially online learning. Similarly, Oman's Supreme Committee enforced strict security measures, leading the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education to close all public and private schools and higher education institutions, shifting to online learning (Ministry of Information 2020). Notably, May 7, 2020, marked the last day of the school year for private and government schools according to the Supreme Committee's announcement (Nasrallah 2020).

The global closure of schools due to the pandemic has significant effects on students, parents, and educators, however, the impact varies. For instance, privileged students, with supportive environments and encouraging parents, are less affected by school closures, while students from disadvantaged backgrounds face greater challenges when their schools shut down (OECD 2020). According to the report by Brossard et al. (2020), the learning crisis was particularly severe in low-income countries, where high rates of learning poverty prevailed. These nations were significantly impacted by global school closures, leaving children without access to literacy materials at home and with minimal parental support for reading and homework. As a result, these children faced a substantial risk of falling behind in their education during such closures. Furthermore, Brossard et al. (2020) suggested that household wealth played a crucial role: parents or caregivers with limited education often struggled to support their children's learning, perpetuating the cycle of learning poverty across generations.

3.7.2 COVID-19 impacts on teachers and parents

The shift from face-to-face schooling to distance learning, facilitated by various communication tools (e.g. video conferencing, audio conferencing, and online platforms), has transformed teaching and learning practices (Dreesen et al. 2020). While teachers play a crucial role in this format, learner involvement and caregiver participation remain

essential (Pesnell 2020). Therefore, providing teachers with opportunities to explore new strategies and platforms, along with additional support for effective student engagement, is essential during this transition (Pesnell 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected families worldwide, causing confusion, tension, economic difficulties, and long-term effects on well-being (Aznar et al. 2021). Many families found themselves in challenging situations, facing sudden changes without much warning or planning. For instance, many parents lost their jobs, had to adapt to remote work, and took on full-time parenting responsibilities while being socially isolated and physically restricted (Kelty 2020). Additionally, families became the primary source of education, supporting distance learning methods as schools closed and transitioned to online platforms (Kelty 2020). However, due to the coronavirus pandemic, both students and their parents were able to remain in the comfort of their home, highlighting the benefits and drawbacks of this form of education (Kolak et al. 2021). One notable advantage is that it allowed families to spend more quality time together.

In the context of adapted learning, distance or remote learning has become a significant responsibility for families, replacing in-person schooling across all educational levels (Daniel 2020). Distance learning, as defined by Rice (2006), is institution-based education where teachers and students are separated by distance, time, and technology, and are connected through various communication systems, both electronic and non-electronic. Taylor (2001) identifies various methods of remote learning, including print-based correspondence, multimedia techniques (such as print, audio, and video), and online distribution via the internet. Consequently, remote learning involves both asynchronous and synchronous communication (Pesnell 2020).

Synchronous learning facilitates real-time interaction through audio and video technologies, allowing students and teachers to engage simultaneously, while asynchronous communication enables students to access and engage with content at their own pace, providing flexibility in learning (Rice 2006). These tools allow both students and teachers to access specialised materials beyond traditional textbooks in various formats, effectively bridging the gap of time and space. They also address fundamental questions about what, where, when, and how people learn (OECD 2020).

However, the implementation of technology during the pandemic has posed significant challenges for the entire educational system. Shortages in digital technology and unequal access to devices and the internet have significantly impacted learning, highlighting the digital divide (OECD 2020). These challenges underscore the need for equitable access to technology to ensure that all students can benefit from remote learning opportunities.

Due to the urgent shift to remote learning, schools were unprepared and required technology devices and reliable internet access for all students, presenting significant challenges (Pesnell 2020). Studies found that one of the biggest challenges faced by students, parents, and schools was the lack of adequate internet connection (Abuhammad 2020; Garbe et al. 2020; Ribeiro et al. 2021). This ultimately affected the learning process and reduced the amount of support that children could receive either from school or parents. This can be linked to the digital divide, which distinguishes between individuals with access to digital media and those without, encompassing various technologies like computers, the internet, phones, and digital TV (Mirazchiyski 2016). This contrasts with digital inclusion, as described by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU 2019) (OECD 2001).

Moreover, several studies have highlighted that during online learning, parents experience significant stress due to increased responsibilities, such as managing digital tools, creating suitable learning environments, and assisting their children at home (Liu et al. 2010; Chang and Yano 2020; Dong et al. 2020; Garbe et al. 2020); especially for children with low motivation (Daniel 2020).

Furthermore, individual characteristics can make financial issues a significant challenge in supporting learning, particularly during the pandemic. Ribeiro et al. (2021) identified financial barriers such as the inability to afford better technological tools and internet access. This even can be more challenging for low-income families to support their children's learning during the pandemic due to the school closures (Irwin et al. 2021).

Additionally, another challenge can be linked to parents' lack of technological knowledge and skills considered as one of the personal barriers in the learning process (Ribeiro et al. 2021). These parental limited technological knowledge and skills can affect the way that parents follow up and support their children's learning during online lessons at home

(Yamamoto and Altun 2020). These parental digital competencies were found to be lacking due to the absence of established guidelines and a lack of expertise in delivering e-lessons (Knopik et al. 2021). Further, Van Dijk (2002) indicated that other factors can contribute to the inequity of technology access, social status, gender, age, and ethnicity.

In response to the inequities in internet access and online learning platforms, some countries have turned to alternative methods. These include television broadcasts (e.g. Greece, Korea, and Portugal) and telephone lines (e.g. Luxembourg and Mexico), however, these approaches may be limited to specific subjects due to time constraints (OECD 2020). Further, to address inequalities in remote learning, some countries collect feedback from parents and caregivers by using different tools including digital platforms and non-digital channels, to reach vulnerable children (Dreesen et al. 2020).

Nevertheless, implementing this form of remote learning can cause parents a certain level of confusion and misinterpretation of online schooling (Kolak et al. 2021). Therefore, to continue education remotely, all policy decisions should be aware of parents' ability to support and help their children to prevent amplifying the learning gaps across socio-demographic groups (Dreesen et al. 2020). Additionally, children should have the right guidance before using technology in their learning to avoid any negative outcomes. Many countries provide children with psychosocial support and encourage their safe use of technology, besides supporting caregivers at home (Dreesen et al. 2020).

Despite all these challenges revealed during the pandemic, using technology has shown promise in supporting children's learning. Technology in education can be a tool to ease communication between schools and parents (See et al. 2020). For instance, some parents have become more connected with their children's teachers, regardless of the school's location (Osorio-Saez 2022). According to See et al. (2020), technology can help reduce geographical disparities by enabling remote connections, allowing parents and teachers to communicate effectively regardless of their physical locations. However, to have effective technology-based communication between parents and schools, it is crucial to establish two-way positive interactions that are timely and personalised for each student, rather than generic (See et al. 2020).

Additionally, relying on technology helped some parents to stay informed, become more aware of their children's school-work, and be more involved (Minero 2017). However, this was not supported by the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) 2022 results, which indicated a decline in PI in education across many countries and economies between 2018 and 2022 (Osorio-Saez et al. 2021). Currently, there is no consensus on effective technology use to enhance PI, and no causal evidence supports its impact on children's learning (See et al. 2020).

However, applying technology in remote learning improved parents' operational/computer abilities, but not their information and strategic digital skills (Osorio-Saez 2022). At the same time, it provides a golden opportunity for researchers and policymakers to collaborate closely with parents and assist them in engaging with their children's learning (Osorio-Saez et al. 2021). Despite these technological promises, it should not be considered as a magic instrument separate from human decisions, ongoing teacher education, family engagement, and empirical research (Osorio-Saez 2022).

3.7.3 Parental involvement (PI) through COVID-19

While most schools implemented specific COVID-19 precautions, PI in education was still influenced by the impact of the pandemic. Further, most schools faced unprecedented family difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic and were unprepared to address them (Kelty 2020). According to the Brossard et al.'s (2020) report, PI through child-oriented books is crucial for home learning, especially in technology-deprived areas. Furthermore, understanding the family's perspective is crucial for effective family-school engagement strategies, improvements schools can make, and how families can best support their child's success in the wake of distance learning and COVID-19 (Kelty 2020). Moreover, supporting PI and providing reading materials is crucial to prevent leaving vulnerable individuals behind (Dreesen et al. 2020).

In the Omani context, no study has been conducted in Omani schools to investigate PI during the pandemic. However, there is one study that explored the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education system at Sultan Qaboos University, particularly with the adoption of e-learning in teacher education (Osman 2020).

This situation provides valuable opportunities for researchers to investigate the pandemic's impact on families and education. However, there remains limited research on this topic, making this current study unique as it explores PI in schooling before and during the pandemic within the Omani context. Additionally, understanding the impact of the lockdown on families and children is crucial for informing government responses to future pandemics (Aznar et al. 2021).

Here are some examples of studies conducted in this field globally. As found by several studies from different countries, the rates of domestic violence and child maltreatment increased (Aznar et al. 2021). Further, a German study on home-schooling during the COVID-19 lockdown found negative impacts on child-parent relations, particularly when children were not used to work independently (Schmidt et al. 2020). Moreover, Kolak et al. (2021) identified differences in parents' attitudes toward distance learning based on structural characteristics (age, sex, educational status), also participants generally provided positive feedback about distance learning. Additionally, Aznar et al.'s (2021) study examined parents' experiences of home-schooling their children in the UK during the lockdown from March to June 2020, to understand common effects of stress on parenting and home-schooling outcomes in the pandemic context. Their findings showed that negative outcomes were more pronounced for parents who used high levels of behavioural control. Furthermore, a study conducted by Chung et al. (2022) revealed that Singaporean parents faced elevated stress levels during the COVID-19 lockdown, leading to adverse effects on their parent-child relationships and an increase in harsh parenting practices (such as caning, spanking, yelling, and the use of strong language). Another research by (Romero et al. 2020) in Spain reported that parents were feeling more stressed during the lockdown, with low SES families experiencing more distress, whereas higher SES families reported higher levels of resilience. Furthermore, Kelty's (2020) study identified parents' perspectives on family engagement in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten for children with and without individualised education plans (IEPs) after COVID-19 in Michigan. This study aimed to identify what strategies support and hinder the engagement of families at the beginning of a child's formal schooling experience, examining opportunities and barriers. Also, (Pesnell 2020) study in the US sought to

explore the experiences of elementary science teachers delivering instruction remotely during the pandemic compared to their instructions in the classroom.

That was briefly about the international studies that were conducted during the pandemic in relation to PI practice.

3.8 Summary

To conclude, this literature review chapters provide a narrative review of relevant literature considering parenting practice, and factors that affect parents' practice with their children's learning. Besides discussing evidence and debates around the PI concept, background, and theoretical part. Additionally, presenting perceptions and practices of PI in general and in the Omani context in particular before and during the pandemic. Moving to the next chapter, which will present the methods employed in this current study with some justifications of how and why they are applied.

Chapter 4: Methods and Methodology

This chapter presents the methods used in this study to explore parents' and school educators' perceptions and practices regarding PI in Basic Education Cycle Two (C2) schools in Oman before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study focused on what parents, teachers, and HTs felt about PI in schooling before and during the pandemic and what they thought might be improved in terms of PI to provide better support for children's learning.

This chapter outlines and discusses the methodology and methods employed to provide a clear rationale for why particular approaches were adopted. In terms of the methodological approach, this was a sequential mixed-methods study. Two main methods were used for data collection: a survey of parents (N=1,429), teachers (N=655), and HTs (N=212), and 25 semi-structured interviews with parents (N=11), teachers (N=8), and HTs (N=6) from schools in different Omani governorates (see Appendix B1) for information on the interview participants. Further details of the participants are provided in the reporting of the findings (Chapters 5 to 8). The key ethical considerations and issues of positionality, validity, and reliability are also examined in this chapter.

4.1 Research paradigm

In the social sciences, paradigm models provide a way of thinking that are useful to frame the study of the social world (Thomas 2017). This term was first used by Thomas Kuhn in 1962 and has since been used in a myriad of ways (cited in Bryman 2012). Morgan (2007) refers to a paradigm as the consensual set of beliefs and practices that guide a field. Therefore, the paradigm within which a researcher operates determines how a research inquiry is carried out from the beginning to the end.

There are various aspects that need to be considered before conducting research. In this regard, Bryman (2008) notes that each researcher brings to the research process sets of epistemological assumptions in relation to the nature of knowledge. These epistemological assumptions are reflected in two main research paradigms: positivism and interpretivism. They represent broad views about the nature of knowledge that have

traditionally dominated methodological and epistemological debates (Thomas 2017). In essence, the two positions (positivist and interpretivist) hold contrasting views about the status of knowledge and how to judge knowledge claims.

Positivism is an epistemological position that focuses on evidence and objectivity in the search for truth and perceives the world as unaffected by the researcher (Snape and Spencer 2003). The values and facts in positivism are very distinct, making it possible to conduct an objective and value-free inquiry (Snape and Spencer 2003). This means that researchers should in no way influence the findings as these represent objective facts.

In opposition to the objectivist and positivist tradition, contrasting views of knowledge and the world appeared, known as constructionism and interpretivism (Bryman 2008). The term 'interpretivism' denotes the view that the subject matter of the social sciences – people and their institutions – is fundamentally different from that of the natural sciences and requires a different logic in terms of research procedure (Bryman 2008, p. 15). The interpretivist approach argues that it is only through lived experience or direct observations that we can know about the world, and that knowledge of the world is based on our understanding, perceptions, and interpretations of the world around us (Ormston et al. 2014). Therefore, reality is affected by the research process and the researcher cannot detach him or herself from the research findings, which is the opposite of the positivist position.

Moreover, these epistemological paradigms underpin what may appear to be conflicting methodological strategies: the former – positivism – often frames quantitative research, while the latter – interpretivism – commonly provides the epistemological framing for a qualitative approach to research. The perceived incompatibility between the two has resulted in what has been described in some quarters as the paradigm wars. This stemmed from a conception of quantitative and qualitative research as distinct and to a great extent representative of competing paradigms based on fundamentally different principles (Bryman 2006). Therefore, there was a need for new alternative paradigms that could offer new ways of thinking about the world, new questions to ask, and new ways to pursue them (Morgan 2007). The third paradigm, which is adopted in this study is the pragmatic paradigm, which seeks not only to replace arguments about the nature of

reality but also to recognise the value of different approaches as research communities that guide choices about how to conduct an inquiry (Morgan 2014).

The pragmatic approach draws on a version of abductive reasoning (uncovering and relying on the best of a set of explanations to understanding one's results) and moves back and forth between induction (the discovery of patterns) and deduction (the testing of theories and hypotheses), first converting observations into theories and then assessing those theories through action (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004; Morgan 2007). This version of the abductive process is familiar to researchers who combine qualitative and quantitative methods in a sequential manner, such that the inductive results derived from a qualitative approach can serve as inputs for the deductive goals of a quantitative approach and vice versa (Morgan 2007). The pragmatic paradigm often underpins mixed-methods research.

According to Creswell (2014), researchers who adopt a pragmatic approach typically do not commit a priori to a methodological strategy; rather, they focus on the problem that the research is trying to answer and use all available approaches to understand the problem. As noted by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), what is most fundamental in the pragmatic paradigm is that the research methods should follow the research questions and offer the best chance of obtaining useful answers. Hence, instead of subscribing to a single system of philosophy or conception of reality, pragmatism focuses on what is the problem and how to fix it (Creswell 2003). In this study, the implementation of a pragmatic methodological approach thus put the exploration of PI at the forefront of all applicable approaches to understanding the issues related to it.

The pragmatic paradigm fits the aim of this study, which explored the perceptions and practices of parents and educators concerning the role of PI in schooling. In particular, the pragmatic model offered the opportunity to obtain data through both quantitative and qualitative approaches, responding to the research questions posed in relation to PI in Omani schools.

4.2 The mixed-methods approach and sequential explanatory research design

When applying mixed-methods, researchers use various terms to describe their approach, such as integrating synthesis, using qualitative and quantitative methods, multi-methods, and multi-methodology (Creswell 2003). In the literature on mixed-methods research, Creswell and Clark (2011) identified two research designs: fixed and emergent. A fixed research design employs qualitative and quantitative methods designed from the start of the project, whereas an emergent design entails the introduction of an alternative method or methods introduced when one method is found to be insufficient (Creswell and Clark 2011).

This is consistent with Bryman's (2012) proposal that a researcher can apply a mixed-methods design and combine quantitative and qualitative methods to overcome their weaknesses and draw on their strengths. It follows the stance adopted by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), namely that the goal of mixed-methods research is not to replace either qualitative or quantitative research, but rather to build on the strengths and mitigate the shortcomings in both single research studies and across studies. Much in the same vein, Creswell (2014) argued that gathering both quantitative and qualitative data allowed the researcher to better understand research problems than either form of data alone.

However, there has been much debate in the social sciences literature about whether quantitative and qualitative methods can be merged. In the paradigm war, there has been a relentless focus on the differences between the two orientations – quantitative and qualitative (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). Moreover, the two dominant research paradigms have resulted in two research cultures; one professes the superiority of rich and deep observational data, while the other one professes the virtues of hard and generalisable data (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). What is more, some writers claim that the methods are so distinct in terms of their conceptual and analytical roots that they cannot be combined effectively.

Nonetheless, others argue that considering the gaps between the ontological and epistemological bases of the two paradigms, combining quantitative and qualitative data may be of benefit (Snape and Spencer 2003). Therefore, there have been attempts to move beyond the quantitative versus qualitative research arguments through the adoption

of a third approach, mixed-methods (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). This approach recognises that research drawing on either quantitative or qualitative data or both is important and useful.

Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009, p. 151) proposed six mixed-methods study designs: 'parallel mixed designs, sequential mixed designs, quasi-mixed designs, conversion mixed designs, multilevel mixed designs, and fully integrated mixed designs'. According to their classification, this study employed a sequential mixed-methods research design. In such a model, the qualitative and quantitative methods are used in sequential order, with one technique depending on or originating from the previous one (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009). Creswell (2014) further distinguishes between an exploratory sequential design and an explanatory sequential design. In studies that use an exploratory sequential design, the researcher begins by collecting qualitative data, for example to examine the views of participants. These qualitative data are then analysed and used to develop a subsequent quantitative phase, also involving data collection and analysis (Creswell 2014). In contrast, the explanatory sequential design starts with quantitative methods, followed by qualitative methods to further elaborate on the quantitative findings in greater detail (Creswell 2014). This latter design is also referred to as the QUAN-qual research model, or the explanatory mixed-methods design (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009).

Considering the specific objectives of this research project, the study adopted an explanatory sequential design, serving to answer the research questions by employing the quantitative method (survey) first and the qualitative method (interviews) second. Employing quantitative methods in this study allowed generalisation and precision (Creswell 2014). Quantitative methods enable researchers to collect numerical data that can be analysed statistically, providing a broad overview of trends and patterns. This approach enhances the reliability and validity of the findings by minimising biases and ensuring replicability. Complementing the quantitative phase, the qualitative phase offered an in-depth exploration of individual perspectives on the practice of PI within the Omani context. Qualitative methods, such as interviews and focus groups, yield a deeper understanding of participants' experiences, beliefs, and motivations (Creswell 2014). This

phase can provide rich, detailed data revealing the nuances and complexities of the practice that might be overlooked by quantitative methods alone (Creswell 2014). By integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches, this study aimed to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the perceptions and practice of PI in Oman, balancing the strengths of both methods.

However, there are some potential challenges in using this approach. As a lone researcher, it can be difficult to carry out both qualitative and quantitative research in the same study; however, I felt that it was feasible to adopt the sequential explanatory design (Creswell 2003). This was because the research was conducted in two phases, collecting only one type of data at a time. Moreover, I had to ensure that I had the skills and experience to implement both the qualitative and quantitative strategies (Creswell 2014). Applying mixed-methods is not an easy task and I needed to prepare carefully and plan the timing and address the resource implications for the two phases. Collecting and analysing data from both quantitative and qualitative methods is time-consuming (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004), especially qualitative data, even though they are drawn from fewer participants. Therefore, researchers need to consider the benefits and drawbacks that result from both quantitative and qualitative methods to make the most of a mixed-methods design (Creswell 2014).

In sum, this study adhered to Cohen et al.'s (2007) point that mixed-methods research acknowledges and deals with the idea that the world is not strictly quantitative or qualitative, and this is the case even when the research may have a prevailing disposition towards or demand for numbers or qualitative results. Therefore, this study adopted a mixed-methods design to achieve the main aim of the study, namely understanding and exploring parents', teachers', and HTs' perspectives and experiences of the practice of PI in Basic Education (C2) schools in the Omani context under the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The research questions were consistent with the use of a mixed-methods technique. The first part of this research concentrated on the factors that could have affected the practice of PI before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, aligned with the use of quantitative research methods. The second part sought to explore and understand parents', teachers',

and HT's perceptions and practice of parental participation in schooling in Oman within the context of COVID-19, which lent itself to the adoption of qualitative methods.

4.2.1 Why mixed-methods research

The voices of participants are often not heard in quantitative research and thus one of the important aspects of employing a mixed-methods approach is that incorporating qualitative methods ensures that the voices of participants are heard in addition to their responses to questionnaires (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). The main advantage of the mixed-methods approach is that it can help address participants' perspectives and clarify knowledge in ways that understand and integrate the genuine voices of the participants (Creswell 2003).

In this study, the two-phase explanatory frame allowed me both to assess the frequency of PI practice and broad attitudes towards it in the first phase and then to explore the social and cultural factors that may have led to these attitudes or practices in the second phase. In phase one, I asked the participants about some demographic information, parental interactions and practice on average, the level of guidance and support for PI, the means of communication used to link schools with homes, and the relationship between educators and parents to encourage PI. This is with considering the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic. I used both closed and open-ended questions at this stage, and the open-ended questions generated qualitative data.

While this provided interesting data, it did not shed light on the reasons for certain levels of interaction between parents and teachers regarding children's learning before and during the pandemic. This was investigated through semi-structured interviews in phase two. In addition, this second phase of qualitative data collection provided a deeper understanding of the different perceptions and practices among parents and educators. These insights from the qualitative data were discussed in light of understandings regarding various social and cultural factors, for example household income and internet connectivity, derived from the survey data to contextualise the results. These findings are articulated in Chapters 5–8.

Moreover, the research questions were consistent with the use of a mixed-methods technique. The first part of this research focused on the factors that can affect the practice of PI before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is aligned with quantitative research methods. The second part looked to explore and understand parents', teachers' and HT's perceptions and practice of parental participation in schooling in Oman, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, which lent itself to qualitative methods. The collection of quantitative and qualitative data in this research offered the potential for diverse and richer interpretations of the participants' experiences and helped gain an understanding of the study problem (Creswell 2014).

4.3 Sampling and population

The sampling in this study was purposive as the intention was to choose participants from Basic Education Schools C2 in Oman. According to Patton (2002), purposive sampling allows information-rich participants who are involved in research to be chosen to gain insights into the research issue.

The participants in this study consisted of three groups: teachers and HTs who worked in Basic Education Schools. The third group was parents who had a child attending C2 schools from grades 5 to 10, and whose ages ranged from 10 to 15 years old. These participants were from all 11 Omani governorates. Table C1 in Appendix C presents the total number of schools, teachers, HTs, and children in the Omani C2 schools, including schools attended by male only and female only students.

At the beginning of the study, I prepared the tools chosen to gather data, namely the surveys and interview protocols, as detailed in section 4.4. I then completed the application form to obtain ethical approval from Cardiff University (see Appendix D1). Having received ethical approval (see Appendix D2), I contacted the Ministry of Education (MoE) in Oman, specifically the Technical Office for Study and Development, to obtain permission to collect data from all governorates in Oman (Basic Education – C2) (see Appendix E1). Once permission was granted by the MoE (Appendix E2), a letter was sent to all C2 schools to allow me access. Subsequently, the HTs from different schools were contacted via email to give them more information about the research and seek their permission to contact teachers and parents using their contact information (school emails

or contact numbers). This process will be explained further in the following section on data collection (4.4).

4.4 Data collection tools

To achieve the main objective of this study and to answer the proposed questions, two methods for data collection were created: a semi-structured questionnaire and a semi-structured interview for teachers/ HTs and parents. Both forms of primary data collection will be presented in the coming sub-sections.

4.4.1 Phase 1: Quantitative methods (questionnaire)

A questionnaire was the first instrument used in this study to collect descriptive data about participants' perceptions and practices regarding PI in children's learning before and during the pandemic. As defined by Kumar (2005, p. 126) a 'questionnaire is a written list of questions, the answers to which are recorded by respondents... respondents read the questions, understand what is expected and then write down the answers'.

In this study, before I started to design the survey, I carefully considered the development of questions, looking at the key issues from the literature review that were presented in previous research and mentioned as needing further investigation. For instance, this included limitations on PI practice and factors that facilitated or inhibited effective PI in school matters. In the literature review, various barriers were referred to as preventing the effective practice of PI, for example teacher workload, time, communication, and attitudes (Epstein 2005). In addition, I identified previous studies that had used questionnaires to explore PI in different countries and this, together with support from my supervisors, enabled me to identify a relevant questionnaire.

According to Wray et al. (1998), there are three types of questionnaire design: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured. Unstructured questionnaires typically use open-ended questions, structured questionnaires use closed questions, and semi-structured questionnaires combine both open and closed questions. Unstructured questionnaires with open-ended questions require a longer response time from the participants and can be demotivating, ultimately affecting the validity and reliability of the results (Wray et al. 1998). Therefore, in this study, I used a semi-structured questionnaire with closed

questions that could enable the comparison of responses. However, as I intended to collect rich data rather than make comparisons, I added two open-ended questions. These asked about the respondents' personal experiences regarding PI in schooling and the relationship between parents and educators during the pandemic. In addition, the respondents were invited to provide any other comments and suggestions they had on this topic. There were additional spaces in some questions for participants could write in where appropriate (see Appendix F1). Moreover, the participants had the option to contact me if they were interested in taking part in the interview through my email address, added at the end of the survey.

The questionnaire included items on general demographic information regarding the participants (parents, teachers, and HTs), face-to-face and online interaction between parents and educators, level of guidance and support from the school, and ways of communicating to support children's learning before and during the pandemic. However, the survey was relatively simple and direct and would not take more than 20 minutes to answer, because having a short questionnaire can help to avoid respondent fatigue.

As the participants were completing the questionnaire online, without my presence, I took time to plan it carefully (Bryman 2012), so the respondents would find it easy to read, understand, and answer independently. In addition, I translated the survey into Arabic (the language spoken in Oman) and used Qualtrics software. After editing the translation, it was sent to a translator's office to ensure the language used was suited to the topic and the respondents (see Appendix F2). Furthermore, the survey was anonymous and did not collect email addresses or any personal information from the participants. All the responses were stored in the Qualtrics software, registered with my university email address.

Moving to the reasons for choosing a semi-structured questionnaire for this study, surveys can address time constraints and gather data from participants who cannot be interviewed for various reasons (Cohen et al. 2007). Thus, for this study, conducted in Oman, the method had potential benefits in reaching a widely distributed sample of respondents even though I was not there. Moreover, a questionnaire is one of the means most used to collect information from many people in a quick and inexpensive manner (Anderson

1998). The survey allowed me to gather data from a large population across 11 Omani governorates. Another advantage of using a questionnaire is that it can be anonymous, allowing researchers to receive information without talking to respondents; therefore, there is a form of detachment and objectivity between researchers and respondents (Walliman and Baiche 2001).

However, there are some limitations that researchers should be aware of before utilising a questionnaire. For instance, the motivation of respondents is difficult to check and respondents may simply wish to finish the questionnaire rather than answering all the questions fully and honestly. In this study, in responding to some of the questions, especially the last two open-ended questions, some participants wrote irrelevant and random words just to fill the gaps. Hence, without knowing how motivated respondents are, the validity of responses can be questionable (Wray et al. 1998). Additionally, the response options in a questionnaire may lead to ambiguity and issues with the reliability of the data if there is the potential for respondents to interpret the options differently (Johnson et al. 2007). As it is difficult to ensure that respondents understand all the questions in the absence of support, I intended to have easy questions and undertook piloting (see section 4.5.1) before distributing the questionnaire.

Another drawback of conducting questionnaires is their low response rate; each copy that is not returned increases the possibility of biased results. This was an issue I faced at the beginning of the research, when I received only a few responses. Every effort should be made to achieve high rates of return (Oppenheim 2001) and this I sought to achieve by trying to reach most of the targeted schools (through emails, social networking, WhatsApp, etc.) and encouraging them to circulate the survey among parents, teachers, and HTs. In addition, I sought support from my friends, colleagues, and relatives. However, despite the potential drawbacks, a questionnaire, if well-designed, allows the collection of trustworthy and valid data in a simple, inexpensive, and timely manner (Anderson 1998).

Moving to the survey procedure, after I received permission to conduct the study from both Cardiff University and the MoE in Oman, the survey was distributed to the participants in November 2021. At that time, the students had direct learning for one week

and then one week off, having previously been learning online in schools in Oman. There was a delay in conducting the survey due to a change I made. Initially, I planned to conduct the study only in Muscat C2 schools. However, I received only two responses in one month. Consequently, I decided to include schools from all other governorates, which required me to apply for permission also from the Technical Office for Study and Development. This process took an additional two months.

At the beginning of the process, the Technical Office at the MoE sent the survey link to all C2 schools in Oman via formal correspondence. Furthermore, all schools' HTs received a brief introductory letter for participants (Appendix G1), with information sheets that answered common questions before taking part in this study (Appendix G2), and a written consent form (Appendix G3). The HTs contacted the teachers, inviting them to volunteer and participate in the study. To ensure their participation was entirely voluntary, the teachers were given introductory information outlining the study's main aims and objectives, assuring them that participation in the study was anonymous and confidential, and that there was no pressure to participate. Parents were informed and encouraged by the teachers and HTs to participate in the study, with care taken to communicate that their participation was entirely voluntary and conferred no benefit beyond contributing to developing understanding in this area of research.

I planned to achieve a cross-section of participants through a combination of targeted requests and the circulation of the link to the survey, and I followed and tracked the procedures used to distribute the survey. For instance, I checked that the C2 schools received the survey link by contacting the Technical Office at the MoE. Also, I tried to contact almost all the parents, teachers, and HTs through text messages/WhatsApp/emails, asking them to send the survey link to all their relatives and friends. Additionally, I sought assistance from relatives, friends, HTs, teachers, and some supervisors to circulate the survey links and encourage more participants to fill in the surveys.

As a result, I got 1,429 responses from parents, 212 responses from HTs, and 655 responses from teachers from all 11 regions across Oman. I employed Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size guide table (see Appendix H1) to determine the

representative sample size given a population of a defined size with a 95% confidence level and +/- 5% sampling error. The table indicated the number of responses required for parents was only 384 as the total number of students in C2 in Oman at the time was 205,117. There were 287 Basic Education Schools in Oman, each with a headteacher (287 HTs in total). According to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample guide, the required number of HTs was 165 and I received 212 responses. In total, there were 14,161 male and female teachers in Basic Education Schools, meaning 384 responses were required from teachers and I obtained 655. These statistics were all taken from the Annual Education Statistics Book, 2022 (MoE 2023) (Appendix C1). As is apparent from the figures, this study achieved a high response rate based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) calculations, which would not have happened without parents', teachers', and HTs' willingness and motivation to improve the current situation of PI; this was clear, especially after experiencing the pandemic for more than two years.

Despite the high rate of responses, I faced some obstacles in conducting the survey. For instance, there was an issue with one of the questions that had to be completed using a number. Some participants wrote the number in Arabic, which is not supported by the Qualtrics software, and so could not move on to the other questions. Therefore, I had to make a clarification and add a note in this question to write it in English. Furthermore, there was a technical issue in the software which meant I could not see all the responses. Therefore, I had to contact the Qualtrics software support team to resolve this issue. Based on some suggestions from the support staff, I made some changes to the settings that allowed the participants to come back to the uncompleted survey after 24 hours and delete all the uncompleted surveys after that. As a result, the uncompleted surveys would not be counted and would not be saved in the software.

4.4.2 Phase 2: Qualitative methods (semi-structured interview)

The second instrument used in this study comprised semi-structured interviews, conducted with parents, teachers, and HTs who agreed to participate from C2 schools in Oman. Interviews are probably the most commonly used method of data collection in educational research and consist of oral questions from the interviewer and oral responses from the research participants (Anderson 1998). The reasons for choosing this

method rather than any other qualitative method were that the interview is undertaken individually, and therefore participants could provide their in-depth knowledge (Cohen et al. 2011) and provide honest answers without hesitation in a non-threatening atmosphere. I chose this tool to help me understand and build on the data from the survey. After I started to analyse the quantitative data, some of the responses were not clear and needed to be explained. The gaps helped me form the interview questions so that I could get the complete story.

As noted by DeMarrais (2004), interviews typically involve individual respondents engaging with the interviewer in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study. In relation to this study, I asked the participants about their thoughts, opinions, perspectives, or descriptions of their specific experiences regarding PI. The purpose of conducting interviews in this study was threefold: (i) to verify the results and findings from the survey; (ii) to identify some aspects of PI that were not fully probed in the survey; (iii) to investigate the participants' perceptions and practice of PI before and during the pandemic. Therefore, interviews appeared to be a convenient method for this study to collect data from participants.

Interviews can be completely unstructured, based on an idea and prompts, giving the interviewee freedom in directing the interview (Harrell and Bradley 2009). However, for this study, semi-structured interviews were preferable as I could prepare a list of questions in advance. Semi-structured interviews are a flexible data collection method that blend the consistency of structured interviews with the adaptability of unstructured ones, allowing interviewers to follow a guide with predetermined questions while also having the freedom to explore topics in greater depth based on the interviewee's responses (Harrell and Bradley 2009). I had time to think carefully about the questions and this gave me greater confidence when conducting the interviews. Sometimes, I repeated or rephrased questions for clearer understanding or even modified the interview structure to better effect when interviewees did not understand a question (Cargan 2007). Another reason for employing this type of interview is that it enables questions to emerge at any time within a reasonably firm structure (Cohen et al. 2007).

However, the advantages of this method are offset by some limitations. One of these is that they take a significant amount of time. As all participants were in Oman, it was challenging to conduct the interviews due to the time difference between Oman and the UK. Furthermore, the working week in Oman is different from the UK; in Oman, the weekend is Friday and Saturday and Sunday is the first day of the week. Consequently, this led to some delays in conducting interviews with most of the participants.

Another obstacle I faced concerned some of the interviewees themselves. For instance, some had to cancel the meeting or just did not show up at the time scheduled and postponed the meeting to another time. Furthermore, some just answered the questions briefly rather than telling the whole story as there were interruptions. For instance, during school time, some teachers/HTs were busy and interrupted by some students or other teachers. Moreover, even though the interviewees were at home, some of them were interrupted by their family members, which all caused some delay. I tried to be flexible with time as much as I could and considered all these constraints, for example reminding the participants that we would have an interview in a few hours.

Additionally, some participants asked if they could receive the interview questions and send their written answers via WhatsApp at their convenience, instead of having a direct conversation with me. However, I declined this request because I wanted to have an interactive conversation with them. I reassured them that all the data gathered would be securely protected, they would remain anonymous, and they could opt out at any time (Harrell and Bradley 2009). I also emphasised that there were no right or wrong responses. Consequently, all the interviews were conducted live to ensure an interactive discussion.

One obstacle was the poor internet connection. Often the interviewee had to either pause the interview to try another calling application or end the interview and reschedule. This process was time-consuming and disrupted our conversation, making it quite frustrating. Another limitation was that I knew some of the respondents personally and this could have influenced the interviews. To address this, I took great care not to influence the participants' responses (Gall et al. 1996). Furthermore, respondents must reveal their identity to the interviewer and thus interviews cannot provide anonymity for the

respondents (Gall et al. 1996). To address this, I made sure that the identity of the participants was not revealed while analysing and reporting the interview data. Despite these challenges, employing interviews can yield rich data and can often put flesh on the bones of questionnaire responses (Bell 2010).

Interviews can be conducted in various ways, for example face-to-face, by email, online, or over the phone (Creswell 2011). In this study, 25 online interviews were conducted. This method was chosen as it would allow flexibility for the participants to engage at a time that was convenient for them. It also aimed to mitigate uncertainty regarding social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, it helped the participants feel more comfortable and confident than they might in face-to-face interviews. All the interviews were organised separately based on the participants' availability.

The participants included 8 teachers, 6 HTs who worked in C2 schools in different Omani governorates, and 11 parents who had sons/daughters in C2 schools (see Appendix I1 for the interview schedule). I used snowball sampling to recruit the participants for this phase, which is a well-known purposive sampling technique (Bryman 2016). Following Bryman's model (2016), I selected certain participants of interest and involved them as key sources. I used my personal connections to identify individuals from C2 schools and then asked these initial participants to help recruit more participants.

All the interview guides were short and included fewer than 13 questions (see Appendix I2). However, the length of each interview varied from 40 minutes to an hour and a half. The order of the questions varied depending on each interviewee's responses. All the online interviews were in Arabic and therefore the interview questions were translated into Arabic (see Appendix I3). They were conducted through various applications and programmes that were chosen by the participants, for example Imo, Zoom, and Google Meet.

In terms of the interview procedure, there are several protocols that researchers must follow, which I considered in this study (Harrell and Bradley 2009). At the outset, once the participants agreed to take part in the interview, I informed them of the nature of the study, its purpose, duration, and the intended use of the research results. I also addressed ethical considerations, highlighting confidentiality and their voluntary

participation. This was done to ensure the integrity of the study and to minimise the possibility of the participants' responses being influenced, for example by social desirability bias. By clearly communicating these aspects, I aimed to create a transparent and trusting environment where the participants felt comfortable sharing their honest opinions without fear of repercussions or misunderstandings. Furthermore, participants were offered information sheets if required before the interview (see Appendix G2), and they had the opportunity to ask questions about all aspects of the research process. I obtained only oral or recorded consent not written because of the COVID-19 restrictions and having participants from different governorates. Also, I was in the UK at that time.

Before I started the interview, I tried to establish a rapport with the participants by putting myself in the position of the interviewees and maintaining a neutral attitude (Patton 2002; Cohen et al. 2011). Rapport with interviewees can be built by adopting a nonjudgmental, comfortable, and welcoming attitude (Cohen et al. 2011). I started the interview with a friendly introduction and gave the interviewees the chance to talk and ask questions before starting the interview. Additionally, during the interview, I tried to listen more and talk less and avoided showing signs of agreement or disagreement to encourage the interviewees to express their views and show more interest (Cohen et al. 2011). Moreover, although I gave the interviewees time to think, I was ready to move on to another question if they were unable to answer, keeping the interview going and not putting them under pressure. At the end of the interview, I thanked the participants orally and afterwards sent them a message thanking them for their cooperation and taking part in the study.

I recorded all the interviews by using a digital voice recorder, which were then transcribed, and anonymised, as almost all the participants preferred not to have a video recording. Using such a device for voice recording is easier and more reliable than other methods in interviewing and recordings can be sent directly to a laptop (Rabionet 2009). Following Rabionet's (2009) recommendation, I also took notes to be used as a backup source in the event of unclear recordings. In taking notes, I kept to the key points and some nonverbal interaction.

After I finished each interview, I checked the recording to ensure the data would be useful and trustworthy (Patton 2002; Harrell and Bradley 2009). Ultimately, I transferred the recorded interviews to secure storage and immediately deleted them from the recording device. I followed detailed measures as outlined by the university for arranging interviews online, such as using password protection for the meeting and switching off functionality that was not needed in the meeting.

4.5 Piloting

Undertaking a pilot study is important as a means of determining the accuracy and quality of the data. For a questionnaire, it collects feedback on its validity and length (Cohen et al. 2011). Further, piloting helps to identify ‘redundancies, eliminate ambiguities, clarity, layout, and appearance of questions’ (Cohen et al. 2011, p. 118). Motivated by this line of thought, pilot testing was conducted in this study for both research instruments: the survey and the interviews.

4.5.1 Piloting the questionnaire

Gray (2009, p. 359) suggests that ‘piloting is vital to any research instrument particularly questionnaires as they reduce the incidence of no response to the questionnaire’. Additionally, piloting can help researchers and investigators not only with the wording of questions but also with procedural matters, such as the design of a letter of introduction, the ordering of the questions, and the reduction of non-response rates, which are especially important if self-completion questionnaires are used (Oppenheim 2001). As Bryman (2012) warns, it frequently takes time for questionnaires to be returned to the investigator and they often require follow-up letters.

Regarding this study, after the questionnaire was approved by my supervisors, it was translated into Arabic to facilitate easy understanding on the part of the participants as their first language was Arabic. Hence, this would ensure that the respondents could understand the items and provide appropriate responses.

In planning the development of the survey in this study, I conducted a pilot run of the questionnaire with my supervisors, and 10 teachers, 2 HTs, and 5 parents from different governorates in Oman (the results are not included in the thesis). This was to check the

clarity of the instructions and the questions and to specify the time that it would take to complete all the items in the questionnaire.

Based on my supervisors' suggestions, I decided to delete one option (neutral) in questions 15 and 16 to avoid participants opting for it if they were in a hurry or did not know what to choose. This is what my supervisors and I agreed upon, and it is supported by literature. For instance, this is consistent with Teddlie and Tashakkori's (2009) argument concerning the importance of carefully designing questionnaires to avoid biases and ensure the reliability of responses. They highlight that the choice of response options can significantly impact the quality of the data collected. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) also emphasise the need for thoughtful question design in mixed-methods research to ensure data integrity and minimise bias. Additionally, Creswell (2003) notes that the inclusion of a neutral option can sometimes lead to its misuse, as respondents may select it to avoid making a definitive choice. Moreover, to assess the social circumstances of the participants, I added some questions to identify the parents' SES level and identify the impact of using technology in online learning on the practice of PI.

Additionally, the pilot testing of the survey with participants revealed some points that needed to be taken into account before collecting the data in the main study. For instance, in response to one item, a parent reported that due to the pandemic, they were discussing their child's learning daily using the WhatsApp application on their phone. Therefore, I added 'daily' as an option and deleted 'once or twice a year' as there was another similar option, 'a few times a year'. Also, I did the same for an item asking about practice before the pandemic and for the teachers' and HTs' surveys as well. Another comment concerned specifying the level of primary school as in Oman this includes Cycle One and part of Cycle Two. Therefore, I added Cycle Two to make it more specific.

4.5.2 Piloting the interview questions

The interview was piloted after being carefully designed with four parents, two teachers, and one HT who met the criteria for inclusion in the study. It was conducted in two phases: the first piloting (Appendix I4) was not satisfactory as I did not obtain sufficient details from the interviewees. After discussing this with my supervisors and reading more about

interviewing, I had ideas for improvement that were implemented in the second piloting phase (Appendix I5).

In the piloting, participants were asked to comment on what they did not understand or were unsure about. They were also asked to judge the length of items and the representation in the questions. Based on their feedback, some amendments were considered before conducting the interviews. For example, one parent felt that some questions had the same meaning. Therefore, I tried to make sure that each question was different and would not lead to the same answer.

Another parent found that one question was not clear. This was about the kind of relationship they would like to have with the school and teachers (Ideally, what would you like parental involvement to look like in your child's school? Can you please give me an example of how you might like that to look? What kind of relationship would you like to have with the school? And with your child's teacher?). I deleted the last part of the question as the first part would be enough to get their opinions.

Furthermore, two parents reported that some questions were not clear to them as they did not specify whether they were asking about before the pandemic or during it. Therefore, I changed the forms of some questions and added the following 'before the pandemic' and 'during the pandemic' to enable the participants to organise their answers and thoughts.

In terms of the teachers, one felt that two questions were the same (How would you describe parent-teacher relationship and communication in your school? Please describe ways and methods of communication that your school uses either frequently or rarely). However, in my view, these questions are not the same. The first is about the schools' methods used to communicate with parents and the second is about the teachers' methods with parents. Some teachers also commented on the form of some questions in terms of specifying before and during the pandemic.

The piloting with the HT did not result in any comments or things to change in the interview questions.

The feedback was very useful. Modifications were made based on the feedback obtained from the participants and were reconciled to produce the final version of the questionnaire and the interview questions before main data collection.

4.6 Data analysis

4.6.1 Quantitative data analysis

I implemented the comprehensive Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyse the quantitative data in this research, as well as Microsoft Excel, which includes descriptive statistics (e.g. frequencies, counts, and percentages), as well as cross-tabulations. Coding was employed to group data in the parents' survey, for example the children's age (10-11=1, 12-13=2, 14-15=3) and the number of children in the household (0-3=1, 4-7=2, 8+=3). For the teachers' survey, this was done, for example, for the classes they taught (5-6=1, 7-8=2, 9-10=3, mix classes=4) and for years of experience (0-5=1, 6-15=2, 16+=3), and the number of classes per week (0-10=1, 11-19=2, 20+=3). In the HTs' survey, this was done for years of experience (0-5=1, 6-15=2, 16+=3) and the number of students in the school (0-100=1, 101-500=2, 501+=3). Other questions were coded directly, for example for items using Likert scale-type responses (1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree, 4 = strongly disagree). The findings from the survey analysis were intended to reveal the general practices among the teachers, parents, and HTs, as well as their perceptions of PI before and during the pandemic. These general findings aimed to guide the more in-depth investigation that followed through conducting semi-structured interviews.

4.6.2 Qualitative data analysis

In this study, I used thematic analysis to analyse the qualitative data obtained from both the semi-structured interviews and open-ended items in the survey. Thematic analysis is a method used for identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meaning and themes within qualitative data (Clarke and Braun 2017). It offers a mechanism for coding and analysing qualitative data systematically, which then can be linked to broader theoretical or conceptual issues (Braun and Clarke 2012). This method is often favoured by qualitative researchers and offers accessible and systematic procedures for generating

codes and themes from qualitative data; these codes are the smallest units of analysis that capture interesting features of the data and are relevant to the research question (Clarke and Braun 2017). Thematic analysis was adopted in this research due to its flexibility and accessibility. As Clarke and Braun (2017) note, thematic analysis is flexible in terms of research questions, sample size and constitution, data collection method, and approaches to meaning generation. It can provide an understanding of what participants think, do, and feel in relation to a real-life experience (Clarke and Braun 2017).

Moreover, thematic analysis offers a way of identifying what is common in the way that a topic is talked or written about, which allows the researcher to identify what needs to be considered important in relation to the research topic and questions being explored (Braun and Clarke 2012). Another benefit of this type of analysis is that it helps answer research questions by finding relevant answers from various types and volumes of data (Braun and Clarke 2012).

This study followed the six-phase approach to thematic analysis described by Braun and Clarke (2006). In the first phase, I familiarised myself with the data by reading and rereading the textual data and listening to the recordings several times. Starting with the qualitative data from the open-ended items in the survey, I copied all the open-ended questions from the Qualtrics software into separate folders, so I could read them multiple times (see Figure 2).

Default Report

Teachers' survey
November 13, 2022 5:26 PM MST

يرجى توضيح كيف تغيرت وجهة نظرك في كيفية التعامل مع أولياء الأمور خلال فترة - Q32

الجائحة؟

...يرجى توضيح كيف تغيرت وجهة نظرك في كيفية التعامل مع أولياء الأمور خلال فترة

أصبح أولياء الأمور أكثر تواصل في مستوى أبنائهم

لم يكن التعامل مباشر كما كان قبل الجائحة لعب الواسع اب دوراً مهماً لتوضيح الواجبات المطلوبة والانضباط خاصة مع أولياء أمور الصف الخامس حيث أدى أولياء الأمور تحلياً كبيراً مما أدى إلى زيادة اهتمام الطلاب في حل الواجبات

نعم

من خلال تكتف إرسال الملاحظات حول الطلبة

التواصل مع ولي الأمر أصبح أسهل

صار التواصل بلس وسهل وفي أمور التعليم فقط

اهتمام أولياء الأمور بتعليم أولادهم والحرص عليهم

أولياء أصبحوا أكثر اهتماماً بتعليم أبنائهم

مأثرف

ضرورة التواصل مع أولياء الأمور ليكون على علم بمستوى أبنائهم

Figure 2: The first stage of organising qualitative data from the semi-structured survey.

Then, I started to organise the responses from the open-ended questions by grouping all the meaningful and related answers under general headings related to each question. This process took longer than I expected, as I had to read and sort through a large number of responses. Also, there were many unrelated, non-meaningful, and incomplete answers. For example, for Question 32, teachers responded regarding their experience and relationship with parents during the pandemic. I organised all related data from the participants' responses into a table with two columns consisting of positive and negative comments (see Table 1).

Table 1: The second stage of organising qualitative data from the semi-structured survey.

Teachers' relationship with parents about students' learning during the pandemic. How has it changed regarding the pandemic?

Positive comments:	Negative comments:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lot of communication led to a convergence of views between me and the parents in terms of standing on how to reach the highest levels of students through the circumstances available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dealing with the guardian requires patience and the ability to be mindful. We discovered many parents who are not understanding and many who do not accept changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents showed interest in their children's education and their keenness to commit to attending classes and implementing activities and tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulty communicating with them and not understanding the level of their children
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pandemic increased the parents' understanding of the teacher's role in the school, which changed their way of dealing with the teacher and their knowledge of his prominent role in raising children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of interest from the guardian and lack of communication for most of them
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents have become more communicative about the level of their children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many complain about duties and activities and not follow up with their children

This allowed me to gain greater familiarity with the qualitative data from the survey and made it easier to return to particular extracts from the data in the final stages of analysis.

For the interviews, I familiarised myself with the data earlier, at the time of the interviews, before the transcription process. Since I undertook both the interviews and data analysis, I became very familiar with the interview data from the outset, when I was listening to the participants during the interviews.

Once I had all the recorded conversations, I started to transcribe the first audio recording by listening and writing manually at the same time; this took more than four hours as I kept repeating and pausing for each part. Therefore, I searched for another transcription technique and came across a study in which the researcher used a smartphone, enabling the dictation feature to transcribe the audio into written text. I started to listen to the recorder via earphones and then spoke the recording I was listening to out loud. At the same time, the phone transcribed the exact words I spoke into an iPhone note. To ensure the accuracy of this process, I watched what was being transcribed as I was speaking to avoid any words being mis-typed that could change the meaning of the sentence (see Figure 3).

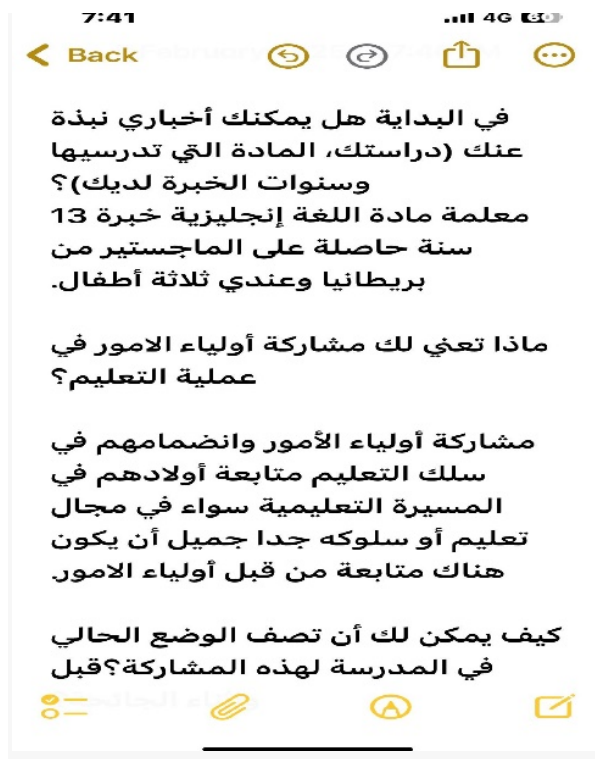


Figure 3: Transcribing interviews using iPhone note.

Having transcribed all the interviews into my iPhone notes, I started to read and reread all the interview transcripts to check for errors. Then, I sent them to my email account and saved them in Microsoft Word documents, organising them into three folders, one for parents, one for teachers, and one for HTs, and coding them numerically based on the order in which the interviewees were interviewed.

As all the interviews were in Arabic, transcribing all 25 interviews and then translating them into English to start the analysis turned out to be challenging. After I had translated seven interviews, I found it unhelpful and time-consuming, as I could read them in Arabic and then analyse them in English, which I did and found much easier.

During the transcription process, I took notes and put down ideas for coding. In this way, the 'time spent in transcription is not wasted', as it informs the early stages of analysis, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 88). I noted some descriptive codes as well as reflections on some of the ways that I had asked the interviewees questions. So, I made two sets of notes while transcribing the interviews, with the first giving me ideas for the second phase, which was generating initial codes.

Moving to the second phase, generating initial codes is part of qualitative data analysis that helps the researcher to think critically about the meaning of the data (Bryman 2012). In simple terms, Cohen et al. (2011, p. 559) describe a code as ‘a name or label that the researcher gives to a piece of text that contains an idea or piece of information’ and ‘the same code is given to an item of text that says the same thing or is about the same thing’. Once I had finished transcribing all the data from the open-ended survey questions and interviews, I started to mark and highlight all the interesting and important data simply using Word documents (see the example in Figure 4).

during the pandemic and before it? Please describe ways and methods of communication that your school uses either frequently or rarely.

I can say that my school has a very good relationship with parents and the interaction between them is excellent. This is especially for the young children in grades 5, 6, and 7, as most of the parents are in WhatsApp groups with their children's teachers. There is continuous communication between the parents and school, and this is even when there are some technical issues. For instance, when there is some issue with the educational platforms, parents have other alternative methods they can use to get connected with the school's members. These can be via using WhatsApp, direct call or it can be through visiting school when it is needed. I feel that there is an effective corporation between school, parents, and teachers. So, this is about parents- teachers relationship during the pandemic, what about before this experience?

There is a huge difference in this relationship, I feel that parents after having this experience of the pandemic are more involved with the learning process as they know more about the academic level of their children, which they did not know before Covid-19. For instance, with online learning with covid-19, parents know more about homework, projects, exams, and attending classes. Direct communication with parents allows them to know more details that they did not deliver to them in a regular way before the pandemic. Actually, before the pandemic teachers spent more time and effort to get contact with parents about the children's learning. This is especially when the children do not do their homework or when they miss some tests, and they must repeat it.

Great, what about the ways of communication that school used before corona virus?

The communication was really limited between schools' members and parents before the pandemic. As there were only two meetings every year, once in each semester, we have a

Figure 4: Highlighting interesting data using Word documents.

After that, I went through the highlighted texts, read them again, and started to generate initial codes related to the research questions, writing them down in a separate table. I then created an Excel sheet to keep track of codes with columns for data extracts and another column for any notes or observations (see Figure 5).

S	R	Q	F
	Data extracts	Codes	Notes
	<i>I only visited the school to ask about my son, and to attend the meetings held at the school'(P7).</i>	School visit	
	<i>I follow her daily in homework and projects, and I am always informed, even in the activities she participates in at school' (P3).</i>	Helping with homework	
	<i>I try to provide everything my children need in case there are any difficulties in the academic subjects'(P6).</i>	Helping with school subjects	
	<i>I have not yet participated in any</i>		

Figure 5: Generating initial codes.

In this stage, I added some codes. By the end, I had many descriptive codes that were grouped and organised in the same table. Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 89) assert that the researcher should create as many codes as possible as 'you never know what might be interesting later'. Examples of the descriptive codes are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Examples of descriptive codes.

Using WhatsApp	Negative experience with teachers	School visit	Checking homework
Direct communication	Positive experience with teachers	School activities	Preparing for exams
Distance communication	Parents' duty and responsibility	Educational programmes	Progress monitoring
Parents' meeting	Teachers' duty and responsibility	Special events	Doing projects

In the third phase, once all the data had been initially coded and collated from both the survey and the interviews, I searched for themes. Themes are distinctive and can stand by themselves, but they also need to work all together as pieces of a jigsaw puzzle (Braun and Clarke 2012). In this phase, the analysis refocuses on the broader level of themes, rather than codes, which involves sorting the different codes into potential themes and collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes (Braun and Clarke 2006). I used visual representations, creating a mind map to sort the different codes into themes and subthemes (see Figure 6).



Figure 6: Mind map including codes, themes, and subthemes.

Additionally, I organised the data from the interviews in a table with four columns: themes, data extracts, quantitative data, and references from the literature (see Appendix I6). This process can be helpful to start thinking about the relationship between codes, themes, and between different levels of themes (Braun and Clarke 2006), and would help me later in the analysis process.

In the fourth phase, I reviewed all the themes. In this phase, it became evident that some candidate themes were not really themes (e.g. there were not enough data to support them, or the data were too diverse), while others could be collapsed into each other (e.g. two apparently separate themes formed one theme), and yet other themes needed to be broken down into separate themes. This phase was important, as at the end I had a fairly good idea of what the different themes were, how they fit together, and the overall story they told about the data (Braun and Clarke 2006).

In the fifth phase, I defined the themes and checked whether the scope and content of each theme could be described in a couple of sentences. Moreover, I checked if these defined themes accurately represented the data. Before starting the analysis, I revisited

the literature and bore in mind the research questions throughout this phase of the analysis. This phase was also linked with the sixth phase, namely, producing the report. In this last phase, creating a report for thematic analysis means conveying the complex narrative of the data in the most straightforward manner possible (Braun and Clarke 2006). I revised the report multiple times to clearly present the findings from the semi-structured interviews and survey data.

4.6.3 Reflections on data analysis

It is necessary to reflect on the data analysis process to identify the advantages and drawbacks of the methods and tools selected. Initially, I started using the NVivo software package to help with the process of organising the thematic data. This software can save time and provides space to organise store, code, and report data. However, as I undertook the analysis over time, I found other methods easier than NVivo although I had received specialised training in it. NVivo only acts as an organisational tool rather than making any contribution to the actual analysis. Therefore, I stopped using it for analysis and switched to Microsoft Word as a means of highlighting interesting data and sorting codes, and Excel for the comprehensive collection of codes and data extracts. Additionally, I used mind mapping tools such as XMind to organise themes.

I chose these tools for several reasons. Microsoft Word offers easy highlighting, annotation, and commenting on text, which helps identify and categorise important data. Most researchers are already familiar with Microsoft Word, making it easy to use without extensive training. Excel is helpful for organising large amounts of data in a structured format, enabling sorting, filtering, and analysis. XMind is excellent for brainstorming and generating ideas; this proved helpful for the visual organisation of themes and concepts.

Handling a large volume of data allowed me to explore the case in detail, but it also brought challenges with it. Identifying and refining themes from so much data was time-consuming and difficult, especially as new data kept coming in. I had to focus on the themes most relevant to the research questions, which meant some themes were not explored in detail and others were deleted. This process demonstrates the iterative nature

of thematic analysis, in which themes are constantly adjusted and re-evaluated to ensure they truly reflect the data.

I followed Braun and Clarke's (2012) features of good thematic analysis for the qualitative data in this study. I ensured that the analysis was focused and directly addressed the research questions. I also took care not to provide data extracts with minimal analysis or merely to paraphrase or summarise the data. Rather, I aimed to provide a thorough and insightful interpretation of the data, ensuring that each extract was analysed in depth to highlight its relevance to the research questions.

To further assist with the process of data analysis and writing the discussion, I designed a table with three columns: Literature Review, Interview Questions, and Research Questions (see Appendix I7). This helped me gain an overview of my data, linking the emerging findings from the thematic analysis to the pertinent points within the literature explored.

4.7 Ethical considerations

As clearly addressed by the British Educational Research Association (BERA 2018), in any educational research there should be a very clear plan for how the participants can be approached by the researcher. An ethical approach means following the code of conduct for acceptable professional practice (Cohen et al. 2011). The ethical issues and implications of conducting research need to be carefully considered (Cohen et al. 2011).

In view of this, I was aware of ethical considerations, as I showed in the form that I submitted seeking approval to conduct the study from Cardiff University's Ethics Committee and from the MoE in Oman (see section 4.3) in which I set out the ethical considerations and how they would be addressed. Researchers are required to obtain ethical consent from their higher education institution and permission from the place where the research will be conducted (Creswell and Clark 2011).

Throughout my research, I remained conscious of the critical importance of conforming to professional and ethical standards. I sought to maintain the integrity and reputation of educational research and I ensured that I adhered to the ethical guidelines set out by BERA (2018). I paid special attention to my responsibility towards all the participants and

treated them fairly and sensitively. At the outset of the study, I ensured that consent – whether oral or written – was obtained from all participants, including the parents and educators involved in the survey and interviews (BERA 2018). Moreover, I provided all the participants with detailed information regarding the study, ensuring they understood the purpose of their involvement, their tasks, and how the data collected would be utilised and preserved at the end of the study (Appendix G2), in line with BERA (2018).

At the outset of the research, I ensured that the schools volunteering to take part in the study were informed about my intention to conduct interviews and surveys; this was after receiving a letter from the MoE giving me permission to access the schools and conduct the study. Before conducting the research, I had to make it clear to the schools that although I had a letter of approval from the MoE, there was no obligation for teachers and HTs to take part in this study. The HTs were then used as gatekeepers to access teachers, parents and family members, sharing the information letter and asking them to participate in the study. All the participants were notified that they were not obliged to take part in the study, they had the right to withdraw at any time, their data would be confidential and they would not be identifiable from the data in any way. Also, I assured the participants that all the data would be used solely for research purposes. I made it clear that on presentation of the data to the Omani Government, or in further presentations or publications, any data that might identify a participant or school would not be used and that pseudonyms would be used for all participants and schools.

Furthermore, I was careful to adopt a reflective perspective, ensuring that the research did not negatively affect others. To reinforce this, I was very explicit about my role as a researcher, distinguishing it from my parent and teacher role, besides informing the participants that their involvement was voluntary and they could withdraw at any time without any negative impact. In addition, I stressed that there would be no broader benefits to participation, such as job benefits. I ensured that the data analysis was accurate, objective, accessible for scrutiny, and that all data collected were kept confidential and anonymous; the participants were made aware of this before taking part in the study.

Moreover, I considered any potential harm (to me or the participants) from the way that the research was conducted. For me, there was no potential harm to my position as a teacher and a mother at the same time, as all interviews and surveys were conducted online.

Regarding the interviews, there was the possibility that an interviewee could feel that they had compromised their standing as a parent or teacher by revealing issues that had arisen in their personal or professional life. To mitigate this, I ensured that all participants were fully informed about the purpose of the research, the voluntary, anonymous and confidential nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without any consequences. This approach aligns with the principle of informed consent, which is crucial in educational research (BERA 2018).

Given that the study was approved and distributed by the Omani directorate, particular emphasis was placed on ensuring that all HTs and teachers were aware at all times that they were not under any pressure to participate. This was achieved by clearly stating the anonymous and voluntary nature of participation at the start of the survey and in ensuring that time was allocated prior to and at the start of interviews for discussion and questions about the nature of the study, such as who would have access to the data and how anonymity and confidentiality would be managed in practice.

Care was taken that no offensive, discriminatory, or other unacceptable language was used in the formulation of the questionnaire items and interview questions. This was done to create a respectful and inclusive environment for all participants, ensuring that the research adhered to ethical guidelines (Cohen et al. 2011). Additionally, I recognised that some participants might feel insecure about presenting any negative experiences, especially if they perceived a lack of parity in power relations between me as the researcher and them. To address this, I emphasised confidentiality and anonymity, reassuring the participants that their responses would be kept private and used solely for research purposes. Such an approach helps to build trust and encourages honest and open participation (Creswell and Clark 2011).

These issues were further impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which altered ways of working, such as parents taking more responsibility to work with their children at home.

To address the unique challenges posed by the pandemic, I adopted flexible interview schedules and provided options for remote participation to accommodate participants' altered routines and responsibilities (BERA 2018). I also acknowledged the additional stress and potential psychological impact of the pandemic, ensuring that participants had access to support resources if needed (Salamanca-Buentello et al. 2024).

By implementing these measures, I aimed to uphold the ethical standards of educational research, ensuring fairness, respect, and the well-being of all participants. These strategies are supported by the literature on ethical considerations in educational research, which emphasises the importance of informed consent, confidentiality, and minimising harm (Creswell and Clark 2011).

In terms of data protection, I stored all the recordings and the transcripts used in the study on an encrypted laptop and kept copies on the University network storage. Also, I stored any paper-based data, such as written notes, in a locked cabinet at home. Finally, participating in this research did not offer any potential commercial benefit. Throughout the study, I made sure that the findings I reached were evidence-based and did not merely confirm previously held opinions or perspectives based on my educational background and parenting role.

4.8 Quality of the research

4.8.1 Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability are two aspects that need to be considered when conducting a study, interpreting the data, and assessing the quality of research (Creswell and Clark 2011). The goal of research is to reach valid outcomes based on appropriate scientific procedures, so establishing validity and reliability are critical for accurate analysis (Edmonds and Kennedy 2013). According to Edmonds and Kennedy (2013, p. 3), the validity of research design relates to 'the extent to which the outcome accurately answers the stated research questions of the study'. If two researchers investigate the same phenomenon, they may gain different findings, but both sets of findings can still be reliable (Cohen et al. 2011). Reliability refers to the repeatability of a study, meaning that if identical methods were employed once more with the same sample, the outcomes would

be replicated or sufficiently similar (Oppenheim 2001). While there can be high reliability but low validity, high validity necessarily demonstrates high reliability (Oppenheim 2001). In relation to this study, validity was considered both in the quantitative and qualitative stages. A statistical technique was used to assess the content validity of the quantitative data to check whether the results of the survey really represented what they were supposed to measure.

In qualitative research, validity is about ensuring that the findings accurately reflect the participants' experiences or perspectives. In this study, member checking was used to boost validity, this being one method of identifying the researcher's bias when misunderstanding is possible (Creswell 2003). This was accomplished by giving the results of transcription to some of the respondents to check their responses and ensure that their language and the original discussion were appropriately represented in the transcripts. The participants in this instance were given the chance to submit additional comments on the data obtained regarding their perspectives on PI.

However, since the researcher is regarded as the primary data-obtaining tool, especially in qualitative research (Creswell 2003), it is common that their personalities and life experiences are embedded in the research, which may imperil the study's validity. Being a mother and a teacher at the same time, whose perceptions of PI have been shaped by personal experience, I was conscious of PI concerns and other related issues. This might introduce bias into the study; thus, care was taken to avoid hinting at desired or unwanted responses from participants, ensuring that my experience and perceptions did not influence the participants' answers.

Turning to reliability, the emphasis differs depending on the type of research. In positivist quantitative research studies, reliability is about ensuring that the results are consistent and replicable, meaning that if the study were repeated under the same conditions, it would yield the same results (Teddle and Tashakkori 2009). In a pragmatic and/or interpretive study, such as this, which draws mostly on qualitative data, reliability is more about dependability. This entails ensuring that the research process is logical, traceable, and clearly documented, so that others can understand how conclusions were reached (Teddle and Tashakkori 2009). In terms of ensuring reliability in this study, as previously

noted, this was enhanced by making the necessary modifications to the questionnaire and interview questions after piloting.

Despite the effort to consider both validity and reliability in this mixed-method study, debates and challenges persist in combining quantitative and qualitative paradigms. This approach can be contentious due to differing assumptions about reality and research design, and researchers must balance depth (qualitative) and breadth (quantitative) while maintaining validity and reliability (Teddle and Tashakkori 2009). Attaining validity and reliability in mixed-method research requires thoughtful design, accurate reporting, and an appreciation of the specific problems posed by integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches, all of which were carefully examined in this study.

4.9 Summary

This chapter has identified the ontological and epistemological underpinnings determined by the approach, design, and methods. The justification for selecting this approach in this study has been set out. This chapter has also shed light on the selection of the samples, and the methods and procedures of data collection, encompassing a survey and interviews. The chapter has reviewed the piloting of the instruments, as well as their validity and reliability. It has discussed the data analysis procedures and ethical considerations, as well as the quality of the study. The following chapters present the findings.

Chapter 5: Results 1

This mixed-methods study aimed to explore the perspectives and practices of Omani Basic Schools (C2) parents, teachers, and HTs regarding PI in children's learning before and during the pandemic. Together, Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 provide a detailed overview of the findings from the analysis of both the survey and interview data. Chapter 5 draws particularly on the survey data and presents the findings according to parents', teachers', and HTs' perspectives. The findings from a thematic analysis of the interview data are integrated with data from the survey in Chapters 6, 7, and 8 to provide more insight into the quantitative results.

This chapter reports the response rate to the survey and presents the background information on the respondents (parents, teachers, and HTs). It focuses on parents' perceptions and practices regarding their own involvement with their child's learning before and during the pandemic, highlighting the relation to demographic characteristics and seeking to answer RQ2 by considering the effect of information communication technology (ICT) on PI. In addition, it also presents findings regarding teachers' and HTs' perceptions of PI with children's learning before and during the pandemic drawing on some demographic characteristics.

5.1 Respondents' demographic information

Demographic variables for the parents included the respondents' relationship with the students, age range of students, number of children in the household, parents' educational level, school location (in which Omani governorate), carer's job, and monthly household income. The demographic variables for the HTs included school location, number of students, professional qualifications, and years of experience. For the teachers, the demographic variables were school location, grades, number of classes per week, professional qualifications, and years of experience. The demographic characteristics from the parent survey are reported in the following sub-sections based on the 1,429 responses received.

5.1.1 Demographic characteristics of the learners (aged 10–15 years)

Tables 3, 4, and 5 display the responses as frequencies and percentages for the students' age, the number of children in the house, and the school location.

Table 3: Distribution according to the students' age (N=1,429).

Students' age in years	N=1,429	Percentage (%)
10–11	922	65%
12–13	409	29%
14–15	98	7%

Table 4: Distribution according to the number of children in the household (N=1,429).

Number of children in the household	N=1,429	Percentage (%)
0–3	615	43%
4–7	762	53%
≥8	52	4%

Table 5: Distribution according to the school location (N=1,429).

School location	N=1,429	Percentage (%)
Muscat	234	16%
Musandam	3	0%
Al Buraimi	13	1%
Al Batinah North	119	8%
Al Batinah South	107	7%
A'Dhahirah	183	13%
A'Dakhiliya	322	23%
ASharqiyah North	84	6%
ASharqiyah South	46	3%
Al Wusta	18	1%
Dhofar	300	21%

Regarding the distribution of children by age, around 65% (922) of parents had children aged 10–11 in school, representing most of the youngest children attending Basic Education (C2). In contrast, only around 7% (98) of parents had children aged 14–15 in school. Regarding the number of children in each family, the categorisation of family size in this sample ranged from one child to more than eight children. The data indicate that only around 4% of the families had 8 children or more, whereas families with 4–7 children represented 53% of the sample, more than half. The second highest percentage was 43% for families who had 0–3 children in their household. In terms of the numbers of children

attending schools in the different Omani governorates, the highest number 322 (23%) were at schools in A'Dakhiliya, followed by 300 (21%) in Dhofar. The lowest number was three in Musandam, related to the small population and limited number of schools in this governorate.

5.1.2 Demographic characteristics of the parents

The second set of demographic data relates to the parents who took part in the study. Table 6 presents the data as frequencies and percentages for the parents who participated in the survey and had children in C2 schools, as specified in the questionnaire. This section presents the participants' relationship with the student, level of education, monthly family income, and employment status.

Table 6: Distribution according to the participants' relationship with the student (N=1,429).

Demographic characteristics	N=1,429	Percentage (%)
Participants' relationship with the student		
Mother	788	55%
Father	596	42%
Uncle	3	0%
Aunt	2	0%
Other	40	3%
Parental education level		
Did not complete high school	203	14%
High school	534	37%
Diploma	195	14%
Bachelor's degree	372	26%
Master's degree	65	5%
Other	60	4%
Current job status		
Employed full-time	652	46%
Employed part-time worker	76	5%
Not employed	242	17%
Other	459	32%
Monthly family income		
<300 OMR	178	12%
300–500 OMR	429	30%
501–1,000 OMR	452	32%
>1,000 OMR	370	26%

* 100 OMR was equivalent to 203 GBP as of 29 September 2024

Different categories of relations appeared in the sample, for example mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, sisters, brothers, and others. Whilst most respondents were mothers (788, around 55%), there was also a fairly high proportion of fathers (596, nearly 42%). In relation to educational level, most had completed high school (534, around 37%), 26% (372) had bachelor's degrees and nearly 14% had not completed high school but had diplomas. Furthermore, nearly 46% (652) were in full-time employment, almost 17% (242) were not employed, 32% (459) recorded 'other' (e.g. retired, housewife, freelance) and the lowest percentage, at around 5% (76), were employed part time. For monthly family income, most responses were in the 300–1,000 OMR range, with 30% (429) of respondents reporting a monthly income of 300–500 OMR, and around 32% (452) earning 501–1,000 OMR per month.

Further discussion will be provided regarding some of these demographic characteristics and their influence on parents' perception of their involvement in their children's learning in section 5.2.

5.1.3 Demographic characteristics of the teachers

The third set of demographic data relates to the 655 teachers who took part in the survey. Table 7 outlines the teachers' school location, the number of classes taught per week and the grades taught, years of experience, and professional qualifications.

Table 7: Distribution according to location of school, grades taught, number of classes taught per week, years of experience, and professional qualifications (N=655).

Demographic characteristics	N=655	Percentage (%)
School location		
Muscat	87	13%
Musandam	3	1%
Al Buraimi	18	3%
Al Batinah North	48	7%
Al Batinah South	27	4%
A'Dhahirah	37	6%
A'Dakhiliya	72	11%
ASharqiyah North	13	2%
ASharqiyah South	26	4%
Al Wusta	31	5%
Dhofar	293	45%
Number of classes taught per week		
0–10	87	13%
11–19	321	49%
≥20	247	38%
Years of experience		
0–5	164	25%
6–15	328	50%
≥16	163	25%
Highest completed qualification		
Diploma	31	5%
Bachelor's degree	573	87%
Master's degree	47	7%
PhD	4	1%
Teaching grades		
Mix 5-10	655	100%

Overall, nearly 45% (293), the largest group of respondents, were working in C2 schools in Dhofar Governorate, followed by Muscat (87, 13%), and then closely by A'Dakhiliya (72, 11%). All the respondents reported teaching mixed grades from 5 to 10 (e.g. grades 5 and grade 9). In terms of the number of classes per week, nearly half 49% (321) were teaching 11–19 lessons per week. Around 38% (247) had 20 lessons or more per week. The lowest percentage, at around 13% (87) was for teachers who had 10 lessons or fewer per week, typical of small schools in rural areas or for senior teachers with other administrative duties and supervision responsibilities besides teaching commitments. Each lesson in a government school took around 45 minutes in all governorates. Half

50% (328) of the respondents had 6–15 years of teaching experience among all the Omani governorates. Around 25% reported having 0–5 years or ≥ 16 years. As shown in Table 7, the majority (573, 87%) reported that they held bachelor's degrees. Only 1% (4) of the participants had a PhD, representing the lowest percentage.

5.1.4 Demographic characteristics of headteachers (HTs)

The fourth set of demographic data relates to the HTs working in Basic Education Schools C2 in Oman, 212 of whom responded to the questionnaire. Table 8 presents the frequencies and percentages for information on school location (in which Omani governorate), total number of students in the school, professional qualifications, and years of experience as an HT.

Table 8: Distribution of headteachers according to school location, total number of students, professional qualification, and years of experience as a headteacher (N=212).

Demographic characteristics	N=212	Percentage (%)
School location		
Muscat	17	8%
Musandam	9	4%
Al Buraimi	11	5%
Al Batinah North	16	8%
Al Batinah South	14	7%
A'Dhahirah	18	8%
A'Dakhiliya	27	13%
ASharqiyah North	11	5%
ASharqiyah South	17	8%
Al Wusta	10	5%
Dhofar	62	29%
Highest completed qualification		
Diploma	6	3%
Bachelor's degree	156	74%
Master's degree	48	23%
PhD	2	1%
Years of experience		
0–5	75	35%
6–15	90	42%
≥ 16	47	22%
Number of students at school		
0–100	30	14%
101–500	95	45%
≥ 501	87	41%

Most of the HTs responding were from Dhofar Governorate (62, around 29%), followed by A'Dakhiliya Governorate (27, nearly 13%). Again, similar to the parents' and teachers' responses, the fewest respondents (9) were from Musandam Governorate. Around 42% (90) of the HTs had 6–15 years of experience, approximately 35% (75) had 0–5 years and around 22% (47) had 16 or more. As shown in Table 8, more than 73% (156) held a Bachelor of Education degree and only 2 reported that they had a PhD. In terms of the number of students, a minority of schools (30, around 14%) had fewer than 100; most (95, around 45%) had 101–500, and 41% (87) had 501 students or more.

The next section addresses parents' reports concerning their involvement with their children's learning before and during the pandemic.

5.2 Parents' self-reports of their involvement in their children's learning

This section will first present the results from the parents' survey concerning their PI practices before and during the pandemic, addressing the following aspects: interaction with the school about children's learning (online and face-to-face); parents' access to the internet at home; parents' access to technology; parents' satisfaction with schools' support and resources within educational programmes; means of parental communication with teachers. In addition, the section considers the relationship between parents' socio-demographic characteristics and PI practices. The demographic variables comprise: the location of the children's school; the number of children; educational level; current job; monthly income. The analysis identifies associations between the parents' socio-demographic characteristics and PI with schools regarding children's learning. The last part concerns the parents' relationship with teachers in terms of PI in their children's learning during the pandemic.

5.2.1 Parental involvement (PI) practices before and during the pandemic

Table 9 presents parents' reported PI practices with their children's teachers during the academic year before and during the pandemic, distinguishing between face-to-face and online interactions. Since the survey was conducted in Arabic (see 4.4.1), it was clear to all participants that 'face-to-face' interaction referred to direct physical interaction as opposed to using online (distance) tools. Moreover, the pilot study showed no

misunderstandings regarding these terms among participants, both parents and educators.

Table 9: Reported PI practices before and during the pandemic face-to-face and online (N=1,429).

	Face-to-face interaction		Online interaction	
	Before % (N=1,429)	During % (N=1,429)	Before % (N=1,429)	During % (N=1,429)
Never	8% (110)	30% (438)	25% (364)	18% (256)
Once a year	8% (114)	8% (119)	6% (95)	9% (126)
At least twice a year	24% (346)	10% (145)	16% (222)	10% (148)
Once a month	37% (532)	18% (252)	27% (380)	16% (239)
Once a week	15% (210)	16% (223)	16% (223)	19% (267)
Daily	8% (117)	18% (252)	10% (145)	27% (393)

Before the pandemic, 37% of parents (532) were interacting with teachers face-to-face once per month and 24% (346) were interacting at least twice a year, as shown in Table 9. During the pandemic, the percentage of parents who never had face-to-face interactions increased from 8% to 30%. However, at the same time, the percentage of parents who had face-to-face contact with the teacher at least once a month or more only decreased by 18%, indicating this type of contact continued during the pandemic. What clearly did increase during the pandemic was daily online contact with a teacher about their child's learning from 10% before the pandemic to 27% during.

In terms of online interaction before the pandemic, 27% (380) of parents reported that their average interaction with teachers about their children's learning was once a month, while 25% (364) of parents indicated that they never interacted with teachers online pre-pandemic. With regard to online interaction during the pandemic, the percentage of participants who said they never had online interaction decreased from 25% to 18%, likely related to the need for distance e-learning. The percentage of parents who said they had online interaction at least once a month decreased from 27% to 16% during the pandemic, whereas the percentage of parents who said they had daily and once-a-week online interaction increased.

To explain this variation in the results for parents' face-to-face and online interaction pre-and during the pandemic, it is worth look closely at some of the factors that might affect PI, for instance geography and socio-demographic variables. This study examined school

location, number of children in the household, relationship to the child, educational level of the carer, employment status, and monthly household income. Tables 10 and 11 present the relation between school location and face-to-face and online interaction between parents and teachers before and during the pandemic.

Table 10: Parent–teacher face-to-face interactions before and during the pandemic differentiating by school location (N=1,429).

Parent–teacher face-to-face interaction over the academic year before and during the pandemic												
School location	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before % (N=110)	During % (N=438)	Before % (N=114)	During % (N=119)	Before % (N=346)	During % (N=145)	Before % (N=532)	During % (N=252)	Before % (N=210)	During % (N=223)	Before % (N=117)	During % (N=252)
Muscat	7% (16)	33% (78)	8% (19)	9% (20)	24% (57)	9% (20)	38% (88)	13% (31)	12% (29)	16% (37)	11% (25)	21% (48)
Musandam	0% (0)	33% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	33% (1)	33% (1)	67% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	33% (1)
Al Buraimi	0% (0)	23% (3)	8% (1)	0% (0)	23% (3)	0% (0)	23% (3)	15% (2)	38% (5)	15% (2)	8% (1)	46% (6)
Al Batinah North	15% (18)	39% (46)	6% (7)	7% (8)	23% (27)	13% (15)	31% (37)	13% (16)	16% (19)	13% (16)	9% (11)	15% (18)
Al Batinah South	10% (11)	30% (32)	9% (10)	10% (11)	21% (23)	10% (11)	36% (38)	15% (16)	14% (15)	15% (16)	9% (10)	20% (21)
A'Dhahirah	5% (10)	31% (56)	9% (17)	14% (25)	33% (60)	12% (22)	39% (71)	18% (33)	11% (20)	13% (24)	3% (5)	13% (23)
A'Dakhiliya	10% (33)	36% (117)	9% (28)	8% (25)	26% (84)	11% (35)	36% (115)	19% (61)	13% (42)	11% (36)	6% (20)	15% (48)
ASharqiyah North	5% (4)	31% (26)	11% (9)	8% (7)	25% (21)	8% (7)	37% (31)	23% (19)	14% (12)	13% (11)	8% (7)	17% (14)
ASharqiyah South	15% (7)	22% (10)	2% (1)	9% (4)	22% (10)	9% (4)	43% (20)	24% (11)	9% (4)	11% (5)	9% (4)	26% (12)
Al Wusta	6% (1)	22% (4)	11% (2)	0% (0)	6% (1)	0% (0)	33% (6)	28% (5)	17% (3)	28% (5)	28% (5)	22% (4)
Dhofar	3% (10)	22% (65)	7% (20)	6% (19)	20% (60)	10% (31)	41% (122)	19% (57)	20% (59)	24% (71)	10% (29)	19% (57)

Table 10 depicts parents' and teachers' face-to-face interaction in Omani governorates. The highest number of responses were, for example, from parents in Dhofar, A'Dakhiliya, and A'Dahirah. This is consistent with the highest number of HTs being from Dhofar (see Table 8). Looking at Table 10, 3% of parents said that they had never had face-to-face interactions with teachers in Dhofar before the pandemic, representing the lowest percentage of responses, but this increased to 22% during the pandemic.

In terms of daily face-to-face interaction, most of the parents' responses from different governorates showed that this increased on average during the pandemic compared to before the pandemic. The highest responses for face-to-face interaction with teachers during the academic year before the pandemic was once a month, as seen in most of the governorates except Musandam and Al Buraimi, with an average of once a week each. However, there were limited responses from these two governorates. The highest

responses from parents during the pandemic showed that they did not engage in face-to-face interactions with their children's teachers, potentially due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. In contrast, in Dhofar, 24% of the parents said that they interacted with teachers face-to-face once a week during the pandemic. Moreover, in Al Buraimi, 46% of parents indicated that they had daily face-to-face interactions with teachers during the pandemic and in Al Wusta 22% of parents said they did so, perhaps reflecting the size of schools and student numbers in some rural areas and villages. These students were attending schools during the pandemic, taking all precautions in terms of following safety measures and rules, particularly since there is often a lack of internet access at home and a shortage of devices in such locations. Furthermore, even if families had devices with internet access, some had limited knowledge when it came to using technology, so they had to visit schools daily to learn how to deal with online learning during the pandemic. These aspects will be investigated in greater depth in light of the qualitative data.

Table 11: Parent–teacher online interaction before and during the pandemic differentiating by school location (N=1,429).

Parent–teacher online interaction over the academic year before and during the pandemic												
School location	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before % (N=364)	During % (N=256)	Before % (N=95)	During % (N=126)	Before % (N=222)	During % (N=148)	Before % (N=380)	During % (N=239)	Before % (N=223)	During % (N=267)	Before % (N=145)	During % (N=393)
Muscat	31% (72)	14% (33)	7% (17)	9% (22)	14% (32)	10% (23)	24% (55)	14% (32)	15% (34)	23% (54)	10% (24)	30% (70)
Musandam	33% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	67% (2)	33% (1)	0% (0)	67% (2)
Al Buraimi	15% (2)	15% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	23% (3)	8% (1)	23% (3)	15% (2)	31% (4)	23% (3)	8% (1)	38% (5)
Al Batinah North	24% (28)	11% (13)	6% (7)	12% (14)	18% (21)	15% (18)	26% (31)	17% (20)	16% (19)	17% (20)	11% (13)	29% (34)
Al Batinah South	25% (27)	21% (23)	8% (9)	10% (11)	14% (15)	9% (10)	30% (32)	21% (22)	14% (15)	19% (20)	8% (9)	20% (21)
A'Dhahirah	23% (42)	19% (35)	8% (15)	14% (26)	17% (31)	13% (24)	33% (60)	16% (30)	13% (24)	15% (28)	6% (11)	22% (40)
A'Dakhiliya	30% (97)	27% (87)	5% (16)	9% (29)	21% (68)	11% (35)	24% (76)	18% (57)	13% (42)	12% (38)	7% (23)	24% (76)
ASharqiyah North	20% (17)	15% (13)	6% (5)	8% (7)	18% (15)	8% (7)	29% (24)	23% (19)	18% (15)	17% (14)	10% (8)	29% (24)
ASharqiyah South	35% (16)	24% (11)	4% (2)	2% (1)	15% (7)	7% (3)	30% (14)	28% (13)	7% (3)	13% (6)	9% (4)	26% (12)
Al Wusta	17% (3)	11% (2)	22% (4)	11% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	11% (2)	11% (2)	22% (4)	22% (4)	28% (5)	44% (8)
Dhofar	20% (59)	12% (37)	7% (20)	5% (14)	10% (30)	9% (27)	28% (83)	14% (42)	20% (61)	26% (79)	16% (47)	34% (101)

In terms of parents' online interactions with teachers in different school locations pre- and during the pandemic, Table 11 shows that they increased by more than double on average

in all governorates during the pandemic. For instance, in Muscat, 31% of the participants said they never had an online interaction with teachers before the pandemic, while only 14% of them said they did not during the pandemic. Moreover, as can be seen, daily online interaction increased in all governorates. However, there were some differences between governorates before the pandemic. Table 11 shows that in Muscat and Al Sharqiyah South, most participants said they never had online interactions before the pandemic, while in the other governorates, parents said their online interactions varied on average between once a month and once a week before the pandemic. This will be explored further through interviews to identify the reasons for the differences between the governorates.

Table 12: Parent–teacher face-to-face interactions before and during the pandemic differentiating by participants’ relationship with the student (N=1,429).

Parent–teacher face-to-face interaction over the academic year before and during the pandemic												
Participants’ relationship with the student	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before % (N=110)	During % (N=438)	Before % (N=114)	During % (N=119)	Before % (N=346)	During % (N=145)	Before % (N=532)	During % (N=252)	Before % (N=210)	During % (N=223)	Before % (N=117)	During % (N=252)
Mother (N=788)	7% (58)	34% (267)	8% (66)	7% (57)	24% (192)	10% (78)	36% (286)	16% (130)	15% (117)	14% (107)	9% (69)	19% (149)
Father (N=596)	8% (46)	27% (159)	7% (42)	10% (61)	25% (149)	11% (63)	38% (229)	19% (115)	15% (87)	18% (107)	7% (43)	15% (91)
Uncle (N=3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	33% (1)	33% (1)	33% (1)	0% (0)	33% (1)	67% (2)
Aunt (N=2)	0% (0)	50% (1)	50% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	50% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	50% (1)
Other (N=40)	15% (6)	28% (11)	13% (5)	3% (1)	13% (5)	10% (4)	40% (16)	15% (6)	10% (4)	23% (9)	10% (4)	23% (9)

Looking at Table 12, it is apparent that the highest parent–teacher face-to-face interaction was on average once a month before the pandemic. In contrast, during the pandemic, most participants said that they never had face-to-face interactions with teachers. However, the few uncles in the sample said they had everyday face-to-face interactions with teachers during the pandemic, and parents’ daily face-to-face interactions with teachers increased by more than double.

Table 13: Parent–teacher online interaction before and during the pandemic differentiating by participants’ relationship with the student (N=1,429).

Parent–teacher online interactions over the academic year before and during the pandemic												
Participants’ relationship with the student	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before % (N=364)	During % (N=256)	Before % (N=95)	During % (N=126)	Before % (N=222)	During % (N=148)	Before % (N=380)	During % (N=239)	Before % (N=223)	During % (N=267)	Before % (N=145)	During % (N=393)
Mother (N=788)	27% (210)	18% (144)	7% (51)	8% (65)	15% (115)	11% (86)	25% (198)	14% (109)	16% (124)	18% (140)	11% (90)	31% (244)
Father (N=596)	24% (140)	18% (105)	7% (40)	10% (60)	17% (102)	10% (60)	29% (170)	20% (120)	16% (93)	20% (119)	9% (51)	22% (132)
Uncle (N=3)	33% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	33% (1)	33% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	33% (1)	67% (2)
Aunt (N=2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	50% (1)	0% (0)	50% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (2)
Other (N=40)	33% (13)	18% (7)	10% (4)	3% (1)	13% (5)	5% (2)	25% (10)	23% (9)	13% (5)	20% (8)	8% (3)	33% (13)

Table 13 shows differences in online interaction between mothers’ and fathers’ responses before the pandemic. The highest percentage of mothers (27%) said they never engaged in online interaction with teachers before the pandemic, while the highest percentage of fathers (29%) said they did so once a month. Both fathers and mothers indicated that their daily online interaction increased during the pandemic, for fathers from 9% before the pandemic to 22% and for mothers from 11% to 31%. These differences between fathers’ and mothers’ online interaction practices before the pandemic will be explored further through the qualitative data.

Table 14: Parent–teacher face-to-face interaction before and during the pandemic differentiating by parents’ educational level (N=1,429).

Parent–teacher face-to-face interaction over the academic year before and during the pandemic												
Parents’ educational level	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before % (N=110)	During % (N=438)	Before % (N=114)	During % (N=119)	Before % (N=346)	During % (N=145)	Before % (N=532)	During % (N=252)	Before % (N=210)	During % (N=223)	Before % (N=117)	During % (N=252)
Did not complete high school	8% (16)	28% (57)	13% (27)	10% (20)	20% (40)	10% (21)	36% (74)	19% (38)	14% (29)	15% (31)	8% (17)	18% (36)
High school	6% (34)	30% (158)	7% (38)	8% (45)	22% (116)	11% (59)	40% (213)	18% (94)	16% (87)	16% (83)	9% (46)	18% (95)
Diploma	9% (18)	32% (62)	7% (13)	10% (19)	25% (49)	8% (15)	40% (78)	18% (35)	14% (27)	13% (25)	5% (10)	20% (39)
Bachelor’s degree	8% (30)	33% (124)	8% (28)	5% (19)	27% (102)	10% (38)	34% (125)	19% (72)	15% (55)	16% (59)	9% (32)	16% (60)
Master’s degree	5% (3)	26% (17)	9% (6)	18% (12)	35% (23)	9% (6)	34% (22)	6% (4)	6% (4)	18% (12)	11% (7)	22% (14)
Other	15% (9)	33% (20)	3% (2)	7% (4)	27% (16)	10% (6)	33% (20)	15% (9)	13% (8)	22% (13)	8% (5)	13% (8)

Table 6 depicts that the greatest proportion of parents (534, 37%) had a high school certificate as the highest level of education. Almost all the parents, regardless of their educational level, reported the same frequency of face-to-face interaction on average before and during the pandemic, with the highest means for once a month before the pandemic and never during the pandemic. Parents' daily face-to-face interaction with teachers increased during the pandemic across all educational levels. These results will be investigated more closely with reference to the interviews to establish the reasons for the increase in face-to-face interaction during the pandemic.

Table 15: Parent-teacher online interaction before and during the pandemic differentiating by parents' educational level (N=1,429).

Parent-teacher online interaction over the academic year before and during the pandemic												
Parents' educational level	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before % (N=364)	During % (N=256)	Before % (N=95)	During % (N=126)	Before % (N=222)	During % (N=148)	Before % (N=380)	During % (N=239)	Before % (N=223)	During % (N=267)	Before % (N=145)	During % (N=393)
Did not complete high school	22% (44)	21% (43)	9% (18)	12% (24)	17% (34)	7% (15)	28% (56)	18% (36)	17% (35)	14% (29)	8% (16)	28% (56)
High school	20% (109)	16% (87)	7% (37)	9% (47)	15% (78)	10% (51)	27% (145)	16% (84)	17% (89)	19% (103)	14% (76)	30% (162)
Diploma	31% (60)	19% (36)	4% (7)	9% (17)	15% (30)	8% (16)	30% (58)	17% (33)	15% (29)	18% (35)	6% (11)	30% (58)
Bachelor's degree	30% (111)	19% (70)	7% (26)	8% (31)	16% (60)	12% (45)	24% (89)	17% (64)	14% (53)	20% (73)	9% (33)	24% (89)
Master's degree	32% (21)	15% (10)	9% (6)	11% (7)	25% (16)	22% (14)	20% (13)	20% (13)	9% (6)	20% (13)	5% (3)	12% (8)
Other	32% (19)	17% (10)	2% (1)	0% (0)	7% (4)	12% (7)	32% (19)	15% (9)	18% (11)	23% (14)	10% (6)	33% (20)

In terms of the parents' educational level in relation to online interaction, there were some differences in the parents' responses before the pandemic. Table 15 shows that parents with lower educational levels engaged in more online interactions with teachers than parents with higher educational levels. Before the pandemic, the highest percentage of parents who did not complete high school said they had online interaction with teachers once a month on average. The highest percentage of those with higher educational qualifications (diploma, bachelor's degree, master's degree) reported they never had online interactions before the pandemic. However, most responded that their daily online interaction increased on average during the pandemic across educational levels. The reasons for these differences in parents' responses in relation to educational level will be explored with reference to the interview data.

Table 16: Parent–teacher face-to-face interaction before and during the pandemic differentiating by parents’ employment status (N=1,429).

Parent–teacher face-to-face interaction over the academic before and during the pandemic												
Parents' employment status	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before % (N=110)	During % (N=438)	Before % (N=114)	During % (N=119)	Before % (N=346)	During % (N=145)	Before % (N=532)	During % (N=252)	Before % (N=210)	During % (N=223)	Before % (N=117)	During % (N=252)
Full-time employed	7% (50)	27% (176)	8% (50)	9% (61)	25% (160)	9% (56)	35% (230)	19% (122)	14% (93)	17% (112)	11% (69)	19% (125)
Part-time employed	8% (6)	18% (14)	13% (10)	8% (6)	16% (12)	17% (13)	34% (26)	29% (22)	24% (18)	11% (8)	5% (4)	17% (13)
Not employed	5% (12)	30% (72)	5% (13)	4% (10)	16% (38)	9% (21)	43% (103)	15% (35)	21% (51)	19% (45)	10% (25)	24% (59)
Other	9% (42)	38% (176)	9% (41)	9% (42)	30% (136)	12% (55)	38% (173)	16% (73)	11% (48)	13% (58)	4% (19)	12% (55)

Table 16 shows a slight difference in parents’ responses concerning their face-to-face interaction with teachers about their children’s learning on average during the pandemic based on employment status. The highest percentage of parents who were in part-time employment (29%) reported face-to-face interaction with teachers once a month on average during the pandemic. In contrast, the highest percentage of parents in the ‘other’ category indicated that they never had face-to-face interaction with teachers during the pandemic. Before the pandemic, most parents responded that their face-to-face interaction with teachers was once a month on average irrespective of employment status. There was an increase in daily face-to-face interaction with teachers during the pandemic. These findings will be addressed further in light of the interview data.

Table 17: Parent–teacher online interaction before and during the pandemic differentiating by parents’ employment status (N=1,429).

Parent–teacher online interaction over the academic year before and during the pandemic												
Parents' employment status	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before % (N=364)	During % (N=256)	Before % (N=95)	During % (N=126)	Before % (N=222)	During % (N=148)	Before % (N=380)	During % (N=239)	Before % (N=223)	During % (N=267)	Before % (N=145)	During % (N=393)
Full-time employed	27% (174)	18% (115)	7% (46)	8% (52)	16% (105)	9% (61)	25% (163)	20% (127)	15% (97)	21% (134)	10% (67)	25% (163)
Part-time employed	17% (13)	13% (10)	3% (2)	9% (7)	17% (13)	13% (10)	33% (25)	20% (15)	22% (17)	15% (11)	8% (6)	30% (23)
Not employed	23% (55)	14% (34)	6% (15)	6% (14)	9% (22)	7% (18)	24% (57)	10% (25)	22% (53)	20% (49)	17% (40)	42% (102)
Other	27% (122)	21% (97)	7% (32)	12% (53)	18% (82)	13% (59)	29% (135)	16% (72)	12% (56)	16% (73)	7% (32)	23% (105)

In terms of online interaction and parents’ employment status, Table 17 reveals some differences in parents’ responses. Most of those who were full-time employees (27%)

reported they had never interacted online before the pandemic. Parents who were not employed or in the 'other' category recorded having online interaction with teachers once a month on average before the pandemic. Thus, as might be expected, parents with full-time jobs had less online interaction with teachers before the pandemic. During the pandemic, parents' daily online interaction increased for most across employment status types.

Table 18: Parent-teacher face-to-face interaction before and during the pandemic differentiating by monthly household income (N=1,429).

Parent-teacher face-to-face interaction over the academic year before and during the pandemic												
Monthly household income	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before % (N=110)	During % (N=438)	Before % (N=114)	During % (N=119)	Before % (N=346)	During % (N=145)	Before % (N=532)	During % (N=252)	Before % (N=210)	During % (N=223)	Before % (N=117)	During % (N=252)
>300 OMR	10% (17)	27% (48)	11% (19)	10% (18)	13% (23)	10% (17)	38% (67)	17% (31)	20% (35)	16% (29)	10% (17)	20% (35)
300–500 OMR	8% (32)	29% (123)	9% (38)	8% (32)	20% (85)	10% (44)	39% (165)	18% (75)	17% (72)	18% (76)	9% (37)	18% (79)
501–1,000 OMR	9% (39)	30% (137)	6% (26)	8% (34)	24% (106)	10% (43)	41% (185)	20% (91)	14% (64)	16% (74)	7% (32)	16% (73)
≥1,000 OMR	6% (22)	35% (130)	8% (31)	9% (35)	36% (132)	11% (41)	31% (115)	15% (55)	11% (39)	12% (44)	8% (31)	18% (65)

Table 18 presents parents' responses regarding their face-to-face interaction with teachers before and during the pandemic on average, categorised by different ranges of monthly income. Most parents reported face-to-face interaction with teachers of once a month on average before the pandemic. However, the highest percentage of parents with a monthly income of more than 1,000 OMR (36%) indicated that they had face-to-face interactions at least twice a year before the pandemic. This suggests that parents with a higher monthly income had slightly less frequent face-to-face interactions with teachers before the pandemic. During the pandemic the situation changed, with most of the parents indicating that they never interacted face-to-face with teachers, regardless of monthly income. Furthermore, there were no apparent differences between parents' responses based on monthly income concerning face-to-face interaction during the pandemic. This reveals a notable difference before and during the pandemic: before, the results show an apparent association between parents' monthly income and the frequency of face-to-face interaction with teachers, but this disappears during the pandemic. The reasons for this will be explored in Chapter 8.

Table 19: Parent–teacher online interaction before and during the pandemic differentiating by monthly household income (N=1,429).

Parent–teacher online interaction over the academic year before and during the pandemic												
Monthly household income	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before % (N=364)	During % (N=256)	Before % (N=95)	During % (N=126)	Before % (N=222)	During % (N=148)	Before % (N=380)	During % (N=239)	Before % (N=223)	During % (N=267)	Before % (N=145)	During % (N=393)
<300 OMR	14% (24)	12% (22)	10% (18)	8% (14)	13% (23)	12% (21)	25% (45)	15% (26)	22% (39)	18% (32)	16% (29)	35% (63)
300–500 OMR	22% (95)	19% (80)	6% (25)	9% (37)	13% (56)	7% (30)	28% (118)	17% (73)	19% (82)	18% (76)	12% (53)	31% (133)
501–1,000 OMR	27% (123)	20% (89)	4% (20)	8% (35)	16% (74)	11% (48)	30% (137)	18% (83)	14% (64)	20% (90)	8% (34)	24% (107)
≥1,000 OMR	33% (122)	18% (65)	9% (32)	11% (40)	19% (69)	13% (49)	22% (80)	15% (57)	10% (38)	19% (69)	8% (29)	24% (90)

Table 19 shows that most parents with a monthly income of 300–1,000 OMR had online interaction with teachers once a month on average before the pandemic. Among those earning more than 1,000 OMR per month, most (33%) said they never had online interaction before the pandemic. This means that parents with a higher monthly income had less online interaction before the pandemic. Parents' daily online interaction with teachers increased on average regardless of monthly income during the pandemic.

Table 20: Parent–teacher face-to-face interaction before and during the pandemic differentiating by number of children in the household (N=1,429).

Parent–teacher face-to-face interaction over the academic year before and during the pandemic												
Number of children in the household	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before % (N=110)	During % (N=438)	Before % (N=114)	During % (N=119)	Before % (N=346)	During % (N=145)	Before % (N=532)	During % (N=252)	Before % (N=210)	During % (N=223)	Before % (N=117)	During % (N=252)
0–3	8% (50)	31% (192)	8% (51)	7% (45)	24% (147)	11% (66)	36% (222)	18% (110)	15% (95)	15% (94)	8% (50)	18% (108)
4–7	8% (57)	31% (238)	8% (60)	9% (71)	25% (191)	10% (74)	38% (289)	17% (128)	14% (105)	16% (118)	8% (60)	18% (133)
≥8	6% (3)	15% (8)	6% (3)	6% (3)	15% (8)	10% (5)	40% (21)	27% (14)	19% (10)	21% (11)	14% (7)	21% (11)

Table 20 presents parents' responses concerning their face-to-face interaction with teachers on average before and during the pandemic in relation to the number of children in their household. There are no apparent differences in parents' responses for before the pandemic, with most reporting once a month no matter how many children they had. However, during the pandemic, the responses indicated that most parents with 8 or more children (27%) had more direct interaction. This, though, was a very small proportion as only 4% of parents had 8 children or more. In terms of online interaction, the data indicated that there was no relation between parents reported online interaction and

number of children, with most parents responding daily online interaction during the pandemic and once a week before the pandemic (see Appendix J1).

Having addressed face-to-face and online interaction before and during the pandemic in relation to different variables, the next section examines specific elements that might have affected parents' online interaction before and during the pandemic. These include having internet access at home and different geographical and socio-demographic factors, such as school location, relationship to the child, educational level, employment status, monthly household incomes, and number of children in the household.

5.2.2 Parents' access to internet at home before and during the pandemic

Table 21 indicates that most parents had internet access at home with a moderate or average speed before and during the pandemic. However, during the pandemic, it seems that the internet speed was reduced, as the second highest percentage of parents' responses (33%) reported unreliable speeds. Interestingly, the percentage of parents without internet access decreased notably from 16% before the pandemic to just 2% during the pandemic. This change might be attributed to the need for internet access for distance learning. Additionally, the percentage of parents reporting high-speed internet access increased slightly from 18% to 21% during the pandemic, which might indicate an improvement in internet quality for some households.

Table 21: Parents' access to the internet at home before and during the pandemic (N=1,429).

	Internet access at home before and during the pandemic	
	Before % (N=1,429)	During % (N=1,429)
No, I did not have access to the internet	16% (235)	2% (34)
Yes, but I couldn't access the internet (due to a weak signal)	4% (54)	4% (60)
Yes, unreliable or slow internet access	24% (336)	33% (514)
Yes, moderate internet access	39% (552)	36% (518)
Yes, with high-speed internet access	18% (252)	21% (303)

To gain further insight into the results presented in Table 21, the potential relationships between internet access at home and socio-demographic variables (school location, parents' educational level, parents' employment status, monthly household monthly, and number of children in the household) are examined in the following tables.

Table 22: Parents' access to internet at home before and during the pandemic differentiating by school location (N=1,429).

School location	Access to the internet at home before and during the pandemic									
	No, I did not have access to the internet		Yes, but I couldn't access the internet (due to a weak signal)		Yes, slow or unreliable internet access		Yes, moderate internet access		Yes, high-speed internet access	
	Before % (N=235)	During % (N=34)	Before % (N=54)	During % (N=60)	Before % (N=336)	During % (N=514)	Before % (N=552)	During % (N=518)	Before % (N=252)	During % (N=303)
Muscat	14% (32)	1% (2)	1% (2)	0% (0)	17% (39)	26% (60)	36% (84)	39% (91)	33% (77)	35% (81)
Musandam	0% (0)	0% (0)	33% (1)	33% (1)	67% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	33% (1)	0% (0)	33% (1)
Al Buraimi	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	15% (2)	31% (4)	69% (9)	54% (7)	15% (2)	15% (2)
Al Batinah North	23% (27)	4% (5)	5% (6)	8% (10)	24% (28)	43% (51)	35% (41)	31% (37)	14% (17)	13% (16)
Al Batinah South	22% (24)	3% (3)	5% (5)	6% (6)	21% (22)	31% (33)	36% (38)	38% (41)	17% (18)	22% (24)
A'Dhahirah	18% (33)	4% (7)	6% (11)	4% (8)	25% (45)	36% (65)	36% (65)	36% (65)	16% (29)	21% (38)
A'Dakhiliya	16% (52)	3% (8)	4% (12)	6% (19)	30% (96)	42% (135)	38% (121)	34% (108)	13% (41)	16% (52)
ASharqiyah North	21% (18)	1% (1)	8% (7)	5% (4)	21% (18)	48% (40)	41% (34)	31% (26)	8% (7)	16% (13)
ASharqiyah South	26% (12)	7% (3)	2% (1)	2% (1)	24% (11)	33% (15)	37% (17)	48% (22)	11% (5)	11% (5)
Al Wusta	22% (4)	6% (1)	11% (2)	6% (1)	44% (8)	61% (11)	22% (4)	22% (4)	0% (0)	6% (1)
Dhofar	11% (33)	1% (4)	2% (7)	3% (10)	22% (65)	33% (100)	46% (139)	39% (116)	19% (56)	23% (70)

Looking at Table 22, the data reveal differences in internet access across different governorates. For instance, parents from Musandam and Alwusta said they had slow internet access before the pandemic, while parents from other governorates said they had moderate internet access before the pandemic. Slow internet access could be related to the location of the governorates, far from the capital, and their low populations. During the pandemic, internet access stayed the same or improved a little on average. However, in Al Batinah North, A'Dakhiliya, and ASharqiyah North, the internet speed decreased during the pandemic. This will be explored further with reference to the qualitative data. The percentage of parents who said they had high-speed internet increased or stayed almost the same during the pandemic in all the governorates. However, a considerable proportion of families did not have internet access at all before the pandemic and this number increased sharply during the pandemic in some governorates (26% in ASharqiyah South, 23% in Al Batinah North, and 22% in Al Batinah South and Al Wusta).

Table 23: Parents' access to the internet at home before and during the pandemic differentiating by parents' educational level (N=1,429).

Parents' educational level	Access to the internet at home before and during the pandemic									
	No, I did not have access to the internet		Yes, but I couldn't access the internet (due to a weak signal)		Yes, slow or unreliable internet access		Yes, moderate internet access		Yes, high-speed internet access	
	Before % (N=235)	During % (N=34)	Before % (N=54)	During % (N=60)	Before % (N=336)	During % (N=514)	Before % (N=552)	During % (N=518)	Before % (N=252)	During % (N=303)
Did not complete high school	26% (52)	6% (12)	5% (10)	5% (10)	27% (54)	45% (92)	30% (60)	34% (69)	13% (27)	10% (20)
High school	19% (100)	2% (13)	5% (27)	5% (29)	24% (126)	42% (223)	37% (198)	34% (182)	16% (83)	16% (87)
Diploma	13% (25)	2% (4)	2% (3)	2% (3)	26% (51)	37% (72)	43% (84)	35% (68)	16% (32)	25% (48)
Bachelor's degree	12% (44)	1% (2)	3% (11)	3% (13)	22% (81)	25% (94)	43% (159)	42% (158)	21% (77)	28% (105)
Master's degree	8% (5)	0% (0)	0% (0)	3% (2)	15% (10)	17% (11)	51% (33)	42% (27)	26% (17)	39% (25)
Other	15% (9)	5% (3)	5% (3)	5% (3)	23% (14)	37% (22)	30% (18)	23% (14)	27% (16)	30% (18)

From Table 23, it appears that there was no association between parents' educational level and internet access before the pandemic, as most parents, regardless of their educational level, reported having internet access at moderate speeds. However, during the pandemic, the educational level of parents did associate with internet access in their homes. For instance, parents with higher educational levels, such as those with bachelor's and master's degrees, had moderate internet speeds. In contrast, parents with lower educational levels experienced unreliable internet speeds, which worsened during the pandemic. Additionally, a sizeable percentage (26%) of parents who did not complete high school reported having no internet access before the pandemic, which decreased to 6% during the pandemic.

Table 24: Parents' access to internet at home before and during the pandemic differentiating by parents' employment status (N=1,429).

Parents' current job	Access to the internet at home before and during the pandemic									
	No, I did not have access to the internet		Yes, but I couldn't access the internet (due to a weak signal)		Yes, slow or unreliable internet access		Yes, moderate internet access		Yes, high-speed internet access	
	Before % (N=235)	During % (N=34)	Before % (N=54)	During % (N=60)	Before % (N=336)	During % (N=514)	Before % (N=552)	During % (N=518)	Before % (N=252)	During % (N=303)
Full-time employed	15% (99)	2% (14)	3% (21)	4% (24)	22% (144)	32% (209)	41% (265)	39% (252)	19% (123)	24% (153)
Part-time employed	21% (16)	4% (3)	5% (4)	1% (1)	18% (14)	40% (30)	34% (26)	33% (25)	21% (16)	22% (17)
Not employed	19% (47)	2% (4)	6% (14)	7% (16)	28% (68)	42% (101)	34% (83)	36% (86)	12% (30)	15% (35)
Other	16% (73)	3% (13)	3% (15)	4% (19)	24% (110)	38% (174)	39% (178)	34% (155)	18% (83)	21% (98)

Table 24 depicts an apparent association between parents' jobs and internet speed at home during the pandemic. Parents in full-time employment reported having moderate internet both before and during the pandemic. In contrast, parents in the category 'other' indicated that their internet speed decreased to low during the pandemic. The table also shows that the number of parents reporting high-speed internet access increased during the pandemic across all employment types. There was no link between parents' employment status and internet speed before the pandemic, with all parents reporting moderate internet access.

Table 25: Parents' access to the internet at home before and during the pandemic differentiating by monthly household income (N=1,429).

Monthly household income	Access to the internet at home before and during the pandemic									
	No, I did not have access to the internet		Yes, but I couldn't access the internet (due to a weak signal)		Yes, slow or unreliable internet access		Yes, moderate internet access		Yes, high-speed internet access	
	Before % (N=235)	During % (N=34)	Before % (N=54)	During % (N=60)	Before % (N=336)	During % (N=514)	Before % (N=552)	During % (N=518)	Before % (N=252)	During % (N=303)
<300 OMR	23% (41)	4% (7)	5% (9)	8% (14)	29% (52)	47% (84)	31% (55)	32% (57)	12% (21)	9% (16)
300–500 OMR	25% (105)	5% (20)	6% (26)	7% (29)	25% (105)	45% (193)	34% (144)	29% (125)	11% (49)	15% (62)
501–1,000 OMR	13% (58)	1% (6)	3% (13)	2% (9)	25% (111)	35% (160)	40% (181)	40% (182)	20% (89)	21% (95)
≥1,000 OMR	8% (31)	0.3% (1)	2% (6)	2% (8)	18% (68)	21% (77)	47% (172)	42% (154)	25% (93)	35% (130)

Table 25 indicates an apparent association between monthly household income and parents' responses regarding internet access at home during the pandemic only. The majority of parents with a higher monthly income (501–1,000 OMR or more) reported having moderate internet speeds during the pandemic, the same as before the pandemic. In contrast, parents with lower monthly incomes reported having slow internet speeds during the pandemic, a drop from moderate speeds before the pandemic. Table 25 also indicates that only 8% of parents with higher monthly incomes reported not having internet access before the pandemic. In contrast, 23% and 25% of parents with monthly incomes lower than 500 OMR reported not having internet access at home before the pandemic. The percentage of families without internet access at home before the pandemic decreased sharply during the pandemic across all income ranges.

Regarding parents' responses to the question about having internet access at home and number of children in the household, Table 26 indicates no differences. Both before and during the pandemic, parents said they had internet access with a moderate speed. However, around half of the parents reported having slow or unreliable internet access during the pandemic.

Table 26: Parents' access to the internet at home before and during the pandemic differentiating by number of children in the household (N=1,429).

Number of children in the household	Access to the internet at home before and during the pandemic									
	No, I did not have access to the internet		Yes, but I couldn't access the internet (due to a weak signal)		Yes, slow or unreliable internet access		Yes, moderate internet access		Yes, high-speed internet access	
	Before % (N=235)	During % (N=34)	Before % (N=54)	During % (N=60)	Before % (N=336)	During % (N=514)	Before % (N=552)	During % (N=518)	Before % (N=252)	During % (N=303)
0-3	13% (81)	2% (15)	4% (25)	4% (27)	24% (148)	35% (213)	40% (246)	35% (218)	19% (115)	23% (142)
4-7	19% (148)	2% (17)	4% (27)	4% (29)	23% (172)	37% (281)	38% (287)	37% (283)	17% (128)	20% (152)
≥8	12% (6)	4% (2)	4% (2)	8% (4)	31% (16)	39% (20)	37% (19)	33% (17)	17% (9)	17% (9)

Having considered parents' access to the internet at home, the coming section addresses their perceptions of PI practice by considering access to technology before and during the pandemic and potential differences in terms of number of children in the household, school location and monthly household income.

5.2.3 Parents' perceptions of parental involvement (PI) practices considering access to technology before and during the pandemic

In terms of access to technology, Table 27 shows that 44% of parents were of the view that there was a lack of technology access that limited their abilities to support their children's learning before and during the pandemic. During the pandemic, 37% of parents disagreed that a lack of technology hindered them from supporting their children, but 33% of parents agreed that they had limited access to technology.

Table 27: Parents' access to technology and the ability to support children's learning before and during the pandemic.

	Lack of access to technology limited the ability to support children's learning before and during the pandemic	
	Before % (N=1,429)	During % (N=1,429)
Strongly disagree	7% (96)	9% (127)
Disagree	30% (422)	37% (534)
Agree	44% (628)	33% (473)
Strongly agree	20% (283)	21% (295)

To understand more about these responses, the following tables examine potential differences based on demographic characteristics (number of children in the household, school location, and monthly household income).

Table 28: Parents' access to technology and their ability to support their children's learning before and during the pandemic differentiating by number of children in the household (N=1,429).

Number of children in the household	Lack of access to technology limited the ability to support children's learning before and during the pandemic							
	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
	Before % (N=96)	During % (N=127)	Before % (N=422)	During % (N=534)	Before % (N=628)	During % (N=473)	Before % (N=283)	During % (N=295)
0–3	6% (37)	8% (49)	31% (192)	38% (236)	43% (263)	33% (201)	20% (123)	21% (129)
4–7	8% (57)	10% (74)	28% (216)	37% (284)	45% (340)	33% (252)	20% (149)	20% (152)
≥8	4% (2)	8% (4)	27% (14)	27% (14)	48% (25)	39% (20)	21% (11)	27% (14)

Looking at Table 28, it is apparent that most parents agreed that there was a lack of access to technology, which affected their ability to support their children before the pandemic, irrespective of how many children they had. During the pandemic, parents with 1–7 children generally disagreed that a lack of access to technology affected their ability to support their children. In contrast, parents with 8 or more children felt there was an impact on their support. While this might suggest an association between the number of children and the perceived impact of access to technology on parental support during the pandemic, only 4% of the parents had 8 or more children.

Table 29: Parents' access to technology and their ability to support their children's learning before and during the pandemic differentiating by school location (N=1,429).

School location	Lack of access to technology limited the ability to support children's learning before and during the pandemic							
	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
	Before % (N=96)	During % (N=127)	Before % (N=422)	During % (N=534)	Before % (N=628)	During % (N=473)	Before % (N=283)	During % (N=295)
Muscat	6% (15)	8% (18)	34% (79)	46% (108)	44% (103)	29% (68)	16% (37)	17% (40)
Musandam	33% (1)	33% (1)	0% (0)	33% (1)	67% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	33% (1)
Al Buraimi	8% (1)	8% (1)	23% (3)	46% (6)	39% (5)	39% (5)	31% (4)	8% (1)
Al Batinah North	8% (9)	9% (11)	31% (37)	39% (46)	42% (50)	33% (39)	19% (23)	19% (23)
Al Batinah South	13% (14)	19% (20)	36% (39)	26% (28)	33% (35)	34% (36)	18% (19)	22% (23)
A'Dhahirah	6% (10)	7% (12)	32% (59)	38% (69)	41% (75)	30% (55)	21% (39)	26% (47)
A'Dakhiliya	4% (14)	9% (30)	30% (95)	37% (118)	47% (152)	33% (105)	19% (61)	21% (69)
ASharqiyah North	10% (8)	4% (3)	24% (20)	32% (27)	51% (43)	37% (31)	16% (13)	27% (23)
ASharqiyah South	0% (0)	4% (2)	26% (12)	39% (18)	57% (26)	28% (13)	17% (8)	28% (13)
Al Wusta	0% (0)	0% (0)	28% (5)	11% (2)	44% (8)	56% (10)	28% (5)	33% (6)
Dhofar	8% (24)	10% (29)	24% (73)	37% (111)	43% (129)	37% (111)	25% (74)	16% (49)

The data in Table 29 show few differences in parents' responses concerning a lack of technology access limiting their support for their children's learning before the pandemic across most governorates, with parents tending to agree that it did so. In contrast, during the pandemic, parents from most governorates disagreed that there was a lack of access to technology. However, in Al Batinah South (34%), A'Sharqiyah North (37%), and Al Wusta (56%), parents agreed that there was a lack of access to technology both before and during the pandemic. This indicates that these three governorates faced significant challenges with technology access.

Table 30: Parents' access to technology and their ability to support their children's learning before and during the pandemic differentiating by monthly household income (N=1,429).

Monthly household income	Lack of access to technology limited the ability to support children's learning before and during the pandemic							
	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
	Before % (N=96)	During % (N=127)	Before % (N=422)	During % (N=534)	Before % (N=628)	During % (N=473)	Before % (N=283)	During % (N=295)
<300 OMR	8% (15)	12% (22)	26% (47)	28% (49)	44% (78)	37% (65)	21% (38)	24% (42)
300–500 OMR	8% (33)	7% (30)	25% (107)	28% (122)	45% (194)	37% (158)	22% (95)	28% (119)
501–1,000 OMR	5% (22)	8% (35)	31% (142)	38% (172)	43% (194)	36% (163)	21% (94)	18% (82)
≥1,000 OMR	7% (26)	11% (40)	34% (126)	52% (191)	44% (162)	24% (87)	15% (56)	14% (52)

Looking at Table 30, the results indicate that parents' responses did not differ according to monthly household income before the pandemic, with most parents agreeing that a lack of access to technology was a hindrance to supporting their children's learning. Those who earned 500 OMR or less also agreed that this was the case during the pandemic. In contrast, the majority of parents with higher monthly incomes disagreed for the period during the pandemic. This is to be expected, as they were in a better position to upgrade their internet speed or acquire new devices enabling them to support their children's learning.

The next section addresses parents' satisfaction with teachers' resources and guidance before and during the pandemic.

5.2.4 Parents' satisfaction with teachers' resources and guidance before and during the pandemic

The data in Table 31 indicate that most of the participants (1,130, 79%) were satisfied with the resources and guidance provided by their children's teachers before the pandemic and also during the pandemic (781, 55%). However, as can be seen, parents were less satisfied with teachers' support during the pandemic.

Table 31: Parents' satisfaction with teachers' support and resources before and during the pandemic (N=1,429).

Satisfaction with the guidance and/or resources from teachers before and during the pandemic		
	Before % (N=1,429)	During % (N=1,429)
Yes	79% (1,130)	55% (781)
No	21% (299)	45% (648)

Table 32 indicates that most of the parents felt that these resources and guidance were useful, predominantly responding 'very useful' and 'slightly useful' before the pandemic, and 'slightly useful' during the pandemic.

Table 32: Usefulness of guidance/resources provided by the teacher in terms of improving the quality of support for children's learning before and during the pandemic (N=1,429).

Usefulness of teachers' guidance/resources in terms of improving the quality of support for children's learning before and during the pandemic		
	Before % (N=1,429)	During % (N=1,429)
Not at all useful	5% (66)	15% (214)
Slightly useful	34% (480)	46% (661)
Very useful	38% (542)	24% (346)
Extremely useful	24% (341)	15% (208)

The following sub-section focuses on PE practices related to parental education programmes provided by schools before and during the pandemic.

5.2.5 Parental education programmes provided by schools before and during the pandemic

The data indicate a lack of provision of parental education programmes designed to help parents support their children's learning. According to Table 33, 62% of parents reported not being involved in any such programmes before or during the pandemic. Those parents who said they joined one of the parental education programmes, either before or throughout the pandemic, were automatically directed to answer the next question about how useful these programmes had been in terms of supporting their children's learning (Table 34). The results indicate that most parents believed that the programmes were useful.

Table 33: Provision of parental education programmes to help support children's learning at home before and during the pandemic (N=1,429).

Provision of parental education programmes to support children's learning at home before and during the pandemic		
	Before % (N=1,429)	During % (N=1,429)
Yes	38% (545)	38% (541)
No	62% (884)	62% (888)

Table 34: Usefulness of parental education programmes in supporting children's learning.

Usefulness of parental education programmes in supporting children's learning		
	N=740	Percentage (%)
Did not participate	66	9%
It was not useful	46	6%
It was somewhat useful	313	42%
It was useful	315	43%

Table 35 presents the parents' responses regarding their access to parental support programmes offered by their children's school before and during the pandemic differentiating by school location. The results show few differences in parents' responses across different governorates, either before or during the pandemic. Most participants in various governorates reported that their children's schools did not offer any parental education programmes. However, in AL Buraimi, 62% of parents responded that they were offered some education programmes before the pandemic and 77% said the same for during the pandemic.

Table 35: Provision of parental education programmes to help parents support children's learning at home before and during the pandemic differentiating by school location (N=1,429).

Provision of parental education programmes to support children's learning at home before and during the pandemic				
School location	Yes		No	
	Before % (N=545)	During % (N=541)	Before % (N=884)	During % (N=888)
Muscat	30% (70)	34% (80)	70% (164)	66% (154)
Musandam	0% (0)	33% (1)	100% (3)	67% (2)
Al Buraimi	62% (8)	77% (10)	38% (5)	23% (3)
Al Batinah North	45% (53)	31% (37)	55% (66)	69% (82)
Al Batinah South	41% (44)	39% (42)	59% (63)	61% (65)
A'Dhahirah	40% (74)	36% (66)	60% (109)	64% (117)
A'Dakhiliya	39% (125)	36% (115)	61% (197)	64% (207)
ASharqiyah North	39% (33)	33% (28)	61% (51)	67% (56)
ASharqiyah South	37% (17)	26% (12)	63% (29)	74% (34)
Al Wusta	28% (5)	33% (6)	72% (13)	67% (12)
Dhofar	39% (116)	48% (144)	61% (184)	52% (156)

The next section considers methods of parental communication with teachers before and during the pandemic, another key aspect of PI.

5.2.6 Means of parental communication with teachers before and during the pandemic

Table 36 represents the results relating to the methods of communication parents used with their child's teacher. The data indicate that before the pandemic, around 39% (557) of parents used mixed ways of communication (telephone, face-to-face, email, website), and almost 37% (524) of parents communicated with teachers face-to-face. During the pandemic, most participants around 65% (935) opted for the telephone as the main tool of communication with school staff. Table 36 also shows that the lowest number of parents used e-mail to communicate with teachers, both before and during the pandemic.

Table 36: Means of communication with the school before and during the pandemic (N=1,429).

Means of communication with the school before and during the pandemic		
	Before % (N=1,429)	During % (N=1,429)
Telephone	22% (317)	65% (935)
Face to face	37% (524)	3% (42)
Email	1% (9)	2% (23)
Website	2% (22)	7% (96)
All	39% (557)	23% (333)

In terms of the technology parents accessed to support their children's learning, there were five categories: mobile phone, PC or laptop, mobile phone with tablet, tablet with PC, and all these tools (Table 37). The data indicated that the most frequent technological aid parents used to access their children's learning, both before and during the pandemic, was the mobile phone.

Table 37: Electronic device used most often to access children's learning before and during the pandemic (N=1,429).

Electronic device most often used to access children's learning before and during the pandemic		
	Before % (N=1,429)	During % (N=1,429)
Mobile phone	54% (774)	32% (464)
PC or laptop	11% (160)	15% (221)
Mobile and tablet	3% (46)	8% (115)
Tablet and PC	23% (333)	24% (337)
All	8% (116)	20% (292)

5.2.7 Parents' relationship with teachers in interactions about children's learning during the pandemic

From Table 38, it appears that most parents' relationships with teachers in their interactions regarding their children's learning did not change during the COVID-19 pandemic. The highest percentage, 62% (886) indicated that their relationship remained the same. However, a considerable proportion 38% (543) stated that their relationship with teachers had changed due to the pandemic. They were asked to respond to an open-ended question to explain how the relationship had changed, providing more in-depth information concerning their opinions and beliefs.

Table 38: Change in relationship with teachers during the pandemic (N=1,429).

Change in relationship with children's teacher from the start of the pandemic		
	N=1,429	Percentage (%)
Yes	543	38%
No	886	62%

These responses highlight that the majority of parents felt their relationships with teachers did not change during the pandemic. However, among those who said the pandemic affected their relationship with teachers, the majority showed a greater interest in teachers' efforts and appreciated their role more than before the pandemic. Furthermore, some parents realised how much knowledge, pedagogical skills, and understanding were required to support their children's learning. However, some parents were not satisfied with the level of communication and support they received from teachers during the pandemic, discussed further in the qualitative analysis (see 6.2.5).

5.3 Teachers' self-reports of parental involvement (PI) in children's learning

This section will first present the results from the teachers' survey on PI practices before and during the pandemic, addressing the following aspects: online and face-to-face interaction with parents about their children's learning; teachers' access to the internet at home, school and in the classroom; teachers' access to technology; teachers' satisfaction with parents' support; means of communication with parents. The following sub-sections examine these results further in relation to teachers' socio-demographic characteristics,

as follows: location of teachers' schools; number of classes taught per week; years of teaching experience and highest completed educational level.

5.3.1 Teachers' interactions with parents before and during the pandemic

Table 39 presents teachers' reported PI practices, including their average face-to-face and online interactions with children's parents over the academic year before and during the pandemic.

Table 39: Teacher–parent face-to-face and online interactions over the academic year before and during the pandemic (N=655).

Teacher–parent face-to-face and online interactions over the academic year before and during the pandemic				
	Face-to-face interaction		Online interaction	
	Before % (N=655)	During % (N=655)	Before % (N=655)	During % (N=655)
Never	8% (53)	27% (174)	35% (230)	18% (121)
Once a year	9% (59)	12% (78)	9% (58)	8% (52)
At least twice a year	30% (197)	13% (84)	12% (81)	10% (66)
Once a month	25% (167)	16% (108)	21% (136)	15% (95)
Once a week	19% (125)	15% (101)	16% (105)	22% (145)
Daily	8% (54)	17% (110)	7% (45)	27% (176)

Table 39 shows that the highest frequency of teachers' face-to-face interactions with parents before the pandemic was at least twice a year on average (197, 30%), followed by once a month (167, 25%). During the pandemic, this decreased, with 27% (174) of teachers reporting that they never had face-to-face interactions with parents. However, daily face-to-face interactions with parents increased from 8% before the pandemic to 17% during the pandemic. The reasons for this will be explored with reference to the qualitative data later.

Regarding online interaction, 35% (230) of teachers said that they never had online interaction with parents before the pandemic. In contrast, during the pandemic, 27% (176) of teachers said that they had online interaction almost every day with parents.

The following tables examine these results in greater detail in light of demographic factors, such as school location, number of classes per week, years of teaching experience, and teachers' highest educational qualification.

Table 40: Teachers' face-to-face interaction with parents before and during the pandemic differentiating by location (N=655).

Face-to face interaction with parents over the academic year before and during the pandemic												
School location	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before % (N=53)	During % (N=174)	Before % (N=59)	During % (N=78)	Before % (N=197)	During % (N=84)	Before % (N=167)	During % (N=108)	Before % (N=125)	During % (N=101)	Before % (N=54)	During % (N=110)
Muscat	6% (5)	31% (27)	16% (14)	10% (9)	36% (31)	13% (11)	28% (24)	13% (11)	9% (8)	16% (14)	6% (5)	17% (15)
Musandam	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	33% (1)	33% (1)	0% (0)	33% (1)	67% (2)	33% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Al Buraimi	11% (2)	39% (7)	6% (1)	11% (2)	22% (4)	17% (3)	17% (3)	11% (2)	44% (8)	11% (2)	0% (0)	11% (2)
Al Batinah North	8% (4)	38% (18)	15% (7)	15% (7)	23% (11)	4% (2)	27% (13)	4% (2)	17% (8)	17% (8)	10% (5)	23% (11)
Al Batinah South	0% (0)	33% (9)	15% (4)	15% (4)	44% (12)	4% (1)	15% (4)	4% (1)	11% (3)	30% (8)	15% (4)	15% (4)
A'Dhahirah	5% (2)	35% (13)	16% (6)	19% (7)	41% (15)	8% (3)	24% (9)	14% (5)	11% (4)	11% (4)	3% (1)	14% (5)
A'Dakhiliya	10% (7)	26% (19)	8% (6)	13% (9)	39% (28)	22% (16)	25% (18)	7% (5)	8% (6)	13% (9)	10% (7)	19% (14)
ASharqiyah North	15% (2)	31% (4)	15% (2)	23% (3)	38% (5)	8% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	15% (2)	31% (4)	23% (3)
ASharqiyah South	8% (2)	50% (13)	12% (3)	8% (2)	38% (10)	19% (5)	19% (5)	4% (1)	15% (4)	8% (2)	8% (2)	12% (3)
Al Wusta	13% (4)	32% (10)	3% (1)	6% (2)	26% (8)	6% (2)	16% (5)	23% (7)	32% (10)	13% (4)	10% (3)	19% (6)
Dhofar	9% (25)	18% (54)	5% (15)	11% (32)	25% (72)	14% (40)	29% (85)	25% (72)	25% (73)	16% (48)	8% (23)	16% (47)

Table 40 shows few differences in teachers' responses concerning the frequency of face-to-face interaction with parents during the pandemic on average in all 11 governorates. The highest percentage of responses indicated that teachers never interacted face-to-face with parents during the pandemic overall. Before the pandemic, most said that they interacted with parents face-to-face on average at least twice a year. However, in Dhofar and in Al Batinah North, teachers interacted with parents face-to-face around once a month before the pandemic. Face-to-face interaction with parents was the highest in Al Buraimi and Al Wusta at once a week on average before the pandemic.

Regarding teachers' online interaction with parents before and during the pandemic, it seems that it increased during the pandemic across all the governorates. There were few differences in teachers' responses concerning their online interaction with parents before the pandemic with most reporting that they never interacted online with parents before the pandemic (see Appendix J2).

Table 41: Teachers' face-to-face interaction with parents before and during the pandemic differentiating by number of classes taught per week (N=655).

Face-to-face interaction with parents over the academic year before and during the pandemic												
Number of classes per week	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before % (N=53)	During % (N=174)	Before % (N=59)	During % (N=78)	Before % (N=197)	During % (N=84)	Before % (N=167)	During % (N=108)	Before % (N=125)	During % (N=101)	Before % (N=54)	During % (N=110)
0–10	14% (12)	33% (29)	8% (7)	9% (8)	33% (29)	8% (7)	25% (22)	15% (13)	11% (10)	18% (16)	8% (7)	16% (14)
11–19	7% (23)	25% (81)	8% (26)	12% (39)	33% (106)	14% (44)	21% (67)	18% (57)	24% (77)	14% (44)	7% (22)	17% (56)
≥20	7% (18)	26% (64)	11% (26)	13% (31)	25% (62)	13% (33)	32% (78)	15% (38)	15% (38)	17% (41)	10% (25)	16% (40)

Table 41 shows little association between the number of classes taught per week and the frequency of teachers' face-to-face interaction with parents on average during the pandemic. Most teachers said that they never had face-to-face interaction with parents during the pandemic no matter how many classes they taught. Before the pandemic, the responses showed the highest percentage for face-to-face interaction was at least twice a year for teachers with 1–19 classes per week. However, for teachers with more than 19 classes per week, face-to-face interaction with parents was higher on average before the pandemic at once a month (32%).

In terms of online interaction with parents, there was no apparent link with the number of classes taught per week either before or during the pandemic. The highest percentage of responses indicated that teachers had daily online interaction with parents during the pandemic but never before the pandemic on average (see Appendix J3).

Table 42: Teachers' face-to-face interaction with parents before and during the pandemic differentiating by years of teaching experience (N=655).

Face-to-face interaction with parents over the academic year before and during the pandemic												
Years of teaching experience	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before % (N=53)	During % (N=174)	Before % (N=59)	During % (N=78)	Before % (N=197)	During % (N=84)	Before % (N=167)	During % (N=108)	Before % (N=125)	During % (N=101)	Before % (N=54)	During % (N=110)
0–5	17% (27)	26% (43)	7% (12)	10% (17)	20% (32)	15% (24)	29% (47)	15% (24)	18% (30)	17% (28)	10% (16)	17% (28)
6–15	5% (16)	24% (80)	8% (27)	14% (47)	34% (112)	13% (44)	26% (84)	19% (61)	20% (65)	13% (43)	7% (24)	16% (53)
≥16	6% (10)	31% (51)	12% (20)	9% (14)	33% (53)	10% (16)	22% (36)	14% (23)	18% (30)	18% (30)	9% (14)	18% (29)

As can be seen from Table 42, there was no apparent association between years of teaching experience and teachers' frequency of face-to-face interaction with parents during the pandemic. The highest percentage of answers indicated that teachers never

interacted face-to-face during the pandemic, while before the pandemic, teachers with fewer years of teaching experience engaged in more face-to-face interaction than those with more years of teaching experience. Specifically, 29% of teachers with 1–5 years of teaching experience said that their face-to-face interaction with parents was once every month before the pandemic on average, while those with more than 5 years of teaching experience reported a frequency of at least twice a year on average.

In terms of teachers' online interaction with parents regarding children's learning, there were no differences before or during the pandemic related to years of teaching experience. Most teachers said that they never had online interaction with parents before the pandemic. During the pandemic, most of the responses reported daily online interaction with parents, which increased during the pandemic (see Appendix J4).

Additionally, teachers with different educational qualifications, from diploma to master's degree, reported almost the same frequency of face-to-face interaction with parents before and during the pandemic. Before the pandemic, this was at least twice a year but during the pandemic dropped to never (see Appendix J5).

For teachers' online interaction, the majority said that they never had online interaction with parents before the pandemic, regardless of educational level. During the pandemic, the highest percentage of teachers reported daily online interaction on average (see Appendix J6).

The next sub-section turns to teachers' internet access and differences in terms of school location, number of classes taught per week, years of teaching experience, and teachers' highest educational qualification.

5.3.2 Teachers' access to the internet before and during the pandemic

This section presents the teachers' responses regarding their internet access at home, school and in classrooms, both before and during the pandemic. Additionally, it links their answers to socio-demographic factors. Table 43 presents the availability of internet access at home.

Table 43: Teachers' access to the internet at home before and during the pandemic (N=655).

Access to the internet at home before and during the pandemic		
	Before % (N=655)	During % (N=655)
No, I did not have access to the internet	9% (58)	3% (18)
Yes, but I could not access the internet (due to a weak signal)	3% (20)	3% (19)
Yes, slow or unreliable internet access	17% (112)	17% (113)
Yes, moderate internet access	45% (295)	42% (275)
Yes, high-speed internet access	26% (170)	35% (230)

Table 43 shows that most teachers (more than 40%) had moderate internet access before and during the pandemic. Those who reported having high-speed internet increased from 26% before the pandemic to 35% during the pandemic. Additionally, the number of teachers who said they did not have internet at all at their homes decreased during the pandemic. The following tables link the teachers' responses to socio-demographic factors to identify differences in access.

Table 44: Teachers' access to the internet at home before and during the pandemic differentiating by school location (N=655).

Access to the internet at home before and during the pandemic										
School location	No, I did not have access to the internet		Yes, but I could not access internet (due to a weak signal)		Yes, slow or unreliable internet access		Yes, moderate internet access		Yes, high-speed internet access	
	Before % (N=58)	During % (N=18)	Before % (N=20)	During % (N=19)	Before % (N=112)	During % (N=113)	Before % (N=295)	During % (N=275)	Before % (N=170)	During % (N=230)
Muscat	8% (7)	3% (3)	1% (1)	0% (0)	7% (6)	3% (3)	40% (35)	43% (37)	44% (38)	51% (44)
Musandam	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	67% (2)	67% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	33% (1)	33% (1)
Al Buraimi	0% (0)	0% (0)	17% (3)	11% (2)	11% (2)	6% (1)	44% (8)	61% (11)	28% (5)	22% (4)
Al Batinah North	4% (2)	2% (1)	4% (2)	0% (0)	33% (16)	35% (17)	46% (22)	42% (20)	13% (6)	21% (10)
Al Batinah South	15% (4)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	15% (4)	22% (6)	30% (8)	22% (6)	41% (11)	56% (15)
A'Dhahirah	8% (3)	3% (1)	5% (2)	3% (1)	27% (10)	30% (11)	57% (21)	49% (18)	3% (1)	16% (6)
A'Dakhiliya	10% (7)	4% (3)	6% (4)	6% (4)	14% (10)	15% (11)	46% (33)	46% (33)	25% (18)	29% (21)
ASharqiyah North	15% (2)	8% (1)	0% (0)	8% (1)	31% (4)	23% (3)	31% (4)	31% (4)	23% (3)	31% (4)
ASharqiyah South	12% (3)	4% (1)	0% (0)	8% (2)	15% (4)	8% (2)	35% (9)	50% (13)	38% (10)	31% (8)
Al Wusta	6% (2)	6% (2)	3% (1)	0% (0)	26% (8)	26% (8)	26% (8)	23% (7)	39% (12)	45% (14)
Dhofar	10% (28)	2% (6)	2% (7)	3% (9)	16% (46)	17% (49)	50% (147)	43% (126)	22% (65)	35% (103)

Table 44 shows slight differences between teachers' responses from different governorates. Most indicated that teachers had internet access with moderate speed

before and during the pandemic across the governorates. In Muscat, the internet speed increased from moderate to high during the pandemic, while in ASharqiyah South, the internet speed decreased from high to moderate during the pandemic. In Musandam and Al Wusta, the internet speed did not change.

Regarding teachers' highest completed qualification, there was no apparent association with internet access at home, as most said that they had a moderate level of access before and during the pandemic (see Appendix J7).

Table 45 addresses teachers' internet access at their schools before and during the pandemic.

Table 45: Teachers' access to the internet at school before and during the pandemic (N=655).

Access to the internet at school before and during the pandemic		
	Before % (N=655)	During % (N=655)
No, I did not have access to the internet	25% (167)	13% (82)
Yes, but I could not access the internet (due to the weak signal)	6% (42)	6% (38)
Yes, slow or unreliable internet access	27% (178)	27% (174)
Yes, moderate internet access	29% (188)	35% (230)
Yes, high-speed internet access	12% (80)	20% (131)

The data show that the highest percentage of teachers had moderate internet access in their schools both before and during the pandemic (Table 45). Before the pandemic, the three highest responses indicated that 29% of teachers had moderate internet access, 27% had slow internet, and 25% said they did not have access to the internet. These responses will be investigated in greater depth with reference to the qualitative data. The following tables address potential differences in access related to demographic variables.

Table 46: Teachers' access to the internet at school before and during the pandemic differentiating by school location (N=655).

School location	Access to the internet at school before and during the pandemic									
	No, I did not have access to the internet		Yes, but I could not access internet (due to a weak signal)		Yes, slow or unreliable internet access		Yes, moderate internet access		Yes, high-speed internet access	
	Before % (N=167)	During % (N=82)	Before % (N=42)	During % (N=38)	Before % (N=178)	During % (N=174)	Before % (N=188)	During % (N=230)	Before % (N=80)	During % (N=131)
Muscat	16% (14)	5% (4)	6% (5)	2% (2)	35% (30)	25% (22)	32% (28)	40% (35)	12% (10)	28% (24)
Musandam	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	33% (1)	33% (1)	67% (2)	67% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Al Buraimi	11% (2)	6% (1)	6% (1)	6% (1)	28% (5)	22% (4)	44% (8)	61% (11)	11% (2)	6% (1)
Al Batinah North	29% (14)	17% (8)	6% (3)	8% (4)	35% (17)	29% (14)	21% (10)	27% (13)	8% (4)	19% (9)
Al Batinah South	22% (6)	19% (5)	15% (4)	7% (2)	22% (6)	22% (6)	33% (9)	33% (9)	7% (2)	19% (5)
A'Dhahirah	22% (8)	11% (4)	11% (4)	11% (4)	43% (16)	41% (15)	24% (9)	30% (11)	0% (0)	8% (3)
A'Dakhiliya	22% (16)	13% (9)	10% (7)	8% (6)	26% (19)	38% (27)	31% (22)	31% (22)	11% (8)	11% (8)
ASharqiyah North	23% (3)	23% (3)	8% (1)	0% (0)	46% (6)	46% (6)	15% (2)	23% (3)	8% (1)	8% (1)
ASharqiyah South	19% (5)	15% (4)	4% (1)	0% (0)	35% (9)	39% (10)	19% (5)	23% (6)	23% (6)	23% (6)
Al Wusta	48% (15)	45% (14)	7% (2)	10% (3)	26% (8)	23% (7)	7% (2)	10% (3)	13% (4)	13% (4)
Dhofar	29% (84)	10% (30)	5% (14)	6% (16)	21% (61)	21% (62)	31% (91)	39% (115)	15% (43)	24% (70)

Table 46 shows an association between the location of schools and the internet access available to teachers. There were some noticeable differences in internet speed and connection quality. For instance, teachers said they had internet with moderate speed in schools in Musandam, Al Buraimi, Al Batinah South and Dhofar before and during the pandemic. In Muscat and Al Batinah North, the internet speed increased from slow before the pandemic to moderate during the pandemic. The other teachers reported that they had slow internet in their schools before and during the pandemic. Moreover, in Al Wusta, nearly half of the teachers said they did not have internet at all in their schools before or during the pandemic. Referring back to Table 44, teachers in Al Wusta reported having high-speed internet at home before and during the pandemic, perhaps due to a lack of broadband at their schools. This can be investigated with reference to the qualitative data later. Table 47 addresses teachers' internet access in their classrooms.

Table 47: Teachers' access to the internet in the classroom before and during the pandemic (N=655).

Access to the internet in the classroom before and during the pandemic		
	Before % (N=655)	During % (N=655)
No, I did not have access to the internet	61% (400)	33% (215)
Yes, but I could not access to the internet (due to a weak signal)	6% (41)	7% (43)
Yes, slow or unreliable internet access	12% (80)	21% (137)
Yes, moderate internet access	14% (93)	28% (183)
Yes, high-speed internet access	6% (41)	12% (77)

Table 47 indicates that most teachers did not have internet access in their classrooms either before (400, 61%) or during (215, 33%) the pandemic. However, during the pandemic, the second and third highest responses indicated that teachers had moderate or slow internet access in their classrooms. These variations might be related to socio-demographic factors, which will be investigated further through the qualitative data analysis.

Table 48: Teachers' access to the internet in their classroom before and during the pandemic differentiating by school location (N=655).

Access to the internet in the classroom before and during the pandemic										
School location	No, I did not have access to the internet		Yes, but I could not access internet (due to a weak signal)		Yes, slow or unreliable internet access		Yes, moderate internet access		Yes, high-speed internet access	
	Before % (N=400)	During % (N=215)	Before % (N=41)	During % (N=43)	Before % (N=80)	During % (N=137)	Before % (N=93)	During % (N=183)	Before % (N=41)	During % (N=77)
Muscat	56% (49)	13% (11)	7% (6)	10% (9)	8% (7)	20% (17)	24% (21)	38% (33)	5% (4)	20% (17)
Musandam	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	67% (2)	100% (3)	33% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Al Buraimi	61% (11)	28% (5)	6% (1)	0% (0)	22% (4)	44% (8)	6% (1)	28% (5)	6% (1)	0% (0)
Al Batinah North	50% (24)	29% (14)	10% (5)	8% (4)	15% (7)	29% (14)	17% (8)	23% (11)	8% (4)	10% (5)
Al Batinah South	59% (16)	30% (8)	19% (5)	11% (3)	0% (0)	7% (2)	22% (6)	44% (12)	0% (0)	7% (2)
A'Dhahirah	73% (27)	51% (19)	11% (4)	5% (2)	14% (5)	24% (9)	3% (1)	16% (6)	0% (0)	3% (1)
A'Dakhiliya	61% (44)	35% (25)	6% (4)	4% (3)	21% (15)	32% (23)	8% (6)	18% (13)	4% (3)	11% (8)
ASharqiyah North	54% (7)	46% (6)	0% (0)	8% (1)	23% (3)	23% (3)	8% (1)	8% (1)	15% (2)	15% (2)
ASharqiyah South	58% (15)	46% (12)	4% (1)	4% (1)	12% (3)	15% (4)	19% (5)	23% (6)	8% (2)	12% (3)
Al Wusta	77% (24)	74% (23)	0% (0)	3% (1)	10% (3)	6% (2)	10% (3)	6% (2)	3% (1)	10% (3)
Dhofar	62% (183)	31% (92)	5% (15)	6% (19)	11% (31)	18% (52)	14% (40)	32% (94)	8% (24)	12% (36)

According to Table 48, it seems that teachers did not have internet access in their classrooms across all governorates before the pandemic. However, this changed

somewhat in some governorates during the pandemic, and there were some variations in teachers' responses. For instance, in Muscat, Al Batinah North, Al Batinah South and Dhofar, the highest responses showed that teachers had moderate internet access in their classrooms during the pandemic. Hence, there was potentially an association between school location and the internet access and speed in teachers' classrooms.

The next sub-section concerns teachers' access to technology and their ability to support children's learning.

5.3.3 Teachers' access to technology before and during the pandemic

Overall, the findings indicated that most teachers experienced a lack of technological access in their homes and schools that limited their ability to support children's learning both before and during the pandemic (see Appendix J8).

Table 49: Lack of teachers' knowledge concerning the use of technology in teaching and learning that limited their ability to support children's learning before and during the pandemic (N=655).

Lack of teachers' knowledge on the use of technology in teaching and learning that limited the ability to support children's learning before and during the pandemic		
	Before % (N=655)	During % (N=655)
Strongly disagree	3% (18)	8% (52)
Disagree	20% (130)	42% (277)
Agree	53% (350)	36% (235)
Strongly agree	24% (157)	14% (91)

As is apparent from Table 49, most teachers (53%) reported a lack of knowledge on the use of technology that affected their ability to support children's learning before the pandemic. In contrast, during the pandemic, more than 40% of teachers disagreed that they lacked knowledge concerning the use of technology. This change might be related to teachers' efforts to improve their skills in using technology and the support provided by schools, although further qualitative data would be needed to confirm this. However, it seems that there were some variations in teachers' responses regarding knowledge of the use of technology within different governorates (see Appendix J9).

Table 50: Teachers' satisfaction with their skills in using technology in teaching and learning to support children's learning before and during the pandemic (N=655).

Satisfaction with skills in using technology in teaching and learning to support children's learning before and during the pandemic		
	Before % (N=655)	During % (N=655)
Very dissatisfied	2% (12)	1% (9)
Dissatisfied	16% (107)	6% (42)
Satisfied	53% (346)	40% (259)
Very satisfied	29% (190)	53% (345)

Table 50 depicts that teachers were satisfied with their skills and abilities in using technology to support children's learning before and during the pandemic. However, teachers were more satisfied with their skills during the pandemic, with more than 50% selecting 'very satisfied'. This could be related to their willingness to enhance their skills in the use of technology, especially with the reliance on online learning and will be investigated further with reference to the qualitative data.

More broadly, 59% of teachers indicated that they were satisfied with the level of technology that was used in C2 schools before and during the pandemic (see Appendix J10).

The upcoming sub-section concerns teachers' perceptions of their level of encouragement for parents to communicate with them regarding their children's learning.

5.3.4 Teachers' encouragement of parents to communicate regarding children's learning before and during the pandemic

Table 51: Teachers' encouragement of parents to communicate regarding children's learning (N=655).

Encouragement of parents to communicate regarding children's learning before and during the pandemic		
	Before % (N=655)	During % (N=655)
Never	10% (67)	10% (66)
Once a year	5% (32)	6% (37)
At least twice a year	13% (85)	9% (56)
Once a month	33% (219)	21% (136)
Once a week	26% (168)	28% (184)
Daily	13% (84)	27% (176)

In terms of teachers' encouraging parents to communicate, Table 51 shows that the majority of teachers (219, 33%) reported doing so once every month before the pandemic. During the pandemic, this increased to once a week (184, 28%) or daily (176, 27%).

The next section considers these findings in greater detail in relation to socio-demographic variables, starting with teachers' educational level.

Table 52: Teachers' encouragement of parents to communicate regarding children's learning before and during the pandemic differentiating by teachers' highest educational qualification (N=655).

Highest educational qualification	Encouragement of parents to communicate regarding children's learning before and during the pandemic											
	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before % (N=67)	During % (N=66)	Before % (N=32)	During % (N=37)	Before % (N=85)	During % (N=56)	Before % (N=219)	During % (N=136)	Before % (N=168)	During % (N=184)	Before % (N=84)	During % (N=176)
Diploma	13% (4)	3% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	13% (4)	13% (4)	32% (10)	26% (8)	29% (9)	32% (10)	13% (4)	26% (8)
Bachelor's degree	10% (56)	10% (58)	5% (31)	6% (35)	14% (78)	9% (49)	32% (186)	20% (117)	26% (149)	29% (164)	13% (73)	26% (150)
Master's degree	11% (5)	11% (5)	2% (1)	4% (2)	6% (3)	6% (3)	45% (21)	23% (11)	21% (10)	17% (8)	15% (7)	38% (18)
PhD	50% (2)	50% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	50% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	50% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)

Table 52 shows some differences in teachers' responses according to their educational level. On average, teachers' encouragement for parents to communicate with them about children's learning was once a month before the pandemic, and these responses were from teachers with different educational levels. During the pandemic, 38% of teachers with higher qualifications (master's degree) said they encouraged parents every day, while for others it was once a week on average.

Examining other socio-demographic variables for differences in frequency of encouragement, no association was found for school location either before or during the pandemic. Before the pandemic, the frequency of teachers' encouragement for parents to communication was once a month on average in most governorates and tended to increase during the pandemic (see Appendix J11).

There was no discernible differentiation in terms of the number of classes taught. Before the pandemic, teachers encouraged parents to communicate with them once a month; during the pandemic, this increased to once a week or even daily (see Appendix J12).

Additionally, there were no noticeable differences related to years of teaching experience. Before the pandemic, teachers reported providing encouragement once a month on average and this increased to once a week during the pandemic (see Appendix J13).

5.3.5 Teachers' means of communication with parents before and during the pandemic

Table 53: Teachers' means of communication with parents before and during the pandemic (N=655).

Means of communication with parents before and during the pandemic		
	Before % (N=655)	During % (N=655)
Telephone	22% (141)	65% (429)
Face-to-face	36% (237)	3% (17)
Email	0.2% (1)	2% (12)
Website	1% (9)	4% (28)
All	41% (267)	26% (169)

Table 53 indicates that most teachers (267, 41%) used all means of communication (telephone, face-to-face, email and website) with parents before the pandemic. During the pandemic, more than 50% of teachers answered that they used the telephone as a way of communicating with parents. This might include calling, texting or even using different social media applications.

The following sub-section presents teachers' perceptions of the support provided by parents regarding children's learning before and during the pandemic. It also addresses teachers' perceptions of PI and whether it changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.3.6 Teachers' perceptions of the support provided by parents for their children's learning before and during the pandemic

Table 54: Teachers' perceptions of parental support for their children's learning at home before and during the pandemic (N=655).

Perceived parental support for children's learning at home before and during the pandemic		
	Before % (N=655)	During % (N=655)
Very limited	15% (101)	17% (112)
Less than satisfactory	18% (121)	19% (122)
Satisfactory	31% (200)	25% (165)
Very good	25% (162)	27% (178)
Excellent	11% (71)	12% (78)

Table 54 illustrates that 31% (200) of teachers viewed parents' support as satisfactory before the pandemic, and 25% (162) reported that it was very good. During the pandemic, 27% (178) of teachers rated the level of parents' support as very good on average. However, the percentage of teachers who felt that parents' support was very limited increased from 15% before the pandemic to 17% during the pandemic.

Table 55: Changes in teachers' perceptions of engaging with parents at school due to experiencing the pandemic (N=655).

Changes in perceptions (attitudes/beliefs) of engaging with parents at school due to experiencing the pandemic		
	N=655	Percentage (%)
No, not changed at all	201	31%
Yes, a little bit changed	292	45%
Yes, totally changed	162	25%

Table 55 illustrates that nearly 45% (292) of teachers said that their attitudes to PI changed slightly because of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, nearly 31% (201) said that their beliefs did not change. This will be explored further with reference to the qualitative data.

The next section present HTs' responses to the survey in relation to PI with children's learning in their schools before and during the pandemic.

5.4 Headteachers' (HTs') self-reports of parental involvement (PI) in children's learning

This section presents the results of the HTs' survey regarding PI practices before and during the pandemic and addresses the following aspects: teachers' online and face-to-face interaction with parents about children's learning; internet access in school; teachers' knowledge of and access to technology; HTs' satisfaction with parents' support; means of parental communication with parents. It also considers differences in responses in relation to socio-demographic characteristics: the location of HTs' schools, number of students, and HTs' highest educational qualification.

5.4.1 Parental involvement (PI) practices before and during the pandemic

Table 56: Headteachers' perceptions of parent-teacher face-to-face and online interaction before and during the pandemic (N=212).

Perceived parent-teacher face-to-face and online interaction over the academic year before and during the pandemic				
	Face-to-face interaction		Online interaction	
	Before % (N=212)	During % (N=212)	Before % (N=212)	During % (N=212)
Never	3% (6)	15% (32)	26% (56)	10% (22)
Once a year	11% (24)	14% (30)	19% (40)	10% (21)
At least twice a year	23% (48)	11% (23)	8% (17)	9% (18)
Once a month	33% (71)	28% (60)	23% (49)	20% (43)
Once a week	20% (42)	17% (35)	17% (36)	24% (50)
Daily	10% (21)	15% (32)	7% (14)	27% (58)

Table 56 shows that HTs perceived that the percentage of teachers who never had face-to-face interaction with parents increased during the pandemic by more than double. While HTs reported that 26% of teachers never had online interaction with parents before the pandemic, this decreased to 10% during the pandemic. Moreover, the HTs perceived that teachers' face-to-face and online daily interaction with parents increased during the pandemic. This is similar to the findings obtained from the teachers' survey and will be explored in greater depth with reference to the qualitative data later.

Tables 57 and 58 examine potential associations between teachers' face-to-face and online interactions with parents, as reported by HTs, and school location.

Table 57: Headteachers' perceptions of teachers' face-to-face interactions with parents before and during the pandemic differentiating by school location (N=212).

School location	Perceived parent-teacher face-to-face interaction over the academic year before and during the pandemic											
	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before % (N=6)	During % (N=32)	Before % (N=24)	During % (N=30)	Before % (N=48)	During % (N=23)	Before % (N=71)	During % (N=60)	Before % (N=42)	During % (N=35)	Before % (N=21)	During % (N=32)
Muscat	6% (1)	6% (1)	29% (5)	18% (3)	29% (5)	12% (2)	18% (3)	24% (4)	12% (2)	29% (5)	6% (1)	12% (2)
Musandam	0% (0)	0% (0)	22% (2)	22% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	33% (3)	56% (5)	33% (3)	0% (0)	11% (1)	22% (2)
Al Buraimi	0% (0)	9% (1)	18% (2)	18% (2)	18% (2)	9% (1)	55% (6)	55% (6)	9% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	9% (1)
Al Batinah North	6% (1)	38% (6)	0% (0)	13% (2)	38% (6)	13% (2)	19% (3)	6% (1)	13% (2)	6% (1)	25% (4)	25% (4)
Al Batinah South	0% (0)	14% (2)	14% (2)	21% (3)	36% (5)	14% (2)	29% (4)	29% (4)	7% (1)	0% (0)	14% (2)	21% (3)
A'Dhahirah	0% (0)	22% (4)	11% (2)	22% (4)	17% (3)	22% (4)	56% (10)	22% (4)	17% (3)	6% (1)	0% (0)	6% (1)
A'Dakhiliya	7% (2)	26% (7)	7% (2)	19% (5)	37% (10)	19% (5)	33% (9)	11% (3)	11% (3)	19% (5)	4% (1)	7% (2)
ASharqiyah North	9% (1)	18% (2)	0% (0)	9% (1)	9% (1)	0% (0)	55% (6)	36% (4)	18% (2)	18% (2)	9% (1)	18% (2)
ASharqiyah South	0% (0)	12% (2)	6% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	12% (2)	65% (11)	41% (7)	12% (2)	24% (4)	18% (3)	12% (2)
Al Wusta	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	10% (1)	10% (1)	20% (2)	40% (4)	50% (5)	10% (1)	20% (2)	40% (4)
Dhofar	2% (1)	11% (7)	13% (8)	13% (8)	24% (15)	6% (4)	23% (14)	29% (18)	29% (18)	26% (16)	10% (6)	15% (9)

Table 57 shows that before the pandemic, HTs reported varying frequency of teacher–parent face-to-face interactions across different regions. For instance, in Muscat, 29% of teachers interacted with parents once a year, while in Al Buraimi, 55% did so once a month. During the pandemic, the frequency of interactions changed notably. In Muscat, the frequency of interaction shifted to once a week (29%), while in Al Wusta, it increased to daily (40%). Conversely, in regions like Al Batinah North and A'Dakhiliya, the frequency of interactions decreased, with more HTs reporting no teacher–parent interactions during the pandemic (38% and 26%, respectively). Some governorates, such as Al Buraimi and ASharqiyah South, maintained a consistent frequency of interactions before and during the pandemic.

Table 58: Headteachers' perceptions of teachers' online interaction with parents before and during the pandemic differentiating by location (N=212).

School location	Perceived parent-teacher online interaction over the academic year before and during the pandemic											
	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before % (N=56)	During % (N=22)	Before % (N=40)	During % (N=21)	Before % (N=17)	During % (N=18)	Before % (N=49)	During % (N=43)	Before % (N=36)	During % (N=50)	Before % (N=14)	During % (N=58)
Muscat	18% (3)	6% (1)	24% (4)	24% (4)	6% (1)	0% (0)	24% (4)	29% (5)	29% (5)	18% (3)	0% (0)	24% (4)
Musandam	0% (0)	0% (0)	44% (4)	11% (1)	11% (1)	22% (2)	33% (3)	33% (3)	11% (1)	22% (2)	0% (0)	11% (1)
Al Buraimi	0% (0)	9% (1)	64% (7)	9% (1)	0% (0)	9% (1)	18% (2)	45% (5)	18% (2)	9% (1)	0% (0)	18% (2)
Al Batinah North	38% (6)	13% (2)	6% (1)	6% (1)	19% (3)	19% (3)	13% (2)	6% (1)	6% (1)	13% (2)	19% (3)	44% (7)
Al Batinah South	43% (6)	29% (4)	29% (4)	14% (2)	0% (0)	7% (1)	7% (1)	21% (3)	14% (2)	14% (2)	7% (1)	14% (2)
A'Dhahirah	22% (4)	22% (4)	17% (3)	0% (0)	6% (1)	11% (2)	28% (5)	17% (3)	17% (3)	28% (5)	11% (2)	22% (4)
A'Dakhiliya	48% (13)	15% (4)	15% (4)	15% (4)	15% (4)	11% (3)	11% (3)	11% (3)	11% (3)	15% (4)	0% (0)	33% (9)
ASharqiyah North	9% (1)	18% (2)	9% (1)	18% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	55% (6)	18% (2)	27% (3)	45% (5)	0% (0)	0% (0)
ASharqiyah South	12% (2)	6% (1)	12% (2)	6% (1)	0% (0)	12% (2)	29% (5)	12% (2)	35% (6)	29% (5)	12% (2)	35% (6)
Al Wusta	50% (5)	10% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	10% (1)	30% (3)	40% (4)	30% (3)	0% (0)	30% (3)
Dhofar	26% (16)	3% (2)	16% (10)	8% (5)	11% (7)	6% (4)	27% (17)	21% (13)	10% (6)	29% (18)	10% (6)	32% (20)

Table 58 shows that HTs reported the percentage of teachers who never interacted online with parents decreased during the pandemic in all governorates. However, there were some variations in the HTs' responses concerning online interaction before the pandemic. In some governorates, such as Al Wusta, A'Dakhiliya, Al Batinah South, and Al Batinah North HTs reported that teachers never interacted with parents online before the pandemic, while in Dofar, ASharqiyah North and A'Dhahirah, HTs reported that online interaction occurred once a month before the pandemic. Additionally, in Al Buraimi and Musandam, HTs reported that online interaction averaged once a year before the pandemic. Thus, there were some differences in teachers' online interaction with parents in different governorates, with online interaction increasing on average during the pandemic in most of the governorates.

No discernible differences were found in terms of the total number of students in schools. Regardless of student numbers, teachers' face-to-face and online interaction increased during the pandemic. According to HTs, the percentage of teachers who never had face-to-face interactions with parents increased during the pandemic. Conversely, the percentage of teachers who never interacted online, as reported by HTs, decreased during the pandemic (see Appendix J14).

Next, I turn to HTs' perceptions of online access in schools before and during the pandemic.

5.4.2 Internet access in school before and during the pandemic

Table 59: Access to the internet in school before and during the pandemic (N=212).

	Access to the internet in school before and during the pandemic	
	Before % (N=212)	During % (N=212)
No, I did not have access to the internet	8% (16)	3% (6)
Yes, but I could not access internet (due to a weak signal)	6% (12)	3% (7)
Yes, slow or unreliable internet access	33% (71)	27% (58)
Yes, moderate internet access	43% (92)	45% (95)
Yes, high-speed internet access	10% (21)	22% (46)

Looking at Table 59, it seems that the internet access in schools improved during the pandemic. The proportion of HTs who said they did not have access to the internet at school decreased from 8% before the pandemic to only 3% during the pandemic. This is similar to teachers' responses from Table 45. Additionally, the percentage of HTs who reported having high-speed internet increased by more than double, from around 10% before the pandemic to around 22% during the pandemic. Moreover, most responses indicated that schools had moderate internet access before and during the pandemic.

These results could be related to several factors, such as school location and number of students in the school, examined in Tables 60 and 61, respectively.

Table 60: Access to the internet in school before and during the pandemic differentiating by school location (N=212).

School location	Access to the internet in school before and during the pandemic									
	No, I did not have access to the internet		Yes, but I could not access the internet (due to a weak signal)		Yes, slow or unreliable internet access		Yes, moderate internet access		Yes, high-speed internet access	
	Before % (N=16)	During % (N=6)	Before % (N=12)	During % (N=7)	Before % (N=71)	During % (N=58)	Before % (N=92)	During % (N=95)	Before % (N=21)	During % (N=46)
Muscat	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	18% (3)	6% (1)	71% (12)	47% (8)	12% (2)	47% (8)
Musandam	0% (0)	0% (0)	22% (2)	11% (1)	33% (3)	44% (4)	44% (4)	22% (2)	0% (0)	22% (2)
Al Buraimi	9% (1)	0% (0)	27% (3)	9% (1)	27% (3)	27% (3)	36% (4)	64% (7)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Al Batinah North	13% (2)	6% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	31% (5)	38% (6)	44% (7)	38% (6)	13% (2)	19% (3)
Al Batinah South	0% (0)	0% (0)	7% (1)	7% (1)	50% (7)	50% (7)	36% (5)	36% (5)	7% (1)	7% (1)
A'Dhahirah	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	56% (10)	39% (7)	39% (7)	50% (9)	6% (1)	11% (2)
A'Dakhiliya	0% (0)	0% (0)	4% (1)	0% (0)	30% (8)	37% (10)	63% (17)	44% (12)	4% (1)	19% (5)
ASharqiyah North	9% (1)	9% (1)	0% (0)	9% (1)	36% (4)	9% (1)	45% (5)	55% (6)	9% (1)	18% (2)
ASharqiyah South	0% (0)	0% (0)	6% (1)	0% (0)	18% (3)	35% (6)	71% (12)	41% (7)	6% (1)	24% (4)
Al Wusta	40% (4)	20% (2)	10% (1)	10% (1)	30% (3)	20% (2)	20% (2)	40% (4)	0% (0)	10% (1)
Dhofar	13% (8)	3% (2)	5% (3)	3% (2)	35% (22)	18% (11)	27% (17)	47% (29)	19% (12)	29% (18)

Looking at Table 60, there were notable differences in internet access at schools across different governorates. For instance, in governorates like Muscat, A'Dhahirah, ASharqiyah North, Al Wusta and Dhofar, the percentage of HTs reporting slow or unreliable internet access at their schools decreased during the pandemic. Before the pandemic, the majority of HTs reported having moderate internet access. However, in Al Batinah South, A'Dhahirah and Dhofar, many HTs indicated that their schools had slow internet before the pandemic. In Al Wusta, 40% of HTs reported no internet access before the pandemic. Overall, internet access in schools improved during the pandemic across all governorates.

Table 61: Access to the internet in school before and during the pandemic differentiating by number of students in school (N=212).

Number of students in school	Access to the internet in school before and during the pandemic									
	No, I did not have access to the internet		Yes, but I could not access the internet (due to a weak signal)		Yes, slow or unreliable internet access		Yes, moderate internet access		Yes, high-speed internet access	
	Before % (N=16)	During % (N=6)	Before % (N=12)	During % (N=7)	Before % (N=71)	During % (N=58)	Before % (N=92)	During % (N=95)	Before % (N=21)	During % (N=46)
0-100	27% (8)	10% (3)	3% (1)	3% (1)	43% (13)	40% (12)	20% (6)	40% (12)	7% (2)	7% (2)
101-500	7% (7)	3% (3)	6 (6)	4% (4)	42% (40)	30% (28)	33% (31)	40% (38)	12% (11)	23% (22)
≥501	1% (1)	0% (0)	6% (5)	2% (2)	21% (18)	21% (18)	63% (55)	52% (45)	9% (8)	25% (22)

Table 61 shows a lack of association between the number of students and internet access in schools during the pandemic. Most schools had moderate internet access regardless of the number of students. Before the pandemic, HTs reported that schools with 500 or more students had moderate internet access. Additionally, the responses indicated that the reported high-speed internet access increased during the pandemic, regardless of the number of students.

5.4.3 Teachers' knowledge of and access to technology before and during the pandemic

Table 62: Lack of access to technology at school that limited teachers' ability to support students' learning before and during the pandemic (N=212).

Lack of access to technology hindering teachers' ability to support their students' learning before and during the pandemic		
	Before % (N=212)	During % (N=212)
Strongly disagree	4% (9)	9% (19)
Disagree	21% (44)	26% (55)
Agree	48% (101)	45% (95)
Strongly agree	27% (58)	20% (43)

Overall, the data in Table 62 indicate that most HTs agreed that there was a lack of technology access in their schools that limited their teachers' ability to support children's learning before and during the pandemic. However, the percentage of HTs who strongly disagreed that there was a lack of access to technology increased from 4% (9) before the pandemic to 9% (19) during the pandemic. This suggests that the technology access situation may have improved during the pandemic, although further qualitative data would be needed to confirm this. It seems that there were some variations in HTs' responses across different governorates, as seen in Table 63.

Table 63: Lack of access to technology at school limiting teachers' ability to support students' learning before and during the pandemic differentiating by school location (N=212).

School location	Lack of access to technology limiting teachers' ability to support students' learning before and during the pandemic							
	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
	Before % (N=9)	During % (N=19)	Before % (N=44)	During % (N=55)	Before % (N=101)	During % (N=95)	Before % (N=58)	During % (N=43)
Muscat	12% (2)	12% (2)	24% (4)	47% (8)	47% (8)	41% (7)	18% (3)	0% (0)
Musandam	11% (1)	11% (1)	33% (3)	33% (3)	33% (3)	33% (3)	22% (2)	22% (2)
Al Buraimi	0% (0)	0% (0)	18% (2)	36% (4)	64% (7)	55% (6)	18% (2)	9% (1)
Al Batinah North	6% (1)	19% (3)	19% (3)	19% (3)	31% (5)	25% (4)	44% (7)	38% (6)
Al Batinah South	0% (0)	7% (1)	29% (4)	36% (5)	36% (5)	29% (4)	36% (5)	29% (4)
A'Dhahirah	6% (1)	17% (3)	11% (2)	17% (3)	61% (11)	61% (11)	22% (4)	6% (1)
A'Dakhiliya	4% (1)	4% (1)	26% (7)	30% (8)	44% (12)	52% (14)	26% (7)	15% (4)
ASharqiyah North	9% (1)	18% (2)	27% (3)	36% (4)	46% (5)	27% (3)	18% (2)	18% (2)
ASharqiyah South	0% (0)	12% (2)	24% (4)	29% (5)	59% (10)	41% (7)	18% (3)	18% (3)
Al Wusta	0% (0)	0% (0)	30% (3)	30% (3)	40% (4)	20% (2)	30% (3)	50% (5)
Dhofar	3% (2)	6% (4)	15% (9)	15% (9)	50% (31)	55% (34)	32% (20)	24% (15)

Table 63 indicates that most HTs agreed there was a lack of technology access before the pandemic in most governorates. During the pandemic, responses varied across different governorates. For example, in ASharqiyah North, the percentage of HTs who agreed that there was a lack of technology access decreased from 46% before the pandemic to 27% during the pandemic. However, in other governorates, such as Al Buraimi and Al Batinah North, the percentage of HTs who agreed that there was a lack of technology access remained high. Overall, the percentage of HTs who disagreed that there was a lack of technology access increased in all governorates, suggesting some improvement in access to technology during the pandemic.

No discernible differences were found in HTs' responses related to the number of students in schools (see Appendix J15).

I now turn to HTs' responses regarding teachers' knowledge of the use of technology before and during the pandemic.

Table 64: Lack of teachers' knowledge of the use of technology limiting their ability to support children's learning before and during the pandemic (N=212).

Lack of teachers' knowledge of the use of technology limiting their ability to support children's learning before and during the pandemic		
	Before % (N=212)	During % (N=212)
Strongly disagree	5% (11)	12% (25)
Disagree	22% (46)	48% (102)
Agree	51% (109)	30% (63)
Strongly agree	22% (46)	10% (22)

Table 64 shows that most HTs (51%) reported a lack of teachers' knowledge concerning the use of technology before the pandemic. However, during the pandemic, this changed, with more than 45% of HTs disagreeing. This is somewhat similar to teachers' responses in Table 49. There were some variations in HTs' responses within different governorates, as seen in Table 65.

Table 65: Lack of teachers' knowledge of the use of technology limiting their ability to support children's learning before and during the pandemic differentiating by school location (N=212).

Lack of teachers' knowledge of the use of technology limiting the ability to support children's learning before and during the pandemic								
School location	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
	Before % (N=11)	During % (N=25)	Before % (N=46)	During % (N=102)	Before % (N=109)	During % (N=63)	Before % (N=46)	During % (N=22)
Muscat	6% (1)	12% (2)	24% (4)	71% (12)	59% (10)	18% (3)	12% (2)	0% (0)
Musandam	33% (3)	44% (4)	22% (2)	22% (2)	33% (3)	33% (3)	11% (1)	0% (0)
Al Buraimi	9% (1)	9% (1)	46% (5)	46% (5)	36% (4)	46% (5)	9% (1)	0% (0)
Al Batinah North	0% (0)	25% (4)	25% (4)	44% (7)	31% (5)	0% (0)	44% (7)	31% (5)
Al Batinah South	0% (0)	7% (1)	57% (8)	79% (11)	36% (5)	14% (2)	7% (1)	0% (0)
A'Dhahirah	6% (1)	0% (0)	28% (5)	61% (11)	61% (11)	33% (6)	6% (1)	6% (1)
A'Dakhiliya	0% (0)	19% (5)	26% (7)	52% (14)	59% (16)	22% (6)	15% (4)	7% (2)
ASharqiyah North	27% (3)	27% (3)	18% (2)	55% (6)	46% (5)	18% (2)	9% (1)	0% (0)
Asharqiyah South	6% (1)	6% (1)	6% (1)	24% (4)	59% (10)	53% (9)	29% (5)	18% (3)
Al Wusta	0% (0)	0% (0)	10% (1)	20% (2)	60% (6)	70% (7)	30% (3)	10% (1)
Dhofar	2% (1)	6% (4)	11% (7)	45% (28)	55% (34)	32% (20)	32% (20)	16% (10)

Table 65 indicates that there were varying responses from HTs across different governorates regarding teachers' knowledge of the use of technology in teaching and learning to support children's learning. Before the pandemic, most HTs in Al Buraimi and Al Batinah South disagreed, while HTs in most other governorates agreed. During the pandemic, the percentage of HTs who disagreed increased in all governorates. These

variations suggest that teachers' knowledge of technology improved during the pandemic, but further qualitative data would be needed to explore these responses in more detail.

In terms of the number of students in schools, there was no association between this and HTs' responses regarding teachers' knowledge of the use of technology before and during the pandemic (see Appendix J16).

Table 66: Satisfaction with the level of technology in teaching and learning in Basic Education Schools C2 in Oman (N=212).

Satisfaction with the level of technology in teaching and learning in Basic Education Schools C2 in Oman		
	N=212	Percentage (%)
Very dissatisfied	12	6%
Dissatisfied	50	24%
Satisfied	129	61%
Very satisfied	21	10%

Table 66 depicts that the majority of HTs (61%) were satisfied with the level of technology in teaching and learning in C2 schools in Oman.

5.4.4 Headteachers' (HTs') encouragement of teachers to engage in parental involvement (PI) before and during the pandemic

Table 67: Encouragement of teachers to communicate with parents regarding children's learning before and during the pandemic (N=212).

Encouragement of teachers to communicate with parents before and during the pandemic		
	Before % (N=212)	During % (N=212)
Never	3% (6)	2% (4)
Once a year	1% (3)	3% (6)
At least twice a year	1% (3)	2% (5)
Once a month	24% (51)	11% (23)
Once a week	43% (91)	29% (62)
Daily	27% (58)	53% (112)

In terms of HTs' encouragement of teachers engaging in PI, Table 67 shows that most (91, 43%) said they encouraged teachers to communicate with students' parents about their learning once a week before the pandemic. This increased to daily communication during the pandemic (112, 53%).

Table 68 examines the potential link between HTs' encouragement of teachers to communicate with parents and school location.

Table 68: Encouragement of teachers to communicate with parents regarding children's learning before and during the pandemic differentiating by school location (N=212).

School location	Encouragement of teachers to communicate with parents regarding children's learning before and during the pandemic											
	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before % (N=6)	During % (N=4)	Before % (N=3)	During % (N=6)	Before % (N=3)	During % (N=5)	Before % (N=51)	During % (N=23)	Before % (N=91)	During % (N=62)	Before % (N=58)	During % (N=112)
Muscat	0% (0)	0% (0)	6% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	29% (5)	12% (2)	47% (8)	35% (6)	18% (3)	53% (9)
Musandam	11% (1)	11% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	22% (2)	0% (0)	44% (4)	33% (3)	22% (2)	56% (5)
Al Buraimi	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	9% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	18% (2)	9% (1)	64% (7)	46% (5)	18% (2)	36% (4)
Al Batinah North	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	6% (1)	6% (1)	19% (3)	25% (4)	38% (6)	13% (2)	38% (6)	56% (9)
Al Batinah South	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	7% (1)	21% (3)	0% (0)	57% (8)	50% (7)	21% (3)	43% (6)
A'Dhahirah	6% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	6% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	39% (7)	17% (3)	33% (6)	33% (6)	22% (4)	44% (8)
A'Dakhiliya	7% (2)	7% (2)	0% (0)	4% (1)	4% (1)	7% (2)	37% (10)	15% (4)	30% (8)	30% (8)	22% (6)	37% (10)
ASharqiyah North	9% (1)	9% (1)	0% (0)	9% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	18% (2)	0% (0)	55% (6)	46% (5)	18% (2)	36% (4)
ASharqiyah South	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	24% (4)	12% (2)	41% (7)	41% (7)	35% (6)	47% (8)
Al Wusta	10% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	10% (1)	10% (1)	30% (3)	10% (1)	50% (5)	80% (8)
Dhofar	0% (0)	0% (0)	3% (2)	3% (2)	2% (1)	2% (1)	19% (12)	10% (6)	45% (28)	19% (12)	31% (19)	66% (41)

Table 68 illustrates that most HTs reported they encouraged teachers to engage in PI once a week before the pandemic, which increased to daily during the pandemic. However, in some governorates (Al Buraimi, Al Batinah South, and A'Sharqiyah North), the level of encouragement for teachers did not change and remained once a week before and during the pandemic. In contrast, in A'Dhahirah and A'Dakhiliya, HTs' encouragement increased from once a month before the pandemic to more frequent during the pandemic. HTs' daily encouragement of teachers increased during the pandemic in all governorates without exception.

Looking at other variables, such as HTs' highest completed qualification, there was no apparent association with level of encouragement for teachers to engage in PI before or during the pandemic (see Appendix J17).

5.4.5 Headteachers' (HTs') encouragement of parents to engage in parental involvement (PI) before and during the pandemic

Table 69: Encouragement of parents to communicate with teachers regarding their children's learning before and during the pandemic (N=212).

Encouragement of parents to communicate with teachers before and during the pandemic)		
	Before % (N=212)	During % (N=212)
Never	4% (8)	2% (5)
Once a year	4% (9)	4% (9)
At least twice a year	8% (17)	4% (9)
Once a month	33% (70)	27% (58)
Once a week	29% (61)	30% (63)
Daily	22 (47)	32% (68)

Turning to HTs' encouragement for parents to communicate with teachers regarding their children's learning, Table 69 indicates that it was predominantly once a month and once a week before the pandemic, increasing to once a week and daily during the pandemic. Table 70 considering differences according to school location.

Table 70: Encouragement of parents to communicate with teachers regarding their children's learning before and during the pandemic differentiating by school location (N=212).

Encouragement of parents to communicate with teachers regarding children's learning before and during the pandemic												
School location	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before % (N=8)	During % (N=5)	Before % (N=9)	During % (N=9)	Before % (N=17)	During % (N=9)	Before % (N=70)	During % (N=58)	Before % (N=61)	During % (N=63)	Before % (N=47)	During % (N=68)
Muscat	0% (0)	0% (0)	6% (1)	6% (1)	12% (2)	0% (0)	35% (6)	41% (7)	24% (4)	24% (4)	24% (4)	29% (5)
Musandam	11% (1)	11% (1)	11% (1)	11% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	44% (4)	11% (1)	11% (1)	44% (4)	22% (2)	22% (2)
Al Buraimi	0% (0)	0% (0)	9% (1)	9% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	36% (4)	45% (5)	45% (5)	18% (2)	9% (1)	27% (3)
Al Batinah North	0% (0)	6% (1)	6% (1)	6% (1)	13% (2)	6% (1)	31% (5)	19% (3)	13% (2)	19% (3)	38% (6)	44% (7)
Al Batinah South	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	7% (1)	0% (0)	29% (4)	36% (5)	43% (6)	43% (6)	21% (3)	21% (3)
A'Dhahirah	6% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	6% (1)	11% (2)	11% (2)	33% (6)	33% (6)	39% (7)	33% (6)	11% (2)	17% (3)
A'Dakhiliya	7% (2)	7% (2)	4% (1)	4% (1)	19% (5)	11% (3)	44% (12)	44% (12)	19% (5)	19% (5)	7% (2)	15% (4)
ASharqiyah North	9% (1)	9% (1)	9% (1)	9% (1)	9% (1)	9% (1)	36% (4)	18% (2)	27% (3)	45% (5)	9% (1)	9% (1)
ASharqiyah South	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	35% (6)	35% (6)	47% (8)	41% (7)	18% (3)	24% (4)
Al Wusta	10% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	10% (1)	0% (0)	10% (1)	20% (2)	30% (3)	40% (4)	40% (4)	40% (4)
Dhofar	3% (2)	0% (0)	5% (3)	3% (2)	5% (3)	3% (2)	29% (18)	15% (9)	27% (17)	27% (17)	31% (19)	52% (32)

Table 70 shows that there were differences in the frequency of HTs' encouragement for parents to engage with teachers before and during the pandemic across various

governorates. Before the pandemic, in governorates like Muscat, Musandam, A'Dakhiliya, and ASharqiyah North, the average frequency of encouragement was once a month. In contrast, in Al Buraimi, Al Batinah South, A'Dhahirah, and ASharqiyah South, it was once a week. During the pandemic, the frequency of daily encouragement increased in most governorates. For example, in Muscat, the percentage of HTs providing daily encouragement increased from 24% to 29%, and in Dhofar, it increased from 31% to 52%.

Looking at other variables, such as HTs' highest completed qualification and number of students in the school, no discernible differences were apparent (see Appendix J18).

5.4.6 Means of communication with parents before and during the pandemic

Table 71: Headteachers' perceptions of teachers' communication methods with parents before and during the pandemic (N=212).

Teachers' communication methods with parents before the pandemic		
	N=212	Percentage (%)
Telephone	41	19%
Face to face	67	32%
All	104	49%
Teachers' communication methods with parents during the pandemic		
	N=212	Percentage (%)
Telephone	122	58%
Face to face	7	3%
Email	3	1%
Website	10	5%
All	70	33%

From Table 71, it appears that most teachers (104, 49%) used all means of communication (telephone, face-to-face) with parents before the pandemic. During the pandemic, more than 50% of HTs reported that teachers used the telephone as a way of communicating with parents, similar to the teachers' answers in Table 53. This might include calling, texting or using different social media applications, explored later in relation to the qualitative data.

The final sub-section concerns HTs' perceptions of the support provided by parents with regard to children's learning before and during the pandemic, and their perceptions of whether PI changed due to experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.4.7 Headteachers' (HTs') perceptions of the support provided by parents for children's learning before and during the pandemic

Table 72: Headteachers' perceptions of parental support for their children's learning at home before and during the pandemic (N=212).

Parental support for their children's learning at home before and during the pandemic		
	Before % (N=212)	During % (N=212)
Very limited	12% (25)	9% (19)
Less than satisfactory	17% (36)	14% (30)
Satisfactory	36% (77)	26% (55)
Very good	28% (59)	35% (74)
Excellent	7% (15)	16% (34)

Table 72 shows that more than 35% (77) of HTs perceived that the average level of parental support for their children's learning was satisfactory before the pandemic. During the pandemic, the majority of HTs (74, 35%) felt that parental support for their children's learning was very good, which is similar to the teachers' responses in Table 54. Moreover, HTs perceived that PI improved during the pandemic; indeed, the percentage of HTs who reported that parental support was excellent increased by more than double during the pandemic.

Table 73: Perceptions of changes in engaging with parents at school due to experiencing the pandemic (N=212).

Perceptions (attitudes/beliefs) of changes in engaging with parents at school due to experiencing the pandemic		
	N=212	Percentage (%)
No, not changed at all	63	30%
Yes, a little bit changed	101	48%
Yes, totally changed	48	23%

Table 73 indicates that around 48% (101) of HTs stated that their beliefs concerning engaging with parents regarding children's learning at their school changed a little due to experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic. This might be related to various factors that influenced the practice of PI during the pandemic, explored further in relation to the qualitative data in the coming chapters.

5.5 Summary of survey findings

The questionnaire was used to collect data on parents' PI practices before and during the pandemic, addressing aspects including internet and technology access, parents' level of

satisfaction with the support and encouragement from the school, provision of parental education programmes, means of communication, and parent–teacher relationships. The results suggest that parents were generally willing to be involved in school matters concerning their children’s education. However, the survey data indicated that this willingness might have been influenced by key socio-demographic factors. For instance, parents’ income appeared to be associated with the time spent in direct interaction with teachers before the pandemic, with parents in higher income brackets having slightly less direct interaction.

During the pandemic, parents’ income also seemed to be linked to the ability to provide reliable, high-speed internet access. Additionally, parents’ employment status appeared to be related to PI practices. Parents with full-time jobs tended to have less direct and online interaction with teachers regarding their children’s learning, both before and during the pandemic. However, these parents seemed to have more reliable internet access during the pandemic compared to those with other types of jobs. Furthermore, parents’ educational level appeared to be linked to internet access, with parents holding lower-level educational qualifications experiencing decreased internet speed during the pandemic but this did not seem to be associated with their interaction with the school on average.

Turning to the educators’ responses to the survey questions regarding their practices and perceptions of PI before and during the pandemic, several aspects were considered, including face-to-face and online interactions between parents and teachers, internet and technology access at school and home, teachers’ and HTs’ duration of experience, number of classes taught per week, means of communication, satisfaction with and encouragement of PI in schools, teachers’ ability to support parental participation in children’s learning, and the overall relationship between teachers/HTs and parents. The findings indicate that during the pandemic, online interactions with parents increased overall, while face-to-face contact generally declined. However, the responses from the teachers and HTs, as well as the parents, suggest that the frequency of daily face-to-face interactions may have risen in specific contexts. Furthermore, the frequency of interactions was linked to the school’s geographical location, with teachers and HTs

reporting increased parental support and encouragement during the pandemic. Internet access and teachers' knowledge of using technology to support parents improved during the pandemic. Before the pandemic, teachers with fewer classes and less experience engaged more in face-to-face interactions. There were no significant differences in interactions based on the total number of students or the HTs' highest educational qualifications.

These initial findings from the quantitative data helped develop the interview questions and will be explored further in the upcoming presentation of qualitative findings in Chapters 6, 7, and 8.

Chapter 6: Results 2

Qualitative data collection was undertaken after the initial analysis of the numerical data. Interview questions were developed based on the quantitative findings to provide deeper insights into the responses of participants regarding PI. For example, participants were asked about the reasons for different levels of PI practice in relation to some of the socio-demographic factors that arose in the Chapter 6 (family income, parental education level, parents' employment status, etc.), both before and during the pandemic. The qualitative findings will be divided into three chapters, drawing on the rich data obtained from semi-structured interviews and from the open-ended questions in the surveys for parents, teachers, and HTs.

This chapter will explore HTs', teachers', and parents' views of what PI in children's learning meant to them and how participants experienced the practice of PI in children's learning before and during the pandemic. Chapter 7 will present participants' reported practice of using technology (ICT) for PI during the pandemic. Then, Chapter 8 will present how the participants would like PI practice to be in the real context, as well as the reasons for PI not being ideal in children's learning at present in the Omani context.

The quantitative findings showed some differences in participants' responses regarding PI in children's learning before and during the pandemic. These included different levels of parents' physical interaction and online communication with school members, encouragement and support from the school members, ways of communication, and technology access in schools and homes. The qualitative data will offer deeper insights and provide context to build on the quantitative findings, helping to clarify why these differences exist. First, I will start with HTs' understanding of the meaning of PI in their children's learning.

6.1 Complex conceptions of parental involvement (PI)

Particular conceptions of PI influence how parents, teachers, and HTs work together to enhance children's learning. The findings demonstrated different and complex understandings of PI among the participants. However, despite differences, the results

indicated that there was a rudimentary understanding of PI in the Omani educational context, which was generally seen as emanating from parents rather than the school. This was the general view among HTs, teachers, and parents. The following sub-section presents HTs' perceptions of PI in their children's learning.

6.1.1 Headteachers' (HTs') perspectives on parental involvement (PI)

Most of the HTs perceived that the parents' role at home is essential and that home learning is a key aspect of PI. However, it seems that the onus is solely on the parents, as there is no mention of the school's role in supporting parents to work with their children at home or in fostering and promoting PI:

'The process of parental participation is very necessary and essential because what the student learns at school needs to be established and consolidated by the parents at home. This is considered an essential role for the guardians to follow up and help at home. They must also guide the students and encourage them to study, follow lessons, and organise time.' (HT5)

This HT considered that parental participation in children's learning is a necessary process that parents should apply at home, fostered through guidance and encouragement, as parents are considered the first and enduring educators of their children (Berger 1991) and have the best firsthand knowledge of the child (Loughran 2008). However, parents' roles in their children's education can vary, necessitating a greater focus on supporting parents, ultimately enhancing their ability to support their children's learning.

Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) highlighted that to have the most effective PI, it needs to be rooted in the home, helping to foster the learning process for the children. This home learning environment emphasises parental support and academic engagement, for example by setting expectations, valuing education, engaging in discussions, and making future plans, rather than just providing direct instruction in school content (Goodall 2022a).

Moreover, learning and getting support at home are PI elements that entail parents creating learning experiences, as identified in Epstein's (2010) typology. In this type of PI,

the school also has a role and should involve families with their children in different learning activities at home. However, in the study data, the view of the school's role in supporting parents with their children's learning at home is unclear. HTs recognised the importance of parents' role in children's education, but, as with the parents, they viewed the home and the school as distinct areas of responsibility, rather than having the fluid relationship promoted by Goodall and Vorhaus (2011), which advocates providing parents with some guidance to help them to support children's learning at home.

While some HTs acknowledged that parents have a major role in children's learning at home, there was another view that considered PI as a way of communication between school and parents that has positive effect not only on students' educational level, but also their wider behaviour. However, even for the limited number of HTs who adopted this broader conception, the onus was placed on the parents and guardians to communicate with the school:

'Parents' participation in the educational process has a significant role in raising the level of achievement, by reviewing educational developments in the evaluation documents and teaching methods. Therefore, when the guardians communicate and are aware of these developments, this positively affects the level and behaviour of the students, so that parents can know what their duties are in this process, then they can contribute in a positive way.' (HT3)

'Effective communication between school and home and parents' participation, in my opinion, this contributes to raising the achievement level of students, and when the guardian is aware of what the student is doing at school, and there is a link between school and home, this positively affects the behaviour and level of the student in the future.' (HT4)

The data emphasised the value of positive communication between parents and teachers about children's learning. This can be considered an effective factor that encourages students to perform better and even to behave better. While the onus is placed on the guardian, and this is framed in the discourse of 'duties', these HTs did recognise the importance of parental/school communication. This falls under the basic obligations of the school, representing the second type of involvement and partnership. This includes

various forms of communication with families about children's progress and school programmes (Epstein 2010). According to Goodall's (2022a) framework, home–school communication not only improves children's achievement and attendance but also supports all aspects of learning through information exchange between school staff and families. However, it seems that these HTs framed this communication in a unidirectional way and did not draw attention to the school's role.

Schools play a crucial role in fostering effective communication with parents about children's learning, and most HTs in this study believed that PI is essential and complements the teachers' efforts. Furthermore, there should be cooperation between teachers and parents to derive the best results from their roles. However, this complementary process is still limited as the schools reported having no proactive procedures in place to promote this practice:

'The role of the guardian is essential and complements the role of the teacher in the school, and there must be cooperation between the home and the school, and this was one of the topics I raised with parents in many meetings held previously.' (HT2)

'... so that the role of the guardian is considered complementary to the role of the teacher but never replaces it. For example, there are new curricula in science, which not all parents have enough experience to teach their children at home.' (HT6)

Regarding this view, the parents' role in schooling is essential to enhance the teachers' role by cooperating with them in an active way. This is again linked to Epstein's (2010) model of communication and related to one of the PI models, namely the cooperative model. In this model, both parents' and educators' attitudes are important and unique in relation to education and the interaction between home and school can be helpful in terms of children's learning. As identified by Goodall and Montgomery (2014), parents and schools share equal responsibility for children's learning to support the best possible outcomes.

However, even though most HTs perceived that parents' and teachers' roles are essential and complementary, the data highlighted the limited nature of the complementary

discourse in terms of PI. Ideally, there should be a partnership that facilitates a two-way flow of information: from the teacher to the parents about the child's classroom achievements and behaviour, and from the parents to the teacher about the complementary elements in the home environment (Loughran 2008).

One of the HTs pointed out that the parents' role will not replace the teachers' role and is limited by certain boundaries, for example parents' lack of familiarity with the new science curriculum. Instead of devising opportunities to engage parents and help them with the new curriculum, they use this to argue that parents should not move out of their role and start 'interfering' with the role of the school.

Overall, HTs viewed parents as having an essential role in supporting their children at home. They highlighted the importance of communication between home and school. However, this communication was often unidirectional, with the majority of HTs placing the onus on parents to initiate contact. This approach did not emphasise the school's role in facilitating two-way communication regarding children's learning.

Additionally, HTs mentioned the complementary relationship between teachers and parents. Despite this, there was still limited understanding of the complementary nature of the process, as specific times and rules for parents' engagement in their children's learning were not clearly defined.

HTs also believed that educating children was not solely the responsibility of the school but a partnership between teachers and parents, in which responsibilities are equally shared. This partnership can be advantageous for a child's overall development. However, HTs did not address the school's role in supporting parents with their children's learning.

I turn now to the teachers' perspectives on PI.

6.1.2 Teachers' perspectives on parental involvement (PI)

At the outset, before presenting what PI means to teachers, it seems that teachers believe that PI in their children's learning has positive impacts that can include both behaviour

and academic achievement. These beliefs are similar to those of the HTs regarding the effect of PI practice.

'Parents' participation in education is necessary and important, by following up on their children in the educational process, whether at the level of achievement or even in the behavioural aspect. As a result of the presence of this parental partnership in schools, it shows positive long-term results not only for the family, but for society as a whole if it is applied in an effective manner.' (T2)

This indicates that PI in children's learning is essential and has many positive effects for children that can include both behavioural and achievement aspects. These positive results can extend not only to the children and their families but also to the educators, and the whole of society.

Regarding the meaning of the practice of PI to the teachers and its impacts on the learning process, even though some teachers believed that it has positive effects on children's learning, these conceptions were limited to monitoring progress:

'The process of the guardians' participation in the education of their children is essential, as it affects the level and performance of the students through the guardians' knowledge of their children's real level and appreciation of their educational status. This affects the level of progress and development of children's learning in the future...' (T4)

'The parents' participation and interest in following up on their children and helping them in the education process is necessary, so that they know what the students' achievements or even their failures are so that parents are not shocked at the end of the school year and surprised by the students' achievement level...' (T5)

These teachers believed that parents' participation in their children's learning can help parents to identify their children's educational level, so they can support them and avoid any issues regarding their children's learning. Nevertheless, even though these perceptions are positive in relation to achievement, there is still limited understanding of PI, which is narrowly focused on children's cognitive and educational involvement. However, the practice of PI is not necessarily effective when it is mainly focused on

academic achievement (Goodall 2013) as children's academic achievement is only part or a small section of the entire process encompassed by the broader concept of PI. Although this understanding was framed by a limited understanding of PI, there was an acknowledgment of communication as outlined by Epstein (2010) and Goodall and Vorhaus (2011).

While most teachers framed PI in terms of following up and monitoring children's academic achievement, they recognised the need to communicate with the school. This communication can be done via multiple sources and different ways depending on the schools and settings:

'Parents' participation in the education process is necessary to complete the education process in an effective manner. When there is a positive connection between parents and teachers, this can mitigate some educational challenges when for example students have any special needs or requirements.' (T3)

'The parent's participation in the educational process has a positive impact on the student's achievement level, through the tangible reality that I see. Many of the outstanding students have very caring parents who communicate in an effective manner with the school and teachers on an ongoing basis, and this confirms the important role that must be played by the parent...' (T6)

'The role of the guardians is to follow up on everything the students do in school, and to ask about them and sit with them so that they know what the difficult points or challenges are facing their children at school, which in turn have a total impact on the students' achievement level.' (T8)

These teachers reported that parents' participation in their children's learning positively affected their students' academic achievement. They observed that the most outstanding students tend to have parents who are more caring and communicate positively with them. Additionally, the teachers believed that positive communication with parents regarding children's learning could also help mitigate some of the educational challenges that children might face in learning.

Even though these teachers believed that positive communication between them and their students' parents had positive effects on the children and their families, there was

still some limitation in their understanding of what such communication entails. For instance, it seems that the onus of communication is on parents only and there is no mention of the school's role and initiative in this matter. Ideally, there should be a two-way flow of information between educators and parents (Loughran 2008), which aligns with HTs' understanding of effective communication:

'There must be communication by parents, and it is even considered necessary. I mean here participation that does not harm the students' education by doing all the required school-work instead of the students. Rather, I mean the communication that the students feel that their parents are aware of the topics they are studying and their behaviour in school.'
(T6)

This means that there should be effective communication between teachers and parents, especially with the implementation of the new curriculum, which requires more active communication. However, the teachers believed that it is the parents' responsibility to initiate communication first with teachers, not the other way round. In addition, parental participation seems to be framed as simply monitoring work and behaviour. In both the teacher and HT data, there was a perception that active PI in children's learning could be 'doing their school-work' for them. This limited understanding of PI reduces it to the parents' basic obligation, which aligns with the first element of Epstein's (2010) typology.

While some teachers reported positive effects of PI on children's learning, others viewed it as an intervention that resulted in negative outcomes for both children and their guardians, in contrast to the HTs' views:

'For me, it is better for the student to get all the information from me only without the interference of the parent in this process in the classroom. Then comes the role of the parents at home to follow up, support and encourage the student to review what was taught in the class, as I prefer to do all the educational process than providing information and solving activities with the students.' (T2)

'Parents' participation in the education process is a double-edged sword, and this depends on the nature of the parents' relationship with their children and the nature of the children themselves, as this relationship can be a cause of adverse results in the academic achievement process. Also, the amount of this participation may be negative, as when there are

more than necessary interventions in the education process, it may negatively affect the student's achievement level and may also negatively affect the family relationship between the parent and the child... There may be a group of teachers who have a view that the guardian has no role in the education process, and this negatively affects the level of students, as the educational process requires a great effort from teachers, guardians, and students at the same time.' (T3)

These quotes indicate a reductive understanding of PI in children's learning, considering PI as an intervention that can lead to negative consequences for both children and their parents. Additionally, PI practice was viewed as an intervention that could be linked to one of the PI models, specifically the independent model, embodying the theory of 'Separate Spheres of Influence' (Epstein 2010, p. 83). Most of the HTs' and teachers' responses suggest separate spheres of influence, such that educators are responsible for educating the children at school and this is independent of the parent's role in educating the children. Furthermore, it specifies that parents' role is to encourage their children to complete their school tasks and to monitor their progress from a distance, without directly involving themselves in their children's specific subjects. Therefore, these beliefs that teachers hold about whether they should work alone or share responsibilities with others for student success might affect their teaching (Epstein and Sanders 2006).

These varied beliefs and perceptions that teachers have regarding PI practice may be related to some barriers that teachers face in their jobs and might negatively affect their support for PI. One of these challenges is lack of time. From the teachers' responses, it seems that most found time constraints in their job a barrier in terms of activating PI, since they have many commitments and responsibilities:

'With the presence of large numbers of students in the classroom, more than 30 students in one class, and the lack of sufficient time for the teacher to focus on each student, in addition to the pressure of the curricula, which is also a burden on the teacher to support parents' role ...' (T5)

'Teachers have difficulty finding sufficient and appropriate time to communicate with the guardians and support their involvement in schooling. This is due to the nature of the teachers' work and requirements on their shoulders that may limit this practice.' (T6)

The teachers indicated that they had limited time because of the nature of their job, which requires a great deal of effort and time, and they thought this could be one of the challenges in terms of supporting PI and encouraging parents to be involved in their children's schooling. This also was supported by parents and some HTs:

'In fact, the pressures that the teacher bears from a large number of students, rich curricula, the presence of remedial plans, the preparation process, exams, and other duties affect the teacher and his ability to allocate special time for parents and encourage them to have an effective participation into their children's learning.' (HT2)

'The large number of students, the intensity of the curricula, and many of the tasks that the teacher must perform may be the reason for the lack of time to activate the role of parents in the education process.' (P10)

'There is a lot of pressure that the teacher bears in public schools, with heavy curricula and a short time to complete them. Thus, the teacher puts pressure on the students and parents at the same time, which at the end affects children's learning and parents' support.' (P11)

All these interviewees believed that the pressure that teachers face can directly influence their views and practice of supporting PI in their school setting. One of these challenges is the large number of students they teach, as well as the heavy curriculum that they need to complete in a limited time. This reflects the finding in the survey that nearly half of the teachers (49%) reported they were teaching 11–19 lessons per week (see Table 7). What is more, 38% of the respondents had 20 lessons or more per week. This indicates that most teachers are under considerable pressure. In addition, there are other obligations that teachers have, with many tasks they must undertake, like designing different remedial plans, exams, and other types of assessment.

Moving to the critical time during the pandemic, some teachers suffered more due to the new way of learning and the stress of using distance communication with parents, which ultimately affected their perceptions and encouragement of PI, as also supported by one of the HTs:

'For teachers, using WhatsApp programme and distance communication with parents during the pandemic have become a great pressure on them...' (T2)

'Another challenge facing the teachers may be the excessive pressure from parents after creating groups in WhatsApp, and the excessive communication process. Therefore, teachers become unwilling to encourage the parents to communicate regarding their negative experience.' (HT2)

During the pandemic, teachers did their best to support their students and parents, maintaining connections through social media and various applications to keep everyone engaged. However, the negative experience that some teachers faced with some parents during the pandemic was reflected in their perceptions and practice as it represented a further burden that they must deal with.

In terms of the teachers' views of PI in children's learning, it seems that they had a reductive understanding of this practice. Even though they believed that PI could have positive impacts on children's learning, they limited parental support to academic achievement. In addition, the teachers highlighted the need for positive communication between the school and parents. However, this focused on the parents' role rather than the school's, in alignment with HTs' views. Furthermore, the teachers framed PI as an intervention that could lead to negative results, again representing a limited understanding of PI; this was because of some of the barriers they faced before and during the pandemic.

The following sub-section will consider parents' views concerning the role of PI in their children's learning.

6.1.3 Parents' perspectives on parental involvement (PI)

For those parents who were supportive of involvement in their children's learning in school, they framed it in a limited way as being their duty and responsibility:

'I feel it is very important, as the students feel proud that someone is taking care of them. This is considered the duty and responsibility of the parents, and I believe that this has an overall impact on the students'

achievement level and enhance and encourage students' continued progress.' (P3)

'Parents' participation in the education process is the duty of every parent and must be among their priorities and responsibilities in life.' (P4)

'As for the participation of parents, it is considered one of the basic duties of parents that they must perform and they are responsible for their children in all aspects of life, so that students do not learn and do not acquire all knowledge and skills only from school. Here emerges the role of parents in helping in this aspect and assisting the role of the teacher and the school in education by encouraging children to continue and reach the required level.' (P9)

These parents explained that their participation in the learning process was among their duties and priorities, assisting and supporting the schools' role in developing knowledge and skills. However, this is a limited understanding of PI that relates to the first element of involvement in Epstein's (2010) typology, which refers to parenting in general and includes the basic obligations of families.

Indeed, the 'duty' discourse reflects a limited understanding of PI, in which the onus is on the parents rather than the school, aligned with some of the HTs' perceptions. There is little sense of school-home collaboration, with parents feeling obligated to assist with ensuring their children's academic achievement. Although many parents admitted that they believed they had an obligation to be involved in their children's education, there was a certain reluctance:

'From my own perspective, parents' participation in their children's learning is mandatory for every matter. However, from society's point of view, there is a great reluctance by many parents through my previous experiences at schools.' (P6)

As this parent reported, parents' support for children's learning is limited as a practice even if it is considered essential. While acknowledging parents' obligations and duties to participate in their children's education, parents were concerned that getting involved in their children's education might hinder their children's academic development and independence at the same time:

'Parents' participation is not about the process of interfering in all educational matters for the children, as this may negatively affect the achievement level through the parent's lack of knowledge and familiarity with the curricula and the difficulty of the curricula with each older age stage. The parent's method may be non-educational and sometimes leads the student to depend entirely on the guardian in the education process...' (P7)

'The participation of the guardian in the education of the children helps them in their educational journey and to overcome difficulties so that they can rely more on themselves in the higher stages.' (P8)

'I do not support the process of full support by parents in the education process so that the students become irresponsible and unable to rely on themselves. However, I believe that the process of parental participation in the education process is very necessary...' (P10)

These parents indicated that PI does not mean that parents support their children entirely throughout their learning process but rather give them the opportunity to be responsible for their learning and just support and guide them when needed. As far as these parents were concerned, their full support for their children would affect their independence in learning when they moved to a higher educational level. Moreover, PI here is considered as interference in children's academic learning that should only happen when it is necessary, for example when children face issues with the new curriculum or other difficulties situation related to their academic achievement that require intervention. Furthermore, these parents believed that such 'interference' in children's learning could have some negative effects on children. This could be related to various factors, for instance parents' lack of knowledge and skills, especially in advanced stages. It would be disadvantageous for children's learning if they were used to relying on their parents' support in everything. Again, this is somewhat similar to some of the HTs' and teachers' views regarding parents' 'interference'.

Although the parents believed PI to be essential and beneficial for their children's learning, they often focused primarily on academic achievement. This narrow view of PI, which was shared by some teachers, overlooks the broader benefits of engaging in dialogic activities.

Furthermore, the data revealed another limited understanding of PI, referring to it as a reactive process that is only relevant at certain times and needs to be withdrawn over time:

'The guardians must guide and direct the students if they encounter a problem and give them a chance to rely on themselves so that they do not face more difficulty when less parents' interference in their own affairs.' (P7)

'For me, it is somewhat limited at the beginning of the school year until the student is settled in and will receive all the textbooks. Then there will be an urgent need for parents to have this participation to follow up the educational process and check the reports of achievement levels, and when any problems or obstacles occur to the student.' (P11)

This view represents a very limited understanding of PI and can be considered reactive rather than proactive. It aligns with the first element of Epstein's (2010) typology, which focuses on parental, rather than school, initiative. One of the parents suggested that parental support does not start in the early weeks of the school year but is established when the students start their actual learning after receiving their books and settling in well. This reveals that parents are not encouraged to begin supporting their children's learning from the early weeks of school and instead wait for things to unfold before responding.

Moreover, the data revealed the perception that parents should not be directly involved in their children's learning at all times. Instead, they should allow their children to face some challenges independently, fostering self-reliance and problem-solving skills. This approach aims to reduce parental 'interference' as children grow older. However, this perspective reflects a limited understanding of PI, viewing it primarily as a reactive measure such that parents only respond to specific issues as they arise. This contrasts with proactive PE, in which parents are prepared in advance and actively support their children in various situations before problems occur (Goodall 2017). Proactive engagement encourages a more supportive and anticipatory role, enhancing the overall

learning experience for children by being ready to address potential challenges and opportunities.

Some parents considered the mechanism of PI to be a reactive response to a certain issue that should be decreased and withdrawn over time when issues are resolved or as children grow. Some parents believed that parental participation in children's learning was more needed with young children rather than in higher educational stages, since it might affect children's progress in learning:

'In fact, this is what affected most of the post-basic students, as the student is completely dependent on the guardian in the early stages, and then when the children grow up and the curriculum becomes more difficult and the parent's participation in the education process decreases, all of this negatively affects the student's achievement level and becomes weak. Sometimes this is because there was a complete dependence on the guardian in the past.' (P6)

'As for the process of parents' participation in their children's education, it depends on the age of the children. For example, in the primary stage, it is more important than the higher levels, and the participation of parents should be more effective with the school.' (P7)

'The role of the guardian is important and essential at home and in the process of educating children, as the guardian follows up and guides. In the absence of this support from the guardian, it affects negatively the education process, especially when the students are in the early stages.' (P8)

These parents considered PI to be more important in the primary and early learning stages than higher and secondary levels. In addition, the parents should play a role in schools, not only at home. These views seem to draw on a 'scaffolding' metaphor, with engagement viewed as a form of support that needs to be withdrawn over time. However, the data suggested the view that while it is essential to have parents' support in the early stages, relying extensively on parents' support at this stage might negatively affect children's learning later when there is less parental support.

Regarding these parents' perspectives, it seems that most had a limited understanding of PI, which is seen as emanating from the parents rather than the school. Even though the

parents believed PI to be an essential practice with their children, they framed their involvement in terms of their duties and responsibilities, with the absence of school initiatives, which can be considered as related to the lower level of Epstein's (2010) typology. Furthermore, other parents considered PI to be interference and solely focused on academic achievement, framing PI as a reactive process responding to certain issues and needing to be withdrawn over time.

Overall, parents, teachers, and HTs held slightly different views in terms of what PI meant to them. Most of the participants considered the practice of parents' support and participation in their children's learning to be an essential part of the learning process. Also, they mentioned that PI in children's learning has positive effects, both behaviourally and academically, for children. Nevertheless, it seems that most parents had a limited understanding of PI. As Goodall (2013) noted, academic achievement is only one aspect of PE in children's learning. Another reduced understanding, some parents indicated, was that PI is a reactive process that occurs for certain circumstances and then needs to be withdrawn over time. This is opposite to a proactive approach, which suggests that parents should be prepared for events before they arise and can act effectively in specific circumstances (Goodall 2017). Furthermore, other parents considered PI to be their duty, related to their basic parenting obligations according to Epstein's (2010) typology.

In terms of the teachers' perceptions of PI, some viewed it as an intervention that has negative effects; sometimes, they preferred to work independently without any support from the parents, reflecting an independent model (Epstein 2010). Moreover, teachers and HTs had a similar constrained understanding of PI in terms of communication. Even though they believed that positive communication between parents and teachers could positively affect children and families, they put the onus on parents rather than the school to engage.

However, some HTs had less limited perceptions of PI, considering it a complementary process between teachers and parents, as highlighted by Desforges and Abouchaar (2003). Nevertheless, these HTs still perceived that some parents did not have sufficient knowledge or skills to support their children's learning. Another perspective was that

home learning is a key aspect of PI practice, but this was not articulated clearly as the school's role in supporting parents was not mentioned.

From these views, it seems that most participants in Oman have a basic understanding of PI. Incorporating a broader view of PI, as suggested by Ndwandwe (2023), could help address these limitations and enhance the effectiveness of PI in children's education.

Moreover, this research considered Epstein's (1995) model of PI, which comprises six types of practice: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. This model emphasises the importance of parents being actively involved in their children's education both at home and at school. Goodall and Montgomery (2014), on the other hand, propose a continuum of PE that ranges from PI with schools to PE with children's learning. They argue that PE should be viewed as a holistic approach that includes both home and school contexts and that parents should be seen as partners in their children's education.

In this study, the data suggested a limited understanding in terms of applying either of these frameworks or conceptualisations with the school or with children's learning. Moreover, there was a limited understanding with reference to Goodall's (2022a) theoretical framework, which was used to frame the research questions and aims and is an adaptation of Epstein's model of PI (see section 2.5).

In the next section, I present the participants' reported PI practice.

6.2 Prevalent parental involvement (PI) practice before and during the pandemic

This section of the thesis will discuss the changes and attitudes towards participation in PI before and throughout the pandemic. Further, this section will illustrate how the pandemic resulted in the practice of PI with children's learning, including PI in children's learning at home, parents' participation in the school, parental participation in educational programmes, schools' and teachers' encouragement for parents to be involved in their children's learning, ways of communication between parents and the school, and parents' and teachers' relationships.

6.2.1 Parental involvement (PI) in children's learning at home before and during the pandemic

Parents reflected upon what PI meant to them before the pandemic, which, as discussed above, reflected a limited understanding of PI generally. The first practice reported by parents before the pandemic indicated a disengaged approach. Parents who adapted this approach used the verb 'interfere' to indicate that they viewed education as the school's responsibility:

'In fact, I do not interfere much in the things my daughter learns at school, so that she has become more responsible for herself, and I only intervene when it is necessary, so she is now more self-reliant with a little help from me when it is necessary...' (P2)

This parent emphasised the importance of fostering independence in the child's learning, suggesting that PI should be minimal and only occur when absolutely necessary. This approach aims to encourage self-reliance in children.

Before the pandemic, some parents reported a restricted view of PI, focusing primarily on reactive support for their children's academic achievement rather than learning more broadly (e.g. developing thinking skills). Generally, parents described their involvement as fulfilling basic parenting obligations, such as checking homework and exam dates:

'I contribute to my daughter's learning when the need arises, for example when she needs help in any subject she studies, whether it is homework or a project that she has to do at home.' (P1)

'I am aware of all the things that my daughter studies and learns at school, and I follow her daily in homework and projects, and I am always informed, even in the activities she participates in at school.' (P3)

'I follow up the process of educating my children by asking about the lessons that have been taken and the dates of the exams, and I try to provide everything my children need in case there are any difficulties in the academic subjects.' (P6)

These parents limited their involvement to monitoring homework and understanding the educational context, focusing mainly on academic achievement. While they were aware

of their responsibilities, their involvement was primarily reactive, addressing issues as they arose. However, as noted by Goodall (2013), supporting academic achievement alone does not constitute effective involvement as it is only one part of the learning process. Goodall (2017) also noted that a reactive academic approach should be phased out once problems are resolved.

However, the pandemic significantly altered the level of PI. Parents who previously adopted a reactive approach found themselves more engaged in their children's school-based learning due to the pandemic's impact:

'While during the pandemic, I think that my participation in her education process has become greater than before because I fully realise that she needs this support at this critical time. As the duration of the study was only three hours, it is considered insufficient to complete all the tasks, and the guardians were required to follow up at home.' (P2)

'My participation in my children's learning increased a lot compared to the period that preceded the pandemic, because the study time was considered very short, approximately only three lessons per day, and the teacher could not finish all the courses and requirements...' (P3)

'During the pandemic, my participation in my children's learning has not changed in terms of contributing to solving difficulties, following up, and supervising the education process, but the level has changed as there has been more intervention because of my presence with my children most of the time at home.' (P6)

Overall, most parents reported an increase in their involvement during the pandemic due to the limited time teachers had to cover lessons. Consequently, many parents felt compelled to take on a more active role in their children's education, sometimes even assuming the role of the teacher at home:

'During the pandemic, my daughter became less dependent on the teacher and relied more on me.' (P1)

'My role has become greater than before; this is playing the role of a teacher. Therefore, my role has gone beyond the process of educational support and follow-up to the acquisition of other skills in the education process in most subjects. For instance, training my daughter to use the educational platform and attend classes.' (P4)

'My participation in the process of educating my son did not change as a matter of course, but this participation increased as I used to teach my son the entire curriculum at the time of the pandemic at home. Also, I used to solve all activities with him and clarify all lessons.' (P7)

From these responses, it seems that PI for these parents changed during the pandemic as it increased, but only in relation to academic attainment. For instance, one parent noted that their child became less dependent on the teacher and relied more on them, indicating a shift in dependency. Another parent described how their role expanded beyond educational support to include direct teaching and technical assistance, such as training their child to use the educational platform and attend classes. Similarly, another parent mentioned that their participation increased as they took on the responsibility of teaching the entire curriculum and clarifying all lessons and activities. These responses highlight a common theme of parents taking on more active and comprehensive roles in their children's education, focusing primarily on academic attainment. The increased involvement required parents to acquire new skills and adapt to new responsibilities, underscoring the significant impact of the pandemic on parental roles in education:

'During the pandemic, my participation has become much greater than before, and I know their real levels, as I follow up on all lessons and assignments with them at home. Additionally, I discovered the aspects that need to be improved by staying with my children during class time and noticing the extent to which the information given by the teacher may be understood or not by students.' (P2)

'It was a very useful experience for parents during the pandemic to follow up on their children's learning.' (Parents' survey)

As these parents experienced the pandemic, their level of participation in their children's learning improved, allowing them to understand their children's true academic levels by following up on all lessons and assignments at home. This increased involvement also enabled the parents to identify areas needing improvement by observing their children's comprehension during class time. This hands-on approach provided valuable insights into how well the information given by the teacher was understood by the students.

Moreover, the parents revealed that many found it very useful to follow up on their children's learning during the pandemic. This suggests that the increased involvement was not only beneficial for the children's academic progress but also for the parents' understanding of their children's educational needs. The experience of closely monitoring their children's learning helped parents gain a deeper appreciation for the educational process and the efforts required to support their children's academic success:

'A beautiful experience, especially during the pandemic, we were close to the teachers, and we saw that teachers were making great efforts that we really appreciate.' (Parents' survey)

This response indicates that the pandemic provided parents with a unique opportunity to observe and understand the significant efforts teachers put into educating their children. The increased proximity to the educational process allowed parents to see firsthand the dedication and commitment of teachers, leading to a greater appreciation for their role. This newfound respect underscores the valuable insights parents gained during this challenging time, as they took on more active roles in their children's education and witnessed the complexities of teaching.

6.2.2 Parental involvement (PI) in children's learning at school before and during the pandemic

Moving to parents' involvement at school, more specifically their participation, the data indicated three types of PI practice at school before and during the pandemic. The first concerning those parents who did not participate in the school setting in any way:

'I have not yet participated in any programme in my children's school.'
(P2)

'I did not participate in any of the activities or programmes in the school because of the lack of these activities to participate in them, and also because we have customs and traditions as a conservative community, I do not prefer to participate in competitions or programmes offered in male schools.' (P8)

This lack of broad PI at the school level appears to have stemmed from the school itself and from some parents' attitudes. As reported by some parents, they did not participate in any activities in their children's school, because there were no activities and they were not invited to participate, both before and during the pandemic. Another parent held the belief that schools should be responsible for their children's education while they were at school and felt they were only responsible for their children's education when they were at home. This was both reported in the survey and stated in the interviews. This was besides the effect of religious and cultural factors that make attending and participating in male schools uncomfortable for female parents.

The second group of parents, the majority, indicated that they did not get involved in their children's education at the school level, apart from occasional need-based communications in class-teacher meetings. Most parents who took part in the interviews said that they had limited participation in their children's schools before or during the pandemic. They would occasionally contact the schools to acquire general information on the attainment and progress of their children:

'In fact, I do not have any active participation in the school, whether it was before Corona or after Corona, I just participated once in a competition and on a charity day by making a dish for the school and helping in the organisation.' (P1)

'There was no participation from me at school and it was considered very simple, for example, in celebrations or official occasions, I participate through attendance only. Of course, this was before the pandemic.' (P3)

'As for the participation, I did not participate in activities inside the school, but I only visited the school to ask about my son, and to attend the meetings held at the school.' (P7)

These responses indicate a lack of participation from parents in schools; rather, PI is limited to school visits to ask about their children's level or attending some general events. There was little reported evidence of PI that was more educative in nature, as described by Goodall and Montgomery (2014), who suggest that PE with children's learning involves a greater commitment and ownership of action.

Finally, the third group comprised parents who indicated they actively participated in their children's school; however, this was only before the pandemic:

'I do participate in my children's school when necessary. Sometimes the school offers some workshops and lectures, for example, how to prepare your child for exams and how to use the Teams programme, and sometimes I write articles and publish them in the school. Also, sometimes I attended some discussion lectures that were given at school, but not frequently due to the pressures and requirements in my job.' (P4)

'I had participations in the Mothers' Council before the pandemic, and I also used to participate in events held in the school, such as ceremonies honouring new students, as well as national events and other activities and events...' (P5)

These parents were involved in their children's schools, for example attending some workshops to help support them in their children's education, before the pandemic. Furthermore, they were involved actively, taking part in the schools' activities and events. One of the parents said that she was a member of the 'Mothers' Council', which is a group of parents selected by all parents in the school to represent their views, resolve issues and provide a link to the school society. The council organises events, meetings and other activities that can help to build a strong link between parents and schools.

6.2.3 Courses and educational programmes to support parental involvement (PI) before and during the pandemic

Educational programmes for parents and teachers can be helpful in supporting PI and enhancing this practice. However, based on the parents' responses, it appears that most parents did not participate in any educational programmes provided by the Ministry of Education, either before or during the pandemic. This aligns with the survey, in which 62% of parents stated that they did not join any such programme during these periods (see Table 33):

'As for programmes or courses, there were none, and nothing offered to me, whether before or during the pandemic.' (P3)

'Unfortunately, there was no special educational programme for parents by the Ministry of Education, and this was before and during the pandemic. However, there were only voluntary community self-efforts by schools and teachers by each governorate separately...' (P4)

'No programmes or courses were offered to participate in. I think even if these programmes exist, there will be reluctance on the parents' side, as I notice that only a small number of parents attend the meetings that were held in the school.' (P8)

These responses identified a lack of parental education programmes in terms of helping parents to support their children's learning either before or during the pandemic. When parents were asked why they might not have participated in any educational programmes or courses developed by the Ministry of Education, most responded that there was a lack of available programmes specifically designed to support their children's learning. They noted that the efforts were mostly limited to workshops and lectures provided by schools and teachers, which were offered infrequently and for limited hours. However, it seems that some parents were keen to be involved in educational programmes as they believed it would be beneficial for them in terms of helping their children's schooling. This was reflected in the survey, in which the minority of parents (38%) who said they attended one of the parental education programmes before or during the pandemic reported finding them useful (see Table 33).

Despite that data found there was a lack of educational programmes for parents, this also was the same for the teachers:

'I also mention that there is a lack of courses that help teachers develop their abilities and skills in teaching and communicating with parents ... There are no training courses for new teachers so that they can give more in terms of relation with parents.' (P6)

This indicates that there is a lack of courses for teachers to support parents' participation in their children's learning, reflected in their practice and encouragement of PI.

The next section will present the methods of communication parents used to connect with schools to support their children's learning, both before and during the pandemic.

6.2.4 Means of communication between parents and schools/teachers before and during the pandemic

Parents have different forms and ways of communicating with teachers regarding their children's learning, either one-way or two-way. As outlined previously, for most of the parents in this study communication with the school was reactive. This was also indicated by the teachers, who explained that they were responsive to parents when approached but they did not initiate or develop two-way communication. However, this reactive model was challenged by the pandemic, which required more dedication and closer contact with teachers and schools, especially with school closures and the move to online learning.

In terms of the types of communication used by parents to communicate with teachers before the pandemic, the most common was a mix including the telephone, face-to-face meetings, email and websites. As reported in the survey, the highest percentage of parents (39%) used a mix of methods of communication (see Table 36). The second highest percentage (37%) communicated face-to-face with teachers, which is consistent with the interview data:

'Before the pandemic, the process of communication was through social networking sites and through direct face-to-face meetings with teachers in the school through meetings that were presented at the school on specific days...' (P3)

'Before the pandemic, the methods of communication were more direct than using social media programmes, which were not activated by all teachers, but I consider the communication process was at a middle level...' (P4)

As seen from the parents' responses, most reported that they used more direct ways of communication with their children's teachers before the pandemic, besides using various social networking sites on their mobile phones. One of the HTs reported that school location affected the parents' direct communication before the pandemic:

'For the situation before the outbreak of the pandemic, communication was more through face-to-face contact. This is because the school is located in the middle of a residential area and is close to parents' homes.'

Therefore, it is an easy process, especially when they do not need any means of transportation.’ (HT5)

This indicates that the location of the school was a factor in facilitating direct communication with schools before the pandemic. For instance, being in the middle of a residential area could ease direct communication between parents and teachers. Consistent with this, Hornby and Lafaele (2011) noted that when a school is situated close to families, this can help to establish more PI by offering an easy means of transportation. However, for parents who live at a distance from the school and cannot reach it regularly, PI might not be as easy, but this does not mean that they are less interested in their children’s learning or less involved in their children’s schooling.

During the pandemic, 65% of parents in the survey stated that the most popular method to communicate with school was by mobile phone (see Table 36). This was supported by the qualitative data as most of the parents reported that they used educational platforms and WhatsApp on their mobile phones to connect with their children’s teachers:

‘The main means of communication was groups in the WhatsApp programme, whether before or during the pandemic.’ (P1)

‘During the Corona period, communication was remotely, and most of the ways were through the mobile phone, such as WhatsApp.’ (P3)

‘As for the period of the pandemic, the method used in the communication process was through educational and remote platforms, for example, the Google Classroom programme and others.’ (P4)

‘I found that using educational platforms and other programmes I have in my mobile phone such as WhatsApp faster and easier for the communication process.’ (P11)

These findings indicate that most interactions between teachers, parents, and students during the pandemic occurred remotely, primarily through mobile phone applications like WhatsApp and educational portals.

Hence, despite limited direct and remote interactions due to the crisis, the pandemic provided an opportunity to explore alternative communication methods to support

children's learning. One key factor in promoting PI in children's learning is encouragement from schools and teachers.

6.2.5 Schools' and teachers' encouragement for parents to be involved in their children's learning before and during the pandemic

Supporting and encouraging parents to be involved in their children's learning can be one of the factors that influence their practice, which ultimately affects children's learning and progress. The more teachers urge parents to take on this responsibility, the more the child will benefit, and classroom learning will become more successful (Loughran 2008).

In this study, the qualitative data indicated four groups of parents with three different responses regarding the support and encouragement they got from their children's school before and during the pandemic. The first group of parents reported that they were satisfied with all support and guidance from the school, both before and during the pandemic. This is consistent with the survey, in which parents reported satisfaction with the resources and guidance provided by their children's teachers, with the highest percentage being 79% before the pandemic and 55% during the pandemic (see Table 31):

'Yes, the school encourages me a lot, even if it is through words that the teacher reinforces the student. This encourages me more to do the role that I am doing. This motivates me to make more effort in the process of educating my children...' (P2)

'... As for the period before the pandemic, there were meetings between the mothers of the higher achievers to praise them in the school by attending the school... During the pandemic, the school encourages me in the process of supporting and educating my daughter, as every class and every teacher has a WhatsApp group to send all the requirements and to reinforce students to do well.' (P3)

'Before the outbreak of the pandemic, the school supported me in the process of educating my daughter. For example, when I encountered a difficulty in mathematics, I contacted the teacher, and she supported me and clarified everything that was incomprehensible ... During the pandemic, school provided incorporated and material support to all parents and encouraged them to follow their children's learning at home.' (P5)

These responses indicate that parents were supported by schools and teachers regarding their children's learning, both before and during the pandemic. Before the pandemic, parents reported that they received direct support and encouragement from their children's teachers by attending meetings in schools and getting educational support when needed. During the pandemic, teachers stayed connected with parents using WhatsApp and other applications to provide them with some resources and materials, which helped them with their children's learning. Furthermore, the parents indicated that the school and the teachers' roles were essential in keeping them notified about their children's learning level and encouraging them at the same time to keep up the hard work through different activities.

However, this was not the same experience for all the parents. The second group of parents expressed that there were some differences in schools' and teachers' support and encouragement before and during the pandemic and they were less satisfied with the provision of support during the pandemic. In the survey, the percentage of parents who were satisfied with the resources and guidance they received from school and teachers decreased from 79% before the pandemic to 55% during the pandemic (see Table 31). Some of the parents expressed their experience during the pandemic, as follows:

'Before the pandemic, the school encouraged parents to help their children, whether at home or at the school, and welcomed them at any time to ask about their children. I think that the school was more encouraging before the pandemic period, but now with the presence of Corona, there are many precautions that have increased...' (P1)

'There was greater encouragement by the school before the pandemic, by communicating with me in case there were any problems related to my son's behaviour or level, which supported my contribution to my son's education. While during the pandemic, communication and encouragement by the school was relatively little.' (P7)

These parents stated that they received more encouragement from their children's schools and teachers before the pandemic than during the pandemic. They referred to this as a unique situation that everyone faced during the pandemic, which caused an interruption in the whole educational process.

In contrast, some parents found that the pandemic offered a great chance to enhance schools' and teachers' roles in supporting and encouraging parents to do their best regarding their children's learning. As represented by the survey, 33% of teachers reported that they encouraged parents to communicate with them about their children's learning once a month before the pandemic (see Table 51), while during the pandemic, teachers' level of encouragement to parents increased to an average of once a week (28%). All these teachers' efforts to support parents and learners were recognised by the parents, as supported by the responses of the third group of parents who were more satisfied with the resources and guidance from the school during the pandemic:

'As for the guardian's support in the education process, it was not very clear, but after the pandemic, the school became more interested in this aspect. This is through the presence of an urgent need by the school and teachers to communicate with parents and students, and it provided many workshops and lectures that helped the guardian in understanding the mechanism of using some technical programmes in education...' (P4)

This revealed the positive aspect of the effects of the pandemic, which gave schools, teachers, and parents an opportunity to support each other. For instance, schools and teachers worked hard to reach parents and students, and they provided guardians with some workshops to enable them to use educational platforms and other educational programmes with their children.

However, the fourth and the last group of parents reported that they were not satisfied with the encouragement and support provided by schools and teachers, either before or during the pandemic:

'From my experience with my daughter's teachers, not all teachers encourage parents to participate in the education process...' (P2)

'As for this aspect, it is considered unclear and unfortunately, I did not feel that there was any support or encouragement from the school, whether it was before or during the pandemic...' (P6)

'As for me, I have not received any support from the school so far, only when there are parental meetings my husband attends.' (P8)

From these responses, it seems that these parents had negative experiences with their children's schools. They stated that there was a lack of encouragement and support from teachers and schools, and there was an unclear process that needed to be changed, especially after the pandemic experience. The insufficient encouragement from the schools may be attributed to inadequate facilities and limited tools and resources to support PI, as experienced by most parents:

'The obstacles may be from the school itself, as they do not have sufficient capabilities or enough materials to encourage parents to participate more in the education process, with a lack of organisation in this aspect. Also, there is nothing that attracts parents or programmes that arouse their curiosity for the participation process more in schools.' (P1)

'Many schools do not encourage parents to communicate with them continuously, and this is what I noticed in previous years.' (P9)

These participants reported that the school as an organisation affects PI practice. This can negatively influence PI when there are limited school facilities to support parents and encourage them to be involved positively in their children's learning. Where possible, schools can encourage parents to be part of the learning process by providing information and support through workshops, programmes or courses.

Another factor contributing to this reported lack of encouragement may be that some teachers did not actively support parents in engaging with their children's learning:

'There must be continuous communication between the guardian and the teacher, however, there is number of teachers who do not encourage this type of communication, which negatively affects the students and their achievement level.' (T4)

'There are some barriers affected into the level of parents' participation in their children's learning. For instance, lack of support and encouragement from the teachers to enhance the level of PI.' (HT5)

These educators believed that teachers' lack of encouragement and limited support for parents was a barrier to PI practice, which ultimately affects children's learning. This limited practice and encouragement from teachers could be linked to various factors

constraining their level of support for parents' participation, for example having limited time to activate PI practices:

'Some teachers may have health, or family conditions, or maybe pressures in the school that affect the process of encouraging parents to participate in the educational process...' (HT3)

'On the part of teachers, work pressures, the intensity of the number of students, the curricula that fall on the teacher's shoulders, the shortage of teachers, emergency leave and maternity leave for female teachers, all of these are considered obstacles that limit the process of constructive communication between the guardian and the teacher so that it can affect the education process.' (P3)

These circumstances might include personal situations or other obstacles related to social and health settings outside the school environment, which affect the time teachers have available to support PI in school. Furthermore, this might be related to negative experiences that teachers had previously:

'The unpleasant experiences of teachers may be one of the reasons for the reluctance of some teachers to encourage parents to communicate with them, as they made an unsuccessful attempt in the past that did not work.' (HT6)

'One of the problems or challenges on the part of teachers is their lack of acceptance and discouragement of parents to communicate with them, whether as a result of a previous experience or as a result of their own concept.' (P3)

Prior negative experiences with parents could explain why some teachers were not supportive of PI. Essentially, they were not willing to repeat the same experience with parents. Moreover, reluctance on the part of teachers could be related to their own concepts and beliefs regarding the role of parents in children's learning.

Having addressed the reported level of support and guidance that parents received from school before and during the pandemic and some of the barriers that hindered PI, the next sub-section will present the relationship between parents and teachers in terms of supporting learning before and during the pandemic.

6.2.6 Parents and teachers' relationships before and during the pandemic

Given the importance of parental participation and the critical role it plays in young people's development, teachers and parents need to collaborate to achieve educational aims. The relationship between parents and teachers is considered one of the core elements that affect PI in children's learning. Building strong bonds between teachers and parents is essential to assist parents engage in their children's education in the most productive ways (Green et al. 2007). Indeed, the importance of good parent-teacher relationships has been well documented; for instance, when teachers and parents work as partners, the good they can do for children is nearly limitless (Loughran 2008).

Looking at the survey results in Table 38, more than half of the parents (62%) indicated that their relationship with teachers regarding their children's learning did not change as a result of experiencing the pandemic. This is supported by some of the parents' comments in the interviews:

'My view of how to deal with teachers has not changed, whether before or during the pandemic, and their role is essential and complementary to the role of the guardian at home, from my point of view.' (P2)

'My view of how to deal with teachers has not changed, as they play their role to the fullest, through the experience we went through during the pandemic period.' (P5)

These parents believed that teachers play an essential role in the learning process and their relationship with teachers remained unchanged even during the pandemic. However, some parents noted that the teachers' roles diminished compared to before the pandemic:

'My relationship with teachers has not changed, only the role of the teachers has changed a little in the Corona pandemic. As their role has become a little less than before the pandemic, I found there are other educational resources during the pandemic that help the guardian to do part of the teacher's role...' (P6)

In contrast, as shown in Table 38, a minority of parents (38%) in the survey claimed that their relationship with teachers did change during the pandemic, and were directed to open-ended questions to explain more about their experiences. From their written

responses, most noticed that their relationship with teachers had become much better than before the pandemic. For instance, parents said that teachers were supportive of the learning process, and they were trying their best to deliver the lesson effectively:

'The relation has changed and improved, as teachers are in contact with us in terms of attendance, participation, and activities, and this indicates the teacher's keenness on the student's level to be excellent.' (Parents' survey)

'The relationship between us became much better and this after we started to communicate daily with them, which gave us great opportunities to gain a lot of information from the teachers in order to deliver it to our children in better ways.' (Parents' survey)

'My relationship with teachers changed in a positive way, as the teacher was striving to facilitate access to various visual, written, and audio teaching aids for a better understanding, and they welcomed any comments or any inquiries they received from parents.' (Parents' survey)

This reflects the great efforts made and support provided by teachers during the pandemic, which led to greater appreciation for the teachers among some of the parents than before the pandemic as they struggled with the teaching process becoming their responsibility and duty at home:

'I realised the importance of the role of the teachers and the efforts they make, but through the experience of the pandemic, this perspective has strengthened, and I became more certain that the teacher is the basis of the education process, but also with the presence of a role supplementary by the parents at home.' (P4)

'I realised that teachers were making a great effort to deliver information and interest in how the students understood the lessons and cooperated with parents.' (Parents' survey)

Moreover, some parents stated that they were closer to the teachers than before the pandemic and they were supporting each other, with the teachers helping parents to overcome some of the challenges that the children were facing during distance learning:

'Teachers and parents became one hand in order to raise the learning level of students, and I gained lots of skills and even I learned some educational methods to support my children's learning.' (Parents' survey)

'The experience was really good, as it greatly contributed to the cooperation between parents and teachers that initiated a strong partnership between home and school.' (Parents' survey)

'The relationship became clearer than before the pandemic, as I identified teachers' methods of teaching, and the extent of my son's abilities. As a result, this made it much easier to deal with my children's learning and to avoid any misunderstanding with teachers in the coming days.' (Parents' survey)

Hence, the pandemic positively affected the relationship with teachers and raised parents' awareness about the importance of having a connection with their children's teachers. As stated by these parents, they identified different methods that helped them to understand teachers and how to deal with them properly based on getting closer to them due to the pandemic.

However, this was not the experience of all parents. A minority of parents had negative experiences with their relationship with teachers due to the pandemic. For instance, some parents said they had fewer discussions with teachers about their children's learning and were unable to guide them properly:

'The relationship with teachers is not the same as before the pandemic, and there is no affective communication or discussion between us.' (Parents' survey)

'Teachers were busy with the electronic content, and they do not open the way for discussion with parents due to the time limitation they had.' (Parents' survey)

Furthermore, other parents were not satisfied with the teachers' ways of communicating. In addition, some parents were not satisfied with some of the teachers' teaching methods during the pandemic, which ultimately affected their children's learning:

'I was not satisfied with their ways of communication, as the response to any inquiries was after a long time and sometimes, we do not receive any responses.' (Parents' survey)

'During my presence with my son during the class time, I discovered that some of the teachers did not have enough ability to deliver the correct information to the students and were not able to answer their requirements.' (Parents' survey)

These parents were not satisfied with the means of communication provided by some of their children's teachers. It seems that they were keen on having more positive communication with the teachers, so they could benefit themselves and support their children's learning. Some parents reported that the pandemic experience demonstrated to them the teachers' abilities to deliver knowledge to the children as they became more involved in their children's lessons, either negatively or positively.

6.3 Summary

Overall, parents expressed different experiences in relation to the practice of PI before and during the pandemic. Some parents stated that they were more involved in their children's learning at home during the pandemic, and they were taking more responsibility for their children's progress. This was due to various circumstances, such as the schools' closure, remote learning, and time limitations, faced by learners worldwide. In terms of parents' participation in school settings, it seems that this was limited and there was a lack of parental education programmes in Omani schools. Furthermore, the data revealed mixed responses regarding the average amount of communication between parents and schools/teachers, with some parents saying they had more positive communication with teachers during the pandemic. In contrast, others had negative experiences, and this is even though they had a moderate level of communication; however, they did not find it very beneficial for them or for their children's learning. This could be due to difficulties in deploying the appropriate means of communication with sufficient skills and tools. Regarding the encouragement that parents received from schools and teachers to become more involved in their children's learning, responses varied. Most parents expressed satisfaction with the support and encouragement provided by the school and teachers, both before and during the pandemic. In terms of parents' relationship with

teachers regarding children's learning, most said it did not change that much during the pandemic.

Moving on to the next chapter, it will highlight the perceptions and experiences of participants concerning parental support at home and the availability/non-availability of technology. It will also present the factors that affect PI and children's learning.

Chapter 7: Results 3

Building on the questionnaire data, this section highlights and discusses how the educators (teachers and HTs), and parents perceived the availability/non-availability of digital technology in the home learning environment (e.g. laptops, iPads, PCs, access to Wi-Fi, technical skills) as significant factors that affected PI and children's learning. In this chapter, digital differences experienced by parents and educators will be presented that can be linked to some of the challenges that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. These can be linked to material, cultural, and technical barriers. In addition to revealing some opportunities and challenges of conducting remote learning that might affect teachers, parents, and students at the same time.

7.1 Challenges in using technology during the COVID-19 pandemic

7.1.1 Limited access to the internet

Remote learning brought in as an emergency measure during the pandemic presented both challenges and opportunities for children's education. Researchers have identified these impacts in various studies conducted across different countries, including the US (Garbe et al. 2020), Jordan (Abuhammad 2020), and Portugal (Ribeiro et al. 2021). One of the most pronounced challenges was related to the lack of adequate internet access and technology to follow learning activities properly as reported by Ribeiro et al. (2021).

In this current study, the analysis of the quantitative survey data indicated several elements within digital poverty. The concept of digital poverty concerns the minimum levels of ICT use and consumption, as well as the income levels required for the population to demand ICT products (Cáceres 2007). The term 'digital divide' is commonly used to describe disparities in ICT access and usage at both the household and national levels (Cáceres 2007, p. 2). Digital poverty and the digital divide are related concepts, but they are not the same, as digitally poor individuals may not use ICTs due to lack of services or lack of use abilities (Cáceres 2007).

Linking this to this study, the elements of digital poverty can include material constraints, the most obvious being unreliable internet coverage or a lack of internet in some rural

areas (e.g. poor families not having access to internet or devices), and cultural constraints (e.g. limited technological skills). These factors were perceived by parents and teachers as significantly affecting parents' support for their children's learning in the home during the pandemic.

This was particularly the case at the beginning of the pandemic, when children, parents, and teachers were all experiencing remote learning for the first time. Prior to the pandemic, around 44% of parents in the survey believed that there was a lack of access to the internet in the home to support their children's learning (see Table 27). During the pandemic, there were contrasting responses; the highest percentage (37%) of parents disagreed that there was a lack of access to technology in the home to support their children's learning, whereas the second highest percentage (33%) of parents agreed that there was a lack of technology. This was in line with the qualitative data, as many parents reported issues with the network and internet connection:

'We faced the problem of networks, internet coverage, and the lack of an internet connection in some areas, which led to difficulty in the education process...' (P3)

'Among the challenges are also the presence of weak internet or even the absence of internet in the area in which the guardian resides.' (P4)

'One of the biggest challenges that faced the distance education process was the interruption of the internet and the lack of coverage in all regions of the Sultanate, which negatively affected children's learning through their inability to open all files or lessons or even during final exams.' (P8)

As explained by these parents, one of the challenges they faced during the pandemic was the lack of internet access in most Omani governorates, which affected the teaching and learning process, especially during the pandemic.

The survey data indicated that the geographical location within Oman affected the availability of high-speed internet, with internet speeds either staying the same, decreasing, or increasing in different governorates during the pandemic. For example, as shown in Table 22, the internet speed decreased in some governorates like Alwusta. Before the pandemic, 44% of parents in Alwusta reported having slow internet access,

which increased to 61% during the pandemic. Conversely, in Muscat Governorate, the percentage of parents reporting high-speed internet access increased from 33% to 35% during the pandemic. These results can be linked to the geographical location of the area, specifically whether it is rural, with fewer facilities, or closer to urban areas.

The qualitative data also highlighted a lack of internet access as the main factor that militated against effective home–school communication in several regions and varied between rural and urban areas. For example, teachers from rural areas in A'Dhahirah region reported that they had limited internet access before and during the pandemic in the area of their schools:

'The location of the school and the lack of adequate services for the people of the area, which leads to the inability of students and even the parents to follow the progress of the educational process during the distance learning process...' (T5)

'Due to the school's location, it was very difficult to implement distance education, due to the lack of an internet network in the school, whether before or during the pandemic. As the internet coverage is very weak and limits the educational process...' (T8)

Teachers from rural areas mentioned that their schools' location, far from the city, affected the internet access and there was a poor network. This ultimately affected their students' learning and even the level of parents' support. This was the same in the ASharqiyah region, as reported by one of the HTs:

'My school faced great difficulty, especially during the exams period with the blended learning where the students were divided into different periods to take the exams, due to the great pressure on the internet, and the students' inability to open the exam files. Therefore, this led to great pressure on the teachers, students, parents, and the Ministry themselves.' (HT4)

This HT, who was working in a school in a rural area in the ASharqiyah region, said that there were difficulties in the exam period during blended learning due to the weak internet coverage and pressure on the internet network.

Turning to the situation in the capital city of Oman (Muscat), teachers also experienced limited internet access at schools before the pandemic:

'Before the pandemic, the internet was considered non-existent even when I want to monitor grades through the online portal, I have to do this task at home because of the poor internet in the school. The internet was almost non-existent in schools in most regions of the Sultanate, this is what changed after e-learning after the spread of the pandemic.' (T6)

Thus, there were no exceptions in terms of internet access at schools before the pandemic, as experienced by educators from different governorates, whether in rural or urban areas. In rural areas, teachers reported not having a stable internet connection or even no internet access at all in schools. Meanwhile, teachers in urban areas had access to a wider digital infrastructure, but this was not available in schools.

7.1.2 Material constraints (financial barriers)

Another factor that might affect the learning process and parents' educational support for their children using technology is financial barriers. These barriers can limit families' access to educational content at home and are a form of material deprivation. Material deprivation is linked to family income and is an aspect of digital poverty, which arises when there is difficulty in accessing or no access to the internet in an area, often related to geographical location. Financial barriers are identified here as the inability to afford better technological tools and internet access (Ribeiro et al. 2021). Such barriers can affect parents' ability to support their children's learning. The survey results presented in Table 30 indicated that families with lower earnings perceived a lack of access to technology during the pandemic, which affected their children's learning. In contrast, families with higher earnings (more than 500 OMR) did not perceive a lack of access to technology during the pandemic. This suggests that even though the internet is available, parents on low incomes may struggle to afford devices or pay for internet bills. This finding is supported by the qualitative data:

'During the pandemic, there were some parents financially unable to acquire electronic devices to help them in the process of educating their children and communication with teachers. Also, their inability to pay

internet bills, which also negatively affected the achievement level of their children.’ (T4)

‘Parents’ financial factor affects the level of parents’ participation in the educational process... they are unable to provide all the school’s materials and cannot afford the internet cost.’ (T8)

‘One of the most important challenges is the lack of devices. This is what many families with limited income faced, as they were unable to provide devices for all their children, and their inability to pay the cost of the internet...’ (P9)

It seems that parents’ limited income affected their ability to provide the materials needed for their children at home during the pandemic, for example due to a lack of devices or the inability to afford the internet cost. Therefore, this affected children’s learning as they were not able to follow the educational content during the pandemic and missed remote lessons as perceived by some of the participants. This is reinforced by the survey data (see Table 25), which indicated an association between monthly household income and parents’ responses regarding the speed of the internet at home during the pandemic. Parents with a higher monthly income (501–1,000 OMR and more) said they had internet with a moderate speed during the pandemic, as before the pandemic. Those on lower monthly incomes said they had slow internet during the pandemic, down from moderate speed before the pandemic, meaning that poor parents had slower internet than more affluent parents during the pandemic. Furthermore, the challenge was exacerbated when families on a limited income had several children:

‘There is a lack of devices with a large number of children in one house.’ (P3)

‘Some parents, their financial condition, does not allow the acquisition of more than one device depending on the number of their children, or even getting sufficient internet bundle.’ (T2)

‘There are many challenges that face the distance education process, including the economic and financial aspect of parents in the inability to provide electronic devices, with the presence of a large number of children in one house.’ (HT2)

Hence, the number of children can be another barrier in combination with low income, affecting families' abilities to support their children's learning by providing them with the essential tools to engage in distance learning, as experienced by some participants.

Most participants perceived those economic factors affected parents' ability to support their children's learning during the pandemic by providing materials such as devices and adequate internet access. However, one HT noted that this was not the case before the pandemic:

'Some of the parents had weak financial capabilities, therefore, they could not provide devices for all their children and could not pay internet bills. This negatively affected their communication and the level of achievement of their children, this is during the pandemic. While before the pandemic, the economic level of parents was not considered a key role in their inability to communicate and support their children's learning, as there were efforts made by the local community and the schools to support these families before the pandemic.' (HT3)

The pandemic served to sensitise HTs with regard to issues related to the material constraints experienced by some parents; indeed, the digital poverty some families experienced became apparent. For instance, families' financial position affected parents' abilities to support their children's learning only during the pandemic; this was not a significant barrier before the pandemic in terms of their ability to provide their children with educational supplements. This is because such families had some financial support from their communities, which might have mitigated their economic challenges.

While much of the data focused on parents' economic challenges and how these might affect their involvement in their children's learning, the analysis also indicated that there were barriers to teachers support for PI due to schools' lack of material resources during the pandemic:

'Another challenge teachers faced during the pandemic was increasing the financial costs by purchasing tablets and subscribing to internet packages that are considered expensive, so they can do all their required tasks.' (HT1)

'The internet networks in schools were very weak. Therefore, teachers were forced to use their own networks on their mobile phones and computers were not available to all teachers. Consequently, some teachers had to purchase additional equipment, so they could be able to get connected with students and parents.' (T1)

This indicates that during the pandemic, teachers used their own resources to facilitate communication with parents. As reported by the participants, some teachers faced some issues in terms of their ability to obtain devices and pay the charges for internet bills. All of this affected teachers' level of support for parents in terms of PI.

While much of the data focused on how material constraints affected some families' capacity to engage with schools, some data also suggested that the use of technology could in some cases mitigate financial hardship. There were parents who found that educational expenses were lower during distance learning:

'Some parents found that the distance education process saved them transportation costs, school supplies, and other needs. As for the schools, the percentage of consumption of publications, papers, and inks was very low, which led to saving schools' budgets that were used for developing the educational sector in school.' (HT1)

'On the positive side regarding e-learning, the low material cost in the work of programmes and courses for teachers, as most of these courses have become online and do not cost anything mentioned, with the saving of effort and time to be transferred to the centres of these specialised courses.' (P6)

These responses indicate that using technology and remote learning helped some parents on a limited income mitigate the effects of material constraints and the high cost of face-to-face learning. Additionally, e-learning also helped in some ways to decrease schools' daily expenses by saving the cost of teachers' workshops, course and programme preparation, reserving funds for educational purposes.

Overall, material constraints can be considered one of the barriers that parents confronted in terms of supporting their children's learning, especially for those who were not able to obtain the minimum materials and tools required to continue the learning process in the

home learning environment when schools were closed. This was not the same for all parents, however, as the data indicated that some found using technology and distance learning helped somewhat to mitigate financial constraints.

7.1.3 Cultural constraints

The previous section considered digital poverty in terms of material barriers and physical resources, which militated against families and teachers being able to engage fully with online learning. This section will now consider some of the cultural constraints that can result in digital poverty, such as a lack of digital literacy skills, digital education, and other cultural barriers.

Limited technological skills are considered among the personal barriers to engaging in remote learning (Ribeiro et al. 2021). Furthermore, limited digital competencies among teachers, students, and parents were identified, resulting from the absence of previously developed and tested guidelines and a lack of experience in conducting e-lessons (Knopik et al. 2021).

According to Liu and Cavanaugh (2011), parents' technological competencies contribute significantly to student learning in virtual learning environments. Therefore, parents' lack of technological knowledge and skills can affect the ability to follow lessons conducted through distance education (Yamamoto and Altun 2020). This was supported by the qualitative data:

'One of the challenges that faced guardians, students and teachers is technological knowledge, this is through the presence of difficulty in understanding and using technology in the education process, for example, how to join a class using a specific programme or how to create an online lesson for teachers...' (T2)

'Many parents in my area did not have enough skill in using technology to help their children in the education process or to communicate with teachers...' (T4)

This shows the unsatisfactory level of technological knowledge, highlighted by the pandemic and imposition of distance learning, which might have affected children's learning (Osorio-Saez et al. 2021).

Turning to educators' technological competencies, the survey clearly showed that cultural constraints related to digital skills and knowledge were linked to educators' ability to support their students' learning before the pandemic. For instance, in Tables 49 and 64, HTs (51%) and teachers (53%) reported a lack of teachers' knowledge in using technology before the pandemic, indicating that lack of knowledge affected teachers' abilities to support children's learning. In the qualitative data, one of the HTs also reported limited knowledge of technological aspects among teachers, especially at the beginning of the pandemic:

'In the beginning of distance learning, it was very difficult for many teachers to know how to use a lot of programmes. Some teachers do not know even the simplest things about using electronic devices.' (HT4)

'Some teachers have insufficient knowledge on using technology. This is unlike some teachers who have experience in the process of communication and the use of technology remotely, which facilitates the process of communicating with parents.' (P7)

This indicates that there was a dearth of technological competencies among some teachers, who were unable to implement distance learning fully because they did not have sufficient skills.

Nevertheless, this was not the case during the pandemic as teachers adapted to the new emergency learning through gaining new digital skills and knowledge. This is reinforced by the survey data in Table 49, as 42% of teachers disagreed that a lack of teachers' knowledge concerning the use of technology affected their ability to support children's learning during the pandemic. Additionally, as shown in Table 50, the percentage of teachers who said that they were very satisfied with their skills in how to use technology in teaching and learning increased from 29% before the pandemic to 53% during the pandemic. This likely reflects the intensive efforts of teachers to improve their technological skills and the schools' effort to provide them with sufficient support. This was supported by the findings from the interviews:

'The situation before the pandemic was unsatisfactory, as many teachers could not use the simplest things in E-learning programmes. Thus, the culture of technology has become larger and wider during the pandemic'

in a very short period of time. Therefore, when we return to the normal situation, we must take advantage of these competencies and skills we acquired...’ (HT1)

Hence, there was an improvement in technological skills among teachers after experiencing the pandemic, which could facilitate learning even after the pandemic.

Moving on to another aspect of cultural constraints in terms of the acquisition of digital knowledge – teachers training – teachers complained about the limited courses and technological support on offer at the beginning of the pandemic:

‘The training period was very short, for only five days. Therefore, teachers needed a long time to overcome this challenge because they were not provided with sufficient training and scientific knowledge. On the other hand, the trainers who were there to train the teachers did not have enough skills and information, as they were also trained in a very short period, which was only five days.’ (T1)

‘As for the courses that were prepared for teachers about distance learning, they were not enough because it is considered a new process and it was difficult at the beginning, and it lasted for a very short time in just one week.’ (T2)

These educators indicated that they had insufficient support in terms of using technology and many teachers struggled at the beginning of distance learning. They complained about the short training course and the trainers’ ability and knowledge in delivering courses.

Moreover, digital competencies play an active role in supporting children’s learning at home, as limited technological competencies among either parents or teachers affect negatively on the whole learning process. Although online learning at the beginning of the pandemic was challenging, especially for parents and teachers with limited technological skills, this changed over time. Many teachers benefited from the experience, dedicating significant time and effort to gain these skills despite insufficient training courses.

The next section presents some of the opportunities of employing technology in remote learning, which affected the learning process and parental support for children’s learning.

7.2 Technology as a tool for parental involvement (PI)

The use of technology in education and shift to remote learning were considered tools for parents' participation and involvement in their children's learning during the pandemic. As the data discussed in this section will illustrate, technology served to promote PI in several ways: technology increased communication between parents and teachers regarding children's learning; parents became more involved in their children's learning by obtaining more skills and knowledge; technology mitigated cultural sensitivities.

7.2.1 Technology and parents' physical and remote interaction with teachers regarding children's learning

At the outset, the pandemic was a very unpleasant experience and created problems in relation to school/home communication. For instance, some parents who faced digital poverty said that they had less communication with teachers regarding their children's learning during the pandemic because of the heavy commitment imposed on both teachers and parents:

'Because of the pressure on teachers and the pressure of the network, the teacher finds it difficult to communicate with parents.' (Parents' survey)

'The teacher has become very pressured in terms of the content of the curricula, not to mention the daily recurring technical problems, so the teacher and the guardian have a very large burden, which led to the inability to communicate with each other...' (Parents' survey)

'During the pandemic, it has become easier to conduct training courses and lectures, but in terms of communication, it is considered less with greater burdens on the guardians.' (P6)

Parents struggled to remain connected with teachers because of the pressure on the network and the heavy obligations that both parents and teachers had. Therefore, parents were not satisfied with the level of communication they had with teachers during this critical time, as they were looking for more communication and support to help them with their children's learning. This was similar to the teachers' view that distance communication imposed great pressure on them and also on parents:

'Using WhatsApp programme and distance communication with parents have become a great pressure on them, and sometimes this may also be pressure on the guardians if they have more than one child with a number of teachers for each subject. In addition to the weakness of the Internet and the difficulty of downloading and uploading some files...' (T2)

Online learning requires a great deal of effort and time from teachers, parents, and the children themselves. Teachers were under pressure to prepare the educational content and find ways of connecting with the students and assessing them remotely. Besides being ready to respond to parents much of the time, teachers also faced the burden of parents intervening in every detail and asking about small matters. Some parents were forced to communicate more with schools and teachers due to the changed circumstances and difficulties in learning from home, which required additional effort and time from both parents and educators:

'Communicating with teachers has become continuous, unlike before the pandemic, and the conversation with them has become at least once a week, in order to know the level of the students and due to the difficulties in some subjects.' (Parents' survey)

'I became more in contact with them due to the many activities and duties that are sent to a student, so we return to them often to clarify what is required.' (Parents' survey)

'During the pandemic, parents were forced to communicate with the teachers more than before, as they wanted to help and facilitate the education process for their children.' (P4)

These responses reveal that even though parents' communication with teachers increased somewhat, some parents generally described their communication with teachers as demand-driven, meaning parents contacted teachers when they had a specific need, such as wanting to find out about their children's attainment or overall educational progress, or when they faced any difficulties in the remote learning process.

However, this was not a universal experience as the pandemic not only accelerated remote communication between school and home but also physical communication in some cases. With the implementation of lockdown at the beginning of the pandemic and

COVID-19 restrictions, it was expected that parents' face-to-face interaction with teachers would decrease. However, this was not what survey revealed from the parents' responses. As shown in Table 9, the percentage of parents' daily face-to-face communication with teachers increased from 8% before the pandemic to 18% during the pandemic, despite the pandemic restrictions. Linking this to parents' responses from the interviews, there were various reasons for this increase in the level of daily face-to-face communication. For instance, the pandemic fostered closer social relations with teachers:

'During the pandemic, I used to meet my daughter's teachers because I was teaching in the same school and ask if she had any shortcomings or problems in the educational process, and I always followed up on her level of achievement.' (P5)

'In some cases, teachers volunteered to visit families who needed more help with online learning to support them, when they live in the same area.' (HT4)

This explains that close relationships with teachers were among the reasons for increased daily face-to-face communication, for instance working with teachers in the same school. In addition, living in the same area with families and being part of the same community, teachers tended to volunteer and visit some families to support children's learning. Therefore, the pandemic may have precipitated new models of PI that were created during the crisis and emergency measures and tools for learning.

Furthermore, living in a rural area and families having limited incomes were other reasons for more face-to-face communication with teachers during the pandemic, as expressed by these participants:

'During the pandemic, students from lower-income households were allowed to attend school due to the existence of difficult circumstances that prevented them from entering classes and their inability to pursue their education remotely.' (P9)

'During the blended learning, as support that the school has made for students who do not have an internet connection, and need to review some lessons, we allowed them to attend the school.' (HT4)

This indicates that schools allowed some students to attend school even during the closure and the blended learning phase, which gave parents the chance to interact with teachers daily. This mitigated the limitation of internet access, particularly for lower-income families who were unable to afford the cost of the internet and devices in their homes.

Despite some participants saying that they had face-to-face interaction with teachers even during the pandemic, most stated that there were limited direct physical interactions between teachers and parents prior to the pandemic and these persisted during it. However, the data revealed that using technology and remote learning during the pandemic helped to mitigate this somewhat:

'As for the communication process, it is better now with more remote communication. As before the pandemic, there were parents who were suffering from conditions that prevented them from attending school. Therefore, we have developed a plan to conduct all meetings now remotely with an organised process at a time convenient for everyone...'
(HT3)

'Technology has been used to facilitate the ways of communication between parents and teachers.' (HT6)

It follows from these views that technology helped to ease communication and increased remote interaction between parents and teachers through different programmes. Despite this increase in communication between parents and teachers with the use of technology in different ways, there is still no clear evidence that such communication can lead to better outcomes in children's learning and attainment (See et al. 2020).

Nonetheless, applying technology helped to overcome one of the challenges that parents faced, which was the location of their children's school, especially when in a difficult area to reach; this was mitigated through distance learning:

'Regarding the challenges in having an effective relationship between schools and parents is the school's geographical location. For example, the school's presence in mountainous areas, which is far for some parents, and this negatively affects the level of parents' communication

with teachers. However, the remote communication process led to the reduction of this challenge...’ (HT6)

This indicates that sometimes the school's geographical location was an obstacle to connecting parents with school members before the pandemic (see 6.2.4). During the pandemic, distance learning helped mitigate the effects of difficult-to-reach schools.

Moreover, some parents stated that they had more effective communication with teachers while they were using technology:

‘My participation in my children’s learning became clearer and faster in effectiveness, as I do not wait for a long time to set an appointment to meet the teachers, but by using the phone.’ (P1)

‘Through social media, there was effective communication between teachers and mothers during the pandemic period.’ (P3)

‘Teachers are now available all the time and it is much easier to communicate with them through networks... The goal of the teacher and the guardian became to help the student as much as possible in the success of distance study despite the circumstances.’ (Parents’ survey)

This also supports some teachers accounts of constant communication between them and parents:

‘Constant communication between teachers and parents has greatly facilitated the education process for our children.’ (Teachers’ survey)

‘There was more communication daily, which brought closer the distances between the teacher and the guardian.’ (Teachers’ survey)

These participants experienced easier and faster ways of communicating between parents and teachers regarding children’s learning during the pandemic. In addition, the data indicated that technology, especially social media apps (see 6.2.4), was particularly important for parents living in geographically remote areas. This reveals that the pandemic had some positive effects in terms of communication between teachers and parents.

7.2.2 Use of technology and an increase in parents' knowledge and involvement in children's learning

There was a clear demarcation within Omani education in relation to PI between teachers' and parents' responsibilities, an issue discussed in section 6.1. Both parents and teachers saw their role as monitoring students' progress; however, helping children with their studies was seen by the participants as 'interference' or 'doing their work for them'. Some educators perceived that parents did not have the knowledge of the curriculum to help in this way (see 6.1.1). However, the use of technology during the pandemic helped parents to improve their knowledge and become more involved in their children's learning, as perceived by some educators:

'This is what happened in light of the pandemic, as the guardians were aware of the lessons the students received and were following up on most of the activities that were provided remotely...' (T5)

'During the pandemic, parents have accurate information and details about the education process that did not exist previously. And parents have a large amount of knowledge and skills acquired through their attendance of all the lessons that were held remotely...' (HT1)

These educators were of the view that the pandemic positively affected parents' involvement in their children's learning, as they believed that parents gained a great many skills and considerable knowledge in relation to their children's curricula as a result of attending online lessons, which they did not have before.

This was similar to some parents' perceptions, namely that they became more interested in their children's learning by following their progress at home regularly:

'The responsibility of parents increased in the educational aspect, and they lived the role of the teachers. There has become a greater culture in the knowledge side by using technology to facilitate the education process for their children. Parents were familiar with almost all the activities and lessons that were offered online.' (P4)

'Parents acquired information from the teacher during distance learning, for example, I personally benefited and learned new things through

attending my children's classes, also I identified the great effort made by teachers in order to deliver information to the student.' (P10)

These responses indicate that parents gained a significant amount of knowledge by fulfilling the roles of teacher and parent simultaneously during the pandemic, particularly during the first lockdown when schools were closed. Then when remote learning started, parents continued to follow their children's learning even if it was challenging at the beginning. This encouraged many parents to improve their technological skills as a means of supporting their children's learning.

Furthermore, the teachers also perceived that some parents became more involved in their children's learning and were increasingly familiar with their children's educational context:

'In fact, there was a huge positive wave in terms of communication and even in the parents' interest, as the parents became very involved in their children's learning and more familiar with the curricula...' (T1)

'Before the pandemic, the participation of parents was not at the required level, which was limited to the behavioural aspect. However, parents have become more interested and more involved in the education process during the pandemic... The process of communicating with parents was facilitated through programmes and WhatsApp groups... Thus, their interaction became greater than before, even for school activities, parents became more interested and more knowledgeable in the educational content.' (T2)

These teachers believed that after experiencing the pandemic and online studies, parents became more interested in their children's learning. Furthermore, they followed their children's learning daily and knew all the work required by the curricula, representing a shift from before the pandemic. This was a result of easy access to educational content through the educational portal and online lessons.

7.2.3 Technology and cultural sensitivity

Looking at the quantitative data in Table 6, most respondents were mothers (55%) and fathers (42%). Hence, mothers might have engaged more than fathers in their children's

learning. However, this gives rise to one of the barriers that parents faced in terms of being physically involved in their children's schools, namely cultural issues. In Oman, there is segregation of girls' schools and boys' schools in government education from grade 5 until they finish high school. As reported by these parents:

'Unfortunately, there is no interest in the presence of courses or programmes in my daughter's school because I am the father and it is a female school, but there may be more participation from mothers than fathers, but in a very limited way...' (P6)

'Because we have customs and traditions as a conservative community, I do not prefer to participate in competitions or programmes offered in male schools.' (P8)

'In fact, I do not have active participants in my current son's school because it is a boys' school.' (P10)

These parents reported that they had less interaction with their children's teachers, especially in the school environment, and had limited direct interaction with them if they were not the same gender. In line with the Omani culture and religion, mostly fathers contacted their children's male teachers and mothers contacted female teachers. While schools welcome all the parents and there is no system or rule preventing mothers and fathers contacting teachers of the opposite gender, parents do not tend to feel comfortable doing so. After experiencing the pandemic, the situation changed, as this cultural barrier could be addressed using technology:

'As for my sons in C2, their father was communicating with the teachers because it is a male school, but we mothers have a WhatsApp group in which we communicate with each other and discuss some matters related to our sons' studies. In fact, I do not make any contact with the teachers personally...' (H9)

From this perspective, it seems that technology can help overcome cultural barriers by enabling parents to communicate with teachers and other parents remotely. This means that parents can stay connected with the school and be involved in their child's education without needing to meet in person. This is particularly beneficial in cultures where direct interaction between men and women might be restricted. By using technology, both

mothers and fathers can engage with the school, regardless of whether it is a boys' or girls' school. Essentially, technology creates a bridge that allows for better communication and involvement in the school community.

7.3 Summary

Overall, examining the results and factors that affected the learning process and parental support for children's learning through online and blended learning due to the unique experience of the pandemic, it is apparent that there were both negative and positive consequences. These varied, with the participants recounting different experiences and circumstances. Despite all the negative impacts that resulted from online learning, there were great opportunities to discover new methods, techniques, and skills to support the learning process and establish new models of PI. Importantly, the use of technology in education should not be viewed as a standalone solution. Its success depends on human decisions, ongoing teacher education, PE, and empirical research (Osorio-Saez 2022).

The next chapter concerns the participants' ideal vision of PI and the reasons it is less than optimal at present.

Chapter 8: Results 4

This chapter will present the participants' vision of the optimal manifestation of PI in schooling. The data suggested some areas that would help promote effective PI in Omani schools, such as providing more support for parents and students, and ensuring positive and continuous communication between school and home, together with technological support. Moreover, collaboration is needed between the community, school and home, establishing a clear and well-designed policy and achievable objectives to improve the level of PI in schooling in Oman. Following the articulation of these participants' views, some barriers to the implementation of their proposals will be presented addressing material constraints, time constraints, and some cultural factors.

8.1 Participants' ideal view of parental involvement (PI) in schooling

8.1.1 More support for parents

Support from educators for parents and carers is among the factors that can help to improve the level of PI in schooling (Goodall and Vorhaus 2011). Looking at the quantitative data, it seems that there was some dissatisfaction among parents with teachers in terms of providing educational resources and support, especially during the pandemic. As shown in Table 31, only 21% of parents were not satisfied with the resources and guidance provided by teachers before the pandemic. However, this percentage increased to 45% during the pandemic. As previously noted, there was a clear demarcation within Omani education in terms of the roles of the school and the family, with the former almost solely responsible for children's academic study. After the pandemic, parents looked for more resources from schools and teachers to support their practice as they had been compelled to become involved in their children's learning. Their dissatisfaction with the resources and support is reflected in the qualitative findings:

'Teachers should provide guardians with tools and resources that contribute to the education process, because in many cases the guardian is not familiar with any aspect that the student needs, whether they were via additional websites or other sources.' (P1)

'There should be more guidance and direction for the guardian by identifying educational sites, and resources that may benefit students so that they are not distracted with the presence of many different sites. Additionally, guidance may be through simplified videos, workshops, or even lectures provided to parents.' (P4)

These parents stressed the importance of providing more educational resources and tools to ease the process of parental participation in children's learning, including the use of technology. Most participants wished to have more support in terms of applying technology in learning and communication between parents and schools:

'There should be more knowledge and awareness of how to use technology to support the parents' and teachers' roles.' (Teachers' survey)

'Parents, teachers, and students should be supported by developing their technological skills.' (Parents' survey)

'Technology must be adapted more effectively in the learning environment and parents' participation in children's learning.' (HTs' survey)

This suggests that parents can be supported not only by providing more resources and programmes, but also technological skills; these can support the learning process and parents' participation in their children's learning.

In addition, the survey data indicated a clear distinction between school and parental responsibilities, revealing a lack of parental education programmes and courses to help parents support their children's learning, both before and during the pandemic. As shown in Table 33, 62% of parents responded that they were not involved in any programme before or during the pandemic (see 6.2.3). This finding was also reinforced by the qualitative data:

'I aspire that there will be programmes or courses that can help parents in the process of supporting children's learning and knowing their obstacles...' (P1)

'Further, there may be programmes in which the guardians participate to educate their children and help them to understand the educational content, so that parental participation in education becomes an effective process.' (P2)

'On the other hand, there should be courses for parents, for example, on how to develop life skills, such as caring for plants and caring for living organisms. There should be also courses to train parents in ways to help them understand and simplify the lessons.' (P4)

These parents believed that courses and educational programmes could be beneficial for them in terms of supporting their children's learning. The data from parents suggested that they felt that being involved in this way could help them become more familiar with their children's educational content:

'As an ideal perspective regarding the parents' role in the education process, they should be familiar with all the educational developments that are presented in each academic year. Also, they should be fully aware of their responsibilities and duties towards the process of educating their children.' (P4)

Parents need more support in the form of educational resources, tools, courses, and programmes, which could be provided by the Ministry of Education, schools, or teachers. This kind of support might help parents understand the educational content and aid them in identifying their duties and responsibilities in terms of their children's learning.

8.1.2 More support and encouragement for children at home

While many of the participants indicated that they were looking for more support for parents, other participants focused on improving parents' support for children at home. For PI to be effective in fostering children's learning, it needs to be rooted in the home (Desforges and Abouchaar 2003):

'As for the parent's participation in education, it starts at home, where the parents allocate a specific time for their children to help them to understand mysterious things or to help them with things in which they need help.' (P2)

'The guardians must be the main support for the children at home because of their great role and duties in achieving children's education and supporting the efforts made by schools.' (P9)

These parents viewed parents' support at home as vital and in need of improvement as this could directly affect children's learning and educational progress. Furthermore, some educators similarly viewed support for children at home as essential. Despite this, it seemed that some teachers were unaware that some parents did not have the cultural capital to support their children's learning at home, and they needed more support from school:

'I hope that there will be a follow-up process by the guardians for students at homes by asking about the educational content they received and following up on the duties and activities required of the students. These activities should be done by the students themselves with some support and guidance from the parents when it is needed.' (T3)

'I am looking for more continuous and accurate follow-up by the parents at homes, especially during remote learning, where the guardians do not leave the full responsibility on the students, but rather they must follow up on them and make sure that they attend all the classes...' (T7)

'Parents must also be aware of their children's educational level and know the difficulties that children might face and how to solve them or overcome these obstacles.' (HT3)

These educators believed that continued home support was important and could help children and parents improve the level of PI in schooling. However, while supporting PI, many of the teachers and HTs in this study reinforced a clear demarcation between school and parental roles ('moderate participation') and warned against parents 'interfering' in the work of teachers:

'From an ideal perspective, I hope that the parent's participation is specific, and that there is no over interference in all the topics that the teacher gives to the students.' (T2)

'I hope that parents' participation will be more on following up on the levels of their children, but without much direct intervention in the work of the teacher...' (T4)

'I want the practice of parental intervention to be a moderate participation, so that it is not overstated.' (T6)

This indicates that these teachers shared the same ideal view of PI, considering moderate parental participation to be more effective in terms of supporting children's learning. However, even in the ideal situation, some teachers still had a limited understanding of PI. They did not view PI in terms of collaboration, retaining the discourse of 'interference'.

Besides advocating for a moderate level of PI in children's learning by teachers, a group of parents believed that there should be another type of support for children in the form of better links and communication between parents and their children, generating more positive encouragement:

'Also, there must be a dialogue and connection between the student and the parents ... From the side of educational attainment, there must be a discussion between the students and their parents to find out if there is anything that needs to be solved or overcome it in the future.' (P6)

'As for the role of the guardians in the education process, they must be following up and familiar with the students' education process... As a result of parents' encouragement and attention, the students realise that the parent is interested, which enhances the students' motivation for the learning process.' (P8)

These parents believed that strong links and positive communication between parents and their children could have benefits for their relationship with their children and help to motivate children to learn. Indeed, such links and communication between parents and their children could potentially encourage children to do better:

'I hope that there will be greater motivation for learning on the part of the students and a greater effort on the part of the parents in developing and exploiting the skills of their children.' (HT2)

'I wish that parents encourage and support their children, especially in the educational aspect, and reduce the negative messages that are transmitted to children about their view of some teachers or even about the school.' (HT3)

'There must be encouragement by parents for their children to make more effort in the education process and motivate them in different ways.'
(HT6)

All these views indicate the importance of the role of parents in encouraging their children to learn, as the participants considered this part of the ideal practice of PI in children's learning, ultimately having a positive effect on children's progress.

8.1.3 Positive, continuous communication between school and home

Another ideal perspective from the participants in terms of PI included continuous communication between parents and teachers. As pointed out by Loughran (2008), there should be a two-way flow of information between educators and parents. The participants described this as follows:

'There should be continuous communication between parents and teachers regarding children's learning, and this is required even from the administrators.' (HT3)

'I hope that there will be continuous communication between parents and teachers, even if it is through some written notes and not face-to-face. This is the opposite of what is currently happening in schools, where the guardians receive a written message from the school only in case the problem escalates and becomes very difficult to fix...' (P7)

'There must be continuous communication between the school and parents so that problems do not escalate, if any, and so that the guardians are aware of their children's strengths and know their weaknesses that can help in overcoming them...' (P8)

Continuous communication between parents and teachers could mitigate the effects of some of the challenges that children might face and make it easier to resolve any issues that arise.

Furthermore, some participants believed that direct communication could be particularly beneficial in some cases based on their experiences:

'I see the best means of communication is direct communication with the teacher, in which parents can understand in a better way through direct dialogue, and by finding solutions to some problems that the students may face... Parents can share some details about their children with the teachers like interest, personality, or any certain things that teachers should know. This will make it easy for teachers to deal with each student individually according to their different needs.' (T7)

'I want parents' participation in the school to be more effective by attending meetings and keeping track of their children's achievement ... Parents should help teachers in solving problems and not throw the whole matter on the teachers...' (T8)

These participants agreed that direct communication between parents and teachers would be an effective means of empowering PI practice.

The participants suggested that having direct communication between parents and the school on a monthly basis would be an effective approach. This is reinforced by the quantitative data in Table 9, which showed that 37% of parents interacted face-to-face with teachers once a month before the pandemic. Additionally, as shown in Table 51, 33% of teachers reported that they encouraged parents to communicate with them about children's learning once a month before the pandemic. In the interviews, the teachers recounted:

'I want there to be communication at least once a month, so that the guardian is informed of the student's achievement and behavioural level during this period. There should be a dedicated day for the parents' meeting, as teachers should be free and ready to receive parents to discuss all matters related to students.' (T6)

'As for the parents' meeting, I think that twice a year is not enough to find a positive result from these meetings. Therefore, I hope that there will be a monthly meeting, so that the guardian is aware of most of the things that may happen to their children and identify any needed help without any delay...' (T7)

These participants wished to have direct communication between parents and teachers, as they viewed this as an appropriate way of benefiting from PI and attaining the best

view of children's learning. Furthermore, engaging in regular communication might mitigate some of the issues associated with student's learning.

While much of the data indicated that the participants would prefer to have direct communication between parents, teachers, and students, some suggested that using technology in communication between school and home could be effective in terms of supporting PI and children's learning:

'For me, it may be ideal to use electronic programmes with direct learning to facilitate the process of communicating with parents and students, as it also helps parents to follow up on their children's learning.'
(T2)

'We can also use technology in the process of communicating with parents ... In addition to facilitating the direct communication, especially in the presence of special circumstances...' (T6)

'I would like to have interactive technology in schools through educational websites other than social networking sites, as it provides all social communication operations with members of the community... I also hope that there is an aspect of privacy while using technology, for instance, guardians can communicate in a certain way with a scheduling of a specific time. This is besides having clear instructions to the guardians...'
(HT1)

These educators agreed that under ideal circumstances, PI would involve the use of technology, applied in a way that could support the learning process and interactive communication between school and home. This also was the ideal view for some parents:

'... I think that if the use of e-mail is activated, it may contribute to solving some of the issues related to communication between parents and teachers...' (P7)

This shows one example of electronic communication, e-mail. This was not an option for many parents in the survey, but it could help parents and teachers overcome some of the challenges imposed by the rapid developments in daily life.

Hence, technology could be a means of supporting the learning process and parents' participation in their children's learning. However, even though technology helped to

continue learning during the critical time of school closures during the pandemic, to ensure it is beneficial, the development of technological knowledge and skills is needed:

'Technology must be adapted more effectively in the learning environment and parents' participation in children's learning.' (HTs' survey)

'There should be more knowledge and awareness of how to use technology to support the parents' and teachers' roles.' (Teachers' survey)

'Parents, teachers, and students should be supported by developing their technological skills.' (Parents' survey)

This highlights the importance of improving the level of technological awareness, knowledge, and skills among society as a whole as this could lead to more effective results in home and school settings.

8.1.4 Collaboration between parents, society, and schools

Another ideal perspective expressed by participants in terms of parents' roles concerned volunteering and giving parents more opportunities to be part of the school environment. This is a reflection of an old African proverb, 'it takes a village to raise a child', meaning that an entire community of people is needed to provide for and interact positively with children for them to learn and grow in a safe and healthy environment.

There is empirical evidence to support the value of community-based learning and increasing the positive relationship between home and school (Lamb-Parker et al. 2001; Epstein et al. 2018). This is part of the practice of PE described by Harris and Goodall (2007) and Goodall and Montgomery (2014), representing active and meaningful involvement in children's learning, which can occur in a variety of settings, such as early learning and childcare settings, schools, the community, family learning, and learning at home. As one of the HTs put it:

'For my ideal view, I set a goal that includes spreading the culture of volunteering where the parent should be willing to volunteer and participate in all the activities of the school. I also hope that all parents cooperate with each other in serving the school and advancing the level

of the school. I also want there to be greater contributions from parents, especially in the surrounding areas in which they work or even the talents they have, and that students can benefit from them...' (HT2)

This emphasises the building of strong relationships between parents, schools, and communities. In this regard, parents can be involved in a range of ways, not only educational subjects but also art and other aspects of interest. Such practice would not only benefit the school, teachers, and students but also extend to the whole community:

'I hope that there will be more support from parents in the school and the local community, and I mean here by sharing their experiences and skills to support each other. For example, guardians can assist the teachers in enriching the education process, or even by giving lectures in the school in the field in which they are specialised...' (HT4)

'I want parental participation to be an effective practice, which concentrates on the quality, not the quantity. This can be through activating the parents' councils in the schools and the whole community... In addition to involving the guardian in some voluntary work that is concerned with raising the level of students' achievement, or it may even include reforming some behaviours of students, or any other aspects.' (HT6)

'From my point of view, the school should take advantage of the nature of the parents' work, for example, if the guardian is interested in the field of poetry and literature, it can be used in the process of offering lectures and developing students' talents in this aspect... It is also possible to take advantage of this in substitution lessons...' (P3)

All these views consider parents' role to be essential and more effective when linked to the whole community. Collaboration between school, home, and the community is part of the effective practice of PI, which ultimately affects the whole process of learning. Moreover, the participants proposed the sharing of ideas and suggestions from teachers or parents in light of their experiences of children's learning to improve the quality of PI practice:

'Also, there may be meetings held at the school in which parents meet to discuss some issues and find solutions to the problems they face with their children ... so there is an opportunity for the guardians to share their experiences with the rest of the parents.' (P2)

'I hope that there will be a link between parents and the Ministry, whereby they are given the opportunity to express their opinions and suggestions that may be most appropriate for them and their children... On the part of teachers, through the reality of their experiences and expertise, they can propose solutions to existing challenges in schools. Then, they can share their ideas and experiences with other schools...' (P10)

These participants believed that parents' and teachers' thoughts and suggestions were of great importance in improving the level of PI in practice. This is because they had experience in this matter and were in a position to identify ways of resolving some of the issues faced in terms of parental support for schooling. They were of the view that it would be beneficial to listen to parents' and teachers' suggestions and to encourage them to share their thoughts and ideas to support the practice of PI.

8.1.5 Establishing a clear, well-designed policy

When there are well-defined policy objectives and the roles of parents are specified, PI practice tends to be more pronounced (Avvisati et al. 2010). In the absence of specific legislation on PI, this will lead to uneven practice (Hornby 2000) and play a role in limiting its implementation (Hornby and Lafaele 2011). Therefore, schools need to establish transparent policies and solid procedures that are tailored to addressing parents and vary depending on the school setting (Hornby 2000). Consistent with this, the participants argued for clear policy and guidelines in the educational system in Oman:

'Unfortunately, there is no clear definition of roles in the educational process, as there is nothing clear that highlights or defines the role of the guardians. Consequently, the roles have become overlapping, especially after the emergence of the pandemic. Therefore, I hope that there will be a specific mechanism and a clear policy in terms of parental role in education sector... In my opinion, there is a lack of a specific system that determines the mechanism of parental support and communication with the school. Unfortunately, government schools rely on self-initiatives.' (P11)

This reflects the importance of having a policy that guides and helps enhance the level of PI practice in Oman. In this regard, there should be applicable steps with clear guidance that can be followed to achieve the desired objectives. Adopting other countries' policies or practical experiences in terms of PI can be challenging due to the features unique to the Omani context. These include diverse social, cultural, and educational perspectives, as well as the different circumstances and experiences of parents and educators in various settings. These differences can directly affect PI practices.

Overall, there were various views of what PI would look like ideally, which included more support and development for parents, students, and teachers in schools, as well as at home. This could be enhanced by using technology to cope with the world's rapid development. Furthermore, the participants argued for developing a strong connection between school, home and community, as well as a clear and well-established policy and system to support PI in schooling.

These views of optimal PI could help enhance the level of implementation and effectiveness; however, this would require considerable time and effort. As reported by the participants, many elements were lacking in practice due to various difficulties and barriers faced by parents, educators, and students. Among the challenges are socio-demographic factors, which will be presented in the last section of the findings.

8.2 The impact of socio-demographic factors

This section will present parents', teachers', and HTs' perceptions of PI practice in light of the socio-demographic factors that can affect the level of parental support in schooling. The factors that will be considered here are the parents' economic situation, parental employment status, where the family lives, school location, and parental education level.

According to a cluster of studies, several factors can influence PI in children's learning. The variation in levels of parents' participation in their children's learning may be a reflection of some socio-demographic factors, including age, gender, level of education, income, marital status, occupation, religion, the average size of the family, the average age at marriage, and others (Lareau 1987; Harris and Goodall 2008; Harris et al. 2009). As studies have found, parents' social and cultural capital influence the level of PI practice

in terms of supporting children's learning. For instance, a parents' social class can influence their ability to interact with schools on behalf of their children. Working-class parents may face disadvantages as they might lack the cultural capital needed to engage effectively with schools (Crozier 2006). Parents from all social classes agree that their involvement in supporting their children's learning is critical. However, when it comes to actively engaging in schooling, there is a clear difference between parents from middle-class and working-class backgrounds (Crozier 2006). This does not mean that working-class parents are less aspirational or interested in their children's learning, but rather that there is a mismatch with the specific sorts of capital valued by schools, or their forms of capital are not identified by the schools (Goodall and Montgomery 2014). Payne (2005) highlights that the hidden rules of different social classes can affect how parents engage with schools, which often operate on middle-class norms. However, placing too much emphasis on the lack of cultural capital can foster a deficit narrative and a school-centric perspective (Sarjeant 2020). Instead, focusing on strengths rather than viewing PI through a deficit lens may promote a more inclusive approach (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence n.d.). Yosso (2005) argues that everyone, including marginalised communities, possesses various forms of capital that should be recognised and valued. Gorski (2013) also contends that the socio-economic context of families should be considered in PI, especially from educators' perspectives.

Lareau (1987) described variations in the level of PI along the lines of social class: cultural poverty, the institutional approach, and the cultural capital approach. For instance, Lareau argued that middle-class families possess the resources to actively cultivate their children, enabling them to succeed academically, whereas working-class and poor families feel they lack such resources and thus their children tend to develop limited and passive relations with school. Additionally, Lareau's (1987) study examined how parenting styles differ among middle-class, working-class and poor parents and how such styles ultimately shape a child's future. Crozier's (2006) study found that middle-class parents had the social, cultural, and material resources to realise the schools' aspirations, but this was not the same for working-class parents, who did not have access to the required resources or felt unable to act upon them. Moreover, Harris and Goodall (2008) reported that PE in children's education is heavily linked to SES and parental education.

Linking all these aspects to the findings of this study, the survey and interview data indicated that most of the socio-demographic factors – parents' economic situation, parental employment status, where the family lives, school location, and parental education level – presented an association with parents' intervention in their children's learning before and during the pandemic. The findings agree with previous studies (Lareau 1987; Harris and Goodall 2008) in relation to these aspects before and during the pandemic. For instance, from the survey findings, households with a higher monthly income had less face-to-face or online interaction with teachers before the pandemic about their children's learning. However, during the pandemic, there were few differences among parents with different household characteristics as face-to-face interaction was limited and most of the participants reported that they had daily online interaction. Parents with higher educational qualifications had less online interaction with teachers regarding their children's learning before the pandemic, which aligns with the study of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler 1997 and Hornby 2000 that indicate the ability to support children's learning does not require a high level of education from parents. The results also indicate that the school's geographical location – rural or urban – affected PI practice, as there were some variations in participants' responses from different governorates. These survey findings seem to consider physical and online interaction with teacher and did not focus on supporting children's learning, which were investigated more through the qualitative data.

The upcoming sub-section will explore the effect of some of the socio-demographic factors on PI practice through the interviewees' responses, categorised under three sub-themes: material constraints, time constraints and cultural capital.

8.2.1 Material constraints

Studies have suggested that teachers and schools might adopt a deficit account of PI, which happens when schools have an abnormal view of working-class parents and when parents are not able to meet all the expectations of the school or teachers (Goodall 2019; Wyness 2020). In this study, the teachers recognised that poorer parents were limited because of material constraints:

'I noticed that parents with low income have much less participation in their children's learning and less communication with us than affluent parents. What may be their concern is to provide a source of livelihood for their children, and they are busy and unable to participate in the learning process.' (T7)

'Some of the factors that affect effective communication between teachers and parents are the financial aspect for the parents and this is in relation to the area in which the school is located. According to my current school, most parents have less than average financial situation, which affected their ability to provide support, devices, and the internet for their children especially with the existence of more than one child in one house.' (T8)

These teachers attributed the lower levels of participation among parents with fewer economic resources to their busy life commitments and other immediate issues, which prevented them from being actively involved in their children's schooling. Additionally, there was also recognition that some poorer parents felt unable to communicate with teachers due to the sense that they lacked cultural capital:

'If the economic situation of the parents is less than the average, they feel embarrassed to communicate with the teacher because they feel below the standard, or that they do not have enough knowledge to communicate with the teacher.' (HT6)

This HT understood the reasons why parents on a low income felt less able to communicate with the school but did not address how they might mitigate this issue.

Although parents' financial circumstances and low income are among the factors that can be linked to limited direct communication with the school, this does not mean that such parents are less interested in their children's learning. However, these parents might lack capital, which makes them feel not equal to others (Crozier 2006). Furthermore, the effect of parents' economic level will be greater if the school's environment is not supportive of these parents, as perceived by this teacher:

'Parents' limited income can affect their participation and their children's learning, especially when the school environment is not cooperating with these parents. Therefore, due to these financial circumstances some

parents do not send their children to school because they cannot afford the expenses that the student needs at school.’ (T3)

This demonstrates that parents’ financial circumstances can negatively affect their involvement in their children’s learning, especially when the school environment is not supportive. Some parents are unable to send their children to school at all, for example if they are unable to afford the cost of transportation:

‘The economic factor affects the process of parents’ participation and communication with school, for example, if the economic level of the family is low, there may be no way to reach the school as they do not have enough money for transportation, and this is from my experience with one of my students.’ (T1)

This teacher perceived that less advantaged families might face some challenges regarding their physical communication with the school, ultimately affecting children’s learning by virtue of simply not attending school every day.

Furthermore, some participants perceived that parents’ financial difficulties might negatively affect their involvement in children’s learning, especially in the early stages:

‘Parents’ financial factor affects the level of parents’ participation in the educational process, and they are unable to provide all the school’s materials and cannot afford the internet cost.’ (T8)

‘When the parents have a limited income, it may sometimes affect the level of their children’s educational participation, and this is what I noticed, especially in the early stages. For example, when children need some tools and supplies related to their studies, and their parents cannot fulfil their requests, this negatively affects the students’ level of achievement and their motivation to learn.’ (P9)

Hence, not being able to give children all the supplementary aspects of schooling and tools might affect their learning, making them feel less motivated to go to school and learn. They could feel that they are ‘lesser’ than other students, especially in the early school stages. In addition, parents’ ability to provide their children with extra resources outside school could be a factor affecting their learning. Middle-class families may have the

resources available to adopt a parenting approach termed 'concerted cultivation' by Lareau (2002, p. 748). Lareau (2003) found that concerted cultivation involved a variety of practices, for example the provision of supplementary tuition and schooling and other extra-curricular activities (cited in Siraj-Blatchford 2010). However, many parents are not able to provide private tutors, lessons or other educational courses and programmes to support their children's learning after school:

'If I am an employee, I will get more opportunities to educate my children by providing private lessons for them.' (P1)

'Many parents are busy in the process of seeking life's concerns and obtaining their livelihood, especially with the emergence of the economic crisis and with the presence of large numbers of laid-offs and job seekers. This is with the presence of large families with more than one child. As sometimes they do not have the financial aspect to spend money on private lessons to support them at home.' (P11)

These parents believed that financial factors affected their ability to provide their children with extra support. They reported that experiencing the current economic crisis, especially for large families with more than one child, could be challenging and it would not necessarily be possible to provide private tuition for all the children. This raises an issue of community involvement in Omani society in terms of relying on private tuition and not considering other elements that can support learning at home. One of the teachers believed that not being able to provide these extra resources could sometimes affect children's learning:

'Parents who are unable to provide additional learning resources for their children, or unable to provide courses or programmes that support the children's education process outside the school these affect their achievement level at school, which is considered financially costly.' (T7)

This teacher linked children's progress at school to parents' financial ability to provide extra learning resources, such as courses or programmes after school, representing a limited understanding of PI.

Several parents reported that providing private tuition could be beneficial for children, particularly in the upper levels facing a difficult curriculum:

'When guardians have difficulty in helping their child in mathematics, this issue can be resolved by bringing a private teacher or providing reinforcement lessons through programmes at home...' (P2)

'I brought private teachers for my children, especially in the upper levels, which require more effort and follow-up in their studies in the basic subjects...' (P4)

These responses illustrate that parents' economic capital is among the factors affecting support for children's learning, especially when parents believe that they lack the required subject knowledge.

These perspectives support the idea that material constraints can pose significant challenges for less affluent parents, as they may struggle to provide their children with all the necessary materials and resources for learning. However, this does not mean that these less advantaged parents do not want the best for their children, even though they do not have the resources that will support their participation in their children's learning.

According to some participants, motivation to learn could mitigate the negative effect of material constraints. They expressed the view that when students have sufficient motivation, this can help overcome financial obstacles and other constraints:

'The economic factor is not considered an obstacle facing parents' contribution in schooling, but it may be an auxiliary factor in some cases. For example, even if the student is from a family with a weak income, this does not prevent him/her from being a distinguished student, so the economic situation by itself is not a barrier, but it may sometimes contribute positively to learning. However, this depends on families and students' situation, where low-income factor may be accompanied by other factors that cause the students' low level of achievement.' (T5)

Hence, while low income can present challenges, it does not necessarily prevent students from excelling academically. Furthermore, parents' understanding of their crucial role in

supporting their children's education can help mitigate the impact of financial issues, alongside students' motivation to learn:

'In some cases, the economic factor of the family affects the process of participation in education. However, I see that the student's motivation to learn may be considered the main source for overcoming these factors and challenges. Also, the parents' insistence on providing their children with skills and scientific knowledge can be a helpful factor in overcoming the challenges and difficult circumstances that the family has...' (P5)

Thus, parents can overcome some of the negative influences of having a low income by trying their best to provide their children with all the skills and knowledge required to improve attainment as far as possible. These parents took the view that they were responsible for supporting their children's learning, as well as students being responsible, appreciating their parents' efforts and aspiring to achieve. Therefore, in some cases, less affluent parents may have more interaction with teachers regarding their children's learning, as experienced by one of the parents:

'The interaction of working-class parents was more than other groups regarding the education of their children in order to improve their economic situation in the future.' (P7)

This parent noted that most of the interaction with teachers and visits were from parents on a low income. This could be due to their ambitions to improve their children's economic situation in the future by making sure that their children were well-educated and trying to avoid any obstacles to learning.

8.2.2 Time constraints

In the interviews, the participants expressed the belief that the level of parents' involvement in their children's schooling could be negatively affected by another factor associated with low income, namely 'time poverty' (Newman and Chin 2003, p. 53). From a somewhat deficit perspective, it is proposed that low-income parents can face difficulty finding free time to dedicate to their child's educational concerns:

'Parents' financial factor affects the level of parents' participation in the educational process and the lack of enough time for them to follow up on their children through their preoccupation with other work... What I noticed is that most of the school's tributaries are from low-income people who are still working in agriculture and their financial returns are less than average, which affects the level of parents' participation in the educational process and the lack of time they have to follow up on their children through their preoccupation with other work...' (T8)

This perspective shows that less affluent parents are less likely to be involved in their children's learning due to the nature of their jobs and time limitations, particularly as they may have more than one job to provide for their families. Indeed, the data indicated a recognition of time constraints linked to parents' work, which could affect PI in children's schooling:

'The parents' preoccupation and their works' nature might affect their contribution in their children's learning. This is due to the existence of self-employment or special requirements that force them to stay away from home for a long period of time.' (T4)

'A few years ago, I was on vacation for a long time when I noticed the difference between being a working mother and only being at home according to the time, I spend for my children's learning...' (P11)

These participants perceived that parents' jobs could negatively affect their PI, related to the type of job and work pressure and commitment that might consume parents' time and effort. For instance, some parents are required to stay away from home or to undertake many tasks while they are at home. In addition, some jobs allow little flexibility for taking time off for school-based PI and other jobs may leave parents too tired at the end of the day to help children with homework (Green et al. 2007). Moreover, a working mother stated that her job requirements and time limitations not only affected her educational and practical support for her children but also influenced her way of dealing with them due to the stress she faced from work and home:

'The nature of my work affects my participation in the education of my children, due to the presence of pressure from the work because I do not have enough time to support them in their learning process. Sometimes, because of the high pressures I suffer at home or at work make me intolerant and irritable, which directly affects my children.' (P10)

This mother felt that she was unable to manage her time and emotions to support her children's learning at home due to the pressure she faced from her job. In Omani society, where most mothers of school-aged children are part of the workforce, this is considered a barrier to PI. Harris et al. (2009) similarly found that working parents often face significant challenges in engaging with their children's education due to time constraints and work pressures, which aligns with the experiences of many Omani mothers. This is in line with the survey data, in which the participants' responses indicated that parents with full-time jobs had less interaction with the school about their children's learning, whether face-to-face or online (see Tables 16 and 17). The highest response from parents with full-time jobs on average was that they never had online interaction with teachers before the pandemic in contrast to once a month for parents with other different types of jobs on average. Furthermore, during the pandemic, parents' face-to-face interaction was higher for those with part-time jobs than for those with full-time jobs. Similarly, in the interviews, participants stated:

'One of the first challenges that parents face that limit their participation and communication with the school is that many mothers have become working, therefore there is difficulty in attending meetings because it is usually held during official working hours.' (T1)

'In my opinion, the working hours of parents may not be commensurate with school times or the nature of the work of the parents do not allow them to communicate with the school, and this is due to the father and the mother are working at the same time.' (P3)

They recounted that it could be more challenging for dual-working parents in terms of finding time to participate and communicate with the school regarding their children's learning. This supports Moon and Ivins's (2004) study, which found that parents working part-time or not at all were far more likely to say they were more involved. However, this

depends on the kinds of jobs parents have and whether both parents work, which can leave less time available for home-based and school-based PI (Hornby and Lafaele 2011).

Furthermore, in terms of the difficulties that parents face in communicating with their children's teachers, the time of school meetings can be a barrier:

'As for the schools and the challenges in them, there may be insufficient organisation of the dates of meetings with parents due to many reasons like teachers' failure to hold these meetings frequently, or teachers not able to attend meetings in the evening time, or because of the presence of other conditions that are related either for teachers or administrative staff... When I go to school to meet a certain teacher, I cannot talk to her because she has classes or maybe other tasks, so it requires me to return to school on the second day, but unfortunately, most of the time I am not able to be there at the specified time because of the nature of my work.' (P4)

'The times of school's meetings are not suitable for all parents, and this is according to the nature of parents' work or obligations...' (P9)

'The absence of a specific reception mechanism with an effective system in schools in order to book meetings' slot for parents in advance... or even the absence of a specialised function to coordinate and organise meetings between parents and teachers to make this process easier and more flexible without placing the teacher in greater pressure.' (P11)

These parents indicated that meeting times in schools were among the reasons for parents' limited participation in the learning process. Indeed, the lack of an organised system in schools when it comes to planning regular meetings with parents can mean that the teachers themselves are unable to attend due to their personal commitments. As highlighted by Ndwandwe (2023), various factors hinder PI, including conflicts in the home–school scheduling and ineffective communication. This is in addition to parents' availability or lack of it at certain times during the day, affected by their various commitments and job roles. However, the difficulties confronting parents in getting involved with the school does not mean that they are less involved or less interested in their children's learning. It is simply the case that not all parents are able to intervene in their children's schooling in the same way (Sarjeant 2020). Parents have different social,

cultural, and material capital affording them the agency that allows them to become more involved in their children's school (Vincent 2001).

The issue of time poverty applies to both low- and high-income families. Linking this to the survey data, the results in Tables 18 and 19 indicated that parents with a higher monthly income had less face-to-face and online interaction before the pandemic, with 36% of parents earning more than 1,000 OMR per month reported face-to-face interaction at least twice a year against once a month for less affluent parents. While it should be noted that during the pandemic, there were few differences in terms of face-to-face interaction with teachers among parents with different ranges of monthly income, the interview participants remarked:

'The guardians may have higher degree of culture and income, but maybe they are busy most of the time in their work and not follow up on their children's learning...' (T3)

'It is possible that middle-income families' interaction in educating their children are greater than rich families, because of their constant preoccupation with their work and other tasks.' (P7)

This indicates that parents with higher incomes are not necessarily more involved with their children's learning based on the time they spend with them. This suggests that the actions parents take to support their children's learning may be more impactful than their financial resources (Dermott 2012).

In terms of the limited time that participants reported regarding parental support for their children at home, many Omani parents reported they tried to mitigate this by providing their children with private tuition at home (see 8.2.1), a feature of concerted cultivation:

'When I was an employee, it affected the education process of my children. As I did not have enough time to devote to helping them in their studies, because I had many tasks to do at home. Therefore, the alternative way was to bring them private tutors at home to help them instead of me...' (P3)

'I do all the tasks that require me at home to follow up on lessons and duties and help them during exam times. And when I realised that I was unable to follow my daughter in a certain subject because of the

pressures that I face from my work, I brought a private teacher to support her learning...' (P5)

These parents pointed out that private tuition was one of the options that parents might choose, especially when they were working and busy or had limited time. Private lessons were an alternative way of ensuring their children continued their learning at home.

8.2.3 Cultural capital

Not only might parents with lower levels of financial income feel that they are 'less' than other parents but also those with lower educational qualifications and thus less cultural capital. Bourdieu (1983) defined three forms of cultural capital: an embodied state that contains long-lasting dispositions of body and mind; the objectified state represented in cultural goods, such as books, pictures, machines, instruments, etc.; the institutionalised state represented in a form of objectification such as educational qualifications (cited in Power 1999, p. 50). Hatton (1985) contended that middle-class parents are better endowed with cultural capital than working-class parents in terms of educational knowledge, specifically knowing how the education system works and what schools could and should do for their children (cited in Crozier 2006). Roy and Giraldo-García (2018) further noted that the characteristics and impact of PI vary across different cultures, discussing how cultural contexts influence the ways in which parents engage with their children's education. Having lower educational qualifications and thus constrained cultural capital might influence parents' practice and their participation in children's schooling. As perceived by these educators:

'...this group of parents are not qualified or feel embarrassed to communicate with the school or with teachers regarding their children's learning... The poor educational level of the guardian may be a factor in limiting the process of participation and communication regarding student education. Therefore, the guardian finds it difficult to deal with children's education even if they are in the early stages.' (T7)

'The educational level of the parents may be one of the challenges facing parents' communication with school. Also, their view and culture may be a major factor affecting the effective participation process, with a lack of awareness of the importance of the family's role and its communication with the school.' (HT3)

These educators believed that parents' cultural capital affected their communication and participation in their children's learning, especially communication with the school. From the teachers' perspective, these parents felt embarrassed about communicating with teachers concerning their children's learning due to their lack of the cultural capital needed for such communication. However, none of the teachers addressed why this might be or reflected on what the school might do to mitigate this. This is because parents' practices vary according to differences in their agency (Goodall and Montgomery 2014). Furthermore, as Bourdieu (1983) argued, cultural capital is institutionalised and perpetuated through educational qualifications (cited in Power 1999). This capital manifests in both an ability to navigate the education system and an understanding of the curriculum and pedagogy of the school. The teachers were aware that parents' level of educational knowledge and approaches could affect their support for their children's learning:

'Some of the parents do not have experience or knowledge of the correct educational methods appropriate to increase their children's motivation to learn, and sometimes their teaching methods may be wrong...' (T3)

According to this teacher, sometimes parents' educational methods or knowledge could inadvertently hinder children's learning instead of supporting them. However, these challenges can also motivate children to strive for better academic achievement. As in the discourse of 'interference', there was no suggestion of strategies that might help bridge this cultural gap, supported by one of the parents, as follows:

'I think parents with higher educational level usually have greater interest and contribution to their children's education more than other parents with lower educational level. As this category of parents does not have the sufficient culture or educational level to help their children in the education process.' (P11)

This indicates that parents with higher educational levels can contribute positively to their children's learning, as they have sufficient knowledge and cultural capital to support their children's educational progress. This is in line with Crozier's (2006) view that to be proactive

in the educational system, one needs to have cultural capital, encapsulated in confidence based on educational knowledge, and knowing what one wants from the educational system, besides having the skills to get what you want; this is what working-class parents tend to lack. This can affect parents' participation in their children's learning. In this study, educators agreed, expressing the belief that having a higher level of cultural capital could positively affect parents' involvement in their children's learning:

'Currently, for the school in which I work, most of the parents' educational level is considered from good to excellent. Therefore, they have a high awareness of their role in supporting their children's learning and encouraging their children to participate in some of the activities offered by the school...' (HT1)

'Most parents in my school are considered to be from the educated category, but parents with higher degree or educational qualification have more effective impact of communication with teachers. Even in the event of students' low achievement, when there is awareness and knowledge by the guardian, this helps to overcome many obstacles that the students may face in the future.' (T6)

Educated parents with higher levels of awareness of their important role in their children's learning can positively affect their children's learning. This can be done through encouraging children to improve their attainment and overcome any issues that children might face in terms of low achievement.

However, another perspective was expressed suggesting that a lower educational level did not necessarily hinder parents' ability to support their children's learning. Some parents did not have higher educational degrees or had not completed education but viewed being involved in their children's learning as one of their priorities:

'Having a sufficient level of attention and awareness from parents has a positive effect on children's learning even when parents do not have a higher academic degree. When the parents are interested in this aspect, even if they are uneducated, this plays a major role in raising the level of students ...' (HT4)

'Parents' educational level and the level of academic degrees do not have a significant impact from my own perspective. As there are mothers who are not educated and do not have high degrees, and their level of

participation and communication with the school is greater than those of higher degrees...' (HT5)

These HTs agreed that a higher educational level was not a measure of parents' involvement and participation in their children's learning. Rather, parents' perceptions and beliefs about their role in their children's learning and provision of the skills and knowledge needed to progress were more important and beneficial. Moreover, although parents may be educated and try their best to be involved in their children's learning, their children may be unmotivated. This will affect their learning even if they have educated parents and all educational requirements, as stated by one of the HTs:

'The higher the educational level of the parents, the more this will be reflected on their children in terms of their permanent knowledge and their ability to enrol in educational programmes other than the school. Of course, this also depends on the personality and behaviour of the students themselves. Through my experience I also faced parents with a high educational level, but unfortunately the students do not bear responsibility for their learning even with the availability of all the equipment and tools required for the study.' (HT2)

This HT believed that students' personalities and motivations directly affected their learning, regardless of whether their parents had higher academic degrees and could provide them with all educational resources. In a similar vein, another HT noted that parents with average educational levels were more likely to be involved in their children's learning:

'It is not a requirement for the guardian to have high academic degrees or certificates, rather it is a culture in which parents acquire through experiences or aspiration in this aspect... Through my simple experience, parents who have educational degrees that are neither high nor low, they have a sufficient amount of culture, and their communication is greater than the rest of the groups that affects positively on children's learning. It may be due to the preoccupation of the holders of certificates or high academic degrees, or the circumstances are not prepared for them to communicate more with teachers.' (HT6)

This HT found that parents with an average level of education were more inclined to participate and communicate with teachers regarding their children's learning than other groups of parents. This is perhaps because some parents with higher educational levels are busier due to their preoccupations and the nature of their work.

Turning to another aspect related to parents' cultural capital, geographical location – urban versus rural – can affect parents' level of awareness and involvement in their children's learning. Some participants perceived that parents living in urban areas were more aware of their involvement in their children's learning:

'I was a headteacher in an area far from the city centre and considered in the mountainous strip. I noticed that the behaviour of parents in the city centre is better with more awareness and acceptance than parents who are in the mountainous areas...' (HT1)

'I noticed that when schools are located in more developed areas, usually parents are more interested and supportive of this process by participating in school and educational projects...' (P9)

These educators found that parents living in urban areas were more mindful of their children's learning, possibly due to factors such as their level of awareness, educational background, job status, standard of living, and other related aspects. However, it is not possible to generalise as it is not necessarily the case that those living in rural areas are less likely to have cultural capital. Indeed, there are some advantages to being in rural areas:

'Due to the presence of the school in an area far from the city and the presence of a small population density, this can help to get more connected from the school staff with the society. For instance, when there is any special circumstance for the students or any issue with some families, the administrative staff sometimes visit them at their homes if it is required.' (HT3)

This underscores the positive side of being in a rural area. Due to the small number of residents in rural areas, there can be more communication between school members and families. In the survey data, presented in Table 10, parents in some rural areas (e.g. Musandam and Al Buraimi Governorates) reported having face-to-face interactions with

schools once a week on average, compared to once a month in other governorates, before the pandemic. During the pandemic, most of the responses indicated that parents from different governorates had no face-to-face interaction with teachers, while in Al Buraimi Governorate 46% of parents said they had daily face-to-face interactions. In Musandam, 33% of parents who interacted face-to-face daily with teachers during the pandemic. In this regard, such interaction not only includes the educational aspect but also social aspects for students and their families, as the whole community is considered one family. Moreover, there is a sense of community in rural settings and relationships tend to be more personal, with a prevalence of traditional values (Prater et al. 1997).

8.3 Summary

Overall, this findings chapter has presented the participants' views of optimal PI practices and recommendations focused on the provision of more support and encouragement for parents and children. Parents wished to have more support at home in terms of educational resources to support their children's learning. This was reinforced by experiencing the pandemic. Moreover, they pointed to the use of technology to support this practice.

Furthermore, the participants proposed having more continuous positive communication between parents and school to mitigate some of the barriers to learning. Most of the parents preferred direct communication with teachers, in addition to getting some support through the use of technology. Collaboration and building strong bonds linking the community, school, and home were also viewed as beneficial. The participants noted that parents can participate in different ways, not just in educational aspects of school life. Collaboration could benefit the whole community, beyond the benefits for students and schools. Furthermore, they argued for establishing a clear well-designed policy and achievable objectives to attain positive results from PI practice in the Omani context.

The participants also highlighted some factors that could hinder the optimal application of PI in children's learning, including material constraints, time constraints, and various cultural factors. These varied depending on the context and parents' beliefs and circumstances, for example parents' economic situation, employment status, area of

residence, school location, and educational level. All these are elements that can either support or hinder PI in schooling.

Chapter 9: Discussion and Conclusion

This study explored parents', teachers', and HTs' experiences and perceptions of PI in schooling in the Omani context. As well as considering perceptions of PI generally, the study investigated the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on various stakeholders' understandings and experiences of PI. The research questions that guided this study were as follows:

- 1) What are the perceptions and practices of PI for children aged 10–15 years for teachers and HTs in Oman?
- 2) What are the perceptions and practices of PI for children aged 10–15 years for parents in Oman?
- 3) How do parents, teachers, and HTs perceive the role of technology in facilitating PI for children aged 10–15 years?
- 4) Did the above change due to the COVID–19 pandemic?

This chapter will address each of the research questions in turn with the intention of responding to the substantive and theoretical issues identified. Furthermore, it will discuss the findings and situate them within the current literature and research on PI. To conclude it will address the study limitations and suggest areas for future research and investigation. It will also highlight clearly what lessons might be learned from the experiences of parents, teachers, and HTs before and during the pandemic to develop effective PI strategies and policies within Oman.

9.1 Participants' perceptions of parental involvement (PI)

9.1.1 Limited understanding of parental involvement (PI)

The data indicated that within the Omani context, there was a very limited understanding of the role of PI in supporting children's learning from the school and parental perspective both before and during the pandemic. All participants in this study were initially asked to recall how they perceived PI in Omani C2 schools before and during the pandemic. They

were also asked to express their beliefs and understanding regarding the role of parents in children's learning, and how they enacted this in practice. Generally, the parents', teachers', and HTs' responses demonstrated a limited understanding of or commitment to the potential values of PI within Omani schooling.

From the school perspective, whether before or during the pandemic, this study revealed that even though teachers and HTs in Oman believed regular open communication and dialogue between parents and schools could have benefits for children and families, the school's role was not clear. The onus seemed to be on parents to develop PI in their child's learning at home, rather than being actively supported by the school to do so. This aligns most closely with the second type of partnership involvement in Epstein's (1995) typology, which refers to the basic obligations of the school, including communication with the families about the school programme and children's progress (Epstein and Dauber 1991), although in a fairly instrumental way.

In general, the schools did not seem to view their role as being proactive in encouraging and actively supporting PI. Indeed, in some instances, educators seemed to draw on a deficit understanding of parents as being disinterested and poorly equipped to support their children's learning in the home (as discussed in the literature see sections 2.1 and 2.2). This reflects wider research which suggests that when parents do not engage in expected ways, they are often labelled as 'hard-to-reach' (Boag-Munroe and Evangelou 2012, p. 209). It seemed that the educators in this study believed that the issue with low levels of PI lay entirely with the parents, rather than with the school. The findings of this study revealed limited evidence that schools implemented strategies to engage or support parents effectively. This included the absence of well-designed school-to-home and home-to-school communication methods, both before and during the pandemic. According to Epstein's (1995) typology, this falls under Type 2 Communicating, which outlines the basic obligations of schools. Additionally, there was a noticeable deficiency in activities corresponding to other types in Epstein's typology, such as Type 3 Volunteering, which involves parental participation in school, Type 5 Decision Making, and Type 6 Collaborating with the Community.

Additionally, there was limited understanding according to Goodall's (2022a) framework, which emphasises relationships between families and school staff, as well as the home learning environment. This framework highlights the need for deep, fundamental changes in the entire learning process rather than superficial or instrumental amendments, being designed to help school staff shift towards a collaborative partnership with parents.

Similarly, there was also limited understanding of PI in terms of the features of Yosso's (2005) cultural wealth model, which complements Goodall's (2002a) framework by highlighting the diverse forms of capital in marginalised communities (e.g. aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant). Recognising these forms of capital can help schools build stronger, more equitable partnerships with families, aligning with Goodall's (2002a) emphasis on deep, fundamental changes.

Furthermore, there was limited understanding of PI reflecting Gorski's (2013) equity-centred practices, which highlight the importance of schools adapting to the diverse needs of families. Gorski (2013) argues that schools must move beyond deficit views of parents and instead focus on creating equitable partnerships that address systemic barriers and biases. This approach aligns with the need for well-designed communication methods and proactive engagement strategies considering the varying backgrounds, cultures, and socioeconomic positions of families. By integrating Gorski's (2013) principles, schools could better support parents and foster a more inclusive and effective PI framework.

Most Omani teachers perceived PI as only necessary in relation to academic performance, similar to some parents' perceptions. This does not reflect the broad meaning of PI, as academic achievement is only part of children's learning, which encompasses broader aspects of children's lives that influence their overall actions (Goodall 2013). Moreover, it seems that academic involvement was framed as monitoring performance, rather than being proactively engaged with the school and child to create an environment, foster dispositions, and support the child to achieve in school.

Furthermore, the findings indicated that some teachers viewed PI in children's learning as an intervention that had negative effects, and sometimes they actively preferred to work independently without any support from parents. This independent model, which

separates the roles of school and home in children's learning, seems to embody the theory of 'separate spheres of influence' (Epstein 2010, p. 83). This indicates not only a lack of support from the school for PI but also the presence of cultural barriers to PI, as schools are seen as distinct places for learning.

This perception of distinct spheres of influence (Epstein 2010, p. 83) was also reflected in parental perceptions. The study showed that while parents generally had a positive attitude towards being involved in supporting their children's learning at home, both before and during the pandemic, they viewed their role in very limited terms (only monitoring or helping with set school-work at home when needed). This approach aligns with Epstein's (1995) Type 1 Parenting according to which parents consider their practice in children's learning as their duty, related to parenting in general and including the basic obligations of families (Epstein and Sheldon 2006). The parents did not mention receiving enough support at home from the school, either before and during the pandemic, and there was no clear evidence of Epstein's (1995) Type 4 Learning at Home, where parents are provided with information and ideas on how to help children with homework. Therefore, there was also little evidence of the implementation of practices delineated in the extended models suggested by Harris and Goodall (2007) and Goodall's (2022a) framework, according to which schools provide levels of guidance and support that enable parents to assist their children's learning at home. Moreover, such an approach helps parents recognise the difference that they make in their children's educational attainment and subsequent life chances.

Beyond basic obligations, the parents generally understood PI as a reactive and supervisory process that occurred in relation to certain circumstances and then should be withdrawn over time; this was the case both before and during the pandemic. This is contrary to the notions of sustained proactive PE and ongoing participatory guidance, which imply that parents are prepared before something happens and can respond actively to specific events (Goodall 2017).

The study also revealed that the parents believed their participation in their children's learning was more essential with young children rather than at higher stages of learning with older learners. This seems to draw on a scaffolding metaphor, which views

engagement as necessary in the early years but should be withdrawn over time to foster children's independence. There was little acknowledgement from teachers or parents of the potential value for learners of activities that are dialogic and support quality verbal interactions between parents and their children in the home (Mercer and Howe 2012).

Generally, from the viewpoint of the parents, it appears that several may not have fully grasped the potential significance of PI in aiding their children's education, either before or during the pandemic. However, the data suggested that this lack of understanding did not equate to a lack of interest in their children's learning. This is consistent with the findings of Harris and Goodall (2008) in the UK, who demonstrated that parents generally have a strong interest in their children's education, including those who encounter hurdles to engaging with schools. Reay (2010) also argued that most parents want the best for their children, have high expectations of their children's educational success, and want to be active in their children's school life. However, Reay (2010) suggested that some parents, despite stating their desire to be involved, do not have the support or capacity to play a full and active role in their child's education. Linking this to the current study, some parents indicated a lack of satisfaction with the level of support, encouragement, and communication they had from their children's school, either before or during the pandemic.

Looking at the HTs' views, the data in this study indicated that the perspectives and understandings of some differed from those of the teachers and parents regarding PI. Some HTs perceived home learning as crucial for children's education, thus identifying PI as important and considering it a complementary process between teachers and parents. However, some HTs, drawing on deficit accounts of PI and support, perceived limitations in establishing and maintaining an effective relationship between parents and teachers due to parents' knowledge of practice. Few HTs, however, outlined any forms of communication (Epstein's Type 2) or other strategies that might bridge these cultural or knowledge gaps. As described by Goodall and Montgomery's (2014) model, authentic dialogue between parents and school can increase trust between parents and the school and also begin to break down some of the barriers to PE. Goodall and Montgomery (2014) suggested that sharing knowledge and making it accessible to all participants during

conversations could promote a sense of partnership. This perspective, however, appeared not to be shared fully among the study participants.

While PI is ideally a collaborative process, there was very limited evidence of schools proactively supporting parents or parents' participation in activities beyond parents' evenings. Other outreach activities, such as skills courses, extra-curricular activities, and volunteering, or more deliberative activities, such as home learning, decision-making, community collaboration, and remote engagement were generally absent (Epstein 2001). Therefore, there is no evidence that this broader and more actively supported approach of PE (Goodall and Montgomery 2014; Goodall 2022a) has been adopted in any of the Omani settings in this study.

Having considered parents', teachers', and HTs' perceptions of PI in children's learning, I now consider any striking differences or changes to the practice of PI before and during the pandemic.

9.2 Parents' reported practice of parental involvement (PI) in schooling before and during the pandemic

9.2.1 Limited practice of parental involvement (PI) before and during the pandemic

Looking closely at the findings from the survey and the interviews, it seems that PI at school was limited to formal meetings or acquiring general information on the attainment of children, which was considered by parents to be inadequate in terms of PI both before and during the pandemic.

Overall, parental participation in school activities was limited both before and during the pandemic, with some parents showing reluctance to get involved. However, many parents did engage in helping their children with homework and academic tasks at home, which aligns with Level 4 of Epstein's typology, according to which parents receive guidance on assisting with homework. This involvement was generally reactive and surface-level, focusing on immediate tasks rather than fostering extended discussions or the development of deeper ideas with their children, both before and during the pandemic. One key element that emerged from the data and which affected parents' ability to support

children's academic work at home, was their lack of curricular awareness and any changes to the curriculum and pedagogy during their time at school. Many parents felt unable to support their children, while others were concerned that they might be overstepping and entering into the territory of the school and did not want to 'interfere'. The interference discourse, viewing PI as a nuisance practice, tends to result in parents and teachers standing in the way of each other to support children's learning: this is the antithesis of the model advocated by Goodall (2013).

However, those parents who adopted this more reactive approach before the pandemic were affected by the shift in the mode of learning, which resulted in a change in their level of involvement in their children's school-work. Most of the parents reported that their involvement in their children's learning increased at home during the pandemic. This was largely due to their need to attend lessons with their children and ensure they understood the material. However, this reflects a focus only on their children's academic achievement, and led some children to become more reliant on their parents for school-related tasks. Some parents felt compelled to take on the role of teachers at home, given the limited time teachers had to cover the entire curriculum. This shift was not always voluntary, as some parents felt forced into this role due to the circumstances.

In addition, many parents stated that they did not receive sufficient support to aid their participation in their children's learning, either before or during the pandemic. As stated by Shulman (2013), to support children's learning, parents and teachers must be equipped with pedagogical knowledge and skills and know the rationale for applying such knowledge in practice. This deficiency can be linked to a lack of parental education programmes in Omani schools in general, as most parents (62%) said they were not offered any educational programmes by their children's schools either before or during the pandemic. This impacted parents' level of awareness and their familiarity with different curriculums, before and during the pandemic.

As this section has illustrated, communication between parents and schools was limited and tended to be reactive on the part of the parents. According to the ways of communication between parents and school members, parents reported that they used mostly mixed ways of communication (telephone, face-to-face, email, and website) before

the pandemic. However, the method most frequently used to access their children's learning, both before and during the pandemic, was the mobile phone.

9.2.2 Effect of economic factors and cultural capital on perceptions and practices of parental involvement (PI) before and during the pandemic

The parents recounted different experiences in relation to the practice of PI in schooling before and during the pandemic. Some parents reported they were more involved in their children's learning at home during the pandemic, and they took more responsibility for their children's learning, while others reported the opposite experience. Although the pandemic did appear to increase communication between parents and the school, the findings revealed mixed responses regarding the average amount of communication between parents and school/teachers. Some parents reported that they had more positive communication with teachers during the pandemic, while others had negative experiences and lower levels of communication.

The data indicated that these differences in parents' perceptions and practices of PI, both before and during the pandemic, could be explained by two general factors: material constraints (including digital poverty) and cultural capital (which includes awareness and understanding of the school's curriculum and pedagogy, as discussed above). As suggested by Reay's (2010) research, one reason for the variation in terms of PI can be individual parents' perceived lack of cultural and social capital, as well as their capacity to rely on this capital to have a beneficial impact on their child's education. This is consistent with the findings of this study, since the parents reported being unaware of the pedagogical approaches implemented by the school, and expressed reluctance to interfere in an area in which they lacked knowledge.

Starting with the families' economic capital and material constraints, this study revealed that most participants perceived that advantaged parents with higher incomes had greater access to resources and tools to support their children's learning than disadvantaged parents. This is consistent with Harris and Goodall's (2008) study, which found that many parents face material barriers to PE – particularly in terms of attending school events. In this study, parents with a lower income had less communication with teachers and tended

not to attend school before the pandemic, possibly due to their sense of being less than others. This is consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005), which found that parents from lower SES backgrounds perceive their ability to assist in their children's behavioural development and academic performance to be minimal and unhelpful, leading to decreased interest and participation in activities that require contact with their children's school.

Furthermore, less-advantaged parents commonly express frustration that the timing of school events prevents them from engaging, and childcare and other caring responsibilities can pose similar difficulties (Harris and Goodall 2008). Ndwandwe (2023) points out that several factors, including scheduling conflicts between home and school and poor communication, hinder parents from being actively involved. This was reflected in the evidence of time poverty in this study, resulting in parents on low incomes being unable to attend school at certain times before the pandemic due to their responsibilities or their jobs. This is consistent with Rached's (2015) finding that parents who are struggling financially will choose their work environment above their children's education because they require money. Additionally, according to Newman and Chin (2003), low-income parents can face difficulty finding free time to dedicate to their child's educational concerns. Interpreting this as disinterest is referred to as a deficit model, which suggests that poor parents (those experiencing poverty) are also considered poor parents (those who do not achieve or obtain the expected standard of parenting) (Goodall 2019).

However, not attending school does not mean that parents are less interested in their children's learning, as not all parents can intervene in their children's schooling in the same way (Sarjeant 2020). As found, there are no one-size-fits-all interventions for supporting parents' participation in children's learning, since not all parents are the same, have the same needs, or face the same barriers (Crozier 2001; Kim 2009). Nonetheless, Goodall (2015) identifies a tendency for policymakers, educators, and researchers to adopt a deficit model when considering parents who are not visibly engaged with the school or are unable to meet all the sets of expectations of the school or teachers (Wyness 2020).

Interestingly, there was a recognition of time poverty not only for disadvantaged parents but also including wealthy parents. The survey data indicated that both poor and rich parents had limited involvement in their children's learning at school before the pandemic because of tight time constraints, which suggests that parents with higher incomes are not necessarily more involved with their children's learning in terms of the time they spend engaging with the school. What parents can do with their children is likely more important than what they have in terms of resources for their children's learning (Dermott 2012), suggesting a complex and nuanced picture in terms of PI. As Domina's (2005) study suggested, the involvement of parents with low SES may be more effective than that of parents with high SES.

While material factors did affect PI, especially during the pandemic, when digital poverty became a key issue, this did not reflect the deficit discourse of a lack of parental aspiration or not wanting to be involved with the school or in their children's learning. There was no evidence of Schoon's (2006) findings, namely that parents with fewer financial resources have lower expectations for their children and young people from low-income families have lower aspirations than their more advantaged classmates. Catsambis (2001) found that high educational expectations, ongoing encouragement and support, and expanding learning opportunities are all connected with improved academic achievement, independent of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic position. Therefore, parental aspirations are among the most powerful indicators of school grades and self-esteem in young people (Catsambis 2001).

The results of this study support Georgiou and Tourva's (2007) finding that the involvement of parents in their children's educational process is influenced in part by their views of themselves as parents, as well as their beliefs about their role in their children's learning. The findings also support Harris and Goodall's (2007) argument that children are more likely to value education if their parents do. This is consistent with this study's findings, as some participants reported that parents' positive beliefs and aspirations in terms of their role in their children's learning were among the factors that supported parents and students and mitigated the effect of material constraints.

However, this study also revealed that parents with higher incomes were more likely to support their children at home with extra resources and materials, both before and during the pandemic. For instance, they could provide private tuition, which less affluent parents could not afford. Thus, many parents with the economic capital outsourced learning to private tuition, often partly due to believing that they did not have the required subject knowledge or pedagogical knowledge to support their children as they progressed through the school years or not having sufficient time. This reflects the 'concerted cultivation' parenting approach, identified by Lareau (2002, p. 748), which is predominantly adopted by middle-class parents when the resources are available. Lareau (2002) described concerted cultivation as involving a variety of practices, for example the provision of supplementary tuition and schooling and other extra-curricular activities. Lareau (1987) argued that middle-class families possess the resources to actively cultivate their children to succeed academically, whereas poor families feel they lack such resources and tend to allow their children to develop limited and passive relations with school.

Having examined the influence of families' economic capital on their children's learning at the PI level, the focus now shifts to the impact of families' cultural capital, starting with gender and religion, which are considered as part of the cultural dimensions that affected PI. In this study, there were some differences in reported PI practices among fathers and mothers, specifically before the pandemic, which can be linked to cultural aspects related to Omani society. Due to gender segregation in Omani schools from grade 5 until high school in government schools, the mothers were less involved in their sons' schools, where the teachers were male, and the fathers were less involved in their daughters' schools, where the teachers were female. This is consistent with Unal and Unal's (2010) study in Turkey, which identified a positive association between the gender of the teacher and the father's involvement, concluding that fathers are less involved when the teacher is female and more involved when the teacher is male. However, this does not mean that the fathers or mothers were less interested in their children's learning at home, as previously mentioned regarding the deficit model. During the pandemic, the effect of gender segregation was mitigated due to the use of distance communication and some mothers reported that they had more communication regarding their sons' learning.

Turning to another cultural dimension that affected PI, the parents' job, the study findings suggest that there was a relationship between parents' jobs and PI practice in children's learning both before and during the pandemic. Indeed, the type of parents' job can be a factor that affects the level of PI in schooling, especially when both parents are working (Hornby and Lafaele 2011), and have responsibilities inside and outside the home. Shove et al.'s (2012) research also indicated that insufficient involvement from parents can be related to parents' busy schedules, childcare issues, and dual-family employment. Due to the fast pace of modern society, most of the mothers in this study were working, consistent with Harris et al.'s (2009) finding that most mothers of school-age children are in the workforce, which is considered a barrier to PE.

Moreover, parents' jobs can be considered with reference to two frames: cultural or material aspects. Starting with cultural aspects, this study identified a link between parents' educational level and their support for their children's learning. Higher levels of education equip parents with the cultural capital to navigate the education system and the curriculum. The findings suggest that parents with higher educational levels can contribute positively to their children's learning, as they have sufficient knowledge and cultural capital to support their children's educational progress, while parents with lower educational levels may feel embarrassed about communicating with teachers concerning their children's learning due to their relative lack of skills or knowledge, as suggested by both teachers and HTs.

Therefore, this can have a negative effect on building a strong partnership between parents and teachers, which ultimately may influence children's learning. This supports Crozier's (1997) study, which found that to be proactive in the educational system, one needs to have cultural capital, namely, having confidence based on educational knowledge and knowing what one wants from the educational system, besides having the skills to get what one wants. It is what working-class parents tend not to have. In the same vein, Williams et al. (1998) found that parents with low literacy are less likely to help their children with reading and writing and feel less confident in doing so. Also, Davis-Kean's (2005) findings suggest that the amount of schooling parents receive affects how they

structure their home environment and interact with their children to promote academic achievement.

Several studies propose that the ability to support children's learning does not require a high level of education from parents (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler 1997; Hornby 2000). However, the qualitative findings in this study indicated that several parents with lower educational levels felt they lacked the knowledge to help their children with their school subjects at home. In Oman, there are no strategies in place to help parents overcome these issues. While some HTs considered parents' lower educational level not to be a barrier in terms of supporting their children's learning or a measure of the level of PI in children's learning, they noted that parents who had higher perceptions and beliefs of their ability could positively influence their children's learning, no matter their educational level. However, there was a lack of recognition that any lack of belief was related to social position and educational attainment. As Sarjeant (2020) illustrated, engagement strategies can equip parents with both strategies and the belief that they can have a positive impact on their children's learning.

There was also recognition of the effect of parents' close social relations with teachers and the effect on the level of communication between them. For instance, before the pandemic, it was more evident that living in the same area or working in the same place as teachers helped parents overcome personal, social, and cultural barriers, thereby improving communication in terms of supporting children's learning. This supports the notion that the existence of strong bonds between teachers and parents helps parents engaging constructively in their children's learning (Green et al. 2007). Interestingly, during the pandemic, the data demonstrated a different dynamic in that using technology helped foster and improve communication between teachers and parents in some cases by overcoming barriers related to time, distance, and parental availability. This is discussed further in Section 9.3.

Turning to another aspect related to parents' jobs and cultural factors, the data indicated recognition of time constraints as material impediments linked to parents' work, affecting PI with children's schooling. The study participants suggested that parents' jobs could negatively affect involvement in their children's learning due to the nature of their work,

which imposed pressure in terms of time and effort. Hence, some parents were unable to support their children at home because of the nature of their jobs and their participation in their children's schooling was constrained, especially during the pandemic. For instance, some jobs allowed little flexibility for taking time off for school-based PI, and in some cases, parents were too tired at the end of the day to help their children with homework (Green et al. 2007). This aligns with Moon and Ivins's (2004) findings, which indicated that parents in part-time work or not working at all reported higher levels of involvement in their children's learning. Moreover, the extent of PI is influenced by the nature of parents' jobs and whether both parents are employed, as this reduces the time available for home-based and school-based activities (Hornby and Lafaele 2011). All these studies support the proposition that parents' work and time constraints can affect the level of PI in children's learning, whether at home or in school. During the pandemic, parents were forced to work from home and therefore reported that they had more time to spend with their children due to the pandemic restrictions.

Another dimension of parents' cultural capital concerns their area of residence, in particular whether it is rural or urban, which can be an SES indicator. In this study, there were two different views regarding families' geographic living areas and PI practice. The first, drawing on the qualitative data, found that some participants perceived that parents living in urban areas were more mindful of their children's learning and more aware of their responsibility for involvement in their children's learning. This supports Shao et al.'s (2022) research, which found that families with high SES were usually located in developed areas and had a high level of education. Additionally, Sun et al. (1997) found that parents who live in urban areas communicate and participate in school activities more than parents from other communities because of their social and demographic characteristics. Additionally, both the quantitative and qualitative data showed that parents in urban areas had more reliable internet coverage to support their children's learning, both before and during the pandemic.

However, this study revealed an opposing view regarding the link between families living in rural versus urban areas, and PI. Although there were some infrastructure issues in rural areas related to broadband and internet access (e.g. a lack of devices and hardware

for parents and schools and a lack of digital skills), as well as other wider social and cultural issues, this did not mean that parents living in rural areas were less likely to have cultural capital or be less interested in their children's learning either at school or at home. The quantitative data did indicate an urban/rural divide, with some differences in parents' face-to-face and online interaction with their children's teachers based on geographical location before and during the pandemic. For instance, parents' responses from governorates far away from the capital cities indicated that they had more face-to-face interaction with teachers before and during the pandemic. This was the same for online interaction, although online interaction between parents and teachers increased in all governorates on average during the pandemic. The data revealed that parents from most urban areas in Oman, like Muscat, had less interaction with teachers before and during the pandemic. However, the lower frequency of physical or online interaction among parents and teachers in urban areas did not mean that the parents were not interested in their children's learning.

Furthermore, the qualitative data support this view, as some participants indicated that there was more communication between parents and school staff in rural areas, which could be linked to the smaller number of residents. Furthermore, there tended to be a strong relationship among all citizens in these areas, as the whole community was viewed as one family. Similarly, Prater et al. (1997) found a sense of community in rural settings and argued that relationships tend to be more personal, with the presence of traditional values. This is also representative of the notion of community attachment described in sociology, found to be much stronger in rural areas than in urban areas (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974). Moreover, parents in rural areas not only engage in PI themselves but also organise and promote activities at the community level (Ma et al. 2014). All these studies found a positive link between families in rural areas and their level of support for each other in terms of PI in schooling, even though some of them had a low educational level or SES.

Notably, the qualitative data indicated that the pandemic might have changed some of the parents' perceptions of PI in their children's learning and there were fewer differences in PI according to geographical location. Parents from all governorates were interested in

supporting their children's learning, especially in the critical time of the pandemic. These changes in perceptions of PI in schooling during the pandemic could be related to the use of technology as a means of communication.

Research has suggested that some geographical disparities can be mitigated by the use of technology (See et al. 2020). This is supported by the data from this study, which indicated that during the pandemic, using technology supported some parents in engaging more with their children's teachers, even in geographical locations where schools were difficult-to-reach. The pandemic expedited a shift to technology-enhanced PI (Osorio-Saez 2022). The coming section discusses the effect of technology on PI practices and the general perception of PI during the pandemic in greater depth.

9.3 Using technology and participants' perceptions of parental involvement (PI) during the pandemic

While this research has highlighted how technology was used to support PI throughout the pandemic, it has also raised several issues relating to material factors in terms of the availability of hardware (access to broadband for schools and parents, families and schools did not have the hardware and devices); as well as cultural barriers (lack of digital skills for teachers and parents). These factors clearly affected parents' ability to use technology or even have it as a tool to support their child's learning in the home.

Technology continues to transform many parts of our lives and education is no exception. EdTech, or Educational Technology, has emerged as a strong instrument that is transforming traditional teaching techniques and learning experiences. When schools were closed due to COVID-19, children's learning and well-being depended more than ever on a supportive home environment (Osorio-Saez et al. 2021). The data in this study indicated that the pandemic expedited parental use of technology as a tool for PI in children's learning. Many parents were initially unaware of or sceptical about the use of technology in learning. This can be explained with reference to the theory of technological acceptance (Osorio-Saez 2022), which relates parents' use to their confidence levels in employing technology.

This study illustrated that there were positive effects of using technology on parental practice and parents considered EdTech to be a tool that could facilitate teaching and learning. For instance, parents reported that they attended their children's online lessons and were supporting them at the same time, which helped them gain a general view of the teaching process and at the same time maintain a connection with teachers regarding their children's learning. Most parents reported that the most common means of communication was through WhatsApp, which helped them obtain answers to their inquiries and support their children's learning. This was especially beneficial for some mothers and fathers in mitigating some of the existing cultural and social barriers related to gender segregation in Omani government schools, which resulted in limited face-to-face interaction with teachers of the opposite gender before the pandemic. As other research has shown, there is a growing reliance on using tech-based communication to help parents stay informed, become more involved, and be better positioned to help with children's school-work (Minero 2017). To attain positive results from using technology in communication between parents and schools, there should be two-way, positive interaction that happens without delay and this should be personalised for each student and not generic (See et al. 2020). Although there is extensive evidence of the widespread use of digital technologies today, there is still no clear consensus on how technology should be utilised to ensure it effectively fosters PI and improves learner outcomes, nor is there causal evidence that such communication enhances the quality or quantity of PI in children's learning (See et al. 2020).

In addition, the findings indicated that the parents appreciated teachers' efforts even more than before the pandemic occurred; however, not all the parents were satisfied with the teachers' resources or support during the pandemic. They expected more from them, such as more regular communication and offering extra resources to support them with their children's learning at home. Nonetheless, the findings revealed that parents and teachers adapted to the new online mode of learning by acquiring new digital skills and knowledge. Therefore, the pandemic provided a golden opportunity to improve parents', teachers', and even students' technological skills and widen their knowledge. This supports Osorio-Saez's (2022) finding that parents reported improved operational/computing abilities in interacting with technology to promote their children's

development. However, they failed to gain certain abilities, such as informational and strategic digital skills.

Thus, although the pandemic provided a chance to search for alternatives in different aspects of daily life, with some positive impacts in the educational setting particularly, this study identified disparities between individuals, households, and geographic areas in terms of SES, both in accessing and using technology. This reflects the digital divide (OECD 2001), the opposite of digital inclusion, which concerns the extent to which everyone has equitable access to digital technology and systems. Substantial research has focused on the digital divide, a phrase that frames the issue of inequality and is an important concern for policymakers (Mirazchiyski 2016). Several factors have been identified as contributing to inequity in access to technology, including income, social status, gender, age, and ethnicity (Van Dijk 2002). In this study, various barriers arose as a result of inequality that made using technology less effective than it might have been in terms of PI. The aspects of digital poverty included infrastructure issues in relation to broadband and internet access, a lack of devices and hardware for parents and schools, a lack of digital skills, and wider social and cultural issues.

Due to infrastructure issues and limited internet access in some areas of Oman, some parents in rural areas recounted that using technology was not as beneficial as might be hoped, especially at the beginning of online learning. This perception remained despite significant efforts by the community and the government to improve internet and network issues. This was due to the lack of internet access at school or at home, as well as some schools being located in difficult-to-reach areas. However, the data revealed that internet access generally improved slightly in some areas, while it stayed the same in others, as reported in the survey. Emergency remote learning began without any prior planning to adopt this mode of learning. Therefore, it was expected that challenges would arise, as indeed reported by most of the participants. A broad range of studies have identified the impact of emergency remote learning on children's learning, both in terms of challenges and opportunities (Abuhammad 2020; Garbe et al. 2020; Ribeiro et al. 2021). In all these studies, there were reports of a lack of adequate internet access or technology to follow learning activities properly.

Furthermore, this study indicated that parents, teachers, and HTs generally held the belief that advantages conferred by higher SES was a major positive component of a helpful home learning environment, with good access to devices/access to the internet being a prevalent element of more affluent home learning environments. The data demonstrated that parents on limited incomes were negatively affected by the need to use technology for learning during the pandemic, as they could not afford the cost of new devices or internet bills, as also found by Ribeiro et al. (2021). Notably, Irwin et al. (2021) found that students who were already struggling in face-to-face learning environments, for instance those from low-income families, struggled even more during pandemic-related school closures. Disadvantaged students may have restricted access to digital devices and the internet at home and their families may be unable to give the same kind of assistance that more advantaged families can. In this study, the quantitative data showed that less affluent parents agreed that a lack of technology access affected their children's learning during the pandemic, while more affluent parents reported that they had no issue in relation to using technology to support their children's learning. However, the study also found a counter-argument that the family's income did not necessarily negatively affect their support for their children's learning, even during the pandemic. For instance, using technology helped some poor parents to mitigate financial hardship, as online learning did not cost them as much as face-to-face learning, with lower school supplements, transport costs, and other required materials.

The findings presented another factor that militated against families and teachers being able to engage fully with online learning, perhaps related to a lack of digital literacy skills. For instance, limited technological skills and knowledge affected parents' and teachers' roles at the beginning of the pandemic. As noted by Yamamoto and Altun (2020), parents' lack of technological knowledge and skills can affect the process of following lessons conducted in distance education. Ribeiro et al. (2021) also identified limited technological skills as one of the personal barriers to using remote learning. Furthermore, limited digital competencies were identified as arising because of the absence of previously developed and tested guidelines, and a lack of experience in conducting e-lessons (Knopik et al. 2021).

The data revealed that using technology in online learning imposed an extra burden not only for parents but also for teachers. Some parents struggled to follow their children's learning due to their work commitments and the limited time they had. More particularly, parents faced various challenges as their homes became the new learning environment during the pandemic. This is consistent with Liu et al.'s (2010) findings that parents confront additional obstacles with respect to online learning, which include not just having more influence over their children, but also pushing them to work, assisting them with self-organisation, and taking responsibility for their children's progress and achievement. To address a range of issues, some studies revealed that parents sought to influence their children's learning by offering digital tools and learning environments, as well as learning how to help their children, which imposed significant stress on carers and parents (Chang and Yano 2020; Dong et al. 2020; Garbe et al. 2020). However, even though parents became accustomed to online learning, they did not find it a satisfactory approach to supporting their children's learning.

As well as all the challenges that militated against families and teachers being able to fully engage with online learning, the pandemic revealed several obstacles that families confront daily in their pursuit of educating their children (Osorio-Saez et al. 2021). This unprecedented situation presented a unique opportunity for researchers and policymakers to understand the lessons learned from this global emergency. By collaborating closely with parents, who are the best partners in mitigating both the short- and long-term effects of COVID-19 on children's learning, it is possible support them in engaging with their children's education more effectively (Osorio-Saez et al. 2021). Although technology can be considered a useful tool, it should not be treated as a magic tool independent of human decisions, ongoing teacher education, PI, and empirical research (Osorio-Saez 2022). While technology offers various benefits, the primary focus should be on building relationships and showing genuine care for each individual and their learning.

9.4 Limitations

As do all studies, this has its limitations. First, it was undertaken by a single researcher, which inherently limited the breadth of perspectives and introduced potential biases in

data interpretation. Whilst not possible within the scope of a PhD thesis, the inclusion of additional researchers could have provided a more comprehensive examination of the enactments and perceptions of PI, leading to richer insights and a more nuanced understanding. Collaborative research efforts often bring diverse viewpoints and expertise, which can enhance the depth and reliability of the findings.

Another limitation is the relatively small sample size for interviews compared to questionnaires. Interviews are inherently time-consuming and participants' availability is often limited. The small sample size tends to restrict the generalisability of qualitative findings. Future studies could benefit from a larger and more diverse sample to enhance the robustness of the results. Additionally, employing longitudinal studies could provide a more comprehensive understanding of PI over time.

Furthermore, data were collected using an online survey and online interviews, so only participants with technological devices and internet access could offer replies and participate in this study, which led to the exclusion of those without such access. However, participants could choose to be involved in this study even with limited technological skills and devices, because they could respond using their mobile phones, as most had access to these. It is acknowledged that those without access to devices and the internet were effectively excluded from the study; nonetheless, those numbers are likely to be very small overall.

9.5 Suggestions for further research

More research into PI in schooling is needed to gain insights that can support the establishment of successful home–school relationships, ultimately improving children's progress. This will pave the way for more in-depth PE in the future. The following areas for future work are proposed:

- *Teacher and school leader training:* Investigate approaches to equip teachers and school leaders with the skills and understanding necessary to foster collaboration between educators and parents from early years to 12th grade. This could involve professional development programmes and policy initiatives aimed at enhancing

home–school partnerships. Understanding the specific needs and challenges faced by educators in different contexts could help tailor these programmes effectively.

- *Attitudes towards PI:* Examine the attitudes of parents and educators regarding PI at different educational levels, such as early years and secondary school. Understanding these attitudes could help tailor strategies to increase PE. Research could explore how these attitudes vary across different cultural and socio-economic contexts, providing insights into how to address barriers to PI.
- *Barriers to PI:* Explore the reasons for low rates of PI in specific activities or subjects. Identifying these barriers could inform targeted interventions to promote family–school partnerships and improve student outcomes. This research could include examining structural, cultural, and personal factors that influence PI, offering a comprehensive view of the challenges and potential solutions.
- *Children's perspectives:* Conduct research into children's views of their parents' involvement in their education. This perspective is often overlooked but could provide valuable insights into how PI affects children's learning experiences and outcomes. Understanding children's perceptions may help develop strategies that align with their needs and preferences, fostering a more supportive learning environment.
- *Comparative studies:* Encourage researchers from different countries to conduct comparative studies on PI. Such research could highlight cultural differences and commonalities, offering a broader understanding of effective PI practices globally. Comparative studies might also identify best practices and innovative approaches that could be adapted to different educational contexts.

By addressing these areas, future research can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of PI and its impact on children's education, ultimately supporting the development of effective strategies to enhance home–school relationships. This expanded discussion not only acknowledges the limitations of this study but also provides a clear roadmap for future research, demonstrating a commitment to continuous improvement and collaboration.

The next section will present recommendations based on the findings of this study aimed at helping promote PI in schooling more specifically in the Omani context.

9.6 Recommendations for enhancing parental involvement (PI) for children aged 10–15 in Omani Cycle Two (C2) schools

This section will present a list of recommendations that might help enhance the level of PI in Omani C2 schools, and thus positively affect children's learning experiences and outcomes. To implement these recommendations effectively, it is envisaged that they need to be considered and implemented holistically to precipitate positive change in children's learning in Oman.

Based on the findings, Figure 7 presents a new model for PI in the Omani context. This proposed model encourages a holistic consideration of the study's recommendations. Appendix K1 summarises the rationale for the development of the proposed model, along with a non-exhaustive illustration of supporting evidence from the literature and findings from this thesis. The recommendations from this study are as follows:

1. To enhance communication, it is crucial to communicate clearly with all stakeholders (parents, teachers, HTs, and policymakers), pointing out that what parents do with their children can significantly affect their learning and future academic trajectories. However, what parents can do may not always be what they enjoy doing with their children. This study highlights the importance of continuous communication between parents and teachers, which was found to be lacking in the practice of PI according to the participants. The participants emphasised the need for ongoing dialogue to support children's learning and address issues promptly (see 8.1.3). They noted that regular communication helps prevent problems from escalating and ensures that parents are aware of their children's strengths and weaknesses, which can aid in overcoming challenges. To establish a shared understanding among stakeholders of the value of developing parents' awareness of the potential benefits of regular and high-quality PI, it is essential to actively support this through various means. This study indicated a limited understanding of the potential value of PI, reluctance to engage in PI, and the impact of previous negative experiences of undertaking or supporting PI. To address these, it is recommended that PI be promoted by providing training

sessions, workshops, and lectures about the role of PI (emphasising the value of quality adult–child interactions) in schooling for educators, parents, and others.

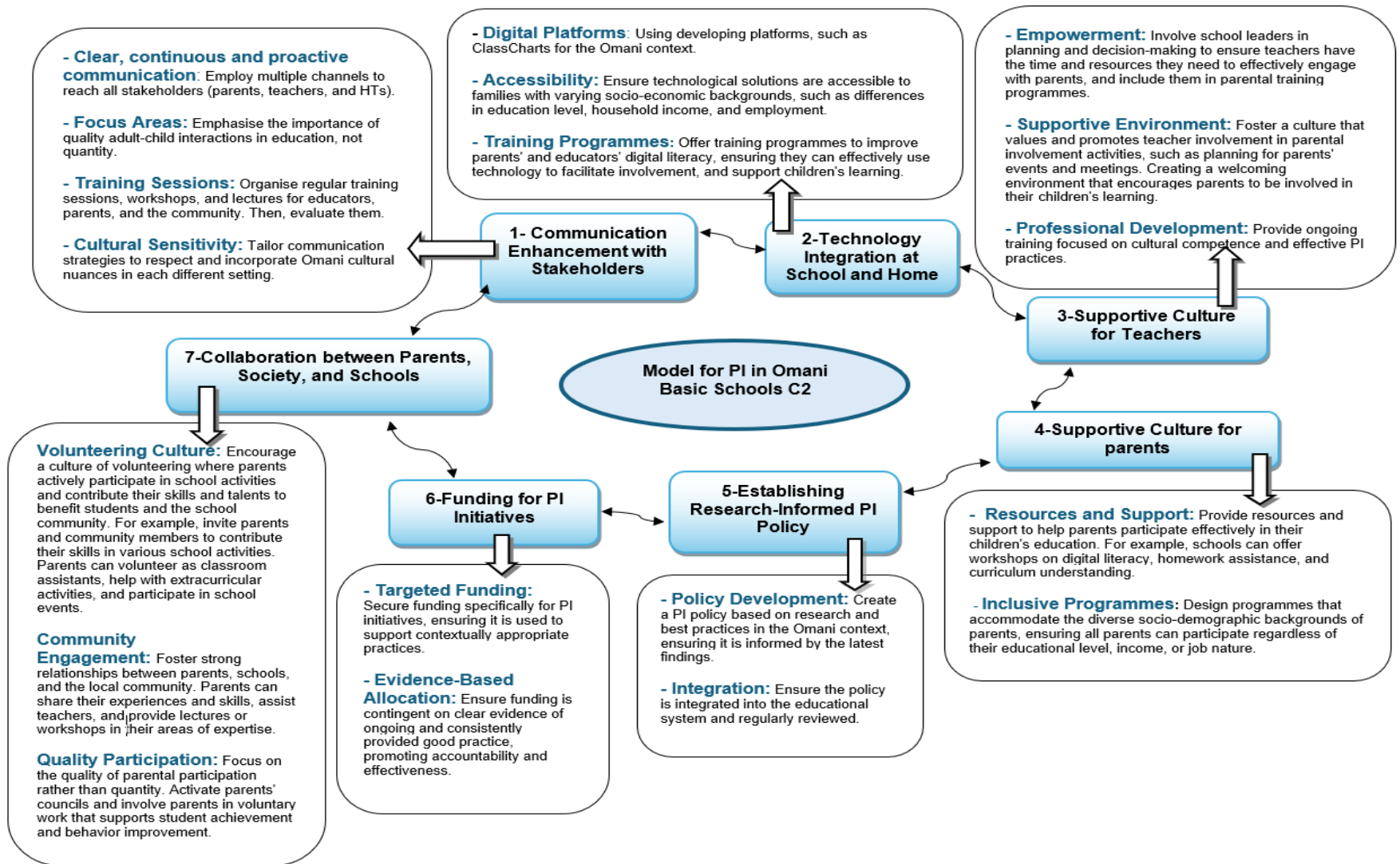


Figure 7: Proposed PI model for the Omani context.

2. Educators and parents should harness the support of technology to promote high-quality PI practice and enhance children's learning. As evidenced by the responses in this study, there is significant potential for IT to play a role in supporting high-quality PI. However, there is also a need to mitigate some of the barriers faced by parents and educators, such as those resulting from digital poverty. This is particularly the case in some rural areas, where there are limited skills and knowledge in applying technology in the teaching and learning process, as well as limited understanding of the value of PI support for both parents and educators. Consideration clearly needs to be given to how to maximise the affordances of technology for PI and minimise the potential constraints. As recommended by the participants in their responses to the open-ended questions in the survey (see 7.1), addressing barriers to PI, for instance by improving internet coverage, reducing the cost of internet usage, conducting blended learning, and investing in the obtained skills during the pandemic, could lead to positive effects.
3. It is necessary to develop a supportive culture and conditions for teachers' engagement with PI. According to the findings and participants' responses, teachers face challenges such as time constraints, and heavy curricula and workloads. To address these issues, it is essential to involve school leaders in planning and deciding how teachers can be empowered and enabled to have the time and expertise to work directly with parents. This will ensure that teachers feel confident in helping parents support their children's learning at home. Providing schools with additional assistance for teachers could help mitigate the workload barrier, allowing teachers more time to plan for PI and work with parents. This suggestion emerged from the participants' responses to the open-ended survey questions. However, implementing this in the current setting of Omani schools may not be feasible due to the shortage of teachers and high student density. This challenge remains an area for future study. It is also important for school leaders and teachers to have honest conversations with parents about the limitations of teacher time and how constraints can be understood and respected. This may involve mutually deciding on school meeting times with parents, specifying areas where schools would like parents to contribute beyond home support, and understanding how virtual interactions will be monitored, managed, and

responded to (see 8.2.2). Effectively managing and supporting PI is a worthwhile endeavour but inevitably involves an additional workload for teachers. Teachers with limited experience in supporting PI will need significant and ongoing support, as well as professional development. Additionally, the digital capacity and constraints of individual teachers and their contexts must be considered, with appropriate support and resources allocated.

4. To develop the culture and conditions to support parents' engagement with PI, a significant and ongoing commitment will be needed by schools to ensure that all parents, regardless of different socio-demographic factors (educational level, material constraints, different job types, etc.), are engaged and supported by any programme to establish strong levels of PI. A one-off workshop is unlikely to create any meaningful change in the day-to-day experiences of parents and their children. What will make a difference over time is regularly sharing what teachers want children to learn and how they support this in the classroom, so parents can easily understand and help at home. Gorski's (2013) equity-centred practices stress the importance of schools adapting to the diverse needs of families. His approach encourages schools to move beyond seeing parents as uninterested and instead focus on creating fair partnerships that address barriers and biases. By following Gorski's principles, schools can create a supportive environment that considers the diverse backgrounds and needs of all parents, leading to better PI. However, in the Omani context, involving all parents can be challenging, especially those with many commitments at home or work, or those who are less educated. Therefore, it might be beneficial to consider different groups of parents and hold regular sessions to discuss their needs in terms of supporting their children's learning at home (see 8.1.1). This might help to increase openness and transparency about learning in school through positive communication between schools and homes. This could be achieved through using different forms of communication, for instance, using technology, and conducting focus groups to collect vital information from families about their needs, wishes and their ideas about how they would like to participate to improve PI. The aim is to soften boundaries between school and home and thus develop higher levels of communication and understanding.

5. To establish a clearly articulated research and enquiry-informed PI policy in the educational system, it is necessary to provide high-quality professional learning for all educators. This will support the enactment of effective partnerships with parents. This informed policy and the provision of educators' high-quality professional learning should be realistic about what is achievable within the available time. Furthermore, such policy could outline specific ways in which parents can be involved, how schools can effectively work in partnership with parents, and the roles and responsibilities of the parents, teachers, and all stakeholders in education in the curriculum of colleges of education and teacher training institutions. Forming partnerships with parents will transform them from the position of recipients of knowledge, information, and direction to an according them equal status. Parents, teachers, and schools can receive and share knowledge and information and make decisions in the interest of the children, making them equal partners in education. Additionally, high-quality, research-informed, and enquiry-based professional learning opportunities (CPD) should be made available to school-based staff. It is important that staff in schools are aware of the significance of PI, understand this involvement as part of their professional role, and feel confident in the strategies they can use to develop this involvement. This should begin at the initial teacher education (ITE) level and continue to develop as teachers and school staff progress in their careers. Similarly, it is crucial to ensure that current school staff can access high-quality professional learning opportunities focused on sharing the rationale for and research about PI, supporting staff in trying out new ideas and innovative ways of working that promote PI, refining these approaches, and developing strategies that work for their specific context and learners. A strong commitment to this from school leaders is vital if schools are to develop their practice. The qualitative findings highlighted the need for such a policy and professional learning (see 8.1.5). The direct application of practices from other countries aimed at improving the level of PI might not be beneficial for the Omani context, as there needs to be cultural contextualisation. This can be linked to the different social and cultural settings in the various Omani governorates, along with the diverse educational understandings and perceptions held by Omani parents and educators. Participants

noted the lack of clear roles and responsibilities in the educational process, leading to overlapping duties, especially during the pandemic. These findings underscore the importance of a structured approach to PI and the provision of professional development for educators.

6. To increase funding specifically to support the enactment of PI in a contextually appropriate way for schools, it is essential to ensure that any funding stream is contingent on clear evidence of ongoing and consistent good practice. Whilst it may be relatively straightforward to get schools to undertake training in PI and to include this in their policy documents, the real challenge, as with any policy, will be ensuring that enactment of the policy moves beyond superficial compliance. In the Omani context, parents' and schools' needs can vary due to their different settings and experiences. For instance, schools located in rural areas might need different levels of support in terms of PI compared to schools in more urban areas. Therefore, any enactment of a national and funded PI policy should encourage schools to take account of different needs (social, cultural, economic) among different communities in diverse geographical locations. This can be done by identifying different concerns regarding PI in schools in certain areas, and then providing each school with the flexibility and funding needed to help families with identified needs. For school leaders to potentially enable swift transformation and address the barriers to low or absent PI, this study recommends that they focus on fostering a culture of involvement. Parents should not be seen merely as individuals to be invited to schools only when problems arise, or decisions are made. Instead, they could be actively engaged as partners in the educational process. Parents must be seen as having a high level of responsibility in their central and enduring role in the education of their children.
7. To promote active and meaningful collaboration between parents, society, and schools across various settings, it could be beneficial to encourage a culture of volunteering, giving parents an opportunity to contribute their skills and talents. This approach might help build strong relationships between parents and school members and allow parents to share their expertise to benefit students and educators. By focusing on quality participation, activating parents' councils, and involving parents in voluntary

work, student achievement, and behaviour improvement can be supported. Additionally, leveraging parents' unique skills can enrich the educational experience and provide additional learning opportunities. Furthermore, schools should embrace families' cultural resources to facilitate effective PI practices. This approach aligns with the works of Harris and Goodall (2007) and Goodall and Montgomery (2014), which emphasise the importance of active and meaningful PE in children's learning across various settings, including schools and the community. They highlight that such engagement can lead to significant improvements in student outcomes and foster a supportive educational environment. In the Omani context, achieving PE with learning can be considered a crucial next step.

9.7 Summary

This study proposes a set of holistic recommendations to enhance PI for children aged 10–15 in Omani C2 schools, supported by a new model tailored to the Omani context. This model emphasises the importance of coordinated efforts among parents, teachers, HTs, and policymakers. Central to this approach is clear and continuous communication, which can help parents understand their role in supporting their children's academic development. The study also highlights the need to raise awareness of the value of PI through training sessions and workshops, particularly as many parents may lack confidence or have had negative past experiences with school involvement.

Additional recommendations focus on leveraging technology to support PI and addressing barriers such as digital poverty. Creating a supportive culture for both teachers and parents is essential, especially given the challenges teachers face, such as time constraints and heavy workloads. Schools must commit to inclusive practices that engage all parents, regardless of socio-demographic differences. Furthermore, the development of a research-informed PI policy, backed by high-quality professional learning for educators, is crucial. This policy should be realistic and achievable within existing time and resource constraints. Finally, increasing targeted funding and encouraging a culture of volunteering can foster stronger collaboration between schools, families, and the wider community.

In conclusion, enhancing PI in Omani C2 schools requires a multifaceted and sustained effort that aligns with the cultural and educational context of Oman. The proposed model and recommendations aim to foster stronger partnerships between families, schools, and communities, ultimately supporting students' academic and personal development. Through strategic investment in communication, professional development, inclusive practices, and policy reform, the Omani education system can create a more supportive and engaging environment for all learners.

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List of Appendices

Appendix A1: GES and BCE-PBCE

Appendix B1: Interview Participants

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Appendix D1: Ethical Approval Application Form/ Cardiff University

Appendix D2: Study Approval Letter/ Cardiff University

Appendix E1: Application form from the Ministry of Education in Oman

Appendix E2: Approval Letter from the Ministry of Education in Oman

Appendix F1: Survey Questions for Teachers, Headteachers, and Parents in English

Appendix F2: Translated Survey in Arabic

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Appendix H1: Krejcie Morgan's Sample Size Table

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Appendix J6: Teachers' online interaction with parents before and during the pandemic differentiating by teachers' highest completed qualification (% of N=655)

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Appendix J8: Lack of access to technology at school and home that limited teachers' ability to support children's learning before and during the pandemic

Appendix J9: Lack of teachers' knowledge on using technology in teaching and learning that limited their ability to support children's learning' before and during the pandemic differentiating by school location

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Appendix K1: Proposed parental involvement (PI) model for the Omani context

Appendix A1:**GES and BCE-PBCE**

General Education	Basic Education
Three levels; elementary (1 to 6), preparatory (1st to 3rd Prep) and Secondary (1st to 3rd Secondary)	Three levels; Cycle 1 (1 to 4), Cycle 2 (5 to 10) and Post Basic Education (11 to 12)
Curricula influenced by other countries	Curricula oriented to the Omani context
Learners mostly taught by expat teachers (especially the early stages)	Learners taught by local teachers
English taught from grade 4 onwards	English taught from grade 1 onwards
Study day from 7 to 12.15 in elementary and 7 to 2 in both Prep and Secondary	Study day from 7 to 2 across all Cycles
Six lessons a day for both Elementary and Prep levels and seven for Secondary	Eight lessons across all Cycles
Heavy emphasis on summative assessment	Equal emphasis on formative and summative assessment

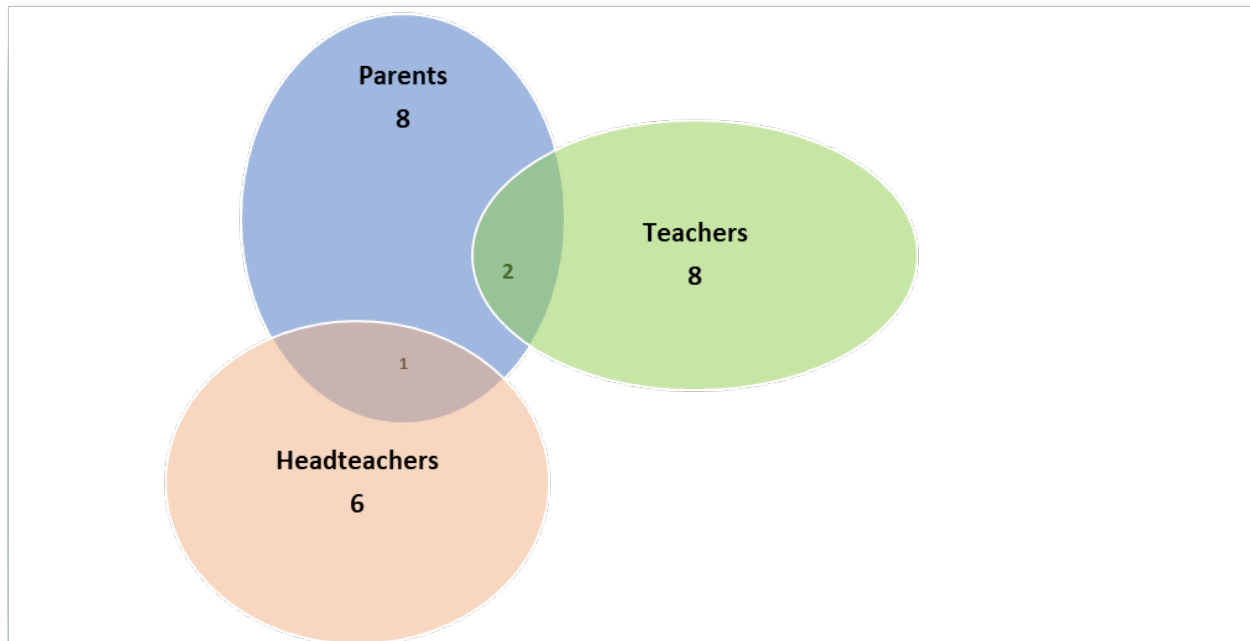
Summative assessment at the end of the academic year)	Learners assessed at the end of each term
Only English taught as a second language	French and German also introduced as foreign languages
Based on Audio-lingual approach	Task-based and communicative approaches used
No career guidance	Learners are guided for future study
Fewer opportunities for CPD	More opportunities for CPD
Segregated system across all levels	Mixed education in Cycle One

Adapted from (Al Ghatrifi 2016)

Appendix B1:

Interview Participants

Specification of the participants numbers of 25 semi-structured interview, 11 parents in total (2 parents who are teachers + 1 parent who is a headteacher), 8 Teachers, and 6 headteachers.



Appendix C1:

Statistics Book, Ministry of Education 2022

المدارس والشعب الدراسية والطلبة والمعلمون والإداريون والفنيون حسب الجنس والجنسية في التعليم الحكومي للعام الدراسي ٢٠٢٢/٢٠٢١
Schools, School Classes, Students, Teachers, Administrators and Technicians in Government Schools by Gender and Nationality in the school year 2021/2022

الإداريون والفنيون Administrators and Technicians						المعلمون Teachers						الطلبة Students						الشعب الدراسية School Classes			المدارس Schools			نوع التعليم Education Type											
الإجمالي Total			غير عماني Non Omani			عماني Omani			الإجمالي Total			غير عماني Non Omani			عماني Omani																				
الإجمالي Total	ذكور Male	إناث Female	الإجمالي Total	ذكور Male	إناث Female	الإجمالي Total	ذكور Male	إناث Female	الإجمالي Total	ذكور Male	إناث Female	الإجمالي Total	ذكور Male	إناث Female	الإجمالي Total	ذكور Male	إناث Female	الإجمالي Total	ذكور Male	إناث Female	الإجمالي Total	ذكور Male	إناث Female	الإجمالي Total											
3078	2079	0	0			2078	2078		16118	16118	0	1488	1488		14638	14638		113808	107783	108075	7372	3783	3689	26406	182038	194406	7654	7654		328	328	مدارس الحلقة الأولى First Cycle Schools			
3662	1252	1809	3	3		3658	1249	1809	14161	6169	7992	1981	372	1529	11260	3797	6463	201117	87522	117595	9433	6075	4948	191094	83047	112647	6253	2057	3196	387	113	174	مدارس الحلقة الثانية Second Cycle Schools		
4332	2568	1767	17	5	12	4288	2563	1735	21257	14780	6477	4184	1895	2299	17863	12885	4178	210457	121940	88317	6139	2482	1657	296318	119418	86860	3674	3023	3465	2186	89	285	66	138	المدارس المستمرة Continuing Schools
1177	498	679	0			1177	498	679	6948	2226	2723	926	173	752	4024	2653	1871	49688	30082	39608	3231	1395	1836	66498	28687	37772	2156	945	1211	93	41	52	مدارس الصفوف (10-12) Schools with Grades		
171	73	98	0			171	73	98	428	321	307	89	34	55	339	287	252	8064	4026	3978	609	249	118	7395	3727	3868	219	129	139	14	6	8	مدارس الصفين (11-12) School Grades		

أولاً: الإجماليات
First: General Information

أولاً: إحصائيات عامة
First: General information

Appendix D1:

Ethical Approval Application Form/ Cardiff University

<p>School of Social Sciences</p> <p>Ysgol Gwyddorau Cymdeithasol</p> <p>Head of School, Pennaeth yr Ysgol</p> <p>Dr Tom Hall</p>		
SREC Ref No:		
<p>STUDENT PROJECTS - MASTERS PROGRAMMES/ MPhil/PhD & PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE RESEARCH PROJECTS</p> <p>Ethical Approval Application Form</p> <p>Must be submitted by the due deadline to: socsi-ethics@cardiff.ac.uk</p>		
<p>Note: This form uses check boxes, select the appropriate box, double click and select 'checked' a cross will appear in the box which indicates your response.</p>		
SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION [all boxes can be expanded]		
Please tick relevant project type:	Masters <input type="checkbox"/>	MPhil/PHD Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
	Professional Doctorate <input type="checkbox"/>	
Student Name:	Student Number: Maymouna Mohammed Alkalbaniya 1831868	
Email Address:	Al-kalbaniyaMM@cardiff.ac.uk	
Supervisors:	1 Alexandra Morgan	2 Mark Connolly
Supervisors' Signatures:	1 Alexandra Morgan	2 Mark Connolly
Degree Programme:	PhD	
Title of Project:	Exploring the perceptions of teachers, parents and headteachers concerning parental involvement in children's learning in (Basic Education Cycle Two) schools in Oman, during and pre Covid-19	
Project Start Date:	December 2020	Dissertation/Thesis Submission Date:

	(Studentship start date September 2019)	
Student's Signature:	Maymouna	Date: 12/11/2020
<p align="center">Before completing, please now read the Application Guidance Notes at the end of this form</p>		
<p>SECTION B: DISSERTATION SUMMARY</p>		
1.	<p>Below, please provide a concise general description of your dissertation project</p> <p>This study aims to explore parents' and school educators' perceptions regarding parental involvement in primary schools for children aged 10-15 years in the Omani context. The focus of this research will be to elucidate (i) how parents/ carers, teachers, and headteachers perceive current practice in terms of parental involvement in the schooling of primary aged children in Oman (ii) to understand how parents and teachers perceive that practice in terms of parental involvement in the schooling of primary aged children in Oman and how they feel this might be improved to better support students in terms of academic achievement.</p>	
2.	<p>What are the research questions?</p> <p>1. How do school learning communities (parents/teachers/headteachers) understand current practice in terms of parental involvement in the schooling of primary aged children in Oman?</p> <p>2. To understand how parents and teachers perceive that practice in terms of parental involvement in the schooling of primary aged children in Oman might be improved to better support students in terms of academic achievement?</p>	
3.	<p>Who are the participants?</p> <p>The participants will be teachers, headteachers and parents from selected primary schools in Oman. Schools will be selected on the basis of key characteristics (e.g. level of government subsistence provided to families with children who attend due to low family income), geographical location and a willingness of the school leadership to engage with the study.</p> <p>Key stakeholders both within the selected schools in Oman, including school leaders, teachers, and those in schools in Oman. It will be made clear that participation is entirely voluntary and that participation or non-participation in the study will confer no personal advantage or disadvantage to the individual concerned. I will make sure that</p>	

	potential participants do not feel pressurised into participating just because the school has consented to allowing me to undertake the study in their setting.
4.	<p>How will the participants be recruited?</p> <p>Schools will be invited to express an interest in participating through sending them an invitation after getting a declaration from the Ministry of Education in Oman. After getting the responses from the schools that will participate, each school headteacher will forward an invitation to participate to parents and teachers. Then, all the participants who opt to participate in this study will be provided with further detailed information regarding the study and guided through consent procedures. All participation will be voluntary and opt in for parents, teachers and headteachers.</p> <p>(1) Semi-structured interviews with primary school teachers, headteachers and parents/carers (who elect to participate)</p> <p>Will be conducted with a purposive sample of the teachers, parents and headteachers.</p> <p>Potential participants in the interviews will receive participant information sheets and the opportunity to ask questions about all aspects of the research process. They will be asked to provide signed or recorded verbal consent prior to the interview. The interview schedules will contain both common questions and some specific to each stakeholder group.</p> <p>Participants will be invited to participate in the study by the researcher in a way that makes clear that they are freely able to choose not to participate and are able to fully or partially opt- out at any stage. The interviews will be recorded using Zoom directly to the computer and then promptly transferred to secure storage and immediately deleted from the computer (including the trash) no recordings will be stored on Teams or Zoom.</p> <p>Detailed measures as outlined by the University for arranging interviews online will be followed such as password protecting the meeting, controlling who can share the screen, switching off functionality that is not needed in the meeting.</p> <p>(2) Parental and teachers survey</p> <p>A survey instrument will provide a further means by which the main</p>

	<p>findings in the selected schools can be measured against parallel provision across Oman. The survey will be relatively short, completed online using standard survey software such as Qualtrics. Potential participants in the survey will receive participant information sheets and the opportunity to ask questions about all aspects of the research process and be asked to provide signed consent prior to commencing the survey. I plan to achieve a cross-section of teachers by a combination of targeted requests and the circulation of the link to the survey via the national electronic newsletter and email. The survey will be anonymous and will not collect emails or personal information from participants and all the respondents will be through my university email address.</p>		
5.	<p>What sort of data will be collected and what methods will you use to do this?</p> <p>Qualitative and quantitative data will be collected through semi-structured interviews (for teachers, headteachers and parents) and parental and teachers surveys. Due to social distancing protocols initiated after the COVID 19 pandemic, these procedures will be conducted remotely. The project will therefore adopt a mixed-method design and will combine two main methods of data-gathering.</p>		
6.	<p>How and where (venue) are you undertaking your research? What is the reason(s) for using this particular location?</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews, surveys will be conducted remotely. It is anticipated that conducting these methods remotely may allow flexibility for teachers and parents to engage at a time that is convenient to them. It also aims to mitigate for uncertainty regarding social distancing in the current Covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, this may help the participants to feel more comfortable and confident instead of face-to-face.</p>		
7.	<p>(1) Will you be analysing secondary data?</p> <p>If YES, does approval already exist for its use in further projects such as yours?</p>	Yes	No
	<p>(2) Will you be using administrative data?</p>	Yes	No

	If YES, how will you be using these data (e.g. sifting for suitable research participants or analysing the data)?		
SECTION C: RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES			
8.	(3) Does your project involve children or young people under the age of 18? If No , go to 10	Yes	No
	(4) If so, have you consulted the University's guidance on child protection procedures, and do you know how to respond if you have concerns?	Yes	No
9.	(1) Does your project involve one-to-one or other <i>unsupervised</i> research with children and young people under the age of 18? If No go to 9(b) If Yes , go to 9(c)	Yes	No
	(2) If your project involves only <i>supervised</i> contact with children and young people under the age of 18, have you consulted the head of the institution where you are undertaking your research to establish if you need a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check? If Yes , and you do need a DBS check, then go to 9(c); if you do not need a DBS check, then go to Question 10.	Yes	No
	(3) Do you have an up-to-date Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check? If your application is pending , please state the submission date: __ / __ / __ The SREC Office will require you to notify them when it is approved.	Yes	No
10.	Does your project include people with learning or communication difficulties?	Yes	No
11.	Does your project include people in custody?	Yes	No
12.	Is your project likely to include people involved in illegal activities?	Yes	No
13.	Does your project involve people belonging to a vulnerable group, other than those listed above?	Yes	No
14.	Does your project include people who are, or are likely to become your clients or clients of the department in which you work?	Yes	No
SECTION D: CONSENT PROCEDURES			
Please ensure you are familiar with the updated General Protection Data Regulation (GDPR) guidance when considering consent for your participants.			
15.	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	Yes	No
16.	What procedures will you use to obtain, record and maintain informed consent from participants? According to the guidance from (BERA, 2018) participants will be provided with information about the study (what the purpose of the research is, what their		

	<p>involvement will be, and how the results of the research will be used). Moreover, the researcher will make sure that all invited participants are freely able to choose not to participate and are able to fully or partially opt- out at any stage.</p> <p>Potential participants in the interviews will receive participant information sheets and the opportunity to ask questions about all aspects of the research process. They will be asked to provide signed or recorded verbal consent prior to the interview. The interview schedules will contain both common questions and some specific to each stakeholder group. Participants will be invited to participate in the study by the researcher in a way that makes clear that they are freely able to choose not to participate and are able to fully or partially opt- out at any stage. The interviews will be recorded using Zoom directly to the computer and then promptly transferred to secure storage and immediately deleted from the computer (including the trash) no recordings will be stored on Teams or Zoom. Detailed measures as outlined by the University for arranging interviews online will be followed such as password protecting the meeting, controlling who can share the screen, switching off functionality that is not needed in the meeting.</p> <p>Participants will be made aware of their right to anonymity and to opt out at any stage of the project up to publication. I will ensure that all participants are clear that participation / non-participation will confer no advantage or disadvantage, making clear what will happen with their personal data, how long audio or video recordings and transcripts from these will be stored and used and that they have my contact details.</p> <p>All consent forms will be digitised and stored on a coded computer and will be uploaded to the university one drive, and the physical copies will be destroyed. These will be retained for the duration of the project.</p>			
17.	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	N/A	Yes	No
18.	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	N/A	Yes	No
19.	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reasons?	N/A	Yes	No
20.	Will you give potential participants appropriate time to consider participation?	N/A	Yes	No
21.	<p>Does your project provide for people for whom English / Welsh is not their first language?</p> <p>* The project will be conducted with people whom Arabic is the first language and English is their second language.</p>	N/A	Yes *	No

	Therefore, both English and Arabic will be used when communicating with participants during the study.			
SECTION E: POTENTIAL HARMS ARISING FROM THE PROJECT				
22.	Is there any realistic risk of any participants experiencing either physical or psychological distress or discomfort?	Yes	No	
23.	Is there any realistic risk of any participants experiencing a detriment to their interests as a result of participation?	Yes	No	
24.	Below, please identify any potential for harm (to yourself or participants) that might arise from the way the research is conducted <u>PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE BOX BLANK</u>			
<p>There is the possibility that an interviewee may feel that they have compromised their standing as a parent or teacher by revealing issues that have arisen in their personal or professional life. Participants will be made fully aware of their right to confidentiality and anonymity. Divulging negative views or experiences might cause feelings of disloyalty. Some participants may feel insecurities in presenting negative experiences because they perceive themselves to be at the bottom of the hierarchy or there to be power dynamics at play. These issues may be further impacted upon by issues surrounding the COVID 19 pandemic and altered ways of working e.g. parents taking more responsibility to work with children at home). Participants will be reminded at the beginning and the end of the interviews of their right to request they partially or entirely withdraw from the study should they wish to do so.</p> <p>In terms of the researcher, there is no potential harm as all interviews will be conducted online.</p>				
25.	Below, please set out the measures you will put in place to control possible harms to yourself or participants <u>PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE BOX BLANK</u>			
<p>At the beginning, participants will be reassured by the researcher that their participation is voluntary and the data with their personal information will remain anonymous, besides their right to withdraw at any time they like without any reasons, and this is according to BERA (2018) guidelines.</p> <p>This reassurance will be included in the information sheet given throughout the project prior to participation and will also be repeated prior to any data collection. We will explain that interviews will be recorded and stored securely and that names and identifying factors will be altered.</p>				

I will demonstrate sensitivity to participants who become distressed or feel uncomfortable during the study and in accordance with BERA (2018) reassure participants of their right to withdraw at any point throughout the research project.

Participants will be further reassured of their anonymity and the confidentiality. We will make clear that on presentation of this data to the Omani Government or in further presentations or publications that any data that might identify a participant or school will not be used and that pseudonyms will be used for all participants and schools.

Moreover, according to the participants' children harm possibility, if I become concerned that a child might be at risk of harm during any stage of this study; then the welfare of the child will take priority over the research. However, if I notice anything concerning, I will share my concerns by following these procedures:

- 1- I will follow the organisational child protection procedures of the school that I will be working with, which must have safeguarding policies and procedures in place in accordance with Omani Law. This is by taking in consideration all the executive regulation of the Child Law that is issued by the Royal Decree No. 22/2014. In regards to the Child Law that particularly guarantee the child rights, which are:
 - a) The right to life, survival and development.
 - b) The right to non-discrimination on grounds of colour, sex, origin, language, religion, social status or any other considerations.
 - c) The right to have his or her best interests given priority in all child-related decisions and procedures adopted by organs of the Administrative Apparatus of the State, judicial bodies or other childcare entities.
 - d) The right to participation, to a voice and to expression in accordance with the rights of others, public order and morals, and national security; as well as the right to have the full opportunity to formulate views.

Furthermore, the Child Law includes all these rights: (Civil Rights- Health Rights- Social Rights- Educational Rights- Cultural Rights- Economic Rights- Rights of the Child with Disabilities- Criminal Accountability), which will be considered by the researcher during the study (Ministry of Social Development in Oman) (MOSD.gov.om).

- 2- I will if appropriate contact my local child protection services, the committees for child protection against violence, exploitation and abuse that called (Child Protection Committees_ that is located in Ministry of Social Development) by calling the local number (Child protection line), or having a direct contact with one of the consultants from Muscat region. Additionally, I can submit an application through the website (MOSD.gov.om) or by sending an email to (familyprotection@mosd.gov.om). This

committee is aiming to apply the most essential objectives of the Child Law, which are to protect child from violence, exploitation, and abuse, and to be treated with dignity, reputation and honour, and the state guarantees for him/ her the enjoyment of this right by all available means (Child Law Chapter Two, Civil Rights Article 7/ MOSD.gov.om).

SECTION F: SECURITY-SENSITIVE RESEARCH & PREVENT DUTY

Cardiff University has established a Security-sensitive research framework which aims to balance the commitment to academic freedom and scope against the need to safeguard researches from risk of radicalisation and/or risk that their research activity might result in a misinterpretation of intent by external authorities.

26.	<p>Has due regard been given to the 'Prevent duty', in particular to prevent anyone being drawn into terrorism?</p> <p>For further guidance, see:</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/445916/Prevent_Duty_Guidance_For_Higher_Education_England_Wales_.pdf</p> <p>and</p> <p>http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/public-information/policies-and-procedures/freedom-of-speech</p>	Yes	No
27.	<p>Does your research fall within the Security-Sensitive policy? This includes the following: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research concerning terrorist or extremist groups (in particular, those designated by the Home Office as a 'Proscribed Terrorist Organisation'); and Research involving access to materials that may be considered extremist and/or materials that promote terrorism, extremism or radicalisation. <p>For further guidance, see:</p> <p>https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/intranet/staff/documents/research-support/integrity-and-governance/Final-V1_Security-Sensitive-Research-Policy.docx</p> <p>If 'Yes' go to Question 28. If 'No' go to Question 29.</p>	Yes	No
28	<p>Have you followed the registration procedure detailed within the policy?</p> <p>Please note this must be done before ethical approval can be given.</p>	Yes	No

SECTION G: RESEARCH SAFETY

Before completing this section, you should consult the document 'Guidance for Applicants' – and the information under 'Managing the risks associated with SOCSI research'.

29.	Are there any realistic safety risks associated with your fieldwork?	Yes	No
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30.	Have you taken into account the Cardiff University guidance on safety in fieldwork / for lone workers?	Yes	No
SECTION H: DATA COLLECTION			
The SREC appreciates that these questions will not in general relate to research undertaken in SOCSI. However, for further University guidance and information please see the links below.			
31.	Does the study involve the collection or use of human tissue (including, but not limited to, blood, saliva and bodily waste fluids)?	Yes	No
	<p>If Yes, a copy of the submitted application form and any supporting documentation must be emailed to the Human Tissue Act Compliance Team (https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/staff/research-support/integrity-and-governance/human-tissue-research). A decision will only be made once these documents have been received.</p> <p>For guidance on the Human Tissue Act: http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/govrn/cocom/humantissueact/index.html</p>		
32.	Does the study include the use of a drug?	Yes	No
	<p>If Yes, you will need to contact Research Governance before submission (resgov@cardiff.ac.uk)</p>		
SECTION I: DATA PROTECTION			
33.	(1) Are you collecting sensitive data? [Defined as: the racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious beliefs (or similar), trade union membership, physical or mental health, sexual life, the commission or alleged commission any offence, or any proceedings for any offence committed or alleged to have been committed the disposal of such proceedings or the sentence of any court in such proceedings.]	Yes	No
	<p>If Yes, how will you employ a more rigorous consent procedure?</p>		
	(2) Are you collecting identifiable data? [Please note, this includes recordings of interviews/focus groups etc.]	Yes	No
	<p>If Yes, how you will anonymise these data?</p> <p>Data collected will be anonymised with the use of pseudonyms and data that involves identifiable information on the participants, or their context will not be used.</p>		
	(3) Will any non-anonymised and/or personalised data be retained?	Yes	No
	(4) Data (i.e. actual interview recordings, not just transcripts) should be retained for no less than 5 years or at least 2 years post-publication and then destroyed in accordance with GDPR . Have you noted and included this information in your Information Sheet(s)? [The University may request	Yes	No

	access to this data at any point in this year to confirm your marks. It is your responsibility to maintain it securely]			
34.	<p>Below, please detail how you will deal with data security. Please note, personal laptops (even password protected) stored in personal accommodation are not acceptable. Storage on University network or use of encrypted laptops is required.</p>			
<p>All recordings and transcripts that will be used in the study will be stored on an encrypted laptop and copies will be kept on the University network storage. Furthermore, consent forms will be digitised and stored on a coded laptop and copies will be saved on the University network storage.</p>				
<p>If there are any other potential ethical issues that you think the Committee should consider, please explain them on a separate sheet. It is your obligation to bring to the attention of the Committee any ethical issues not covered on this form</p>				
<p>THE NEXT SECTION IS TO BE COMPLETED BY YOUR SUPERVISOR(S)</p>				
<p>SECTION J: SUPERVISOR DECLARATION</p>				
<p>The supervisor(s) must explain in the box below how any potential ethical issue(s) highlighted by the student above and via ticked shaded boxes on this form, will be handled. Please also consider if it is appropriate for the information sheet(s) and consent form(s) to be attached to this form.</p>				
<p><u>PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE THIS BOX BLANK</u></p>				
<p>Maymoona has carefully considered the key ethical issues of her proposed study in light of the BERA 2018 guidance. She is aware of the need to ensure that participants are fully informed and understand that they are under no pressure to participate in the study. She has also considered appropriately the necessary adjustments and considerations required for undertaking a research study during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>				
<p>As the supervisor for this student project, I believe that all research ethical issues have been dealt with in accordance with University policy and the research ethics guidelines of the relevant professional organisation.</p>				
Supervisor(s) Signature:	1. Alexandra Morgan	2. Mark Connolly		
Date: 12/11/20	A.E.Morgan	Mark Connolly		

Application Guidance Notes

Making an application to the School Research Ethics Committee if you are a Postgraduate student

There are five stages in preparing an application to the Research Ethics Committee. These are:

1. Consider the guidance provided in the **SOCSI RESEARCH ETHICS 'module' on the Learning Central**.
2. Discuss any ethical issues you have about the conduct of your research with your supervisor(s).
3. Complete this Student Projects application form.
4. Sign and date the form, and ask your supervisor(s) to complete and sign the Supervisor Declaration.
5. Submit one copy of your application to the secretary of the School Research Ethics Committee – see contact details on Page 1.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING BEFORE COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION:

1. Illegible handwritten applications will not be processed so please type.
2. Some NHS-related projects will need NHS REC approval. The SREC reviews NHS-related projects that do not require NHS REC approval. See guidance provided in the **SOCSI RESEARCH ETHICS 'module' on the Learning Central**.
3. You should not submit an application to the SREC if your research involves adults who do not have capacity to consent. Such projects must be submitted to the NRES system.
4. Research with children and young people under the age of 18.
 - i) *One-to one research or other unsupervised research with this age group requires an up-to-date Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check (formerly called Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Check).*
 - ii) *If your research is in an institution or setting such as a school or youth club and all contact with the children and young people is supervised you will still need to check with the person in charge about whether you need a DBS check; many such organisations do require DBS checks for all those carrying out research on their premises, whether this includes unsupervised contact or not.*
 - iii) *You will need to have an awareness of how to respond if you have concerns about a child/young person in order that the child/young person is safeguarded.*
 - iv) *You will also need:*
 - a) *permission from the relevant institution*
 - b) *consent from the parent or guardian for children under 16*
 - c) *consent from the child/young person, after being provided with age-appropriate information.*

See guidance provided in the **SOCSI RESEARCH ETHICS 'module' on the Learning Central**.

5. Information on data management, collecting personal data: data protection act requirements, can be accessed via: <https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/study/postgraduate-research-support/integrity-and-governance>
6. The collection or use of human tissue (including, but not limited to, blood, saliva and bodily waste fluids): The Committee appreciates that the question relating to this in this application form will not in general relate to research undertaken in SOCSI. However, for further University guidance and information on the Human Tissue Act, please see: <https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/study/postgraduate-research-support/integrity-and-governance>
7. Undergraduate Dissertation Research involving HM Prison Service Employees: students are advised to discuss with their supervisors the SREC guidance note '[Undergraduate Dissertation Research involving HM Prison Service Employees](#)' which can be accessed in the **SOCSI RESEARCH ETHICS 'module' on the Learning Central**.
8. Supervisors are primarily responsible for the contents of information sheets and consent forms. Information Sheets and consent forms are not normally required as part of the SREC approval process, however, the Committee can find them helpful in cases where sensitive issues are involved or where the

participants are children or vulnerable adults. Supervisors should consider whether their inclusion would assist the Committee.

For interesting examples of information sheets and consent forms, please see the **SOCSI RESEARCH ETHICS 'module' on the Learning Central**.

11. If you tick a box in the shaded sections of the proforma you should address this in the Dissertation Summary and/or Supervisor's Declaration.

Appendix D2:

Study Approval Letter/ Cardiff University



School of Social Sciences
Ysgol Gwyddorau Cymdeithasol
Head of School, Pennaeth yr Ysgol
Dr Tom Hall

Cardiff University
Glamorgan Building
King Edward VII Avenue
Cardiff CF10 3WT
Wales UK
Tel +44(0)29 2087 5179
Fax +44(0)29 2087 4175
www.cardiff.ac.uk/social-sciences

24th May 2021

Our ref: SREC/4057

Maymouna Mohammed Al-Kalbaniya
PhD Programme
SOCSI

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Ffôn +44(0)29 2087 5179
Ffacs +44(0)29 2087 4175
www.caerdydd.ac.uk/social-sciences

Dear Maymouna,

Your project entitled *Exploring the perceptions of teachers, parents and headteachers concerning parental involvement in children's learning in (Basic Education Cycle 2) schools in Oman, during and pre Covid-19.* has now been approved by the School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of Cardiff University and you can now commence the project should all necessary forms of approval been received.

If you make any substantial changes with ethical implications to the project as it progresses you need to inform the SREC about the nature of these changes. Such changes could be: 1) changes in the type of participants recruited (e.g. inclusion of a group of potentially vulnerable participants), 2) changes to questionnaires, interview guides etc. (e.g. including new questions on sensitive issues), 3) changes to the way data are handled (e.g. sharing of non-anonymised data with other researchers).

In addition, if anything occurs in your project from which you think the SREC might usefully learn, then please do share this information with us.

All ongoing projects will be monitored and you will be obliged periodically to complete and return a SREC monitoring form.

Please inform the SREC when the project has ended.

Please use the SREC's project reference number above in any future correspondence.

Yours sincerely


Professor Emma Renold
Chair of School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee



Registered Charity, no. 1136855
Elusen Gofrestredig, rhif 1136855

Appendix E1:

Application Form from the Ministry of Education in Oman


سلطنة عُمان
وزارة التربية والتعليم

استمارة طلب تسهيل مهمة بحثية

تاريخ تقديم الطلب: ٢٠٢١/٧/٢٣

مقدم الطلب: ميسون محمد راشد الكلباني

الجامعة/الجهة المشرفة على البحث: Cardiff University

البريد الإلكتروني: mm.a.kalbani@yahoo.co.uk

عنوان الدراسة: Parental involvement in children's education

الغرض من الدراسة:

☐ متطلب للحصول على الماجستير ☒ متطلب للحصول على الدكتوراه ☐ أخرى (تذكر)

المرحلة البحثية: وصلت في دراستي / بحثي إلى مرحلة:

☐ تحديد العنوان أو المشكلة ☒ جمع البيانات أو المعلومات حول موضوع الدراسة ☒ تطبيق أدوات الدراسة

☐ بناء المخطط أو الأدوات البحثية ☐ تطبيق الدراسة الاستطلاعية ☐ استخراج النتائج وتفسيرها

حجم العينة:

فئة عينة الدراسة: ☐ طلاب ☒ معلمون ☒ إداريو المدارس ☐ موظفون ☐ أخرى (تذكر) ...أولياء أمور

نوع الأداة: ☒ استبانة ☒ مقابلة ☐ ملاحظة ☐ أخرى

أود أن أطبق دراستي في نطاق مديرية/محافظة:

☒ مسقط ☒ ظفار ☒ الداخلية ☒ مسندم ☒ البريمي ☒ الباطنة جنوب ☒ الشرقية شمال ☒ الشرقية جنوب ☒ الباطنة شمال ☒ الظاهرة ☒ الوسطى

☐ مديريات ديوان عام الوزارة: (تذكر)

عليه يرجى التكرم بـ: ☒ تسهيل الحصول على بيانات ☒ الموافقة على جمع بيانات لبناء أدوات الدراسة

☒ الموافقة على تطبيق الدراسة الاستطلاعية ☒ الموافقة على تطبيق أدوات الدراسة

يرجى إرفاق: 1- رسالة الجامعة/الجهة المشرفة على البحث 2- مخطط الدراسة 3- أدوات الدراسة المحققة

ترسل جميع هذه الوثائق مع استمارة طلب تسهيل مهمة بحثية إلى البريد الإلكتروني: tosd@moe.om
للاستفسار يرجى التواصل على هاتف المكتب الفني للدراسات والتطوير / 24255303 - 24255134

للاستعمال الرسمي فقط

نتيجة مراجعة أدوات الدراسة:

☐ يمكن تطبيق الأدوات بأكملها وفق الإجراءات المتبعة

☐ يتطلب تعديل بعض الجوانب في أدوات الدراسة (تذكر)

☐ يتطلب أخذ ملاحظات جهات أخرى ذات علاقة (تذكر)

☐ أخرى

النتيجة النهائية: ☐ تسهيل المهمة ☐ رفض تطبيق أدوات الدراسة

Appendix E2:

Approval Letter from the Ministry of Education in Oman



الموضوع / الموافقة على إجراء دراسة بحثية

نهديكم أطيب التحايا، ويسرنا إفادتكم بموافقة وزارة التربية والتعليم على تطبيق أدوات الدراسة
المعنونة بـ (استكشاف تصورات المعلمين وأولياء الأمور ومديري المدارس فيما يتعلق بمشاركة
الوالدين في تعليم الأطفال في مدارس "التعليم الأساسي الحلقة الثانية" في سلطنة عمان، أثناء وقبل
جائحة كورونا)، المقدمة من الفاضلة ميمونة بنت محمد بن راشد الكلبانية، معلمة لغة إنجليزية
بمدرسة أصيلة بنت قيس للتعليم الأساسي (5-8)، بمحافظة مسقط، وتم السماح لها بتطبيق أدوات
الدراسة على عينة من مدرّاء ومعلمي وأولياء أمور طلبة في مدارس الحلقة الثانية بمحافظة مسقط، وقد
أعطيت لها هذه الرسالة بناءً على رغبته، دون تحمل الوزارة أية مسؤولية تجاه ذلك، وفي حال
وجود أي استفسار لديكم، نرجو تواصلكم مع دائرة الدراسات التربوية والتعاون الدولي على هاتف رقم
24255303 أو 24255134 أو على البريد الإلكتروني tosd@moe.om.

وتفضلوا بقبول فائق التقدير والاحترام،،،

كهم / مريم بنت محمد بن سعيد الريامية

مستشارة الوزيرة لشؤون العلاقات التربوية الدولية

مكلفة بتسيير أعمال دائرة الدراسات التربوية والتعاون الدولي



Appendix F1:

Survey Questions for Teachers, Headteachers, and Parents in English

Parents' questionnaire

About the student (who is attending Basic Education School Cycle Two in Oman).

1- What is the age of your youngest school aged son/ daughter? _ _ _

2- Number of children in your family (younger than 18) _ _ _

3- In which Omani governorate is your son/ daughter attending school? (Please choose one answer)

- a) Muscat
- b) Musandam
- c) Al Buraimi
- d) Al Batinah North
- e) Al Batinah South
- f) A'Dhahirah
- g) A'Dakhiliya
- h) ASharqiyah North
- i) ASharqiyah South
- j) Al Wusta
- k) Dhofar

About the respondent (this should be the main carer for this student) select one answer only.

4- You are:

- a) Mother
- b) Father
- c) Uncle
- d) Auntie
- e) Grandmother
- f) Grandfather
- g) Others (please specify) _ _ _ _

5- What is the highest level of your completed certificate?

- a) Did not complete high school
- b) High School

- c) Diploma (please specify) _ _ _ _
- d) Bachelor
- e) Postgraduate (masters)
- f) Postgraduate (PhD)
- g) Others (please specify) _ _ _ _ _

6- What is your current job?

- a) Employed full-time (please specify) _ _ _ _ _
- b) Employed part-time worker
- c) Not employed
- d) Other (please specify) _ _ _ _ _

7- About your total household monthly income.

(Please pick only one answer)

- a) You earn less than 300 Omani Rials per month
- b) You earn between 300 and 500 Omani Rials per month
- c) You earn between 501 and 1000 Omani Rials per month
- d) You earn more than 1000 Omani Rials per month

About parental involvement with learning BEFORE THE COVID-19 pandemic.

(PLEASE FIRST ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS ABOUT BEFORE THE PANDEMIC)

8- Before the pandemic, how often on average did you interact about your son's/ daughter's learning with their teachers during the academic year face-to-face?

- a) Daily
- b) Once a week
- c) Once a month
- d) At least twice a year
- e) Once a year
- f) Never

9- Before the pandemic, how often on average did you interact about your son's/ daughter's learning with their teachers during the academic year online?

- a) Daily
- b) Once a week
- c) Once a month
- d) At least twice a year
- e) Once a year
- f) Never

10- Before the pandemic, were you satisfied with the guidance and /or resources that your son's/ daughter's teacher/s gave you to support your child's learning at home? (e.g. providing resources to support them to improve their reading skills or understanding in mathematics). (Please pick only one answer)

- a) Yes
- b) No

11- Before the pandemic, how useful do you feel that the guidance and / or resources provided by your son's/ daughter's teacher were in terms of improving the quality of your support for your child's learning?

- a) Extremely useful
- b) Very useful
- c) Slightly useful
- d) Not at all useful

12- Did your son's/ daughter's school provide any parental education programmes before the pandemic to help parents to support their sons'/ daughters' learning at home? (e.g. programmes on introducing phonics or supporting students in math). (Please pick only one answer)

Yes / No

If yes, please go to question 13

If no, please go to question 14

13- How useful do you believe these programmes are in terms of helping you to support your son's/ daughter's learning?

- a) It was useful
- b) It was somewhat useful
- c) It was not useful
- d) I did not participate in them

14- Before the pandemic, how did you communicate with the school? (Tick all that apply)

- a) Telephone
- b) Face to face
- c) Email
- d) Website / School based software
- e) Others (please specify) _ _ _ _ _

15- Before the pandemic, how do you often access your son's/ daughter's learning? (You can pick more than one answer)

- a) Mobile phone
- b) Tablet
- c) PC or laptop

16- Before the pandemic, rank these devices from (1 to 3) in terms of how suitable you feel they are for providing learning access from home?

Mobile phone _ _ _

Tablet _ _ _

PC or laptop _ _ _

17- Before the pandemic, did you have access to the internet at home?

- a) Yes, with high-speed internet access
- b) Yes, with average-speed internet access
- c) Yes, with slow-speed or unreliable speed internet access
- d) Yes, but I did not have access to the internet
- e) No, I did not have access to the internet

18- Before the pandemic, there was a lack of access to technology that limited your ability to support your son's/ daughter's learning.

- a) I strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) I strongly disagree

PLEASE NOW ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS ABOUT DURING AND AFTER THE PANDEMIC.

19- During the pandemic, how often on average did you interact about your son's/ daughter's learning with their teachers during the academic year face-to-face?

- a) Daily
- b) Once a week
- c) Once a month
- d) At least twice a year
- e) Once a year
- f) Never

20- During the pandemic, how often on average did you interact about your son's/ daughter's learning with their teachers during the academic year online?

- a) Daily
- b) Once a week

- c) Once a month
- d) At least twice a year
- e) Once a year
- f) Never

21- During the pandemic, were you satisfied with the guidance and /or resources that your son's/ daughter's teacher/s gave you to support your child's learning at home? (e.g. providing resources to support them to improve their reading skills or understanding in mathematics). (Please pick only one answer)

- a) Yes
- b) No

22- During the pandemic, how useful do you feel that the guidance and / or resources provided by your son's/ daughter's teacher were in terms of improving the quality of your support for your child's learning?

- a) Extremely useful
- b) Very useful
- c) Slightly useful
- d) Not at all useful

23- Did your son's/ daughter's school provide any parental education programmes during the pandemic? (e.g. programmes on introducing phonics or supporting your child in math). (Please pick only one answer)

Yes / No

If yes, please go to question 24

If no, please go to question 25

24- How useful do you believe these programmes are in terms of helping you to support your son's/ daughter's learning?

- a) It was useful
- b) It was somewhat useful
- c) It was not useful
- d) I did not participate in them

25- During the pandemic, how did you communicate with the school? (Tick all that apply)

- a) Telephone
- b) Face to face
- c) Email
- d) Website / School based software
- e) Others (please specify) _ _ _ _ _

26- During the pandemic, how do you often access your son's/ daughter's learning? (You can pick more than one answer)

- a) Mobile phone
- b) Tablet
- c) PC or laptop

27- During the pandemic, rank these devices from (1 to 3) in terms of how suitable you feel they are for providing learning access from home?

Mobile phone _ _ _

Tablet _ _ _

PC or laptop _ _ _

28- During the pandemic, did you have access to the internet at home?

- a) Yes, with high-speed internet access
- b) Yes, with average-speed internet access
- c) Yes, with slow-speed or unreliable speed internet access
- d) Yes, but I did not have access to the internet
- e) No, I did not have access to the internet

29- During the pandemic, there was a lack of access to technology that limited your ability to support your son's/ daughter's learning.

- a) I strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) I strongly disagree

30- Has your relationship with teachers at your son's/ daughter's school about their learning changed due to your experiences in the pandemic?

Yes/ No

If yes, can you please explain what has changed? _____

31- Please add any further comments about your experience of the parent- teacher relationship or suggestions about how the parent – teacher relationship could be developed in Basic Education Cycle Two schools in Oman before and after COVID-19 pandemic?

Thank you for your time and interest. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.
I would greatly appreciate it if you would let me know if you are willing to participate in the
interview as well, please feel free to contact me on (AL-kalbaniyaMM@cardiff.ac.uk)
(mm.alkalbani@yahoo.co.uk)

Teachers' questionnaire

Personal information

1- In which Omani governorate you are teaching? (Please choose one answer)

- a) Muscat
- b) Musandam
- c) Al Buraimi
- d) Al Batinah North
- e) Al Batinah South
- f) A'Dhahirah
- g) A'Dakhiliya
- h) ASharqiyah North
- i) ASharqiyah South
- j) Al Wusta
- k) Dhofar

2- What grades are you currently teaching? _ _ _ _ _

3- How many classes do you teach per week? _ _ _ _ _

4- How many years of experience do you have of teaching students at this level? _ _ _ _ _

5- What is the highest level of your completed certificate?

- a) Diploma
- b) Bachelor
- c) Master
- d) PhD
- e) Others (please specify) _ _ _ _ _

About parental involvement with learning BEFORE THE COVID-19 pandemic.

(PLEASE FIRST ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS ABOUT BEFORE THE PANDEMIC)

6- Before the pandemic, how often on average did you interact with parents about their son's/ daughter's learning face-to-face, during the academic year?

- a) Daily
- b) Once a week
- c) Once a month
- d) At least twice a year

- e) Once a year
- f) Never

7- Before the pandemic, how often on average did you interact with parents about their son's/ daughter's learning online, during the academic year?

- a) Daily
- b) Once a week
- c) Once a month
- d) At least twice a year
- e) Once a year
- f) Never

8- Before the pandemic, how did you communicate with your students' parents? (Tick all that apply)

- a) Telephone
- b) Face to face
- c) Email
- d) Website /School based software
- e) Others (please specify) _ _ _ _ _

9- Before the pandemic, I felt that on average parental support for their sons'/ daughters' learning at home in the grades I teach in my school setting was

- a) Excellent
- b) Very good
- c) Satisfactory
- d) Less than satisfactory
- e) Very limited

10- Before the pandemic, how often on average did you encourage parents to communicate with you regarding their sons'/ daughters' learning?

- a) Daily
- b) Once a week
- c) Once a month
- d) At least twice a year
- e) Once a year
- f) Never

11- Before the pandemic, did you have access to the internet at home?

- a) Yes, with high-speed internet access
- b) Yes, with average-speed internet access
- c) Yes, with slow-speed or unreliable speed internet access
- d) Yes, but I did not have access to the internet
- e) No, I did not have access to broadband

12- Before the pandemic, did you have access to the internet in your school?

- a) Yes, with high-speed internet access
- b) Yes, with average-speed internet access
- c) Yes, with slow-speed or unreliable speed internet access
- d) Yes, but I did not have access to the internet
- e) No, I did not have access to broadband

13- Before the pandemic, did you have access to the internet in your classroom?

- a) Yes, with high-speed internet access
- b) Yes, with average-speed internet access
- c) Yes, with slow-speed or unreliable speed internet access
- d) Yes, but I did not have access to the internet
- e) No, I did not have access to broadband

14- Before the pandemic, there was a lack of internet access at your school and at your home that limited your ability to support your students' learning.

- a) I strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) I strongly disagree

15- Before the pandemic, how satisfied were you with your skills on how to use technology in teaching and learning to support your students' learning?

- a) Very satisfied
- b) Satisfied
- c) Dissatisfied
- d) Very dissatisfied

16- What do you think of this statement?

Before the pandemic, there was a lack of teachers' knowledge on using technology in teaching and learning that limited their ability to support children's learning.

- a) I strongly agree
- b) Agree

- c) Disagree
- d) I strongly disagree

17- Please add any further comments -----

PLEASE NOW ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS ABOUT DURING AND AFTER THE PANDEMIC.

18- During the pandemic, how often on average did you interact with parents about their son's/ daughter's learning face-to-face, during the academic year?

- a) Daily
- b) Once a week
- c) Once a month
- d) At least twice a year
- e) Once a year
- f) Never

19- During the pandemic, how often on average did you interact with parents about their son's/ daughter's learning online, during the academic year?

- a) Daily
- b) Once a week
- c) Once or twice a month
- d) A few times a year
- e) Never communicate

20- During the pandemic, how did you communicate with parents? (Tick all that apply)

- a) Telephone
- b) Face to face
- c) Email
- d) Website /School based software
- e) Others (please specify) _ _ _ _ _

21- During the pandemic, I feel that on average parental support for their sons'/ daughters' learning at home in the grades I teach in my school setting was

- a) Excellent
- b) Very good
- c) Satisfactory
- d) Less than satisfactory
- e) Very limited

22- During the pandemic, how often on average did you encourage parents to communicate with you regarding their sons'/ daughters' learning?

- a) Daily
- b) Once a week
- c) Once a month
- d) At least twice a year
- e) Once a year
- f) Never

23- During the pandemic, did you have access to the internet at home?

- a) Yes, with high-speed internet access
- b) Yes, with average-speed internet access
- c) Yes, with slow-speed or unreliable speed internet access
- d) Yes, but I did not have access to the internet
- e) No, I did not have access to broadband

24- During the pandemic, did you have access to the internet in your school?

- a) Yes, with high-speed internet access
- b) Yes, with average-speed internet access
- c) Yes, with slow-speed or unreliable speed internet access
- d) Yes, but I did not have access to the internet
- e) No, I did not have access to broadband

25- During the pandemic, did you have access to the internet in your classroom?

- a) Yes, with high-speed internet access
- b) Yes, with average-speed internet access
- c) Yes, with slow-speed or unreliable speed internet access
- d) Yes, but I did not have access to the internet
- e) No, I did not have access to broadband

26- During the pandemic, there was a lack of internet access at your school and at your home that limited your ability to support your students' learning.

- a) I strongly agree

- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) I strongly disagree

27- During the pandemic, how satisfied were you with your skills on how to use technology in teaching and learning to support your students' learning?

- a) Very satisfied
- b) Satisfied
- c) Dissatisfied
- d) Very dissatisfied

28- What do you think of this statement?

During the pandemic, there was a lack of teachers' knowledge on using technology in teaching and learning that limited their ability to support children's learning.

- a) I strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) I strongly disagree

29- Please add any comments about technology access (online learning) that can be helpful for teachers to support their learners during the pandemic. -----

30- How satisfied are you with the level of technology in teaching and learning in Basic Education Schools (Cycle Two) in Oman?

- a) Very satisfied
- b) Satisfied
- c) Dissatisfied
- d) Very dissatisfied

31- Has your perception (attitude / beliefs) around engaging with parents at your students' school changed due to your experiences in the pandemic?

- a) Yes, totally changed
- b) Yes, a little bit changed
- c) No, not changed at all

If yes, can you please explain how this has changed?_____

32- Any comments or recommendations to add about the practice of parental involvement in Basic Education Schools in Oman (Cycle Two) before and after COVID-19 pandemic?

Thank you for your time and interest. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.
I would greatly appreciate it if you would let me know if you are willing to participate in the interview as well, please feel free to contact me on (AL-kalbaniyaMM@cardiff.ac.uk)
(mm.alkalbani@yahoo.co.uk)

Headteachers' questionnaire

Personal information

1- In which Omani governorate you are working? (Please choose one answer)

- a) Muscat
- b) Musandam
- c) Al Buraimi
- d) Al Batinah North
- e) Al Batinah South
- f) A'Dhahirah
- g) A'Dakhiliya
- h) ASharqiyah North
- i) ASharqiyah South
- j) AL Wusta
- k) Dhofar

2- What is the highest level of your completed certificate?

- a) Diploma
- b) Bachelor
- c) Master
- d) PhD
- e) Others (please specify) _ _ _ _ _

3-How many years of experience do you have working as a headteacher? _ _ _ _ _

4- Approximately, how many students do you have in your school? _ _ _ _ _

About parental involvement with learning BEFORE THE COVID-19 pandemic.

(PLEASE FIRST ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS ABOUT BEFORE THE PANDEMIC)

5- Before the pandemic, how often on average did teachers in your school interact with parents about children's learning during the academic year face-to-face?

- a) Daily
- b) Once a week
- c) Once a month
- d) At least twice a year

- e) Once a year
- f) Never

6- Before pandemic, how often on average did teachers in your school interact with parents about children's learning during the academic year online?

- a) Daily
- b) Once a week
- c) Once a month
- d) At least twice a year
- e) Once a year
- f) Never

7- Before the pandemic, how did teachers communicate with parents in your school? (Tick all that apply)

- a) Telephone
- b) Face to face
- c) Email
- d) Website /School based software
- e) Others (please specify) _ _ _ _ _

8- Before the pandemic, I felt that on average parental support for their sons'/daughters' learning at home in my school setting was

- a) Excellent
- b) Very good
- c) Satisfactory
- d) Less than satisfactory
- e) Very limited

9- Before the pandemic, how often on average do you encourage teachers to communicate with their students' parents regarding their sons'/daughters' learning?

- a) Daily
- b) Once a week
- c) Once a month
- d) At least twice a year
- e) Once a year
- f) Never

10- Before the pandemic, how often on average do you encourage parents to communicate with your school- teachers regarding their sons'/daughters' learning?

- a) Daily
- b) Once a week
- c) Once a month
- d) At least twice a year
- e) Once a year
- f) Never

11- Before the pandemic, did you have access to the internet in your school?

- a) Yes, with high-speed internet access
- b) Yes, with average-speed internet access
- c) Yes, with slow-speed or unreliable speed internet access
- d) Yes, but I did not have access to the internet
- e) No, I did not have access to broadband

12- Before the pandemic, there was a lack of access to technology that limited your school-teachers' ability to support their students' learning

- a) I strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) I strongly disagree

13-What do you think of this statement?

Before the pandemic, there was a lack of teachers' knowledge on using technology in teaching and learning that limited their ability to support children's learning.

- a) I strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) I strongly disagree

14- Please add any comments about technology access (online learning) that can be helpful for teachers to support their learners before the pandemic. -----

PLEASE NOW ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS ABOUT DURING AND AFTER THE PANDEMIC.

15- During the pandemic, how often on average did teachers in your school interact with parents about children's learning during the academic year face-to-face?

- a) Daily
- b) Once a week
- c) Once a month
- d) At least twice a year
- e) Once a year
- f) Never

16- During pandemic, how often on average did teachers in your school interact with parents about children's learning during the academic year online?

- a) Daily
- b) Once a week
- c) Once a month
- d) At least twice a year
- e) Once a year
- f) Never

17- During the pandemic, how did teachers in your school communicate with parents? (Tick all that apply)

- a) Telephone
- b) Face to face
- c) Email
- d) Website /School based software
- e) Others (please specify) _ _ _ _ _

18- During the pandemic, I feel that on average parental support for their sons'/daughters' learning at home in my school setting was

- a) Excellent
- b) Very good
- c) Satisfactory
- d) Less than satisfactory
- e) Very limited

19- During the pandemic, how often on average do you encourage teachers to communicate with their students' parents regarding their sons'/daughters' learning?

- a) Daily
- b) Once a week
- c) Once a month
- d) At least twice a year
- e) Once a year
- f) Never

20- During the pandemic, how often on average do you encourage parents to communicate with your school- teachers regarding their sons'/daughters' learning?

- a) Daily
- b) Once a week
- c) Once a month
- d) At least twice a year
- e) Once a year
- f) Never

21- During the pandemic, did you have access to the internet in your school?

- a) Yes, with high-speed internet access
- b) Yes, with average-speed internet access
- c) Yes, with slow-speed or unreliable speed internet access
- d) Yes, but I did not have access to the internet
- e) No, I did not have access to broadband

22- During the pandemic, there was a lack of access to technology that limited your school-teachers' ability to support their students' learning.

- a) I strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) I strongly disagree

23- What do you think of this statement?

During the pandemic, there was a lack of teachers' knowledge on using technology in teaching and learning that limited their ability to support children's learning.

- a) I strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) I strongly disagree

24- Please add any comments about technology access (online learning) that can be helpful for teachers to support their learners during the pandemic. -----

25- How satisfied are you with using technology in teaching and learning in Basic Education Schools (Cycle Two) in Oman?

- a) Very satisfied
- b) Satisfied
- c) Dissatisfied
- d) Very dissatisfied

26- Has your perception (attitude / beliefs) around engaging with parents at your students' school changed due to your experiences in the pandemic?

- a) Yes, totally changed
- b) Yes, a little bit changed
- c) No, not changed at all

If yes, can you please explain how this has changed? -----

27- Any comments or recommendations to add about the practice of parental involvement in Basic Education Cycle Two schools in Oman before and after COVID-19 pandemic?

Thank you for your time and interest. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.
I would greatly appreciate it if you would let me know if you are willing to participate in the interview as well, please feel free to contact me on (AL-kalbaniyaMM@cardiff.ac.uk)
(mm.alkalbani@yahoo.co.uk)

Appendix F2:

Translated Survey in Arabic

CR: 1380962
Tel: 97549494



سجل تجاري رقم: 1380962
هاتف: 97549494

دراسة استطلاعية للتعرف على آراء أولياء الأمور والمعلمين ومدراء المدارس حول طبيعة مشاركة أولياء الأمور في مدارس الحلقة الثانية في سلطنة عمان، قبل وخلال جائحة كورونا.

عزيزي المشارك،

هذا البحث يمثل جزءاً من دراسة دكتوراة حول المعلمين ومديري المدارس وأولياء الأمور الذين يشرفون على الطلاب الملتحقين بمدارس التعليم الأساسي (الحلقة الثانية) في سلطنة عمان.

الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو استكشاف آراء أولياء الأمور والمعلمين ومدراء المدارس حول مشاركة الوالدين في العملية التعليمية بمدارس التعليم الأساسي للحلقة الثانية في عمان قبل جائحة كورونا (COVID-19) وأثنائها.

من خلال إكمال هذا الاستبيان الذي يستغرق 10 دقائق، ستساعد هذه الدراسة البحثية في تطوير فهم الشراكة بين الأسرة والمدرسة في سلطنة عمان، إذ ستتاح لكم الفرصة لطرح أفكاركم حول مشاركتكم في تعليم أبنائكم، كما ستكون إجاباتكم مجهولة المصدر وسرية، ولهذا السبب، لا يُطلب منكم الإفصاح عن الاسم في الاستبيان الذي نقدر لكم مساهمتكم فيه.

إذا أردتم المشاركة في هذه الدراسة، نرجو منكم قراءة التوجيهات الخاصة بكل سؤال بعناية.

إذا كانت لديكم أية أسئلة تخص الدراسة لا تترددوا في التواصل على:

(AL-kalbaniyaMM@cardiff.ac.uk) (mm.alkalbani@yahoo.co.uk)

شكراً لكم على وقتكم واهتمامكم.

مقدرين لكم تعاونكم.



استبانة أولياء الأمور

معلومات عن ولي أمر الطالب الملتحق بمدرسة التعليم الأساسي (الحلقة الثانية) في سلطنة عمان.

1- ما هو أصغر سن لأبنائك في مدارس التعليم الأساسي (الحلقة الثانية)؟ _ _ _

2- عدد أطفال عائلتك (الأقل من سن 18 سنة) _ _ _

3- في أي محافظة عمانية يذهب ابنك / ابنتك إلى المدرسة؟ (الرجاء اختيار إجابة واحدة)
أ. مسقط

ب. مستدم

ج. البريمي

د. شمال الباطنة

هـ. جنوب الباطنة

و. الظاهرة

ز. الداخلية

ح. شمال الشرقية

ط. جنوب الشرقية

ي. الوسطى

ك. ظفار

حول المجيب (يجب أن يكون هو مقدم الرعاية الرئيسي لهذا الطالب). (حدد إجابة واحدة فقط).

4- صلة القرابة بالطالب/الطالبة:

أ. الأم

ب. الأب

ج. العم/العمة

د. الخال/الخالة

هـ. الجدة

و. الجد

ز. أخرى (يرجى التحديد) _ _ _

5- آخر درجة علمية مكتملة حصلت عليها؟

أ. لم أكمل الدراسة الثانوية.

ب. دبلوم التعليم العام.

ج. شهادة الدبلوم (يرجى تحديد نوع الدبلوم، مثال: مهني، تقني، عالي) _ _ _ _

د. البكالوريوس

هـ. الدراسات العليا (الماجستير)

و. الدراسات العليا (دكتوراه)

ز. أخرى (يرجى التحديد) _ _ _ _ _

6- ما هي وظيفتك الحالية؟

أ. موظف بدوام كامل (يرجى التحديد) _ _ _ _ _

ب. موظف بدوام جزئي.

ج. باحث عن عمل.

د. غير ذلك (يرجى التحديد) _ _ _ _ _

7- إجمالي الدخل الشهري لأسرتك.

(اختر إجابة واحدة فقط).

أ. أقل من 300 ر.ع شهرياً.

ب. ما بين 300 و500 ر.ع شهرياً.

ج. ما بين 501 و1000 ر.ع شهرياً.

د. أكثر من 1000 ر.ع في الشهر.

الجزء الأول: قبل الوباء، مشاركة أولياء الأمور في التعليم قبل جائحة كوفيد 19.

يرجى الإجابة على الأسئلة التالية:



8- قبل انتشار الوباء، ما هو متوسط عدد مرات التواصل مع المعلمين حول تعليم ابنك / ابنتك وجهاً لوجه - خلال السنة الدراسية؟

أ. يوميًا

ب. مرة في الأسبوع

ج. مرة في الشهر

د. على الأقل مرتين في السنة

هـ. مرة في السنة

و. لا ينطبق

9- قبل انتشار الوباء، ما هو متوسط عدد مرات التواصل مع المعلمين حول تعليم ابنك / ابنتك عبر الإنترنت - خلال السنة الدراسية؟

أ. يوميًا

ب. مرة في الأسبوع

ج. مرة في الشهر

د. على الأقل مرتين في السنة

هـ. مرة كل سنة

و. لا ينطبق

10- قبل انتشار الوباء، هل كنت راضيًا عن الإرشادات أو الموارد التي قدمها لك معلم ابنك / ابنتك لمساعدتهم على التعلم في المنزل؟ (على سبيل المثال، توفير المصادر لمساعدتهم في تحسين مهارات القراءة لديهم أو فهمهم في الرياضيات). الرجاء اختيار إجابة واحدة فقط.

أ. نعم

ب. لا

11- قبل انتشار الوباء، ما مدى فائدة التوجيه والمصادر التي قدمها معلم ابنك / ابنتك من أجل تحسين مساهمتك الفاعلة في تعليمهم؟

أ. مفيدة للغاية.

ب. مفيدة جدًا.

ج. مفيدة بعض الشيء.

د. غير مفيدة على الإطلاق.

12- هل قدمت المدرسة أي برامج لتعليم أولياء الأمور قبل انتشار الوباء من أجل المساهمة بشكل فعال في تعليم الأبناء في المنزل؟ (على سبيل المثال، برامج لمساعدة الطلاب في القراءة أو في الرياضيات). (الرجاء اختيار إجابة واحدة فقط)

نعم / لا

إذا كانت الإجابة "نعم"، الرجاء الانتقال إلى السؤال 13.

إذا كانت الإجابة "لا"، الرجاء الانتقال إلى السؤال 14.

13- ما مدى فائدة هذه البرامج من حيث المساهمة في دعم تعلم ابنك / ابنتك؟

أ. كانت مفيدة.

ب. كانت مفيدة إلى حد ما.

ج. لم تكن مفيدة.

د. لم أشارك فيها.

14- قبل انتشار الوباء، كيف كان التواصل مع المدرسة؟ (يمكنك اختيار أكثر من إجابة)

أ. عبر الهاتف المحمول.

ب. وجهاً لوجه.

ج. عبر البريد الإلكتروني.

د. عن طريق البوابة التعليمية.

هـ. أخرى (يرجى التحديد) _____

15- قبل انتشار الوباء، ما هي الوسيلة المستخدمة في تعليم ابنك / ابنتك؟ (يمكنك اختيار أكثر من إجابة)



أ. الهاتف المحمول

ب. الجهاز اللوحي

ج. جهاز الكمبيوتر المحمول أو المكتبي

16- قبل الوباء، رتب هذه الأجهزة من (1 إلى 3) من حيث مدى ملائمتها في توفير التعليم في المنزل؟

الهاتف المحمول _ _ _

الجهاز اللوحي _ _ _

جهاز الحاسوب المحمول أو المكتبي _ _ _

17- قبل الوباء، هل كان لديك اتصال بشبكة الإنترنت في المنزل؟

أ. نعم، مع اتصال عالي السرعة.

ب. نعم، مع اتصال متوسط السرعة.

ج. نعم، مع اتصال بطيء السرعة.

د. نعم، لكن لم يكن بإمكانني الوصول إلى شبكة الإنترنت.

هـ. لا، لم يكن لدي اتصال بشبكة الإنترنت.

18- قبل الوباء، كانت هناك صعوبة في إمكانية الوصول إلى التكنولوجيا (التعلم عبر الإنترنت) مما حد من قدرتك على المساهمة في تعليم ابنك / ابنتك.

أ. أوافق بشدة.

ب. أوافق.

ج. لا أوافق.

د. لا أوافق بشدة.

الجزء الثاني: أثناء الوباء، مشاركة أولياء الأمور في التعليم أثناء جائحة كورونا.

يرجى الإجابة على الأسئلة التالية:

19- أثناء فترة الوباء، ما هو متوسط عدد مرات التواصل مع المعلمين حول تعليم ابنك / ابنتك وجهاً لوجه - خلال السنة الدراسية؟

أ. يوميًا

ب. مرة في الأسبوع

- ج. مرة في الشهر
د. على الأقل مرتين في السنة
هـ. مرة في السنة
و. لا ينطبق

20- أثناء فترة الوباء، ما هو متوسط عدد مرات التواصل مع المعلمين حول تعليم ابنك / ابنتك عبر الإنترنت – خلال السنة الدراسية؟

- أ. يوميًا
ب. مرة في الأسبوع
ج. مرة في الشهر
د. على الأقل مرتين في السنة
هـ. مرة في السنة
و. لا ينطبق

21- أثناء الوباء، هل كنت راضيًا عن الإرشادات أو الموارد التي قدمها لك معلم ابنك / ابنتك لمساعدتهم على التعلم في المنزل؟ (على سبيل المثال، توفير المصادر لمساعدتهم في تحسين مهارات القراءة لديهم أو فهمهم في الرياضيات). الرجاء اختيار إجابة واحدة فقط.

- أ. نعم
ب. لا

22- أثناء فترة الوباء، ما مدى فائدة التوجيه والمصادر التي قدمها معلم ابنك / ابنتك من أجل تحسين مساهمتك الفاعلة في تعليمهم؟

- أ. مفيدة للغاية.
ب. مفيدة جدًا.
ج. مفيدة بعض الشيء.
د. غير مفيدة على الإطلاق.

23- هل قدمت المدرسة أي برامج لتعليم أولياء الأمور أثناء انتشار الوباء من أجل المساهمة بشكل فعال في تعليم الأبناء في المنزل؟ (على سبيل المثال، برامج لمساعدة الطلاب في القراءة أو في الرياضيات). (الرجاء اختيار إجابة واحدة فقط)

نعم / لا

إذا كانت الإجابة "نعم"، الرجاء الانتقال إلى السؤال 24.

إذا كانت الإجابة "لا"، الرجاء الانتقال إلى السؤال 25.

24- ما مدى فائدة هذه البرامج من حيث المساهمة في دعم تعلم ابنك / ابنتك؟

أ. كانت مفيدة.

ب. كانت مفيدة إلى حد ما.

ج. لم تكن مفيدة.

د. لم أشارك فيها.

25- أثناء فترة الوباء، كيف كان التواصل مع المدرسة؟ (يمكنك اختيار أكثر من إجابة)

أ. عبر الهاتف المحمول.

ب. وجهاً لوجه.

ج. عبر البريد الإلكتروني.

د. عن طريق البوابة التعليمية.

هـ. أخرى (يرجى التحديد) _ _ _ _ _

26- أثناء فترة الوباء، ما الوسيلة المستخدمة في تعليم ابنك / ابنتك؟ (يمكنك اختيار أكثر من إجابة)

أ. الهاتف المحمول

ب. الجهاز اللوحي

ج. جهاز الحاسوب المحمول أو المكتبي

27- أثناء فترة الوباء، رتب هذه الأجهزة من (1 إلى 3) من حيث مدى ملائمتها لتوفير التعليم في المنزل؟

الهاتف المحمول _ _ _

الجهاز اللوحي _ _ _

جهاز الحاسوب المحمول أو المكتبي

28- أثناء فترة الوباء، هل كان لديك اتصال بشبكة الإنترنت في المنزل؟

أ. نعم، مع اتصال عالي السرعة.

ب. نعم، مع اتصال متوسط السرعة.

ج. نعم، مع اتصال بطيء السرعة.

د. نعم، لكن لم يكن بإمكانني الوصول إلى شبكة الإنترنت.

هـ. لا، لم يكن لدي اتصال بشبكة الإنترنت.

29- أثناء فترة الوباء، كانت هناك صعوبة في إمكانية الوصول إلى التكنولوجيا (التعلم عبر الأنترنت) مما حد من قدرتك على المساهمة في تعليم ابنك / ابنتك.

أ. أوافق بشدة.

ب. أوافق.

ج. لا أوافق.

د. لا أوافق بشدة.

30- أثناء فترة الوباء، هل تغيرت العلاقة بينك وبين المعلمين بشأن تعليم ابنك/ابنتك؟

نعم / لا

إذا كانت الإجابة "نعم"، يرجى توضيح ذلك: _____

CR: 1380962
Tel: 97549494



سجل تجاري رقم: 1380962
هاتف: 97549494

31- يرجى إضافة أي تعليقات أخرى حول تجربتك الشخصية في مشاركة أولياء الأمور مع المعلمين في العملية التعليمية لأبنائهم في مدارس الحلقة الثانية قبل وبعد الجائحة؟

شكراً لكم على وقتكم واهتمامكم.

وأقدر تعاونكم كثيراً.

سأكون ممتنة للغاية لو سمحت لي بمعرفة ما إذا كنتم على استعداد للمشاركة في المقابلة أيضاً، فلا تترددوا في التواصل معي على:

AL-kalbaniyaMM@cardiff.ac.uk

mm.alkalbani@yahoo.co.uk



C.R.NO : 1380962 س.ت : ٩٦٤-١٣٨

92 04 94 94

ماجد سلطان ماجد العربي | الموهب شارع 39 بوفيسر | بناية PS9 الطابق الثاني | البريد: PalaceTranslation@gmail.com

استبانة المعلمين

معلومات شخصية

1- في أي محافظة عمانية تدرّس/ تعمل؟ (الرجاء اختيار إجابة واحدة)

أ. مسقط

ب. مسندم

ج. البريمي

د. شمال الباطنة

هـ. جنوب الباطنة

و. الظاهرة

ز. الداخلية

ح. شمال الشرقية

ط. جنوب الشرقية

ي. الوسطى

ك. ظفار

2- ما هي الصفوف التي تقوم بتدريسها حالياً؟ _____

3- كم عدد الحصص التي تدرسها في الأسبوع؟ _____

4- كم عدد سنوات خبرتك في تدريس طلبة هذا المستوى (الحلقة الثانية)؟ _____

5- ما هي آخر درجة علمية مكتملة حصلت عليها؟

أ. شهادة الدبلوم

ب. شهادة البكالوريوس

ج. شهادة الماجستير

د. شهادة الدكتوراه

هـ. أخرى (يرجى التحديد) _____

الجزء الأول: قبل الوباء، مشاركة أولياء الأمور في التعليم قبل جائحة كورونا

يرجى الإجابة على الأسئلة التالية:

6- قبل انتشار الوباء، ما هو متوسط عدد مرات التواصل مع أولياء الأمور حول تعليم ابنهم / ابنتهم وجهاً لوجه - خلال السنة الدراسية؟

أ. يوميًا

ب. مرة في الأسبوع

ج. مرة في الشهر

د. على الأقل مرتين في السنة

هـ. مرة في السنة

و. لا ينطبق

7- قبل انتشار الوباء، ما هو متوسط عدد مرات التواصل مع أولياء الأمور حول تعليم ابنهم / ابنتهم عبر الإنترنت - خلال السنة الدراسية؟

أ. يوميًا

ب. مرة في الأسبوع

ج. مرة في الشهر

د. على الأقل مرتين في السنة

هـ. مرة في السنة

و. لا ينطبق

8- قبل انتشار الوباء، كيف كان التواصل مع أولياء الأمور؟ (يمكنك اختيار أكثر من إجابة)

أ. عبر الهاتف المحمول

ب. وجهاً لوجه

ج. عبر البريد الإلكتروني

د. عن طريق البوابة التعليمية

هـ. أخرى (يرجى التحديد) _____

9- قبل انتشار الوباء، في محيط مدرستي أشعر أن متوسط دعم أولياء الأمور لتعليم أبنائهم في المنزل كان

أ. ممتاز

ب. جيد جداً

ج. جيد

د. متوسط

ه. مقبول

10- قبل انتشار الوباء، كم مرة في المتوسط قمت بتشجيع أولياء الأمور على التواصل معك فيما يتعلق بتعليم أبنائهم؟

أ. يومياً

ب. مرة في الأسبوع

ج. مرة في الشهر

د. على الأقل مرتين في السنة

ه. مرة في السنة

و. لا ينطبق

11- قبل انتشار الوباء، هل كان لديك اتصال بشبكة الإنترنت في المنزل؟

أ. نعم، مع اتصال عالي السرعة.

ب. نعم، مع اتصال متوسط السرعة.

ج. نعم، مع اتصال بطيء السرعة.

د. نعم، لكن لم يكن بإمكانني الوصول إلى شبكة الإنترنت.

هـ. لا، لم يكن لدي اتصال بشبكة الإنترنت.

مكتب القصر للترجمة
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12- قبل انتشار الوباء، هل كان لديك اتصال بشبكة الإنترنت في المدرسة؟

أ. نعم، مع اتصال عالي السرعة.

ب. نعم، مع اتصال متوسط السرعة.

- ج. نعم، مع اتصال بطيء السرعة.
د. نعم، لكن لم يكن بإمكانني الوصول إلى شبكة الإنترنت.
هـ. لا، لم يكن لدي اتصال بشبكة الإنترنت.

13- قبل انتشار الوباء، هل كان لديك اتصال بشبكة الإنترنت في الصف؟

- أ. نعم، مع اتصال عالي السرعة.
ب. نعم، مع اتصال متوسط السرعة.
ج. نعم، مع اتصال بطيء السرعة.
د. نعم، لكن لم يكن بإمكانني الوصول إلى شبكة الإنترنت.
هـ. لا، لم يكن لدي اتصال بشبكة الإنترنت.

14- قبل انتشار الوباء، كانت هناك صعوبة في الوصول إلى شبكة الإنترنت في مدرستك وفي منزلك مما حد من قدرتك على المساهمة في تعلم طلابك.

- أ. أوافق بشدة.
ب. أوافق.
ج. لا أوافق.
د. لا أوافق بشدة.

15- قبل الوباء، ما مدى رضاك عن مهاراتك حول كيفية استخدام التكنولوجيا في التدريس والتعليم لدعم تعلم طلابك؟

- أ. راضٍ جدًا
ب. راضٍ
ج. غير راضٍ
د. مستاء جدًا



16- ما رأيك في هذه العبارة؟

"قبل الوباء، كان هناك نقص في معرفة المعلمين بشأن استخدام التكنولوجيا في التدريس والتعلم مما حد من قدرتهم على دعم تعلم الطلاب".

أ. أوافق بشدة.

ب. أوافق.

ج. لا أوافق.

د. لا أوافق بشدة

17- الرجاء إضافة أي تعليقات أخرى -

الجزء الثاني: أثناء الوباء، مشاركة أولياء الأمور في التعليم أثناء جائحة كورونا

يرجى الإجابة على الأسئلة التالية:

18- أثناء فترة الوباء، ما هو متوسط عدد مرات التواصل مع أولياء الأمور حول تعليم ابنهم / ابنتهم وجهاً لوجه - خلال السنة الدراسية؟

أ. يوميًا

ب. مرة في الأسبوع

ج. مرة في الشهر

د. على الأقل مرتين في السنة

هـ. مرة في السنة

و. لا ينطبق

19- أثناء فترة الوباء، ما هو متوسط عدد مرات التواصل مع أولياء الأمور حول تعليم ابنهم / ابنتهم عبر الإنترنت - خلال السنة الدراسية؟

- أ. يوميًا
- ب. مرة في الأسبوع
- ج. مرة في الشهر
- د. على الأقل مرتين في السنة
- هـ. مرة في السنة
- و. لا ينطبق

20- أثناء فترة الوباء كيف كان التواصل مع أولياء الأمور؟ (يمكنك اختيار أكثر من إجابة)

- أ. عبر الهاتف المحمول
- ب. وجهاً لوجه
- ج. عبر البريد الإلكتروني
- د. عن طريق البوابة التعليمية
- هـ. أخرى (يرجى التحديد) _____

21- أثناء فترة الوباء، في محيط مدرستي أشعر أن متوسط دعم أولياء الأمور لتعليم أبنائهم في المنزل كان

- أ. ممتاز
- ب. جيد جداً
- ج. جيد
- د. متوسط
- هـ. مقبول

22- أثناء فترة الوباء، كم مرة في المتوسط قمت بتشجيع أولياء الأمور على التواصل معك فيما يتعلق بتعليم أبنائهم؟

أ. يوميًا

ب. مرة في الأسبوع

ج. مرة في الشهر

د. على الأقل مرتين في السنة

هـ. مرة في السنة

و. لا ينطبق

23- أثناء فترة الوباء، هل كان لديك اتصال بشبكة الإنترنت في المنزل؟

أ. نعم، مع اتصال عالي السرعة.

ب. نعم، مع اتصال متوسط السرعة.

ج. نعم، مع اتصال بطيء السرعة.

د. نعم، لكن لم يكن بإمكانني الوصول إلى شبكة الإنترنت.

هـ. لا، لم يكن لدي اتصال بشبكة الإنترنت.

24- أثناء فترة الوباء، هل كان لديك اتصال بشبكة الإنترنت في المدرسة؟

أ. نعم، مع اتصال عالي السرعة.

ب. نعم، مع اتصال متوسط السرعة.

ج. نعم، مع اتصال بطيء السرعة.

د. نعم، لكن لم يكن بإمكانني الوصول إلى شبكة الإنترنت.

هـ. لا، لم يكن لدي اتصال بشبكة الإنترنت.

25- أثناء فترة الوباء، هل كان لديك اتصال بشبكة الإنترنت في الصف؟

- أ. نعم، مع اتصال عالي السرعة.
- ب. نعم، مع اتصال متوسط السرعة.
- ج. نعم، مع اتصال بطيء السرعة.
- د. نعم، لكن لم يكن بإمكانني الوصول إلى شبكة الإنترنت.
- هـ. لا، لم يكن لدي اتصال بشبكة الإنترنت.

26- أثناء فترة الوباء، كانت هناك صعوبة في الوصول إلى شبكة الإنترنت في مدرستك وفي منزلك مما حد من قدرتك على المساهمة في تعلم طلابك.

- أ. أوافق بشدة.
- ب. أوافق.
- ج. لا أوافق.
- د. لا أوافق بشدة.

27- أثناء فترة الوباء، ما مدى رضاك عن مهاراتك حول كيفية استخدام التكنولوجيا في التدريس والتعليم لدعم تعلم طلابك؟

- أ. راضٍ جدًا
- ب. راضٍ
- ج. غير راضٍ
- د. مستاء جدًا

28- ما رأيك في هذه العبارة؟

- "أثناء فترة الوباء، كان هناك نقص في معرفة المعلمين بشأن استخدام التكنولوجيا في التدريس والتعلم مما حد من قدرتهم على دعم تعلم الطلاب".
- أ. أوافق بشدة.
ب. أوافق.
ج. لا أوافق.
د. لا أوافق بشدة

29- يرجى إضافة أي تعليقات حول الوصول إلى التكنولوجيا (التعلم عبر الإنترنت) والتي يمكن أن تكون مفيدة للمعلمين لدعم الطلاب أثناء فترة الوباء.

- 30- ما مدى رضاك عن مستوى التكنولوجيا في التعليم في مدارس التعليم الأساسي (الحلقة الثانية) في سلطنة عمان؟
- أ. راضٍ جدًا
ب. راضٍ
ج. غير راضٍ
د. مساء جدًا

31- هل تغيرت وجهة نظرك في كيفية التعامل مع أولياء الأمور أثناء فترة الوباء؟



- أ. نعم، تغير كلي.
ب. نعم، تغير محدود.
ج. لا، لم تتغير.
إذا كانت الإجابة "نعم"، يرجى توضيح ذلك؟
- -----

CR: 1380962
Tel: 97549494



سجل تجاري رقم: 1380962
هاتف: 97549494

32- هل هناك أي تعليقات أو توصيات يمكن إضافتها حول مشاركة أولياء الأمور في عملية التعليم في مدارس التعليم الأساسي في عمان (الحلقة الثانية) قبل وبعد جائحة COVID-19؟

شكراً لكم على وقتكم واهتمامكم.

وأقدر تعاونكم كثيراً.

سأكون ممتنة للغاية لو سمحتم لي بمعرفة ما إذا كنتم على استعداد للمشاركة في المقابلة أيضاً، فلا تترددوا في التواصل معي على:

(AL-kalbaniyaMM@cardiff.ac.uk)

(mm.alkalbani@yahoo.co.uk)



استبانة مدراء المدارس

معلومات شخصية

1- في أي محافظة عمانية تعمل؟ (الرجاء اختيار إجابة واحدة)

أ. مسقط

ب. مسندم

ج. البريمي

د. شمال الباطنة

هـ. جنوب الباطنة

و. الظاهرة

ز. الداخلية

ح. شمال الشرقية

ط. جنوب الشرقية

ي. الوسطى

ك. ظفار

2- ما هي آخر درجة علمية مكتملة حصلت عليها؟

أ. شهادة الدبلوم

ب. شهادة البكالوريوس

ج. شهادة الماجستير

د. شهادة الدكتوراه

هـ. أخرى (يرجى التحديد) _____

3- كم عدد سنوات الخبرة التي عملت بها كمدير مدرسة؟ _____

4- كم عدد الطلاب في مدرستك؟ _____

الجزء الأول: قبل الوباء، مشاركة أولياء الأمور في التعليم قبل جائحة كورونا

يرجى الإجابة على الأسئلة التالية:

5- قبل انتشار الوباء، ما هو متوسط عدد مرات تواصل المعلمين مع أولياء الأمور حول تعليم الطلاب وجهاً لوجه خلال السنة الدراسية؟

أ. يوميًا

ب. مرة في الأسبوع

ج. مرة في الشهر

د. على الأقل مرتين في السنة

هـ. مرة في السنة

و. لا ينطبق

6- قبل انتشار الوباء، ما هو متوسط عدد مرات تواصل المعلمين مع أولياء الأمور حول تعليم الطلاب عبر الإنترنت خلال السنة الدراسية؟

أ. يوميًا

ب. مرة في الأسبوع

ج. مرة في الشهر

د. على الأقل مرتين في السنة

هـ. مرة في السنة

و. لا ينطبق

7- قبل انتشار الوباء، كيف كان تواصل المعلمين مع أولياء الأمور في مدرستك؟ (يمكنك اختيار أكثر من إجابة)

أ. عبر الهاتف المحمول.

ب. وجهاً لوجه.

ج. عبر البريد الإلكتروني.

د. عن طريق البوابة التعليمية.

هـ. أخرى (يرجى التحديد) _____

8- قبل انتشار الوباء، في محيط مدرستي أشعر أن متوسط دعم أولياء الأمور لتعليم أبنائهم في المنزل كان

- أ. ممتاز
- ب. جيد جداً
- ج. جيد
- د. متوسط
- هـ. مقبول

9- قبل الوباء، ما هو متوسط عدد مرات تشجيع المعلمين بالتواصل مع أولياء الأمور فيما يتعلق بتعلم الطلاب؟

- أ. يومياً
- ب. مرة في الأسبوع
- ج. مرة في الشهر
- د. على الأقل مرتين في السنة
- هـ. مرة في السنة
- و. لا ينطبق

10- قبل الوباء، ما هو متوسط عدد مرات تشجيع أولياء الأمور بالتواصل مع المعلمين فيما يتعلق بتعلم الطلاب؟

- أ. يومياً
- ب. مرة في الأسبوع
- ج. مرة في الشهر
- د. على الأقل مرتين في السنة
- هـ. مرة في السنة
- و. لا ينطبق

11- قبل انتشار الوباء، هل كان لديك اتصال بالإنترنت في المدرسة؟

- أ. نعم، مع اتصال عالي السرعة.
ب. نعم، مع اتصال متوسط السرعة.
ج. نعم، مع اتصال بطيء السرعة.
د. نعم، لكن لم يكن بإمكانني الوصول إلى شبكة الإنترنت.
هـ. لا، لم يكن لدي اتصال بشبكة الإنترنت.

12- قبل انتشار الوباء، كانت هناك صعوبة في الوصول إلى التكنولوجيا (التعلم عبر الإنترنت) مما حد من قدرة المعلمين على دعم تعلم الطلاب.

- أ. أوافق بشدة.
ب. أوافق.
ج. لا أوافق.
د. لا أوافق بشدة.

13- بما رأيك في هذه العبارة؟

"قبل الوباء كان هناك نقص في معرفة المعلمين بشأن استخدام التكنولوجيا في التدريس والتعلم مما حد من قدرتهم على دعم تعلم الطلاب".

- أ. أوافق بشدة.
ب. أوافق.
ج. لا أوافق.
د. لا أوافق بشدة.

14- يرجى إضافة أي تعليقات حول الوصول إلى التكنولوجيا (التعلم عبر الإنترنت) والتي يمكن أن تكون مفيدة للمعلمين لدعم المتعلمين قبل الوباء.

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الجزء الثاني: أثناء الوباء، مشاركة أولياء الأمور في التعليم أثناء جائحة كورونا.

يرجى الإجابة على الأسئلة التالية:

15- أثناء فترة الوباء، ما هو متوسط عدد مرات تواصل المعلمين مع أولياء الأمور حول تعليم الطلاب وجهاً لوجه خلال السنة الدراسية؟

أ. يوميًا

ب. مرة في الأسبوع

ج. مرة في الشهر.

د. على الأقل مرتين في السنة.

هـ. مرة في السنة.

و. لا ينطبق

16- أثناء فترة الوباء، ما هو متوسط عدد مرات تواصل أولياء الأمور مع المعلمين حول تعليم الطلاب عبر الإنترنت خلال السنة الدراسية؟

أ. يوميًا

ب. مرة في الأسبوع

ج. مرة في الشهر.

د. على الأقل مرتين في السنة.

هـ. مرة في السنة.

و. لا ينطبق

17- أثناء فترة الوباء، كيف كان تواصل المعلمين مع أولياء الأمور؟ (يمكنك اختيار أكثر من إجابة)

أ. عبر الهاتف المحمول

ب. وجهاً لوجه

ج. عبر البريد الإلكتروني

د. عن طريق البوابة التعليمية

هـ. أخرى (يرجى التحديد) _____

18- أثناء فترة الوباء، في محيط مدرستي أشعر أن متوسط دعم أولياء الأمور لتعليم أبنائهم في المنزل كان

- أ. ممتاز
- ب. جيد جداً
- ج. جيد
- د. متوسط
- ه. مقبول

19- أثناء فترة الوباء، ما هو متوسط عدد مرات تشجيعك للمعلمين بالتواصل مع أولياء الأمور فيما يتعلق بتعلم الطلاب؟

- أ. يوميًا
- ب. مرة في الأسبوع
- ج. مرة في الشهر
- د. على الأقل مرتين في السنة
- ه. مرة في السنة
- و. لا ينطبق

20- أثناء فترة الوباء، ما هو متوسط عدد مرات تشجيعك لأولياء الأمور بالتواصل مع المعلمين فيما يتعلق بتعلم الطلاب؟

- أ. يوميًا
- ب. مرة في الأسبوع
- ج. مرة في الشهر
- د. على الأقل مرتين في السنة
- ه. مرة في السنة
- و. لا ينطبق

21- أثناء فترة الوباء، هل كانت لديك إمكانية الوصول إلى شبكة الإنترنت في المدرسة؟

- أ. نعم، مع اتصال عالي السرعة.
ب. نعم، مع اتصال متوسط السرعة.
ج. نعم، مع اتصال بطيء السرعة.
د. نعم، لكن لم يكن بإمكانني الوصول إلى شبكة الإنترنت.
هـ. لا، لم يكن لدي اتصال بشبكة الإنترنت.

22- أثناء فترة الوباء، كانت هناك صعوبة في الوصول إلى التكنولوجيا (التعلم عبر الإنترنت) مما حد من قدرة المعلمين على دعم تعلم الطلاب.

- أ. أوافق بشدة.
ب. أوافق.
ج. لا أوافق.
د. لا أوافق بشدة.

23- ما رأيك في هذه العبارة؟

"أثناء فترة الوباء، كان هناك نقص في معرفة المعلمين بشأن استخدام التكنولوجيا في التدريس والتعلم مما حد من قدرتهم على دعم تعلم الطلاب".

- أ. أوافق بشدة.
ب. أوافق.
ج. لا أوافق.
د. لا أوافق بشدة.

24- يرجى إضافة أي تعليقات حول الوصول إلى التكنولوجيا (التعلم عبر الإنترنت) والتي يمكن أن تكون مفيدة للمعلمين لدعم المتعلمين أثناء فترة الوباء.

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ص م ت : ٩٦٤-١٢٨

25- ما مدى رضاك عن مستوى التكنولوجيا في التعليم في مدارس التعليم الأساسي (الحلقة الثانية) في سلطنة عمان؟

- أ. راضٍ جداً
ب. راضٍ
ج. غير راضٍ
د. مستاء جداً

26- هل تغيرت وجهة نظرك في كيفية التعامل مع أولياء الأمور أثناء فترة الوباء؟

- أ. نعم، تغير كلي.
ب. نعم، تغير محدود.
ج. لا، لم تتغير.

إذا كانت الإجابة "نعم"، يرجى توضيح ذلك؟

27- هل هناك أي تعليقات أو توصيات يمكن إضافتها حول مشاركة أولياء الأمور في مدارس التعليم الأساسي (الحلقة الثانية) في سلطنة عمان قبل وبعد جائحة COVID-19؟

شكراً لكم على وقتكم واهتمامكم.

وأقدر تعاونكم كثيرًا!

سأكون ممتنة للغاية لو سمحتم لي بمعرفة ما إذا كنتم على استعداد للمشاركة في المقابلة أيضاً، فلا تترددوا في التواصل معي على:



(AL-kalbaniyaMM@cardiff.ac.uk)

(mm.alkalbani@yahoo.co.uk)

Appendix G1:

Introductory Letter for the Participants

Research Title: Exploring the perceptions of teachers, parents, and headteachers regarding parental involvement in children's learning in Basic Education Cycle Two schools in Oman.

Dear participant,

I am undertaking this research as a part of a doctoral study focused on teachers, headteachers, and guardians who are taking care of students attending Basic Education Cycle Two schools in Oman.

My name is Maymouna Mohammed Alkalbaniya, I am a mother of three children and have more than 10 years' experience working as a teacher in Basic Education Cycle Two schools in Oman. The purpose of my study is to explore parents', teachers', and headteachers' perceptions of parental involvement in Basic Education Cycle Two schools in Oman before and during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

By completing this 10-minute questionnaire, you will help this research study and help develop an understanding of family-school partnerships in Oman. You will have the opportunity to share your ideas on your involvement in your child's education. Your answers will be anonymous, private, and confidential. For this reason, you are not asked to sign your name on the questionnaire. Your participation would be highly valued.

If you decide to take part in this study, please read the directions for each question carefully and take your time before responding. Please feel free to contact me at (AL-kalbaniyaMM@cardiff.ac.uk) (mm.alkalbani@yahoo.co.uk), if you have any questions concerning the study. Thank you for your time and interest. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Maymouna Mohammed Alkalbaniya

Doctoral Student

School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University

Appendix G2:

Participant Information Sheet in English

Research Title: **Exploring the perceptions of teachers, parents, and headteachers regarding parental involvement in children's learning in Basic Education Cycle Two schools in Oman.**

You are invited to participate in a study to explore parental involvement in children's learning in Basic Education Schools in Oman with the existence of the COVID-19 pandemic. This study is being conducted in partial fulfillment of a Philosophy doctoral degree (PhD) under the supervision of Dr. Alexandra Morgan and Dr. Mark Connolly at the University of Cardiff.

What is the purpose of the study?

To obtain teachers', headteachers', and parents' views and beliefs on their understanding of the real practice of parental involvement with experiencing extraordinary situations during the existence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, to view the importance of parental involvement and its relation to children's learning, and to identify the challenges and obstacles that prevent the effective parental involvement practice in primary schools in Oman.

Why have I been invited?

You have been selected to participate in this study because you are either teacher or headteacher who are dealing with parents in Basic Education School, and you have the experience to be able to talk about the practice of parental involvement in your school/classroom. Furthermore, parents are also invited to participate in this study, and this is because they have children who are attending a Cycle Two school.

What do you have to do in this study? If you consent to participate in this study, you will be invited to contribute data in the following ways:

- Completing a questionnaire that will take up to 20 minutes
- You may then agree to participate in audio-recorded/or non-recorded a follow-up interview for up to 40 minutes. You may choose for the interview to be audio recorded. In case you choose not to have the interview recorded, the researcher will take handwritten notes.

Do I have to take part?

You are under no obligation to participate. You have complete discretion on whether or not to participate in the questionnaire and interview. You will also be able to withdraw without providing a reason at any time. You will be unaffected by your decision to withdraw or not participate.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you decide you would like to take part, the researcher will contact you by telephone or by email. Your involvement in the study would end after which aspect of the project you decide to participate in.

What information do you need from me?

If you agree to take part in the study, firstly you will give data by responding to a questionnaire that will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. If you wish to take part in a follow-up interview, you will indicate this on the questionnaire by ticking the box at the bottom of the questionnaire. Then you can leave your contact details on the questionnaire so that the researcher can contact you. If you decide to participate in the interview, you will answer questions about what your understanding is regarding parental involvement in schools supporting children's learning, with challenges that prevent the effectiveness of parental involvement.

Will I have to do anything differently?

Yes, if you agree to participate in an interview, you will need to find a suitable time to meet with me by choosing your preferable method from the given options.

Are there any side effects, disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no disadvantages or risks to you of taking part in this research apart from the time you have to make available to fill out the questionnaire and participate in a follow-up interview.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Your perspectives will contribute valuable information on how to improve parental involvement to support the education of students and to overcome any possible obstacles for effective practice of parental involvement.

What happens when the research study stops?

The data will be used to prepare a doctoral thesis. The outcomes of this research can help to understand the parents' and educators' perceptions of parental involvement in schooling, which can help to find the appropriate strategies that can make the real practice of parental involvement more effective. Moreover, this study can offer a wide knowledge and understanding of this involvement, which can improve and affect positively the level of students' academic achievement. Additionally, the findings may be used by the researcher to create a seminar programme to help teachers improve their ability to effectively involve parents in school activities.

Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?

All information you will provide during this research will be kept strictly confidential. Your contact information will be stored on a protected database at the University of Cardiff, and we

will adopt a confidentiality policy to comply with data protection laws. Your name will not be included in the data, and it will be shredded and discarded after 5 years using the University's confidential waste disposal systems.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the study will be used to produce a thesis and journal articles. Some of the results might be presented at conferences and seminars. You will not be personally identified in any publications from this study or presentations.

What if something goes wrong or I have a complaint?

The researcher does not expect this research to cause any harm to you, however, if you are concerned you can contact the researcher by email (AL-kalbaniyaMM@cardiff.ac.uk), (mm.alkalbani@yahoo.co.uk). Alternatively, you can contact my supervisors – Dr Mark Connolly (ConnollyM4@cardiff.ac.uk). Dr Alexandra Morgan (MorganA24@cardiff.ac.uk).

Who is organising and funding the research?

I am a doctoral student with a scholarship from the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation in Oman. It is not a commercially funded study. This means, there is no financial benefit to the researcher and participants.

Who has reviewed the study?

All research in Cardiff University is reviewed by an independent Research Ethics Committee to protect your safety, rights wellbeing and dignity. This study has also been reviewed by my doctoral advisors.

Contact for Further Information

If you need any further information about this study please contact: Maymouna Mohammed Alkalbaniya: (0096899568660) (00447465685155)/ (AL-kalbaniyaMM@cardiff.ac.uk), (mm.alkalbani@yahoo.co.uk). Dr Mark Connolly (ConnollyM4@cardiff.ac.uk). Dr Alexandra Morgan (MorganA24@cardiff.ac.uk).

Appendix G3:

Consent Form for Teachers, Headteachers. and Parents

Research Title: Exploring the perceptions of teachers, parents, and headteachers regarding parental involvement in children's learning in Basic Education Cycle Two schools in Oman.

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the research project. I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, I am free to refuse to participate and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time without any penalty or harm.

I agree to participate in the following activities:

- Participate in a questionnaire
- Participate in an interview
- Allow the interview to be audio-recorded I understand that:
 - There is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation at any time.
 - I have the right to refuse permission for any information about me to be released.
 - Any information I provide will only be used for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications.
 - All information I give will be treated as confidential.
 - The researcher will make every effort to preserve my anonymity.

By signing below, I am indicating my consent to participate in this study:

(Signature of participant) ----- (Date) -----

(Printed name of participant) -----

If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact **Maymouna Mohammed Alkalbaniya**: (0096899568660) (00447465685155)/ (AL-kalbaniyaMM@cardiff.ac.uk) (mm.alkalbani@yahoo.co.uk). **Dr Mark Connolly** (ConnollyM4@cardiff.ac.uk). **Dr Alexandra Morgan** (MorganA24@cardiff.ac.uk), or if I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, you can contact the Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee SREC, Cardiff University, Tel +44(0)29 2087 5179 or email socsi-ethics@cardiff.ac.uk

Appendix H1:

Krejcie Morgan's Sample Size Table

<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	100000	384

Note.—*N* is population size. *S* is sample size.

Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970

Appendix I1:
Interview Schedule

DATE	DURATION	PLACE OF INTERVIEW	CODES	DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ABOUT PARTICIPANTS
21/06/2021	From: 08:30 To: 09:20	Google Meet	P1	Mother
22/06/2021	From: 09:10 To: 09:50	Google Meet	T1	Male teacher
23/06/2021	From: 09:30 To: 10:20	via zoom	HT1	Female Headteacher
24/06/2021	From: 16:30 To: 17:00	via zoom	P2	Father
21/06/2021	From: 08:30 To: 09:20	Google Meet	P3	Mother
28/06/2021	From: 08:00 To: 09:10	via zoom	P4	Mother
28/06/2021	From: 11:30 To: 12:20	via zoom	T2	Female teacher
21/10/2021	From: 14:00 To: 15:10	lmo	P5	Mother
27/10/2021	From: 11:15 To: 12:30	via Zoom	P6	Mother

29/10/2021	From: 11:15 To: 12:30	Google Meet	P7	Mother
30/10/2021	From: 11:11 To: 12:20	Google Meet	T3	Female teacher
04/11/2021	From: 12:15 To: 13:05	Google Meet	T4	Female teacher
06/11/2021	From: 06:15 To: 07:00	Google Meet	P8	Father
07/11/2021	From: 10:00 To: 11:30	Google Meet	P9	mother
15/11/2021	From: 11:00 To: 12:30	Imo	P10	mother
23/11/2021	From: 13:00 To: 14:00	Google Meet	P11	mother
06/12/2021	From: 12:00 To: 12:40	Google Meet	HT2	Female headteacher
15/12/2021	From: 10:30 To: 11:40	via Zoom	T5	Female teacher
25/12/2021	From: 09:30 To: 10:10	Google Meet	T6	Female teacher

29/12/2021	From: 14:00 To: 15:15	Imo	T7	Male teacher
09/01/2022	From: 16:00 To: 17:05	via Zoom	T8	Female teacher
2/02/2022	From: 11:00 To: 12:10	Google Meet	HT3	Male headteacher
3/02/2022	From: 15:00 To: 15:40	Google Meet	HT4	Male headteacher
5/02/2022	From: 12:00 To: 13:20	Google Meet	HT5	Female headteacher
12/02/2022	From: 13:00 To: 14:00	via Zoom	HT6	Female headteacher

Appendix I2:

Interview Questions in English

Exploring the perceptions of teachers, parents, and headteachers regarding parental involvement in children's learning in Basic Education Cycle Two schools in Oman.

Introduction:

As part of my doctoral thesis requirement at Cardiff University, I wish to conduct individual interviews to explore teachers', headteachers', and parents' perceptions of parental involvement in schooling in Oman. My name is Maymouna Mohammed Al-kalbaniya and I am a mother of three children besides having the experience of working as a teacher at Basic Education Cycle Two schools in Oman for more than 10 years. The purpose of this interview is to openly express and listen to your thoughts and experiences freely related to communications between homes and schools.

There are no right or wrong answers, and your responses will assist me in advancing my research in this specific concentration and will inform me of the findings of this study.

According to the length of the interview, it will not take more than forty minutes, and the interview will be recorded for transcription and analysis. Your confidentiality is always respected as all the participants will remain anonymous. Furthermore, all the responses will be kept private and safe.

Your involvement in the interview is entirely voluntary, and you can end it up at any time. You will obtain a written transcript of your interview within two weeks, which you can proofread for accuracy. Thank you in advance for your participation and it would be highly valued.

Please feel free to ask if you have any questions before we start the interview.

To protect your identity, please do not say your name at any time during the interview. I will record this interview from beginning to end for a permanent record. Is it okay that I start the process of recording?

Teachers' interview questions

1. Could you please tell me about your personal background (years of experience, which school subject you are teaching)?
2. How would you describe parent-teacher relationships and communication in your school before and during the pandemic? Please describe ways and methods of communication that your school uses either frequently or rarely.
3. Can you tell me about the experiences you have had of working with parents (how they communicate with you, and you communicate with them) before and during the pandemic?
4. Do you think that parental involvement can contribute to learners' learning? Can you please explain how?
5. How do you encourage parents to participate in your classroom? How is technology used to support your practices?
6. Ideally what would you like parental involvement to look like for your learners? What practical approaches do you think would be most effective in achieving this goal? How is technology used to support parents to help learners?
7. Do you think that parents want to be involved in the way you would like them to be?
8. From your experience, what are the challenges of getting parents to act the way you want them to and not to be effectively involved in their sons'/ daughters' schooling? How could you overcome these interferences? Have you already tried any strategies?
9. Has your perspective towards engaging with parents changed as a result of your experiences in the COVID-19 pandemic?
10. Are there any comments you would like to add?

Thank you for your time and interest. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Parents' interview questions

1. Tell me about your own experience of school and education (certificate, number of children you have)?

So, you work - what is your job? Do you feel that this impacts your ability to contribute to your son's/ daughter's learning?

2. Can you tell me about the experiences you have had with your son's/ daughter's school/ teacher? First, can you tell me about how they communicate with you, and how you communicate with them before and during the pandemic?

3. Do you participate at your son's/ daughter's school in any way, before and during the pandemic? If yes, in which way are you participating?

4. Do you feel that your son's/ daughter's school supports you in helping them to learn? Can you explain how? Is it the same way even during the pandemic?

5. Do you feel involved in some of the things your son/ daughter does and learn about in school before and during the pandemic? If yes, how are you involved?

6. Have you been offered the chance to participate in any parental education programmes in your son's/ daughter's school – did you take it up? Why and how was it? Would you participate in similar programmes again?

7. Ideally what would you like parental involvement to look like in your son's/ daughter's school? Can you please give me an example of how you might like that to look?

8. What are the challenges of working in this way with your son's/ daughter's schooling? (What are the limitations of parents and the limitations of schools)?

9. What do you think might help improve this? What are your recommendations?

10. Has your experience of your son's/ daughter's education changed in the last year with experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic? Have you been more involved in your son's/ daughter's learning?

11. Has the way you communicate with teachers changed? Can you explain how?

12. Has your perception (attitude/ beliefs) around engaging with teachers at your son's/ daughter's school changed due to your experiences in the pandemic?

Thank you for your time and interest. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Headteachers' interview questions

1. Could you please tell me about your personal background (years of experience)?
2. How would you describe parent-teacher relationships and communication in your school? How are parents currently involved in your school and before the pandemic? Please describe ways and methods of communication that your school uses either frequently or rarely.
3. How would you describe your role in parental involvement activities in your school? Have things changed/ developed during the time you have been a headteacher? How do you feel about this?
4. Can you tell me about the experiences you have had of working with parents (how they communicate with you, and how you communicate with them) before and during the pandemic?
5. Do you think that parental involvement can contribute to learners' learning? Can you please explain how?
6. How do you encourage parents to participate in your school? How is technology used to support your practices?
7. Ideally what would you like parental involvement to look like in your school? What practical approaches do you think would be most effective in achieving this goal?
8. Do you think that parents want to be involved in the way you would like them to be? How motivated do parents/teachers seem towards involvement?
9. From your experience, what are the challenges of getting parents to act the way you want them to and not to be effectively involved in their sons'/ daughters' schooling? How could you overcome these interferences? Have you already tried any strategies?
10. Has your perspective towards engaging with parents changed as a result of your experiences in the COVID-19 pandemic?
11. Are there any comments you would like to add?

Thank you for your time and interest. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Appendix I3:

Translated Interview Questions in Arabic

دراسة استطلاعية للتعرف على آراء أولياء الأمور والمعلمين ومدراء المدارس حول طبيعة مشاركة أولياء الأمور في مدارس الحلقة الثانية في سلطنة عمان، قبل وخلال جانحة كورونا

هذه الدراسة هي جزء من رسالة الدكتوراه التي أقوم بها في جامعة كارديف في بريطانيا. أريد في إجراء مقابلات فردية لاستكشاف تصورات المعلمين ومديري المدارس وأولياء الأمور حول مشاركة الوالدين في التعليم في عمان. اسمي ميمونة محمد الكلبانية وأنا أم لثلاثة أطفال إلى جانب خبرة عملي كمدرسة في مدارس الحلقة الثانية في مسقط لأكثر من 10 سنوات. الهدف من هذه المقابلة هو التعبير والاستماع بشكل صريح لأفكارك وخبرائك المتعلقة بالتواصل والمشاركة بين المنزل والمدرسة.

لا توجد إجابات صحيحة أو خاطئة، إجاباتك ستساعدني على إكمال بحثي في هذا الجانب وأيضاً ستشكل جزء من نتائج هذه الدراسة.

بالنسبة لمدة المقابلة لن تستغرق أكثر من أربعين دقيقة وسيتم تسجيل المقابلة وذلك لغرض النسخ والتحليل مع احترام سريتك في جميع الأوقات حيث سيبقى جميع المشاركين مجهولين الأسماء. علاوة على ذلك، ستبقى جميع الردود سرية وأمنة.

مشاركتك في المقابلة طوعية تماماً، وكما يمكنك أن تنتهيها في أي وقت ترغب به. ستحصل على نسخة مكتوبة من مقابلتك في غضون أسبوعين، وذلك للتأكد من دقتها.

شكراً لك مقدماً على مشاركتك مع خالص الشكر والتقدير.

لا تتردد في السؤال عما إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة قبل أن نبدأ المقابلة.

من أجل حماية هويتك، يرجى عدم ذكر اسمك في أي وقت أثناء المقابلة، وسوف أقوم بتسجيل المقابلة بعد أن تأذن لي بالبداية بذلك. هل ممكن أن أبدأ عملية التسجيل الآن؟



أسئلة مقابلة المعلمين

1. هل يمكن أن تخبرني من فضلك عن خبرتك واهتماماتك الشخصية؟ (سنوات الخبرة، أي مادة مدرسية تدرسها)؟
2. كيف تصف العلاقة بين أولياء الأمور والمعلمين والتواصل في مدرستك قبل الجائحة وأثناءها؟ يرجى وصف طرق الاتصال التي تستخدمها مدرستك إما بشكل متكرر أو نادرًا.
3. هل يمكن أن تخبرني عن التجارب التي مررت بها في العمل مع أولياء الأمور (كيف يتواصلون معك، وكيف تتواصل معهم) قبل الجائحة وأثناءها؟
4. هل تعتقد أن مشاركة أولياء الأمور يمكن أن تسهم في تعلم أبنائهم؟ وضّح؟
5. كيف تشجع الآباء على المشاركة في الفصل الدراسي الخاص بك؟ كيف يتم استخدام التكنولوجيا لدعم ممارساتك؟
6. من منظور مثالي، كيف تريد أن تبدو مشاركة أولياء الأمور للطلاب لديك؟ ما هي الأساليب العملية التي تظن أنها ستكون أكثر فعالية في تحقيق هذا الهدف؟ كيف تُستخدم التكنولوجيا لدعم الآباء لمساعدة الطلاب؟
7. هل تعتقد أن الآباء يريدون أن يشاركوا بالطريقة التي تريدها؟
8. من واقع خبرتك، ما هي التحديات التي تواجهك في جعل الآباء يتبعون الطريقة التي تريدها وأن يشاركوا بشكل فعلي في تعليم أبنائهم؟ كيف يمكنك التغلب على هذه التحديات؟ هل جربت بالفعل أي استراتيجيات؟
9. هل تغيرت وجهة نظرك في كيفية التعامل مع أولياء الأمور أثناء فترة الوباء؟
10. هل هناك أي تعليقات تود إضافتها؟

شكراً لك على وقتك واهتمامك. نقدر تعاونك كثيرًا.



أسئلة مقابلة أولياء الأمور

1. أخبرني عن تجربتك الخاصة في المدرسة والتعليم (الشهادة، عدد الأطفال لديك)؟
إذا كنت تعمل - ما هي وظيفتك؟ وهل تشعر أن هذا يؤثر على قدرتك على المساهمة في تعلم ابنك / ابنتك؟
2. هل يمكن أن تخبرني عن التجارب التي مررت بها مع مدرس ابنك / مدرسة ابنتك؟ أولاً، هل يمكن أن تخبرني كيف يتواصلون معك، وكيف تتواصل معهم قبل وأثناء الوباء؟
3. هل تشارك في مدرسة ابنك / ابنتك بأي شكل من الأشكال، قبل وأثناء الوباء؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم، فبأي طريقة تشارك؟
4. هل تشعر أن مدرسة ابنك / ابنتك تدعمك لمساعدتهم على التعلم؟ هل يمكن أن توضح كيف؟ هل هي بنفس الطريقة حتى أثناء الجائحة؟
5. هل تشعر بأنك تتدخل في بعض الأشياء التي يقوم بها ابنك / ابنتك ويتعلمها في المدرسة قبل وأثناء الوباء؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم، فكيف تشارك؟
6. هل عرضت عليك فرصة المشاركة في أي من برامج تعليم أولياء الأمور في مدرسة ابنك / ابنتك - هل شاركت فيها؟ لماذا وكيف كانت؟ هل ستشارك في برامج مماثلة مرة أخرى؟
7. من منظور مثالي، كيف تريد أن تبدو مشاركة أولياء الأمور في مدرسة ابنك / ابنتك؟ هل يمكنك أن تعطيني مثالاً على الشكل الذي قد يعجبك أن تبدو عليه؟
8. ما هي تحديات العمل بهذه الطريقة مع تعليم ابنك / ابنتك؟ (ما هي التحديات من جهة أولياء الأمور ومن جهة المدارس والمعلمين)؟
9. ما رأيك في هذه التحديات؟ وما هي توصياتكم؟
10. هل تغيرت تجربتك في تعليم ابنك / ابنتك في العام الماضي بسبب الأوضاع التي فرضتها الجائحة؟ هل شاركت بشكل أكبر في تعلم ابنك / ابنتك؟
11. هل تغيرت طريقة تواصلك مع المعلمين؟ هل يمكن أن توضح كيف؟
12. هل تغيرت وجهة نظرك في كيفية التعامل مع المعلمين أثناء فترة الوباء؟

أسئلة مقابلة مدراء المدارس

1. هل يمكن أن تخبرني من فضلك عن خبرتك الشخصية (سنوات الخبرة)؟
2. كيف تصف العلاقة والتواصل بين أولياء الأمور والمعلمين في مدرستك؟ كيف كانت مشاركة أولياء الأمور في مدرستك قبل وخلال الجائحة؟ يرجى وصف طرق الاتصال التي تستخدمها مدرستك إما بشكل متكرر أو بشكل نادر.
3. كيف تصف دورك في أنشطة مشاركة أولياء الأمور في مدرستك؟ هل تغيرت / تطورت خلال الفترة التي كنت فيها مدير للمدرسة؟ كيف تشعر حيال ذلك؟
4. هل يمكن أن تخبرني عن التجارب التي مررت بها من خلال العمل مع أولياء الأمور (كيف يتواصلون معك، وكيف تتواصل معهم) قبل الجائحة وأثناءها؟
5. هل تعتقد أن مشاركة أولياء الأمور يمكن أن تسهم في تعلم الطلاب؟ هل يمكنك شرح كيف؟
6. كيف تشجع أولياء الأمور على المشاركة في مدرستك؟ وكيف يتم استخدام التكنولوجيا لدعم ذلك؟
7. من منظور مثالي، كيف تريد أن تبدو مشاركة أولياء الأمور في مدرستك؟ ما هي الأساليب العملية التي تعتقد أنها ستكون أكثر فعالية في تحقيق هذا الهدف؟
8. هل تعتقد أن الآباء يريدون أن يشاركوا بالطريقة التي تريدها؟ ما مدى تقبل الآباء والمعلمين لهذه الشراكة بين المدرسة والمنزل؟
9. من واقع خبرتك، ما هي التحديات التي تواجهك في جعل الآباء يتبعون الطريقة التي تريدها وبأن يشاركوا بشكل فعال في تعليم أبنائهم؟ كيف يمكنك التغلب على هذه التحديات؟ هل جربت بالفعل أي استراتيجيات؟
10. هل تغيرت وجهة نظرك في كيفية التعامل مع أولياء الأمور أثناء فترة الوباء؟
11. هل هناك أي تعليقات تود إضافتها؟

Appendix I4:

First Piloting for Interview Questions

Teachers' interview questions

Teacher1 (Am**)

1. Could you please tell me about your personal background (years of experience, which school subject you are teaching)? *I am teaching for twelve years as an English teacher.*
2. How would you describe parent-teacher relationships and communication in your school? Please describe ways and methods of communication that your school uses either frequently or rarely. *I can say that I have a very good relationship with parents. The ways that my school is using right now with Covid-19 are applications like what's App, school portal, emails and sometimes face-to-face communication.*
3. Can you tell me about the experiences you have had of working with parents (how they communicate with you, and you communicate with them)? *I think this is similar to the ways that I said in the previous question, the same tools as (what's App, school portal, emails and sometimes face-to-face communication).*
4. Do you think that parental involvement can contribute to children's learning? Can you please explain how? *Yes, definitely. This is because when parents are involved with their children can help the parents to follow their children learning needs and especially with homework, projects and learning remotely right now. Also, parents can give their feedback to their children's teacher, which can help positively into their children's learning.*
5. How do you encourage parents to participate in your classroom? How is technology used to support your practices? *Each parent prefers to participate in different ways as some parents prefer to communicate by using what's App groups, some of them like to visit the school from time to time, and others like to participate indirectly be other parents. Technology is used to support this practice by using a school platform that I can share and communicate with parents regularly.*
6. Ideally what would you like parental involvement to look like for your learners? What practical approaches do you think would be most effective in achieving this goal? How is technology used to support parents to help learners? *Regular direct contact from schools with parents as we miss this thing in our school, one of the things that we realised by using the school's portal is that the registered contact emails and phone numbers belong to students themselves instead of their parents as this is the biggest issue that we face when we want to communicate with parents.*
7. Do you think that parents want to be involved in the way you would like them to be? *I am not sure, but I feel that parents from this specific age (Cycle Two) would like to be involved in the way that I want them to be more than higher-level grades.*
8. From your experience, what are the challenges of getting parents to act the way you want them to and not to be effectively involved in their children's schooling? How could you overcome these interferences? Have you already tried any strategies? *The most challenging situation that I think parents face with online learning is their (children's independent learning) it is considered as an extra load on parents they have to check that their children are doing their work especially when they have more than one child. This is with the existence of COVID-19 and before this pandemic, I think that most parents were not that much involved with their children's learning except a few of them who were really*

interested. Another challenge that affects PI is the education system in general as there is no policy that encourages parents to be more involved with their children's learning. To overcome these certain challenges, I think there should be more efforts from the Ministry of Education to solve these issues by reducing the number of students in each class so teachers can have individual communication with each parent and have more roles of parents in learning and teaching and this is similar to the international school system. I tried my best to communicate with parents as needed.

9. Has your perspective towards engaging with parents changed as a result of your experiences in the COVID-19 pandemic? No, I think that I have the same perspective.

10. Are there any comments you would like to add? I would like to have more roles of parents in the process of teaching and learning and I think that parents need to be taught how to be active and effective in their children's learning.

Parents' interview questions

Parent (Dh**)

1. Tell me about your own experience of school and education (certificate, number of children you have)? I have a higher diploma and I have three children (Two girls in Cycle One and one girl in Cycle Two).

So, you work - what is your job? Do you feel that this impacts your ability to contribute to your child's learning? No, I am not working, and I think this contributes into my children's learning as I have more time for them, and I try guiding them in their learning as much as I can.

2. Can you tell me about the experiences you have had with your child's school/teacher? First, can you tell me about how they communicate with you, and how you communicate with them? Before the pandemic, we used to communicate face-to-face in meetings, but now we have what's App groups and we share and discuss about children's learning. Sometimes I go to my daughter's school if I have any issues and meet the headteacher.

3. Do you participate at your child's school in any way? If yes, in which way are you participating? I do not participate in any activities.

4. Do you feel that your child's school supports you to help your child to learn? Can you explain how? Yes, the teachers are always communicating with me regarding my daughter's learning. For example, when she forgot to do some work, they directly sent me a direct message to inform me about it.

5. Do you feel involved in some of the things your child does and learn about in school? If yes, how are involved? Yes, I feel that I am involved as I am following what my daughter learned and did in school. Sometimes I attend school events like National day celebrations, and I encourage my daughter to take part in it.

6. Have you been offered the opportunity to participate in any parental education programmes in your child's school – did you take it up? Why and how was it? Would you like to participate in similar programmes again? No, I did not participate in any parental education programmes. Before Covid I did not hear about these programmes but now they have some on zoom and I am thinking of joining them in the coming days if they are interesting.

7. Ideally what would you like parental involvement to look like in your child's school? Can you please give me an example of how you might like that to look? I would like to have more connections between the school and the parents. For example, I would like to have more encouragement from teachers, more advice for parents to guide their children, and more guidance to help children study.
8. What are the challenges of working in this way with your child's schooling? (What are the limitations of parents and limitations of schools)? I think teachers are one of the challenges as sometimes they are not welcoming parents and they do not encourage parents to have a regular connection with them.
9. What do you think might help improve this? What are your recommendations? One of the things is to improve the relationship between parents and teachers. Parents should consider teachers' efforts and deal nicely with them. On the other hand, teachers also should listen to parents and encourage them to be more involved.
10. Has your experience of your child's education changed in the last year with experiencing COVID-19 pandemic? Have you been more involved in your child's learning? Yes, I think my experience has changed since last year as there is too much load on mothers to be more responsible about their children's learning, which takes more time and effort.
11. Has the way you communicate with teachers changed? Can you explain how? No, it is the same, we just have other ways of connection through online communication.
12. Has your perception (attitude/beliefs) around engaging with teachers at your child's school changed due to your experiences in the pandemic? I think yes, it changed as now I feel that parents are more responsible for their children's learning, which was not the same as before. For example, now with online learning when the students do not understand the lesson/activity or when they have a poor connection this will be the parents' responsibility to make sure they solve these issues.

Thank you for your time and interest. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Parents' interview questions

Parent (Am**)

1. Tell me about your own experience of school and education (certificate, number of children you have)? I have bachelor's degree in English, and I have four children.
So, you work - what is your job? Do you feel that this impacts on your ability to contribute to your child's learning? Yes, I am a teacher and I think this really contributes to my children's learning as sometimes I feel that I do not have enough time to spend with my children according to the load of work I have.
2. Can you tell me about the experiences you have had with your child's school/teacher? First, can you tell me about how they communicate with you, and how you communicate with them? I have great experience from my children's schools and teachers. Before the pandemic, it was not that strong communication, however; now with COVID-19 the situation is better as we communicate regularly using what's App groups and the school's portal.
3. Do you participate at your child's school in any way? If yes, in which way are you participating? I used to participate in my children's school before the pandemic by organising some events or some special celebrations, but with online learning, I have not participated yet.

4. Do you feel that your child's school supports you to help your child to learn? Can you explain how? Yes, definitely. I feel that my daughter's teachers support me to help her learn and this is by reminding me that there is a project or work that has to be finished.
5. Do you feel involved in some of the things your child does and learns about in school? If yes, how are involved? Not in a direct way as sometimes when I feel that she needs help, I try to support and guide her, however; I am not involved all the time with the work that she has to do by herself.
6. Have you been offered the opportunity to participate in any parental education programmes in your child's school – did you take it up? Why and how was it? Would you like to participate in similar programmes again? No, I did not participate in any parental education programmes as nothing was offered to me.
7. Ideally what would you like parental involvement to look like in your child's school? Can you please give me an example of how you might like that to look? I would like to have educational programmes for parents that can help them to guide and support their children's learning. Also, I would like to have more communication between parents and teachers that helps to understand the children's needs.
8. What are the challenges of working in this way with your child's schooling? (What are the limitations of parents and the limitations of schools)? I think that the educational system that we have is one of the challenges, as there is a gap between schools and parents. Parents are not involved in the process of teaching and learning and there is no strong connection between the school and parents during the school day unless there is an issue with their children in general.
9. What do you think might help improve this? What are your recommendations? To involve parents more in schools by inviting parents to attend their children's class or by participating in some projects that they do with their children without counting marks on them, just to encourage parents to be involved with their children's learning.
10. Has your experience of your child's education changed in the last year with experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic? Have you been more involved in your child's learning? Sure, I think that all parents are affected, and I feel that I have been more involved in my children's learning especially with the existence of online learning.
11. Has the way you communicate with teachers changed? Can you explain how? I think yes, I have now more communication with my children's teachers as we have remote learning, and communication is better and faster than before the pandemic.
12. Has your perception (attitude / beliefs) around engaging with teachers at your child's school changed due to your experiences in the pandemic? Actually, my perception has not changed as I believe that the major role of teaching is the teacher's responsibility and I think my role is just to monitor and guide, however; experiencing the pandemic I feel that I am more responsible for my children's learning, and I have to take the teachers' role as well.

Thank you for your time and interest. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Parents' interview questions

Parent (Ay**)

1. Tell me about your own experience of school and education (certificate, number of children you have)? I have a bachelor's degree in English, and I have four children.

So, you work - what is your job? Do you feel that this impacts on your ability to contribute to your child's learning? Yes, I am a teacher and I think that it sometimes contributes to my children's learning.

2. Can you tell me about the experiences you have had with your child's school/teacher? First, can you tell me about how they communicate with you, and how you communicate with them? In fact, I have a good relationship with my children's teachers and school, I do communicate with my children's teachers via meetings, and with COVID we use the school portal, what's App groups, and sometimes face-to-face meetings when I need something important.

3. Do you participate at your child's school in any way? If yes, in which way are you participating? I did not participate.

4. Do you feel that your child's school supports you to help your child to learn? Can you explain how? Yes, they do support me. For example, when there is a competition, they send me some information about it, and they encourage the students to take a part on it.

5. Do you feel involved in some of the things your child does and learn about in school? If yes, how are involved? Yes, I feel that I am involved with their learning, and this is when I revise with them some lessons like in science.

6. Have you been offered the opportunity to participate in any parental education programmes in your child's school – did you take it up? Why and how was it? Would you like to participate in similar programmes again? No, I did not participate in any parental education programmes.

7. Ideally what would you like parental involvement to look like in your child's school? Can you please give me an example of how you might like that to look? I would like to see all parents involved with the same level of involvement, not only a group of parents. Also, I would like to have some programmes that can contribute to children's learning and support the parents and teachers at the same time.

8. What are the challenges of working in this way with your child's schooling? (What are the limitations of parents and the limitations of schools)? There is a lack of communication between schools and some parents to support children's learning and this can be related to the meeting times.

9. What do you think might help improve this? What are your recommendations? By asking parents for their suggestions and feedback that can help to improve the learning situation and then the school can find ways to develop new ideas to resolve the existing issues.

10. Has your experience of your child's education changed in the last year with experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic? Have you been more involved in your child's learning? I think that my experience of my children's education has not changed. I have the same level of involvement with their learning just only the ways that have changed.

11. Has the way you communicate with teachers changed? Can you explain how? I think yes, before the pandemic, we had face-to-face meetings, but now most of our communication is by using online meetings and conversations.

12. Has your perception (attitude/beliefs) around engaging with teachers at your child's school changed due to your experiences in the pandemic? [My perception has not changed as I believe that parents and teachers should share the same responsibilities to support children to learn.](#)

Thank you for your time and interest. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Appendix I5:

Second Piloting for Interview Questions

Headteachers' interview questions

Headteachers' interview questions

Headteacher1 (Ba**)

At the beginning, can you please tell me about your personal background (your experience in Education)? I was employed as a teacher in 2002 and I was teaching English for around 7 years. Then, I became a school vice headteacher in 2009. After another 7 years in 2016, I became a headteacher. Therefore, I have around 5 years of experience as a school headteacher.

That is great, can you tell me about your education level? I mean the last certificate you had. I finished my master's in education before I became a headteacher and this was in 2016.

How would you describe parent-teacher relationships and communication in your school before and during the pandemic? Please describe ways and methods of communication that your school uses either frequently or rarely. I can say that now with the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have excellent communication with most parents. Approximately 90% of parents are contacting their kids' teachers and they like to communicate regularly with the school. However, there are a few percentages of parents who are not communicating, and some do not respond to our messages and calls. According to the ways and methods, we are using What's App groups so the parents can receive our messages and notifications and share their comments and concerns at the same time, and they are really glad to have this way of communication. Again, there are some parents who do not care to have communication with school.

So, for these certain groups of parents who are not responding, are you sure that they are receiving your messages? I think yes as we update all the contact numbers for parents every year, and even if they are not responding they are receiving everything that we want them to have. This is maybe they do not like to interact with the school.

Are there any other ways and methods you use currently? Yes, we also use Zoom and Microsoft team programme to have meetings and this is for parents' council or general meetings for parents.

Do you use video or just audio when you have these meetings? Actually, I use video calls and they can join with audio without showing themselves if they like, and most of the parents prefer just using audio only.

Do you have these meetings with parents only? Most of the time, these meetings are with parents, teachers, and me besides the school's administration staff.

That is great, what about the relationship with parents before the pandemic? Before the pandemic, we used the same What's App groups to communicate with parents and this is with the actual meeting (face-to-face regular meeting) when they have any issue or when they have any inquiries regarding their

kids. Before Covid-19 the school's doors were open at any time when the parents felt that they needed anything to discuss it with the school's members.

Do they call before they come to school to have an appointment? Yes, most of the parents call before they visit the school, however, some of them just come to school directly without having an appointment which I believe depends on the level of education and awareness of parents. Sometimes, when we invite the mother to come to school, the father attends and this is according to the situation and the family conditions. However, we welcome both of them if there are any issues related to academic or behavioural issues.

Did you have a regular meeting with parents before the pandemic? We have two regular meetings with parents after each academic semester to discuss the academic achievement of the students at the end of each semester and to discuss the evaluation reports after test results appear. The first meeting is usually held at the end of November and the second one will be at the end of March. Furthermore, other meetings involve the (parents' council), which consists of the parents and teachers who have kids in the school and the headteacher with the vice-principle. Every two years, there is a meeting to revise the previous plan and have another plan for the coming years. This council contains four committees that are responsible for (academic achievement- health, and well-being – activities, and programmes- social state). The numbers of this council depend on the school's capacity and number of students.

Do you think that these meetings are effective and do the parents like to interact in them? I think yes most of the parents are keen to discuss with us and to find the solution for any concerns or issues related to the students in the school and to have a strong relationship with the school that can improve their interaction and get the best results of these meetings. For instance, some parents who are in this council work in different fields as doctors or nurses and they share some useful information and sometimes they do some lectures or presentations in the school with some health campaigns.

So, these are the ways that you use regularly, are there any other methods that you use rarely for communication in your school? This is when we have a specialist in any field to conduct a lecture or a conference in the school, and then we invite parents to attend. This was before the pandemic, and since last year we have been moving to online and virtual lectures.

How can you describe your role in the practice of communication with parents in your school? What are the things that have changed since you became a headteacher? There is little change according to the meeting time with parents. The parents used to visit the school at any time they liked without having a specific time or certain meetings with teachers. However, I think that there should be a specific time for parents to come and see the teachers, if they like them and if they have any concerns or just to follow the progress of their children. Therefore, I put a schedule to allow parents to come to the school and this is twice every month. This can give the teachers the chance to be prepared to have some time for parents if they need any help or support. Also, I considered the working mothers who are not able to attend the meetings at the usual time and have some meetings after school in the evening time. Another thing, in regards to the meeting organisation, I set the meeting room in a way that makes all the parents comfortable with some refreshments by presenting a slide showing all the points that will be discussed

with all important points. Then giving the parents the guidance to the teachers' rooms to discuss their children's progress and educational achievement or any other inquiries they have.

Do the teachers accept to have parents at these times? I mean if it is in the evening time. Actually, according to the current situation, all communications are via phones. For the teachers, at the beginning they refused, and they were not keen on this step as this is an extra task they do, however, they found it really beneficial for the students and the parents as well. Also, to take into consideration the situation of the parents who cannot communicate at school time and all this can be done just by making a call at a specific time. Additionally, I had another challenge some teachers do not like to have groups using what's app in their phones with parents and this was before the pandemic and, then when we moved to online learning, they found it much convincing as they had to communicate with the parents and the students at the same time. This is according to the poor network sometimes or when there is an issue with it or when the educational platform is not working well or running really slow.

Can you tell me about the experiences you have had of working with parents (any experience you had with parents in regards to communication due to any reasons)? Before the pandemic, we used to have a forum every semester with parents and the parents participated with the skills and knowledge they had and also presented and taught the kids some different. For example, some handcraft or any other talents they have.

This is in general. Is there any personal experience you have dealing with parents? It can be before or during the pandemic. Actually, there are many situations and cases I have faced. For example, one student had a manner problem and we tried to find the reasons that caused this problem, and I asked her parents to come to talk and to discuss the issue with them. After we had the conversation with the parents, we realised that the main reason for the problem was the family environment. As the parents do not spend enough time with their child to discuss and provide the child with the right guidance and support to avoid making mistakes.

Do you think that parental involvement can contribute to children's learning? Can you please explain how? Yes, definitely. When the parents are caring and trying to get in touch with teachers to follow their child's learning there is an improvement in the level of academic achievement, and this is even when the parents are not with high qualifications. This is especially true at the early stages of learning, when the child finds attention and proper guidance from the parents and the school this will reflect into their child's level in the next stage, and this is with an improvement in the academic achievement. In the end, this will affect directly the children's future.

You mentioned the students in early stage (Cycle One), what about Cycle Two from grades (5 to 10)? What I have noticed from my experience as a teacher before, and as a parent and a headteacher at the current time, there is a connection and support from parents to their children even when they move to Cycle Two. However, this support and communication decreases when the students grow up and get older. This is according to the level of education of parents as some of them find it difficult for them to continue their support when the curriculums get harder, for example in Math or science. Other parents want their children to be more independent and rely on themselves, at least they need some help or support that can get from their parents. This does not mean that parents are not involved at all, however, they keep asking and giving support and guidance when it is needed. The most important thing, some parents are communicating regularly with teachers to ask about their children's level and the areas that need to be improved.

Do you encourage parents to participate in your school? If yes, how is technology used to support your practices? Yes definitely, this is what I am looking to achieve in my school, as sometimes we face some difficulties with parents who do not contact the schools' members. This caused a gap between the school and homes. I feel that these children who are not being supported by their parents are left behind and some of them feel lost. They really need someone to follow their progress in learning and to continue the support at home, as the school itself is not enough to complete this job.

What about using technology to support this practice? We have been using technology to encourage parents to communicate with us and keep following their children's learning and this is even before the pandemic. We use social networks, for example: Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram accounts to get the parents to be involved in the school activities and to have an update of all the things that we are planning to conduct. This is besides having direct contact with parents using mobile phone apps like what's App groups. During the pandemic, we added online virtual meetings via Zoom or Google classroom.

Ideally what would you like parental participation to look like in your school? What are the practical approaches do you think would be most effective in achieving this goal? I would like to have regular contact from parents with their children's teachers; this can be at least once every month. They have to know more about their children's behaviour and their academic achievement. This is because the month period is not a short time, which can impact directly the rest of the academic year, and when there is any issue, it will be better to solve it from the early stage so it will not become worse.

What about the procedures that can help you to achieve this goal? This is by having more encouragement for parents through some forums or meetings that can be delivered directly or online. Also, to clarify the importance of their role in their children's learning. Another thing is by activating the parents' council to visit parents when there is an issue, and the parents cannot communicate with the school. Also, by organising some competitions that involve parents and have some praise for the best participation and communication from parents. At the same time, I am trying to encourage the teachers as well to make the parents feel that they are welcome to come and to ask at any time they need any help or support.

Ok, that is helpful. You stated that you praise the parents for their participation or for their involvement. Do you think this will negatively affect the other parents, like some of them, due to their jobs? I feel this will encourage the parents more to have this link with the school and what I noticed is that even if the parents (the working mother for example) are really busy or with the challenging nature of work, they are involved more with the schools and with their children's learning if they are really interested in this communication.

You said that you would like to have regular communication between the school and the parents that at least once every month. Do you think that parents would like to have this way of communication? I think if the parents really want the best for their children, sure they will accept and would like to have this communication. And they will try their best to find a way to participate and to be involved, not necessarily every month if they are not able but at least every semester. As the parents' role is really essential and completes the teachers' role with this kind of support.

From your experience, what are the challenges of getting parents to act the way you want them to and not to be effectively involved in their children's schooling? One of the challenges can be related to the school itself, as some schools are not welcoming parents to ask or visit at any time they would like to. Or

it could be the parents themselves, according to the nature of jobs by having long hours or staying away from their homes for several days. This is besides the teachers' appreciation for this type of communication and making the parents feel that they are welcome and comfortable to ask and share their views of the learning process. This is when the teachers really care about the students' benefits and learning they will try to find a way to communicate with the students' parents to have a great improvement in the educational level.

So, you said that there are some factors that affect the level of communication between the school and the parents. How could you overcome these interferences? Have you already tried any strategies? I tried many ways to overcome these challenges, as I tried to discuss these issues with the teachers. They really need to understand the importance of this communication between schools and parents. Also, I tried to show real examples of situations when the teachers succeed in improving the level of their students and this is with the parents' support. Another thing, I believe that when the teacher knows the importance of the parents' communication this will reflect and impact positively on the students' academic level. Therefore, every year when I am writing the teachers' reports and their evaluations, I consider the percentage of students' improvement level in their classes.

This was about the challenges that can be caused by the school environment. What about the challenges that can be related to the parents (for example: their working hours or some certain situation related to their ways of communication) how can you manage to overcome these things? As I said earlier, we are trying to consider these groups of parents who are not able to attend or to be contacted during school time. We have an evening meeting, and we specify times to receive their calls or messages about any concerns they have in regards to their children's learning. And for those who do not like to communicate with the school, we try to encourage them to attend some meetings to discuss with them the importance of their role.

That is brilliant. What about if these parents refuse to attend these meetings and are not keen on this practice of communication with the school? What will you do? Well, it is really difficult as we feel really sorry for the students whose parents are not willing to communicate in regards to their learning. Therefore, in our school, we have a committee that takes care of this specific group of students with some help from their teachers. We try our best to concentrate on them to avoid the negative impact of the lack of parents' communication. As these students really need some extra support, so they do not feel that they are fewer than other students who have educated families with better social life circumstances. For example, the teachers in my schools volunteered to give remedial lessons for the students who need some support that can be at the early time before the first period. Teachers teach them extra lessons in what they need; this can be like the basic skills in reading, writing, or even in Math.

This is brilliant. Can you tell me about your perspective on engaging with parents? Has it changed as a result of your experiences in the COVID-19 pandemic? Actually, my understanding and belief in parents' participation have not changed. On the contrary, I think that the experience of having online learning with school closures at the beginning of the pandemic affected positively the practice of parents' communication with school members. As I noticed that some parents were not that much involved with their children's learning, and they rarely contacted the school before the pandemic. However, this has changed since the appearance of COVID-19 as they become more involved, and they are looking to get

help and guidance from the school to support their children's learning during this difficult time. Actually, most parents like the different ways of communication during the pandemic having more time to be with their children and they enjoy the new experience of online meetings with more flexibility in timing. Most of the parents attended the meetings because the majority of parents were available at home, especially when it was lockdown.

So, does this mean that you believe that parents play a major role in their children's learning? Exactly, as with experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic approve that the parent's role is essential and can support the teachers' role in teaching. This has been approved through the experience of the pandemic as the parents' role in learning is important because they are much closer to their children more than teachers according to the schools' closure and online learning. Now, parents have become more involved with the learning content, and more cooperative with teachers.

Are there any comments you would like to add? Hopefully, this crisis will be over, and life will return to its normal rhythm. However, I would like to continue using the online learning mechanism besides the normal face-to-face learning. Also, to keep the virtual meeting with parents and teachers to support the process of teaching and learning in a better way, this is at least once each semester. We really enjoyed this new experience and I hope that we can facilitate it to improve and enhance children's learning level.

That is interesting, thanks for your time and your contribution.

Teachers' interview questions

Teacher1 (Am**)

Before we start can you please tell me about your personal background in Education? I have been teaching for around thirteen years as an English teacher. Approximately, I taught all the levels starting from year one till year twelve. Besides this, I am a mother of four children.

How would you describe parent-teacher relationships and communication in your school during the pandemic and before it? Please describe ways and methods of communication that your school uses either frequently or rarely. I can say that my school has a very good relationship with parents and the interaction between them is excellent. This is especially for the younger children in grades 5, 6, and 7, as most of the parents are in WhatsApp groups with their children's teachers. There is continuous communication between the parents and the school, and this is even when there are some technical issues. For instance, when there is some issue with the educational platforms, parents have other alternative methods they can use to get connected with the school's members. These can be via What's App, direct call or it can be through visiting school when it is needed. I feel that there is an effective cooperation between the school, parents, and teachers.

So, this is about the parents- teachers relationship during the pandemic, what about before this experience? There is a huge difference in this relationship, I feel that parents after having this experience of the pandemic are more involved with the learning process as they know more about the academic level of their children, which they did not know before the COVID-19. For instance, with online learning with COVID-19, parents know more about homework, projects, exams, and attending classes. Direct communication with parents allows them to know more details that they did not deliver to them in a

regular way before the pandemic. Actually, before the pandemic teachers spent more time and effort to get in contact with parents about the children's learning. This is especially true when the children do not do their homework or when they miss some tests, and they must repeat them.

Great, what about the ways of communication that school used before corona virus? Communication was really limited between school members and parents before the pandemic. As there were only two meetings every year, once in each semester, we had a regular face-to-face meeting. This is in the normal setting; however, if there are any concerns related to the students' behavioural, educational, or other things related to the school system, parents were invited to attend the school to discuss these matters. Otherwise, there was limited communication between the school and the parents, only except if the parents had the desire to attend school regularly to ask and discuss their children's learning and attitude.

Ok, so you mentioned the regular means of communication that were used frequently. What about other methods that were rarely used in communication in your school and this is during and before experiencing the pandemic? Actually, according to the government schools, the parents are not able to attend classes with their children and this can be distinguished by the parents who have experience with private or international schools. For instance, the school specifies a week in the year that allows parents to attend classes with their children, which can help to improve the level of connection between schools and homes. I think the reasons for not having this way of communication in government schools are related to the large number of students in each school exceeding 35 students in each class. Moreover, the facilities in the government schools are not helping to provide this way of communication with parents.

Good, this is before the pandemic. What about the ways of communication that are rarely conducted with online learning (except the normal face-to-face meeting)? According to online learning, we now have two systems for education with the existence of online learning. We have the original reference from the Ministry of Education website that contains all the data of parents, teachers, students, and the Ministry of Education staff. When we started online learning after the schools' closures, the Ministry of Education launched a new educational platform that we use every day to download lessons, share files with our classes, conduct live lessons (synchronized and asynchronous lessons), and other tasks. Nevertheless, there is a limited connection between the two systems I mentioned that is maybe this happened as a result of having this new experience of online learning that we never conducted before. For example, when I want to upload the students' marks, I must do it in the two systems, so the students are able to see it from the platform and the parents as well from the (Educational website). This takes lots of time and effort from the teachers and causes some level of confusion at the same time for parents, students, and teachers as well. Another thing that we struggled with was when we wanted to release the final students' reports; we had to upload them to the Ministry website. However, not all the parents were able to get these reports as some of them forgot the password and some of them did not know how to get it. This is because the educational website is not linked to the educational platform and the parents register their email, contact information, and password on this website. While on the platform, students registered their email with a different password, which caused some confusion.

Can you tell me about the experiences you have had of working with parents (how they communicate with you, and you communicate with them)? One of the experiences that I had with my students'

parents was with a student from grade 9 who had low marks, and she missed a few tests that would make her fail at the end of the year. Therefore, I directly contacted her parents using their contact number and I discussed with them the situation of their daughter via mobile phone. This helped to encourage the student to work harder on the final exam by giving her more support from her parents and with extra guidance from me.

According to the ways of communicating with my students' parents with online learning, first I used the educational platform to send comments and messages to the students and if I did not get responses, I got their parents' contact numbers from the database (the Ministry website or from the school administration office). For instance, I had a student who did not attend lessons and did not want to do the tasks that I was sending. Then, I tried to talk to her by sending some direct messages and she did not reply. Therefore, I contacted her parents directly via phone and I explained the issues that their daughter had, which changed, and became more active afterward.

What about What's App groups? You said earlier those teachers use this app to communicate with parents. In the beginning, I used to use this application, however; I did not feel comfortable with it, and I got annoyed by the huge numbers of messages daily that most of them are not necessary. Honestly, I found it very effective to use the educational platform to communicate with students and parents; and this is because I was teaching grade 9 and they know how to use the online platform.

According to the teachers who are teaching the lower grades like 5, 6, and 7 they found it much easier for them to communicate with their students' parents, mothers in particular. If the situation continues in the same way as online learning, I think I will have another number for parents and students that I can only use at a certain time without getting disturbed by calls or messages at any time.

Do you think that parental involvement can contribute to children's learning? Can you please explain how? Yes, definitely. Parents can really contribute effectively to their children's learning by supporting them and providing them with the right guidance. However, according to the current situation with online learning, parents are not supporting their children; they are doing the tasks by themselves instead of giving their children the chance to think. This is related to many reasons as the students are not motivated to learn and with some difficulty of online learning, they became not that much inserted, and they are disturbed with other things. For instance, online gaming, watching YouTube, and other social networks.

There is no doubt that online learning is totally different from the normal way of learning, the amount of knowledge and information that students receive is not comparable with regular learning. In government schools' students have only three hours daily only, which includes (synchronized and asynchronous lessons). They start from 8 to 11 and they study only three subjects, this is because there are two times and the second time for the other level of students from 11 to 1 pm. This will allow families who have children of different levels to use laptops or the devices in case they do not have more than one in each house. And this will not make the network go slow as well.

I think that these three hours are not enough for the students, which raises the important role of parents to encourage their children and keep following their learning. Parents can check the understanding of their children and support them if they need more help in different ways.

Unfortunately, the current interaction of most parents with their children's learning does not have a positive effect on their learning, and it has negative consequences in the coming years. This is because they are teaching their kids to rely mainly on their parents to do the whole job of learning, starting from

the easiest homework to final tests. During the experience of COVID-19, most of the teachers noticed exaggerated increases in the students' marks that do not reflect their real levels. However, from my own perspective and the experience I had with my daughter, I found that being involved with her learning really helped me to understand the specific support that she needs, and this also affected her level of understanding directly. This does not mean that I am providing everything for her, as I am just following and checking her work, and this is not all the time, because she is responsible also for her learning.

How do you encourage parents to participate in your classroom? How is technology used to support your practices? From my experience, I think that I did not ask parents to participate in my classroom and I did not tell them that they must do this or that thing for their children. However, when I communicate with parents, I just ask them to keep following their children's learning and to concentrate on some skills or if there is any other concern. This is because I think that grade 9 that I am teaching is more independent than other grades in my school like 5, 6, or 7, in which there should be more connection between their parents and teachers. By using technology to communicate with parents, I have used the learning portal to deliver some messages and if it was an important matter or if there was no response via the portal, I used a mobile phone to directly call the parents.

Ideally what would you like parental involvement to look like for your learners? Regular direct contact from schools with parents as we miss this thing in our school, one of the things that we realised by using the school's portal is that the registered contact emails and phone numbers belong to students themselves instead of their parents as this is the biggest issue that we face when we want to communicate with parents.

Do you think that parents want to be involved in the way you would like them to be? I think yes, from my experience with parents, I felt that they were really glad to be contacted by me. This is because they knew that I was looking for the best for my students. For instance, when I contacted the parents regarding their children's learning, I received really positive and effective reactions. Also, I felt that the parents appreciated my communication with them, and I did not feel that any parents were not keen to have any type of connection with me.

From your experience, what are the challenges of getting parents to act the way you want them to and not to be effectively involved in their children's schooling? The first and the biggest challenge that really affects the practice of parents' involvement in their children's learning is what happened at the beginning of the year when we first experienced the COVID-19 pandemic. There was nothing clear from the Ministry of Education about the academic year, when, and how we are going to deal with this crisis. Also, there was no clue about if we were going to use online learning or the regular way. In the beginning, we started online learning, and then we moved to regular learning for two weeks only in the month, after this we returned again to online learning. These caused tensions and confusion for families, students, and school members.

Another challenge is the educational curriculum itself, as there are some lessons that are deleted that are still in the printed books. This leads to confusion for the students and the parents as well when they

want to follow their children. This will be worse if the child is not attending the online lessons regularly or when there is a lack of connection between the parents and the teachers. Moreover, the technical issues that parents face. For example, when they are not able to use technology according to their educational level, or when they are not able to provide more than one device for their children, especially if they have more than two children. This is besides having a strong network to continue following their children's learning, and this will be even really difficult with more children in the same house to be checked by their parents. Furthermore, when both parents are working and some of them work for long hours that affect directly their involvement with their children's learning. Therefore, parents are required to have the desire, and to be patient, to try their best to overcome some of these challenges, and at the same time to participate effectively in their children's learning.

Great, so that was about the challenges that appeared with the existence of the pandemic. What about before the pandemic, what are the challenges that really affect parents' practice? I think the most important thing is the parents' beliefs and perspectives about their practice as if they believe that they are playing a major role in their children's learning and they have to be communicated regularly with the school, this will make a difference in their practice.

So, you mentioned these internal factors that affect the practice of parents' participation. What about the other external factors? The school building and the facilities that are provided in each school do not help to highlight the parents' role in learning. There is the parents' council that I think does not have that powerful role and effect in the schools. This is besides the educational curriculum itself as I mentioned earlier.

Another thing is the educational system itself in the government schools as I mentioned before, as there is a limited space for parents to participate in the schools. In general, there is no policy in our educational system that encourages parents to be more involved with their children's learning. To overcome these certain challenges, I think there should be more efforts from the Ministry of Education to solve these issues by reducing the number of students in each class so teachers can have individual communication with each parent, and to have more roles of parents in learning and teaching and this is similar to the international school system.

Moreover, the school environment really affects the practice of parents' communication. For instance, if the school members encourage the parents and welcome the parents to ask or participate in any way, this really makes a difference in the level of the parents' involvement. Also, when the teachers are more supportive and more flexible when they are dealing with parents, this will help to build a strong relationship and connection between the school and home.

Additionally, I think the schools that are in small villages with small numbers of students are more corporation with each other, as most of them are relatives and everyone supports each other.

According to these challenges that you mentioned, how could you overcome these interferences? Have you already tried any strategies? The most important thing that we have to think about is the personal beliefs that everyone has (I mean parents and teachers), as it is noticeable in our society that there are different concepts between parents and teachers and sometimes this leads to having a conflict at the end. For instance, parents blame teachers if anything goes wrong and vice versa. Some parents are offensive and do not give teachers a chance to explain their views. On the contrary, some teachers think

that they are experts and parents should not interfere as they are in charge. Therefore, if we can manage to have the concept that parents and teachers are all together working, and they have to share the responsibility for the children's learning.

According to the strategies that I have used to overcome some of these challenges, I usually use direct contact with parents if there is any concern. Actually, modern technology has made life easier by using it in communication with parents. I already believe that parents have an essential role in their children's learning, and I would like to have more communication with parents to empower this process.

Has your perspective towards engaging with parents changed as a result of your experiences in the COVID-19 pandemic? As I said before, during the experience of COVID-19 there was a lack of communication between parents and school members except if it was really urgent. Now, the situation has changed with more communication using modern technology that facilitates this process. After having this experience, I am planning to have another phone number specified for contacting parents because I had a really positive impact through the experience of the pandemic. There are many parents who are looking for and really keen to be contacted by teachers as some of them experience difficult social or economic issues that make them unable to participate in their children's learning effectively. This will help to motivate the children to make more effort when they know that there is a strong connection between their teachers and parents.

Are there any comments you would like to add? I would like to return back to the normal way of learning and at the same time, we keep using the educational platform and Google Classroom meetings, and all the online tools that we used during the pandemic. This is to make these tools an extra and additional resource that can be used by the teachers and the students with some supervision of parents as well. For example, these tools can be to do some projects or homework, or even to upload some extra information and lessons during the year. Additionally, teachers can upload some explanations about different lessons that can be a reference for the absent students. Therefore, I would like to have a combination of normal and online learning with some modifications that impact positively on the children's learning level and make the teaching process much easier for teachers.

Also, it would be more effective if there is a link between the educational platform and the Ministry of Education website, so we and the parents get all the data we want with less effort and time.

Additionally, I think that parents need to be taught how to be active and effective in their children's learning.

Parents' interview questions

Parent (Ay)**

Tell me about your own experience of school and education (certificate, number of children you have)? I have a bachelor's degree in English, and I have 20 years of experience as an English teacher. I taught students from grade 5 till grade 12, and I was a senior English teacher for three years. Currently, I am retired, and I have my own home business. I have four children, one daughter who is the oldest one at university, and three sons at school. One of them is in high school and the other two are in primary school.

So, you were working, and you are retired now - Do you feel that when you were working this impacted on your ability to contribute to your child's learning? Yes, a little bit as I think that my work affected sometimes my contribution to my children's learning. Sometimes I was really busy, and I had to do some work at home. However, now I feel that I have more time to support my children and I can manage my time to give them the guidance needed.

Can you tell me about the experiences you have had with your child's school/teacher? First, can you tell me about how they communicate with you, and how you communicate with them? In fact, I have a good relationship with my children's teachers and school, I do communicate with my children's teachers via face-to-face meetings and the annual parents' meeting. Furthermore, if there is an issue or something urgent, I contact them directly by phone, before the pandemic.

Good this was before COVID-19, what about during the pandemic, how do you communicate with your children's teacher? During the experience of Covid-19, there were no face-to-face meetings and I used direct calls if I had anything to ask about. Also, I used the school portal, and What's App groups and sometimes we contacted each other through emails.

Do you have any experience regarding communication with school members about your children's learning? Once my son had an exam and he had some issues related to the exam, I tried to contact his teacher and there was no answer. Then, I tried to contact the administration office and at the same time, I did not get any responses. I know that they were busy, however, I would like to know if there is another way that we can use if we have something urgent or any concerns about our children.

Do you participate at your child's school in any way and this either before or during the pandemic? If yes, in which way are you participating? I do not participate in the school itself, as there were no programmes specified for parents and I did not receive any invitations to join during the academic year.

Do you feel that your child's school supports you to help your child to learn? Can you explain how? Yes, they do support me, and this is through the advice and guidance that I receive from the school's members. Also, they provide the children with the support needed, especially before exams or when they face any difficulty during their learning. For example, when there is a competition, they send me some information about it, and they encourage the students to take part in it.

Do you think that your children's school has the same support for your children during the pandemic? I think it is the same; the only difference is the way they use to support the children. For example, before Covid-19 the school used to give them some support and guidance face-to-face or through some papers (brochures). While during the pandemic the school's members use the learning portal or email to help and guide the children.

Do you feel involved in some of the things your child does and learn about in school before and during the pandemic? If yes, how are you involved? I feel that I am involved with their learning, but not in everything they are learning. As I cannot know all the details about their learning in all subjects they have. Sometimes, I revise with them some lessons like in science when they face some difficulties, or when they have some types of projects, and they need my support.

Have you been offered the chance to participate in any parental education programmes in your child's school – did you take it up? Why and how was it? Would you like to participate in similar programmes again? No, I did not participate in any parental education programmes.

Ideally what would you like parental involvement to look like in your child's school? Can you please give me an example of how you might like that to look? I would like to see all parents involved with the same level of involvement, not only a group of parents, and this can be achieved through different ways like (face-to-face communication or other technological ways). However, the level of parents' participation should be in the middle, not too little and not too much. As parents, they should have knowledge about their children's level of learning and what are the things that they need to support. On the other hand, parents should not interfere in everything that belongs to their children's learning in school. Another thing I would like to have in our schools is some programme that can contribute to children's learning and support the parents and teachers at the same time.

What are the ways that you prefer to have to communicate with your children's teachers? I think the best way to get in touch with teachers is face-to-face communication, which I prefer more than other ways instead using technology and others.

What are the challenges of working in this way with your child's schooling? (What are the limitations of parents and the limitations of schools)? According to the parents who are over-communicating in regard to their children, this can be as a result of some issues or challenges they have with their children that can be related to their children's level of learning or behavioural concerns. Other parents who are not communicating properly, this can be again to some issues that they face (maybe they are too busy, working hours, or they do not want to communicate themselves).

What about the schools? I think that there is a lack of communication between schools and some parents to support children's learning and this can be related to the school's ability and facilities that can encourage parents to be more involved, or the meeting times do not suit the parents especially if they are working for long hours.

What do you think might help improve this? What are your recommendations? When the school has an annual plan that parents should know about, that can be about the learning process and the ways for assessment that they have to follow with their children from the beginning. Additionally, parents should be informed about any activities or events that can help to improve the level of children by using text messages or emails. For example, the exam timetable, the exam results, and other important things; all these parents should know in advance.

Additionally, asking parents for their suggestions and feedback can help to improve the learning situation and then the school can find ways to develop new ideas to resolve the existing issues.

What about your recommendation? I would like to keep using technology besides the normal way of learning for communication and learning and this even the life returns to normal.

Has your experience of your child's education changed in the last year with experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic? Have you been more involved in your child's learning? According to my personal experience with my children learning during the pandemic, I think that my experience of my children's education has not changed. I have the same level of involvement with their learning just only the ways that have changed especially during their assessment and doing projects. I used to revise for them regularly and I checked their work and understanding of their subjects. The things that I felt were different and challenging at the same time are that they do not have the same level of learning acquisition and they were not as interested in learning as they used to be with face-to-face learning. This forces me to spend more effort encouraging them to work hard. Even though they were attending the whole lesson they did not write in their notebooks, and they did not understand everything. Because of the online situation, it was not that much helpful for them to ask for more explanation due to the short time they had for each lesson.

Has the way you communicate with teachers changed? Can you explain how? I think yes, before the pandemic, we had face-to-face meetings, but now most of our communication is by using online meetings and conversations. We still have the same level of communication, only ways have changed.

Has your perception (attitude/beliefs) around engaging with teachers at your child's school changed due to your experiences in the pandemic? My perception has not changed as I believe that parents and teachers should share the same responsibilities to support children to learn. From the Covid-19 experience, I think teachers had a very effective role even in the difficulties they faced. They tried their best to involve parents and students at the same time. They spent lots of effort to learn in no time how to adapt to new technology and move from ordinary learning to online learning. I think that the children themselves were the main challenge as they were not very motivated to learn, and they felt bored sometimes as it was something new for them and they were not used to it.

Thank you for your time and interest. Anything you want to add at the end? Nothing, just as I said before, if life returns to normal, we should not ignore the new way of learning (online learning) and combine it with the normal way. This is because it has some positive effects on students and gives them the chance to be more independent in their learning. This pandemic gave us a new experience and a new lesson that we all learned from it.

Appendix I6:

Themes Table

Themes	Data extracts	Quantitative data	References from the literature
<p>1-conceptions of parental involvement</p> <p>*Academic achievement</p>	<p>P4: Parents' participation in the education process is the duty of every parent and must be among their priorities and responsibilities in life. I noticed the difference in students' levels and behaviour in the case of active participation of parents in the education process, also when the students feel that their parents are interested in this aspect and that there is continuous and effective communication between school and home, the students will be more interested in their studies and even their behaviour and personality are positively affected.</p> <p>P6: From my own perspective, parents' participation at their children's learning is mandatory for every matter. However, from the society's point of view, there is a great reluctance by many parents through my previous experiences at schools.</p> <p>P1: Parents have a very active and significant role in the process of educating their children, and their role is</p>		<p>Zhou (2014) found that teachers and Parents differed significantly on parental expectations, rewards, and educational decision making for the children.</p> <p>Jeynes (2012) Research generally supports the understanding that parent involvement in a child's education can lead to enhanced student outcomes.</p> <p>(Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Xu, Kusher Benson, Mudrey-Camino, & Steiner, 2010) Positive outcomes of parent involvement include the promotion of self-regulatory skills, academic achievement gains, overall grade improvement, and higher graduation rates.</p> <p>(Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, & Doan Holbein, 2005; Kreider, Caspe, Kennedy, & Weiss, 2007; Sheldon, 2007; Tan & Goldberg, 2009; Topor, Keane, Shelton, & Calkins, 2010) In addition, parents' support of learning has been associated with more positive student attitudes toward school, better school attendance, increased self-esteem, and increased motivation to learn.</p>

Appendix I7:

Interview and Research Questions Table

Literature Review	Interviews' Qs	Research Qs
<p>#Gulevska, V. (2018) conducted that there is a tendency of determination of teachers' perceptions of both the benefits of creating productive partnerships with parents, on one side and the barriers that must be overcome, on the other side. Further, there is a need to know more about how teachers can make the school more welcoming for all parents and how parental involvement can palliate the restrictions of poverty for disadvantaged students. Therefore, I am looking to investigate the teachers' perceptions of PI as this can help to create a productive relationship with parents and can help to overcome barriers that both teachers and parents might face.</p> <p># Burns, P. A. (2020) study focused on educators' perspectives on benefits of parent engagement, barriers to parent engagement, and ways to increase parent engagement.</p> <p># Wyness (2020) explored the different ways that teachers enact, apply and challenge the concept of the responsible parent. The study looks at the school's focus on origins, responsibilities and outcomes. According to the finding, there is a 'deficit' discourse among teachers when discussing their engagement with parents. Teachers condemn the practices of parents, through an assessment of pupil behaviour and attitude, but on occasion this critique of parents is a direct consequence of encounters with parents in school.</p>	<p>*What does the term PI mean to you?</p> <p>*What is your experience of the practice of PI in the real field? (Describe the real practice of PI in their setting).</p> <p>*What do you want/expect from the parents?</p> <p>*What are the barriers that you face in terms of getting the most effective outcomes of PI?</p> <p>*How to make the practice of PI more effective? How do the school's members promote PI? Before and during the pandemic.</p>	<p>1)How do teachers/ headteachers perceive PI?</p>

Appendix J1:

Parent–teacher online interaction before and during the pandemic differentiating by number of children in the household (N=1,429)

Parent–teacher online interaction over the academic year before and during the pandemic

Number of children in the household	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before %(N=364)	During %(N=256)	Before %(N=95)	During %(N=126)	Before %(N=222)	During %(N=148)	Before %(N=380)	During %(N=239)	Before %(N=223)	During %(N=267)	Before %(N=145)	During %(N=393)
0–3	26% (159)	18% (112)	7% (43)	8% (51)	16% (97)	11% (67)	27% (164)	17% (107)	16% (99)	18% (109)	9% (53)	28% (169)
4–7	26% (199)	18% (139)	6% (49)	9% (71)	15% (117)	10% (76)	27% (202)	16% (125)	15% (115)	19% (146)	11% (80)	27% (205)
≥8	12% (6)	10% (5)	6% (3)	8% (4)	15% (8)	10% (5)	27% (14)	14% (7)	17% (9)	23% (12)	23% (12)	37% (19)

Appendix J2:

Teachers' online interaction with parents before and during the pandemic differentiating by location (N=655)

Online interaction with parents over the academic year before and during the pandemic

School location	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before %(N=230)	During %(N=121)	Before %(N=58)	During %(N=52)	Before %(N=81)	During %(N=66)	Before %(N=136)	During %(N=95)	Before %(N=105)	During %(N=145)	Before %(N=45)	During %(N=176)
Muscat	45% (39)	26% (23)	9% (8)	10% (9)	18% (16)	16% (14)	15% (13)	9% (8)	7% (6)	15% (13)	6% (5)	23% (20)
Musandam	33% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	33% (1)	33% (1)	0% (0)	33% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	33% (1)	33% (1)
Al Buraimi	33% (6)	22% (4)	6% (1)	11% (2)	6% (1)	6% (1)	33% (6)	6% (1)	17% (3)	17% (3)	6% (1)	39% (7)
Al Batinah North	27% (13)	21% (10)	17% (8)	10% (5)	8% (4)	6% (3)	17% (8)	8% (4)	23% (11)	23% (11)	8% (4)	31% (15)
Al Batinah South	37% (10)	26% (7)	15% (4)	4% (1)	22% (6)	7% (2)	7% (2)	15% (4)	11% (3)	26% (7)	7% (2)	22% (6)
A'Dhahirah	38% (14)	14% (5)	11% (4)	16% (6)	16% (6)	11% (4)	24% (9)	14% (5)	8% (3)	24% (9)	3% (1)	22% (8)
A'Dakhiliya	46% (33)	18% (13)	8% (6)	11% (8)	13% (9)	15% (11)	15% (11)	8% (6)	8% (6)	18% (13)	10% (7)	29% (21)
ASharqiyah North	39% (5)	8% (1)	15% (2)	15% (2)	8% (1)	15% (2)	0% (0)	8% (1)	23% (3)	31% (4)	15% (2)	23% (3)
ASharqiyah South	27% (7)	12% (3)	0% (0)	15% (4)	23% (6)	19% (5)	23% (6)	15% (4)	15% (4)	23% (6)	12% (3)	15% (4)
Al Wusta	45% (14)	23% (7)	6% (2)	3% (1)	13% (4)	13% (4)	13% (4)	10% (3)	19% (6)	23% (7)	3% (1)	29% (9)
Dhofar	30% (88)	16% (48)	8% (23)	5% (14)	9% (27)	7% (19)	26% (77)	20% (58)	21% (60)	25% (72)	6% (18)	28% (82)

Appendix J3:

Teachers' online interaction with parents before and during the pandemic differentiating by number of classes taught per week (N=655)

Online interaction with parents over the academic year before and during the pandemic

Number of classes per week	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before (N=230)	During (N=121)	Before (N=58)	During (N=52)	Before (N=81)	During (N=66)	Before (N=136)	During (N=95)	Before (N=105)	During (N=145)	Before (N=45)	During (N=176)
0-10	36% (31)	20% (17)	14% (12)	5% (4)	12% (10)	8% (7)	15% (13)	15% (13)	15% (13)	24% (21)	9% (8)	29% (25)
11-19	35% (113)	18% (59)	10% (31)	10% (32)	13% (42)	11% (35)	20% (65)	14% (45)	16% (51)	20% (65)	6% (19)	27% (85)
≥20	35% (86)	18% (45)	6% (15)	7% (16)	12% (29)	10% (24)	24% (58)	15% (37)	17% (41)	24% (59)	7% (18)	27% (66)

Appendix J4:

Teachers' online interaction with parents before and during the pandemic differentiating by years of teaching experience (N=655)

Online interaction with parents over the academic year before and during the pandemic

Years of teaching experience	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before (N=230)	During (N=121)	Before (N=58)	During (N=52)	Before (N=81)	During (N=66)	Before (N=136)	During (N=95)	Before (N=105)	During (N=145)	Before (N=45)	During (N=176)
0-5	36% (59)	19% (31)	6% (9)	5% (8)	9% (15)	7% (12)	24% (39)	10% (17)	17% (28)	26% (43)	9% (14)	32% (53)
6-15	34% (112)	17% (56)	9% (30)	8% (25)	14% (46)	13% (41)	21% (68)	16% (51)	18% (58)	23% (75)	4% (14)	24% (80)
≥16	36% (59)	21% (34)	12% (19)	12% (19)	12% (20)	8% (13)	18% (29)	17% (27)	12% (19)	17% (27)	10% (17)	26% (43)

Appendix J5:

Teachers' face-to-face interaction with parents before and during the pandemic differentiating by teachers' highest completed qualification (% of N=655)

Face-to-face interaction with parents over the academic year before and during the pandemic

Highest completed qualification	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before %(N=53)	During %(N=174)	Before %(N=59)	During %(N=78)	Before %(N=197)	During %(N=84)	Before %(N=167)	During %(N=108)	Before %(N=125)	During %(N=101)	Before %(N=54)	During %(N=110)
Diploma	3% (1)	23% (7)	0% (0)	10% (3)	35% (11)	16% (5)	32% (10)	16% (5)	19% (6)	23% (7)	10% (3)	13% (4)
Bachelor's	8% (48)	27% (155)	9% (51)	12% (67)	30% (172)	13% (73)	25% (144)	17% (95)	20% (112)	15% (86)	8% (46)	17% (97)
Master's	4% (2)	26% (12)	17% (8)	15% (7)	30% (14)	13% (6)	26% (12)	15% (7)	13% (6)	17% (8)	11% (5)	15% (7)
PhD	50% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	25% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	25% (1)	25% (1)	25% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	50% (2)

Appendix J6:

Teachers' online interaction with parents before and during the pandemic differentiating by teachers' highest completed qualification (% of N=655)

Online interaction with parents over the academic year before and during the pandemic												
Highest completed qualification	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before %(N=230)	During %(N=121)	Before %(N=58)	During %(N=52)	Before %(N=81)	During %(N=66)	Before %(N=136)	During %(N=95)	Before %(N=105)	During %(N=145)	Before %(N=45)	During %(N=176)
Diploma	36% (11)	19% (6)	7% (2)	3% (1)	10% (3)	13% (4)	16% (5)	16% (5)	13% (4)	16% (5)	19% (6)	32% (10)
Bachelor's	35% (202)	19% (108)	9% (49)	8% (43)	12% (71)	9% (52)	21% (121)	15% (83)	16% (93)	23% (134)	7% (37)	27% (153)
Master's	34% (16)	13% (6)	15% (7)	17% (8)	15% (7)	19% (9)	19% (9)	15% (7)	15% (7)	11% (5)	2% (1)	26% (12)
PhD	25% (1)	25% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	25% (1)	25% (1)	0% (0)	25% (1)	25% (1)	25% (1)	25% (1)

Appendix J7:

Teachers' access to internet at home before and during the pandemic differentiating by their highest completed qualification (% of N=655)

Access to the internet at home before and during the pandemic

Highest completed qualification	No, I did not have access to the internet		Yes, but I could not access internet (due to a weak signal)		Yes, slow or unreliable internet access		Yes, moderate internet access		Yes, high-speed internet access	
	Before (N=58)	During (N=18)	Before (N=20)	During (N=19)	Before (N=112)	During (N=113)	Before (N=295)	During (N=275)	Before (N=170)	During (N=230)
Diploma	13% (4)	3% (1)	6% (2)	3% (1)	26% (8)	16% (5)	32% (10)	35% (11)	23% (7)	42% (13)
Bachelor's	8% (47)	2% (12)	3% (16)	3% (18)	17% (95)	18% (102)	47% (269)	43% (248)	25% (146)	34% (193)
Master's	11% (5)	6% (3)	4% (2)	0% (0)	19% (9)	13% (6)	34% (16)	32% (15)	32% (15)	49% (23)
PhD	50% (2)	50% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	25% (1)	50% (2)	25% (1)

Appendix J8:

Lack of access to technology at school and home that limited teachers' ability to support children's learning before and during the pandemic

Lack of internet access at school and at home that limited teachers' ability to support children's learning before and during the pandemic learning		
	Before %(N=655)	During %(N=655)
I strongly disagree	6% (39)	6% (40)
Disagree	23% (149)	27% (179)
Agree	42% (277)	44% (286)
I strongly agree	29% (190)	23% (150)

Appendix J9:

Lack of teachers' knowledge on using technology in teaching and learning that limited their ability to support children's learning' before and during the pandemic differentiating by school location

Lack of teachers' knowledge on the use of technology in teaching and learning that limited the ability to support children's learning before and during the pandemic								
School location	I strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		I strongly agree	
	Before %(N=18)	During %(N=52)	Before %(N=130)	During %(N=277)	Before %(N=350)	During %(N=235)	Before %(N=157)	During %(N=91)
Muscat	2% (2)	8% (7)	24% (21)	44% (38)	48% (42)	39% (34)	25% (22)	9% (8)
Musandam	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	67% (2)	33% (1)	33% (1)	67% (2)
Al Buraimi	0% (0)	6% (1)	44% (8)	44% (8)	44% (8)	44% (8)	11% (2)	6% (1)
Al Batinah North	8% (4)	8% (4)	17% (8)	46% (22)	42% (20)	27% (13)	33% (16)	19% (9)
Al Batinah South	0% (0)	19% (5)	22% (6)	37% (10)	59% (16)	37% (10)	19% (5)	7% (2)
A'Dhahirah	3% (1)	11% (4)	8% (3)	35% (13)	62% (23)	43% (16)	27% (10)	11% (4)
A'Dakhiliya	4% (3)	6% (4)	21% (15)	54% (39)	54% (39)	29% (21)	21% (15)	11% (8)
ASharqiyah North	0% (0)	0% (0)	8% (1)	46% (6)	62% (8)	31% (4)	31% (4)	23% (3)
ASharqiyah South	0% (0)	8% (2)	27% (7)	31% (8)	50% (13)	35% (9)	23% (6)	27% (7)
Al Wusta	3% (1)	10% (3)	23% (7)	52% (16)	61% (19)	29% (9)	13% (4)	10% (3)
Dhofar	2% (7)	8% (22)	18% (54)	40% (117)	55% (160)	38% (110)	25% (72)	15% (44)

Appendix J10:

Teachers' satisfaction with the level of technology in teaching and learning in Basic Education Schools C2 in Oman (N=655)

Satisfaction with the level of technology in teaching and learning in Basic Education Schools C2 in Oman		
	N=655	Percentage %
Very dissatisfied	26	4%
Dissatisfied	137	21%
Satisfied	387	59%
Very satisfied	105	16%

Appendix J11:

Teachers' encouragement of parents to communicate regarding children's learning before and during the pandemic differentiating by school location (N=655)

Encouragement of parents to communicate regarding children's learning before and during the pandemic

School location	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before %(N=67)	During %(N=66)	Before %(N=32)	During %(N=37)	Before %(N=85)	During %(N=56)	Before %(N=219)	During %(N=136)	Before %(N=168)	During %(N=184)	Before %(N=84)	During %(N=176)
Muscat	15% (13)	13% (11)	6% (5)	9% (8)	18% (16)	10% (9)	37% (32)	24% (21)	15% (13)	18% (16)	9% (8)	25% (22)
Musandam	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	33% (1)	33% (1)	33% (1)	33% (1)	33% (1)	33% (1)
Al Buraimi	6% (1)	11% (2)	11% (2)	6% (1)	11% (2)	6% (1)	39% (7)	28% (5)	33% (6)	22% (4)	0% (0)	28% (5)
Al Batinah North	21% (10)	23% (11)	6% (3)	6% (3)	4% (2)	6% (3)	38% (18)	15% (7)	19% (9)	23% (11)	12% (6)	27% (13)
Al Batinah South	11% (3)	11% (3)	11% (3)	15% (4)	11% (3)	7% (2)	33% (9)	11% (3)	15% (4)	15% (4)	19% (5)	41% (11)
A'Dhahirah	16% (6)	8% (3)	16% (6)	8% (3)	19% (7)	8% (3)	24% (9)	27% (10)	22% (8)	40% (15)	3% (1)	8% (3)
A'Dakhiliya	13% (9)	14% (10)	4% (3)	6% (4)	25% (18)	13% (9)	31% (22)	19% (14)	15% (11)	26% (19)	13% (9)	22% (16)
ASharqiyah North	8% (1)	15% (2)	8% (1)	0% (0)	15% (2)	15% (2)	31% (4)	8% (1)	31% (4)	46% (6)	8% (1)	15% (2)
ASharqiyah South	12% (3)	15% (4)	8% (2)	12% (3)	15% (4)	15% (4)	27% (7)	23% (6)	31% (8)	15% (4)	8% (2)	19% (5)
Al Wusta	7% (2)	3% (1)	0% (0)	3% (1)	13% (4)	9% (3)	26% (8)	13% (4)	38% (12)	32% (10)	16% (5)	39% (12)
Dhofar	6% (19)	7% (19)	3% (7)	3% (10)	9% (27)	7% (20)	35% (102)	22% (64)	31% (92)	32% (94)	16% (46)	29% (86)

Appendix J12:

Teachers' encouragement of parents to communicate regarding children's learning before and during the pandemic differentiating by teachers' number of taught classes per week (N=655)

Encouragement of parents to communicate regarding children's learning before and during the pandemic

Number of classes per week	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before (N=67)	During (N=66)	Before (N=32)	During (N=37)	Before (N=85)	During (N=56)	Before (N=219)	During (N=136)	Before (N=168)	During (N=184)	Before (N=84)	During (N=176)
0-10	13% (11)	14% (12)	7% (6)	7% (6)	13% (11)	6% (5)	31% (27)	17% (15)	27% (23)	34% (29)	10% (9)	23% (20)
11-19	12% (37)	10% (33)	6% (19)	5% (14)	14% (45)	11% (36)	30% (96)	19% (60)	29% (91)	27% (85)	11% (33)	29% (93)
≥20	8% (19)	9% (21)	3% (7)	7% (17)	12% (29)	6% (15)	39% (96)	25% (61)	22% (54)	29% (70)	17% (42)	26% (63)

Appendix J13:

Teachers' encouragement of parents to communicate regarding children's learning before and during the pandemic differentiating by teachers' years of teaching experience (N=655)

Encouragement of parents to communicate regarding children's learning before and during the pandemic

Years of teaching experience	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before (N=67)	During (N=66)	Before (N=32)	During (N=37)	Before (N=85)	During (N=56)	Before (N=219)	During (N=136)	Before (N=168)	During (N=184)	Before (N=84)	During (N=176)
0-5	15% (25)	10% (17)	3% (4)	4% (6)	9% (14)	4% (7)	32% (53)	21% (35)	27% (44)	32% (52)	15% (24)	29% (47)
6-15	8% (25)	8% (25)	5% (15)	7% (22)	15% (49)	11% (36)	33% (109)	21% (68)	27% (88)	27% (88)	13% (42)	27% (89)
≥16	10% (17)	15% (24)	8% (13)	6% (9)	14% (22)	8% (13)	35% (57)	20% (33)	22% (36)	27% (44)	11% (18)	25% (40)

Appendix J14:

Headteachers' perceptions of teachers' face-to-face and online interaction with parents before and during the pandemic differentiating by number of students in school (N=212)

Perceived parent–teacher face-to-face interaction over the academic year before and during the pandemic

Number of students in school	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before % (N=6)	During % (N=32)	Before % (N=24)	During % (N=30)	Before % (N=48)	During % (N=23)	Before % (N=71)	During % (N=60)	Before % (N=42)	During % (N=35)	Before % (N=21)	During % (N=32)
0–100	3% (1)	17% (5)	13% (4)	10% (3)	23% (7)	3% (1)	20% (6)	23% (7)	30% (9)	33% (10)	10% (3)	13% (4)
101–500	2% (2)	15% (14)	8% (8)	15% (14)	21% (20)	11% (10)	36% (34)	30% (28)	23% (22)	15% (14)	10% (9)	16% (15)
≥501	3% (3)	15% (13)	14% (12)	15% (13)	24% (21)	14% (12)	36% (31)	29% (25)	13% (11)	13% (11)	10% (9)	15% (13)

Perceived parent–teacher online interaction over the academic year before and during the pandemic

Number of students in school	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before % (N=56)	During % (N=22)	Before % (N=40)	During % (N=21)	Before % (N=17)	During % (N=18)	Before % (N=49)	During % (N=43)	Before % (N=36)	During % (N=50)	Before % (N=14)	During % (N=58)
0–100	37% (11)	7% (2)	10% (3)	7% (2)	10% (3)	10% (3)	30% (9)	23% (7)	10% (3)	20% (6)	3% (1)	33% (10)
101–500	25% (24)	12% (11)	22% (21)	8% (8)	5% (5)	7% (7)	21% (20)	20% (19)	20% (19)	30% (28)	6% (6)	23% (22)
≥501	24% (21)	13% (9)	18% (16)	13% (11)	10% (9)	9% (8)	23% (20)	20% (17)	16% (14)	18% (16)	8% (7)	30% (26)

Appendix J15:

Lack of access to technology at school limiting teachers' ability to support students' learning before and during the pandemic differentiating by number of students in school (N=212)

Lack of access to technology limiting teachers' ability to support students' learning before and during the pandemic

Number of students in school	I strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		I strongly agree	
	Before (N=9)	During (N=19)	Before (N=44)	During (N=55)	Before (N=101)	During (N=95)	Before (N=58)	During (N=43)
0–100	3% (1)	7% (2)	7% (2)	3% (1)	47% (14)	50% (15)	43% (13)	40% (12)
101–500	3% (3)	11% (10)	20% (19)	27% (26)	47% (45)	38% (36)	30% (28)	24% (23)
≥501	6% (5)	8% (7)	26% (23)	32% (28)	48% (42)	51% (44)	20% (17)	9% (8)

Appendix J16:

Lack of teachers' knowledge of the use of technology limiting their ability to support children's learning before and during the pandemic differentiating by number of students in school (N=212)

Lack of teachers' knowledge of the use of technology limiting the ability to support children's learning before and during the pandemic								
Number of students in school	I strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		I strongly agree	
	Before %(N=11)	During %(N=25)	Before %(N=46)	During %(N=102)	Before %(N=109)	During %(N=63)	Before %(N=46)	During %(N=22)
0–100	0% (0)	7% (2)	7% (2)	33% (10)	60% (18)	40% (12)	33% (10)	20% (6)
101–500	7% (7)	12% (11)	20% (19)	54% (51)	52% (49)	26% (25)	21% (20)	8% (8)
≥501	5% (4)	14% (12)	29% (25)	47% (41)	48% (42)	30% (26)	18% (16)	9% (8)

Appendix J17:

Encouragement of teachers to communicate with parents regarding children's learning before and during the pandemic differentiating by headteachers' highest completed qualification (N=212)

Encouragement of teachers to communicate with parents regarding children's learning before and during the pandemic

Highest completed certificate	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before (N=6)	During (N=4)	Before (N=3)	During (N=6)	Before (N=3)	During (N=5)	Before (N=51)	During (N=23)	Before (N=91)	During (N=62)	Before (N=58)	During (N=112)
Diploma	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	17% (1)	33% (2)	0% (0)	33% (2)	33% (2)	33% (2)	50% (3)
Bachelor's	2% (3)	1% (1)	1% (1)	2% (3)	1% (2)	1% (2)	23% (36)	13% (20)	43% (67)	29% (45)	30% (47)	54% (85)
Master's	6% (3)	6% (3)	4% (2)	6% (3)	2% (1)	4% (2)	27% (13)	6% (3)	44% (21)	31% (15)	17% (8)	46% (22)
PhD	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	50% (1)	0% (0)	50% (1)	100% (2)

Appendix J18:

Encouragement of parents to communicate with teachers regarding children's learning before and during the pandemic differentiating by headteachers' highest completed qualification and number of students in school (N=212)

Encouragement of parents to communicate with teachers regarding children's learning before and during the pandemic

Highest completed certificate	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before % (N=8)	During % (N=5)	Before % (N=9)	During % (N=9)	Before % (N=17)	During % (N=9)	Before % (N=70)	During % (N=58)	Before % (N=61)	During % (N=63)	Before % (N=47)	During % (N=68)
Diploma	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	17% (1)	0% (0)	17% (1)	50% (3)	0% (0)	50% (3)	17% (1)	0% (0)	50% (3)
Bachelor's	3% (5)	1% (2)	4% (6)	5% (7)	8% (13)	3% (5)	31% (49)	29% (45)	28% (43)	28% (44)	26% (40)	34% (53)
Master's	6% (3)	6% (3)	6% (3)	2% (1)	8% (4)	6% (3)	35% (17)	25% (12)	29% (14)	35% (17)	15% (7)	25% (12)
PhD	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	50% (1)	50% (1)	50% (1)	50% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)

Encouragement of parents to communicate with teachers regarding children's learning before and during the pandemic

Number of students in school	Never		Once a year		At least twice a year		Once a month		Once a week		Daily	
	Before % (N=8)	During % (N=5)	Before % (N=9)	During % (N=9)	Before % (N=17)	During % (N=9)	Before % (N=70)	During % (N=58)	Before % (N=61)	During % (N=63)	Before % (N=47)	During % (N=68)
0–100	0% (0)	0% (0)	7% (2)	7% (2)	10% (3)	7% (2)	20% (6)	23% (7)	33% (10)	27% (8)	30% (9)	37% (11)
101–500	6% (6)	3% (3)	3% (3)	4% (4)	7% (7)	1% (1)	34% (32)	27% (26)	27% (26)	39% (37)	22% (21)	25% (24)
≥501	2% (2)	2% (2)	5% (4)	3% (3)	8% (7)	7% (6)	37% (32)	29% (25)	29% (25)	21% (18)	20% (17)	38% (33)

Appendix K1:

Proposed parental involvement (PI) model for the Omani context

The table below summarises the thinking behind the development of the proposed model presented in Section (9.6). The first column presents the key areas from the model, whilst the second column shows the supporting evidence from the literature and findings from this thesis. This table aims to explicitly outline how the model was conceptualised based on these sources.

Key area from the proposed model	Evidence to support the proposed model
<p>1- Communication Enhancement with Stakeholders</p> <p>- Clear, continuous and proactive communication: Employ multiple channels to reach all stakeholders (parents, teachers, and HTs).</p> <p>- Focus Areas: Emphasise the importance of quality adult-child interactions in education, not quantity.</p> <p>- Training Sessions: Organise regular training sessions, workshops, and lectures for educators, parents, and the community. Then, evaluate them.</p> <p>- Cultural Sensitivity: Tailor communication strategies to respect and incorporate Omani cultural nuances in each different setting.</p>	<p>Clear, continuous and proactive communication:</p> <p>Having clear and continuous communication between parents and schools is crucial for supporting children's learning. This helps mitigate the effects of challenges children might face and makes it easier to address issues promptly. Findings from Section (8.1.3) highlight the ideal nature of PI:</p> <p><i>'There should be continuous communication between parents and teachers regarding children's learning, and this is required even from the administrators.'</i> (HT3)</p> <p><i>'There must be continuous communication between the school and parents so that problems do not escalate, if any, and so that the guardians are aware of their children's strengths and know their weaknesses that can help in overcoming them ...'</i> (P8)</p> <p>Moreover, literature supports the need for a two-way flow of information between educators and parents (Loughran 2008). Additionally, proactive communication can enhance the effectiveness of this interaction in supporting children's learning. This proactive approach is part of parental engagement, as described by Goodall (2017) in Sections (9.1.1) and (6.1.3). It involves ongoing</p>

	<p>participatory guidance, where parents are prepared before issues arise and can respond actively to specific events.</p> <p>- Focus Areas:</p> <p>In Section (8.1.4), participants presented their ideal view of parental PI, emphasising the importance of communication and sharing suggestions from both teachers and parents based on their experiences to improve the quality of PI practices.</p> <p>Additionally, in Section (9.1.1), data indicated that there was little acknowledgement from teachers or parents of the potential value of activities that support quality verbal interactions between parents and their children at home.</p> <p>- Training Sessions:</p> <p>In Section (8.1.1), findings from this study indicated that participants stressed the importance of supporting parents by providing them with more educational resources and tools to ease the process of parental participation in children's learning. Furthermore, as presented in Section (2.1), it is necessary not only to provide training and resources to parents but also to implement mechanisms that evaluate and ensure these skills are effectively applied and meet certain standards (Goodall 2019).</p> <p>Additionally, in Section (6.2.3), data indicated a lack of courses for teachers to support parents' participation in children's learning, which can reflect in their practice and encouragement for this practice in real situations. As noted by participant:</p> <p><i>'I also mention that there is a lack of courses that help teachers develop their abilities and skills in teaching and communicating with parents ... There are no training courses for new teachers so that they can give more in terms of relation with parents.'</i> (P6)</p> <p>According to the literature in Section (3.2), it is suggested that professional discussions among teachers, along with training courses, workshops, and lectures, are significant forms of development for teachers (Goodall et al. 2005; Harris et al. 2006).</p>
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	<p>Cultural Sensitivity:</p> <p>From the literature indicated in Section (3.6.1), Omani schools have actively encouraged open communication channels with parents, addressing educational matters related to achievement, behaviour, and other aspects. This practice is well-received by Omani parents, who maintain a strong tradition of PI in elementary schools (Al-Barwani et al. 2012). However, it can be more beneficial to tailor communication strategies according to the different needs and settings of parents and educators. For instance, considering dual-working parents and gender when deciding the most appropriate ways of communication to support children's learning. As noted in Section (8.2.2), participants stated that it can be more challenging for dual-working parents to find time to participate and communicate with the school regarding their children's learning. Additionally, gender segregation in government schools should be considered when planning effective communication strategies. Section (7.2.3) highlighted that applying distance communication during the pandemic helped mitigate this cultural aspect.</p> <p>This is supported by Gorski's (2013) equity-centred practices, as mentioned in Sections (9.1.1) and (2.1). This approach aligns with the need for well-designed communication methods and proactive engagement strategies that consider the varying backgrounds, cultures, and socioeconomic positions of families. Such strategies can better support parents and foster a more inclusive and effective PI framework.</p>
<p>2-Technology Integration at School and Home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital Platforms: Using developing platforms, such as ClassCharts for the Omani context. - Accessibility: Ensure technological solutions are accessible to families with varying socio-economic backgrounds, such as differences in education level, household income, and employment. - Training Programmes: Offer training programmes to improve parents' and educators' digital literacy, ensuring they can effectively use technology to facilitate involvement, and support children's learning. 	<p>- Localised Digital Platforms:</p> <p>Data from this study in Section (8.1.4) suggested that using technology in communication between school and home can be effective in supporting PI and children's learning simultaneously.</p> <p><i>'For me, it may be ideal to use electronic programmes with direct learning to facilitate the process of communicating with parents and students, as it also helps parents to follow up on their children's learning.'</i> (T2)</p>

	<p><i>'We can also use technology in the process of communicating with parents... In addition to facilitating the direct communication, especially in the presence of special circumstances...'</i> (T6)</p> <p>Participants agreed that an ideal practice of PI should include the use of technology to support the learning process and interactive communication between school and home. However, data from Section (7.1.1) showed some barriers to using technology, such as limited internet access before and during the pandemic in most of the eleven Omani governorates at schools and homes. Another challenge was limited material resources, as indicated by teachers and parents during the pandemic. Additionally, participants reported limited skills and knowledge among some parents and teachers in applying technology to support children's learning, especially at the beginning of the pandemic. Therefore, it can be beneficial to consider these barriers and develop a digital platform tailored to the Omani context.</p> <p>- Accessibility:</p> <p>According to the findings of this study (7.1.2), some participants stated that it was challenging to use distance learning, especially for parents with limited income. Parents with low incomes may struggle to afford devices or pay for internet bills.</p> <p><i>'During the pandemic, there were some parents financially unable to acquire electronic devices to help them in the process of educating their children and communication with teachers. Also, their inability to pay internet bills, which also negatively affected the achievement level of their children.'</i> (T4)</p> <p><i>'One of the most important challenges is the lack of devices. This is what many families with limited income faced, as they were unable to provide devices for all their children, and their</i></p>
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	<p><i>inability to pay the cost of the internet ...' (P9)</i></p> <p>Moreover, qualitative data indicated that the number of children can be another barrier combined with financial issues. This impacts families' abilities to support their children's learning by providing them with essential tools to continue their education during distance learning, as experienced by some participants.</p> <p>Therefore, it can be beneficial to consider the different socio-economic backgrounds of families before applying any technological solutions.</p> <p>- Training Programmes:</p> <p>Findings from this study (Section 7.1.3) indicated that teachers complained about limited courses and technological support at the beginning of the pandemic. They mentioned the short training courses and the trainers' ability and knowledge to deliver the course. Therefore, many teachers struggled at the beginning of distance learning.</p> <p>Additionally, in Section (8.1.1), the majority of participants expressed a need for more support in terms of applying technology in learning and communication between parents and schools.</p> <p><i>'There should be more knowledge and awareness of how to use technology to support the parents' and teachers' roles.' (Teachers' survey)</i></p> <p><i>'Parents, teachers, and students should be supported by developing their technological skills.' (Parents' survey)</i></p> <p>Moreover, the findings of this study highlighted the importance of improving the whole society's level of technological awareness, knowledge, and skills, which can lead to more effective results from using technology in home and school settings.</p> <p><i>'Technology must be adapted more effectively in the learning environment and parents'</i></p>
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	<p><i>participation in children's learning.' (HTs' survey)</i></p> <p><i>'There should be more knowledge and awareness of how to use technology to support the parents' and teachers' roles.' (Teachers' survey)</i></p> <p><i>'Parents, teachers, and students should be supported by developing their technological skills.' (Parents' survey)</i></p>
<p>3-Supportive Culture for Teachers</p> <p>- Empowerment: Involve school leaders in planning and decision-making to ensure teachers have the time and resources they need to effectively engage with parents, and include them in parental training programmes</p> <p>- Supportive Environment: Foster a culture that values and promotes teacher involvement in parental involvement activities, such as planning for parents' events and meetings. Creating a welcoming environment that encourages parents to be involved in their children's learning</p> <p>- Professional Development: Provide ongoing training focused on cultural competence and effective PI practices.</p>	<p>- Empowerment and Supportive Environment:</p> <p>From the literature presented in Section (3.2), schools need to establish a welcoming environment in which the school staff are respectful and responsive to parents (Wherry 2009). As argued in the literature, an environment of mutual respect and trust can help foster strong partnerships and successful parental participation (Deslandes et al. 2015). Consequently, this school environment may motivate parents to participate, particularly when the school provides opportunities for them to showcase their skills and areas of expertise, empowering them to contribute to the decision-making process (Knopf and Swick 2008). Additionally, school leaders play a major role in activating PI in a supportive way by displaying enthusiasm and having the ability to build trust and understanding between parents and schools (Riley 2009).</p> <p>Moreover, teachers' time and resources should be considered. As noted in Section (3.1.2), Ludicke and Kortman (2012) found that teachers' busy schedules and multifaceted responsibilities may reduce their time for active engagement with parents. This highlights the need for school-wide policies to support collaboration between parents and schools (Goodall 2022b).</p> <p>- Professional Development:</p> <p>From the literature in Section (3.1.2), scholars provide valuable insights and evidence supporting</p>

	<p>the need for initial training courses for educators on PI (Henderson and Mapp 2002; Hornby 2011; Mandarakas 2014). It is challenging to expect teachers who are not trained in this area to form effective partnerships with parents (Goodall 2022b).</p> <p>Therefore, as mentioned in Section (3.2), high-quality continuing professional development should be made available to school-based staff so they can feel prepared to work well with the families in schools where they are placed (Epstein 2018). Additionally, professional discussions among teachers, along with training courses, workshops, and lectures, are significant forms of development for educators (Goodall et al. 2005; Harris et al. 2006). All these elements can raise awareness of the importance of PI in children's learning; however, they require effort, time, funding, and curriculum space.</p> <p>Regarding this study's findings, there was a lack of courses for teachers to support parents' participation in children's learning, which can reflect in their practice and encouragement for this practice in real situations (Section 3.2.6).</p>
<p>4-Supportive Culture for parents</p> <p>- Resources and Support: Provide resources and support to help parents participate effectively in their children's education. For example, schools can offer workshops on digital literacy, homework assistance, and curriculum understanding.</p> <p>- Inclusive Programmes: Design programmes that accommodate the diverse socio-demographic backgrounds of parents, ensuring all parents can participate regardless of their educational level, income, or job nature.</p>	<p>- Resources and Support:</p> <p>As mentioned in the literature, support from educators for parents and carers can be one of the factors that help improve the level of PI in schooling (Goodall and Vorhaus 2011). This was highlighted in Section (8.1.1). Parents expressed the need for more educational resources, guidance, and tools to support their children's learning. Moreover, the study findings indicated that the role of parents shifted during the pandemic. As parents stated, the pandemic forced most parents to become more involved in their children's learning, highlighting the need for more resources and support from schools. However, parents' satisfaction with teachers' support decreased during the pandemic, with dissatisfaction rising from 21% to 45%.</p> <p>Here are some quotes from parents:</p> <p><i>'Teachers should provide guardians with tools and resources that contribute to the education process, because in many cases the guardian is not</i></p>

	<p><i>familiar with any aspect that the student needs, whether they were via additional websites or other sources.’ (P1)</i></p> <p><i>‘There should be more guidance and direction for the guardian by identifying educational sites, and resources that may benefit students so that they are not distracted with the presence of many different sites. Additionally, guidance may be through simplified videos, workshops, or even lectures provided to parents.’ (P4)</i></p> <p>- Inclusive Programmes:</p> <p>In Section (8.1.1), findings from this study revealed that there was a lack of parental education programmes and courses to help parents support their children’s learning, both before and during the pandemic. This was found in both quantitative and qualitative data. Parents believed that parental courses and educational programmes can be beneficial for them in terms of supporting their children’s learning.</p> <p>Here are some quotes from parents:</p> <p><i>‘I aspire that there will be programmes or courses that can help parents in the process of supporting children’s learning and knowing their obstacles...’ (P1)</i></p> <p><i>‘Further, there may be programmes in which the guardians participate to educate their children and help them to understand the educational content, so that parental participation in education</i></p>
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	<p><i>becomes an effective process.'</i> (P2)</p> <p><i>'On the other hand, there should be courses for parents, for example, on how to develop life skills, such as caring for plants and caring for living organisms. There should be also courses to train parents in ways to help them understand and simplify the lessons.'</i> (P4)</p> <p>From these findings, there is a need to design programmes and courses provided by the Ministry of Education, schools, or teachers to better understand their duties and responsibilities in their children's learning. However, these programmes and courses should accommodate the diverse socio-demographic backgrounds of Omani parents, as parents have different needs, experiences, and socio-demographic backgrounds.</p>
<p>5- Establishing Research-Informed PI Policy</p> <p>- Policy Development: Create a PI policy based on research and best practices in the Omani context, ensuring it is informed by the latest findings.</p> <p>- Integration: Ensure the policy is integrated into the educational system and regularly reviewed.</p>	<p>According to this study's findings in Section (8.1.5), having clear policies and guidelines in the educational system in Oman was one of the participants' ideal views of PI.</p> <p><i>'Unfortunately, there is no clear definition of roles in the educational process, as there is nothing clear that highlights or defines the role of the guardians. Consequently, the roles have become overlapping, especially after the emergence of the pandemic. Therefore, I hope that there will be a specific mechanism and a clear policy in terms of parental role in education sector... In my opinion, there is a lack of a specific system that determines the mechanism of parental support and communication with the school. Unfortunately,</i></p>

	<p><i>government schools rely on self-initiatives.’ (P11)</i></p> <p>This reflects the importance of having a policy that guides and helps to enhance the level of PI practice in Oman. However, there should be applicable steps with clear guidance that can be followed to achieve the desired objectives. Therefore, there is a need to conduct more studies and research to frame a PI policy that suits the Omani context. Additionally, it is essential to ensure the integration of this policy into the educational system and to review it regularly.</p>
<p>6-Funding for PI Initiatives</p> <p>- Targeted Funding: Secure funding specifically for PI initiatives, ensuring it is used to support contextually appropriate practices.</p> <p>- Evidence-Based Allocation: Ensure funding is contingent on clear evidence of ongoing and consistently provided good practice, promoting accountability and effectiveness.</p>	<p>As presented in the literature in Section (3.1.2), school-related variables can occasionally affect PI practice. For instance, a school's culture plays a key role; if it is more autocratic in its management, there will be less practice of PI (Hornby 2000). This becomes obvious when the school believes that there is not much need for parents to get involved due to its high quality of teaching or because they do not want to consume a lot of time and effort from parents.</p> <p>Furthermore, the school environment and facilities also affect PI initiatives and encourage parents to be part of this practice. This was reflected in some of the parents' responses:</p> <p><i>‘The school building and the facilities that are provided in each school do not help to highlight the parents’ role in learning... Another thing is the educational system itself in the government schools as I mentioned before, as there is a limited space for parents to participate in the schools...’</i></p> <p>This highlights the need to financially support schools so they can provide a better environment to support PI practice. However, decisions on funding should be based on reliable data and evidence of successful educational practices. This ensures that resources are allocated to initiatives that have a proven track record of improving student outcomes. Additionally, there is a need for regular assessments, surveys, and evaluations to</p>

	monitor the effectiveness of various programmes and initiatives.
<p>7-Collaboration between Parents, Society, and Schools</p> <p>Volunteering Culture: Encourage a culture of volunteering where parents actively participate in school activities and contribute their skills and talents to benefit students and the school community. For example, invite parents and community members to contribute their skills in various school activities. Parents can volunteer as classroom assistants, help with extracurricular activities, and participate in school events.</p> <p>Community Engagement: Foster strong relationships between parents, schools, and the local community. Parents can share their experiences and skills, assist teachers, and provide lectures or workshops in their areas of expertise.</p> <p>Quality Participation: Focus on the quality of parental participation rather than quantity. Activate parents' councils and involve parents in voluntary work that supports student achievement and behavior improvement.</p>	<p>Based on the findings from Section (8.1.4), participants emphasised the importance of fostering a culture of volunteering, where parents actively engage in school activities and contribute their skills and talents. This approach strengthens relationships between parents, schools, and the community, benefiting the wider community. Parents can enhance the educational process by sharing their expertise, assisting teachers, and delivering lectures in their areas of specialisation. Effective parental participation should prioritise quality over quantity, involving parents in councils and voluntary work to boost student achievement and behavior. Utilising parents' unique skills, such as in poetry or literature, can enrich the educational experience. Collaboration between school, home, and community is crucial for effective PI, ultimately enhancing the learning process. Additionally, exchanging ideas and suggestions between teachers and parents can further improve the quality of PI practices.</p> <p>This approach is consistent with the findings of Harris and Goodall (2007) and Goodall and Montgomery (2014), who stress the significance of active and meaningful PI in children's education across various settings, including schools and the community. Their research indicates that such engagement significantly enhances student outcomes and creates a supportive educational environment. In the context of Oman, fostering parental engagement in learning is an essential next step.</p>