

# The Managers' Role in the Professional Development of Teachers in a Vocational Education and Training Institution

Kenny Muscat  
kenny.muscat@gmail.com

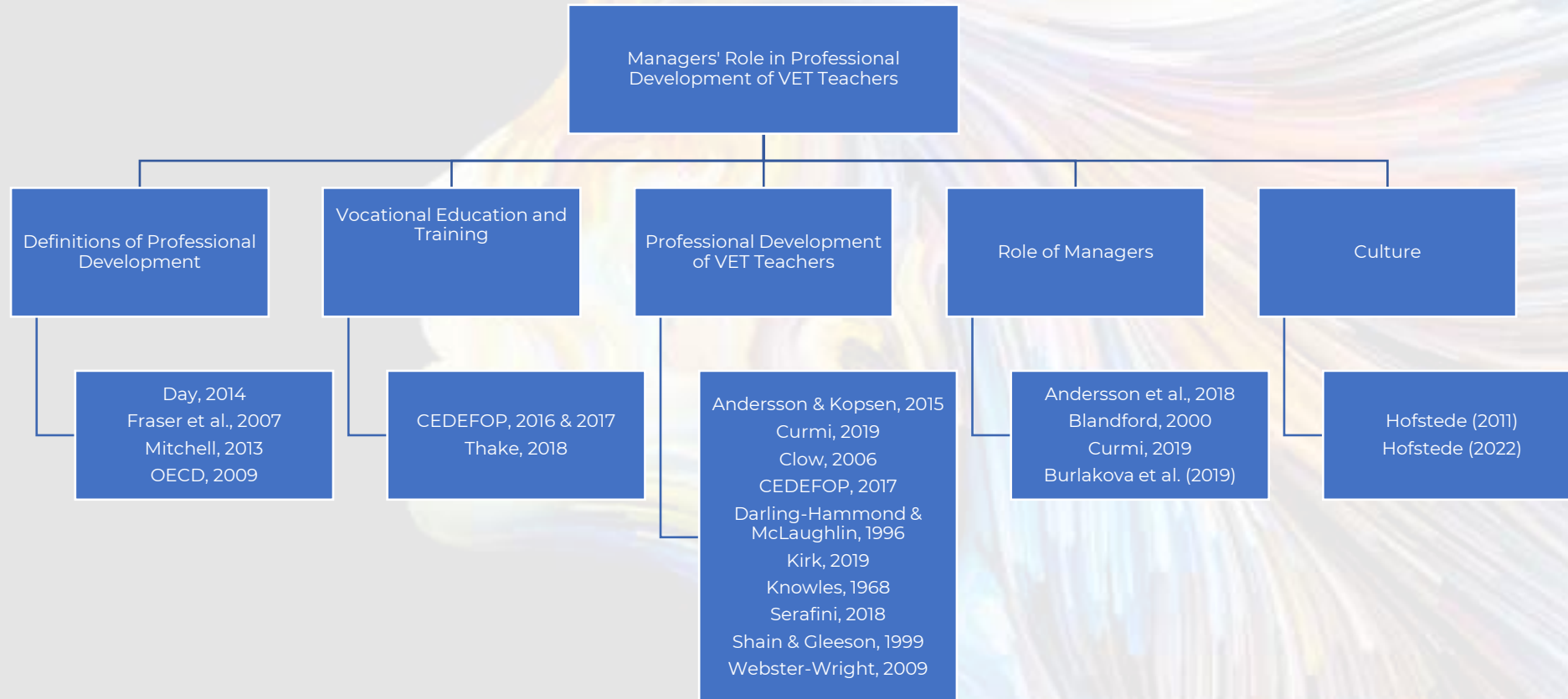
# Introduction

- Vocational education and training (VET) is **increasing its popularity** because of its benefits to both the economy and society.
- VET doesn't exist in a vacuum, and is characterised by **constant change**.
- VET requires teachers that are **dual professionals**, with expertise in:
  - Vocational field
  - Pedagogy
- **Professional development** of VET teachers is **different** from that of other teachers.
- There are **several factors** that affect the VET teachers' professional development, but the **driver** for maintaining and building connections as part of one's growth is the **VET teacher** (Andersson et al., 2018).
- Other actors also influence the professional development of VET teachers, including **managers** as these have an important role in setting direction and overseeing the operations of education institutions.

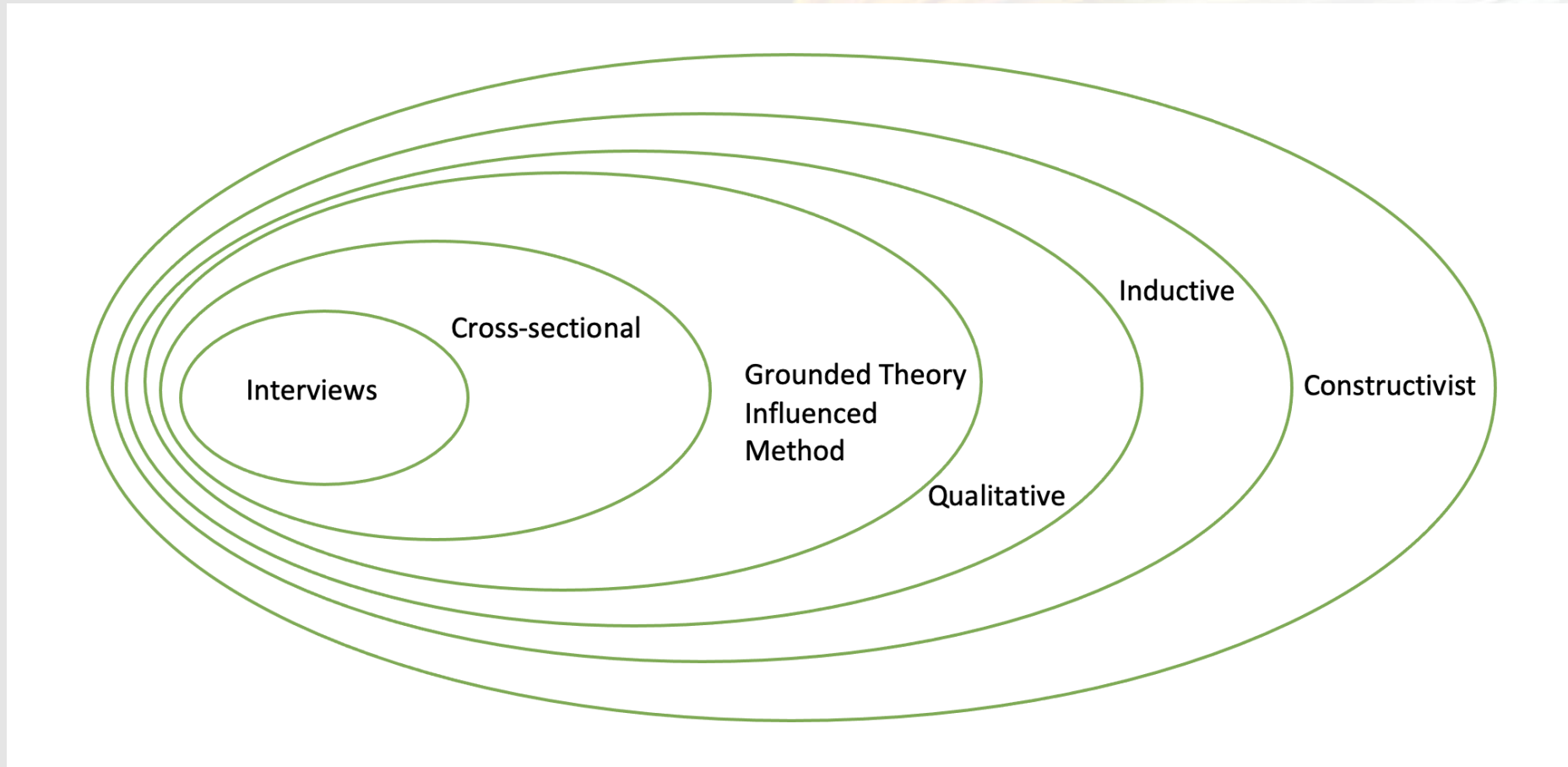
# Research Question

- Main research question:
  - What is the **managers' role** in the VET teachers' professional development in a state-funded education institution in Malta?
- Sub-questions:
  - How do managers engage in professional development and learning themselves?
  - How do managers perceive professional development of VET teachers?
  - What is the managers' influence in the professional development and learning of VET teachers?
  - What are the managers' experiences when involved with the professional development activities of VET teachers?

# Literature Map

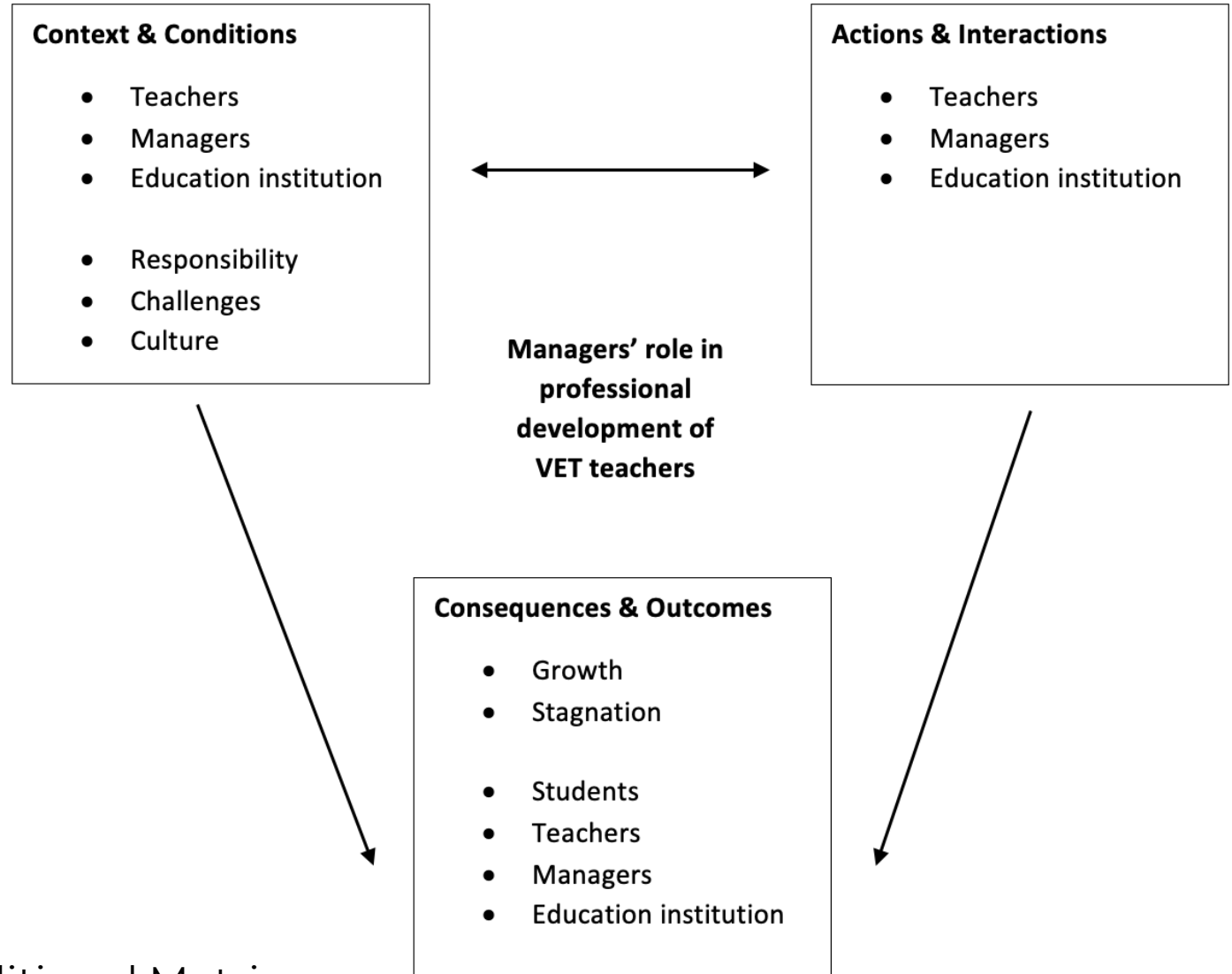


# Methodology



Adapted from Saunders et al. (2016)

# Analysis and Findings



# Context and Conditions

- Managers
  - Aware of importance of professional development; “struggle” with their own professional development; different managers’ personalities, beliefs and values;
- Teachers
  - Dual professionals; various roles and duties; teachers’ enthusiasm for professional development varies; teachers’ work conditions;
- Education Institution
  - Concerns about institution’s culture; existing collective agreement; controlling environment; working in isolation; several opportunities for professional development; teachers who come up with initiatives are supported;
- Responsibility
  - “multi-faceted”; shared responsibility of all;
- Challenges
  - Family and financial commitments; internal and external motivators;
- Culture
  - “transactional” working relationship; things are “calculated”; immediate benefits.

# Actions and Interactions

- Teachers
  - Not all teachers respond equally; different characteristics; teachers influencing each other; expected to engage with different areas of professional development;
- Managers
  - The importance of “encouraging”, “supporting”, “empowering”, “motivating”, and “influencing” teachers; relationship with teachers; need to “push” teachers; making their part in the professional development of VET teachers; they could and should do more; sense of agency of managers is at times questionable;
- Education Institution
  - Different forms of opportunities; would like to see more; not enough support for new teachers; not enough focus on part-time teachers.



# Consequences and Outcomes

- Stagnation
  - Students will “gain much less”;
  - Teachers less likely to participate if there are bureaucratic processes; forcing teachers can backfire; teachers can easily end up “not teaching the [subject] but history of [the subject]”;
  - Managers may feel that their effort had been useless;
  - Education institution’s reputation suffers;
- Growth
  - Students can be offered with more “beneficial” opportunities; behaviour and engagement improve;
  - Teachers can “reignite the flame” when they collaborate; positive influence; teachers that are trusted are “happy” at work; increase “confidence as professionals”;
  - Managers can benefit if they know what’s happening in other units; participating in teachers’ initiatives; more effective relationships with teachers;
  - Education institution offers better quality education; remains relevant to students.

# Concluding Remarks

- Managers are very much **aware** of the importance of the VET teachers' professional development. They feel that they are involved but that they can, and should, do more.
- Professional development leads to the students', the teachers', the managers' and the education institution's **growth**, while lack of this leads to their **stagnation**.
- VET requires more attention to provide **quality education** improve its status.
- Teachers, managers and the education institution have an excellent **opportunity to collaborate together** to maximise the potential of existing opportunities, and to seek further opportunities and adapt as the world **changes**.
- The managers of the institution have a **unique role** to bring all parties together to achieve ambitious targets in VET.
  
- **Limitations** – first time experimenting with GTM; number of interviewees;
- **Future work** – possibility to look at other VET institutions; consider the teachers' point of view.



**Fueling Creative Minds Through Applied  
Qualitative Research 21st-25th Nov 2022**



MCAST

**Thank you for  
your attention!**

Kenny Muscat  
kenny.muscat@gmail.com