

**Investigating the Integration of Authentic Multicultural  
Young Adult Literacy Resources: An Exploratory Study of  
a Bilingual IB International Private Secondary School in  
Dubai**

التحقيق في دمج الموارد الأصيلة لمحو أمية الشباب متعدد الثقافات: دراسة  
استكشافية لمدرسة ثانوية دولية خاصة ثنائية اللغة بنظام البكالوريا الدولية في  
دبي

by  
**LUCIA BERSOTTI**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION  
at  
The British University in Dubai**

**May 2022**

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**Lucia Bersotti**

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Education in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
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**The British University in Dubai  
May 2022**

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## ABSTRACT IN ENGLISH

Even though globalization has urged each nation to give birth to globally competent citizens and future leaders capable to cope with the complexities of the modern world, international private schools still find it difficult to deal with the concept of diversity, providing students with instructional resources imbued with negative and stereotyped portrayals of other cultures, resulting in the perpetuation of a singular dominant view of the discourse about the other.

Supported by the Orientalist and Post-Colonialist, Critical Race Theories, the Culturally Relevant/Transformative Pedagogy, and the Critical Multicultural Education, and in light of the previous studies on the topic demonstrating the urgent need for a change in the design of school curricula to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population as well as for higher quality culturally sensitive teacher education and professional development training programs, this study aimed at investigating the extent to which the IB curriculum of a bilingual international private secondary school located in Dubai is enriched with English-written culturally authentic multicultural literacy resources for secondary students, with a particular emphasis on those portraying Muslim societies.

Adopting a sequential mixed methods design, the study revealed that the selection of these resources as well as the provision of in-service professional development workshops promoting culturally sensitive teaching practices did not rank very high in the school's culture. As a consequence, considering the wealth of the beneficial effects that these resources may have on adolescent students, school leaders, IB specialists, and educators are encouraged to implement their use in the classroom, and teachers' educators to provide trainee and in-service teachers with higher quality culturally sensitive preparation and professional development programs. Since the present study took into consideration a specific case, it would be recommendable that further studies be conducted in the future, not only in other international private schools offering different curricula but also in government schools, and located in the other UAE emirates. Ultimately, the study proved the importance for *imported* educational theories, policies, and curricula to be adjusted to the different cultural contexts in which they are implemented.

## ABSTRACT IN ARABIC

على الرغم من أن العولمة قد حثت كل دولة على ولادة مواطنين أكفاء عالمياً وقادة مستقبلين قادرين على التعامل مع تعقيدات العالم الحديث، لا تزال المدارس الخاصة الدولية تجد صعوبة في التعامل مع مفهوم التنوع، وتزويد الطلاب بالموارد التعليمية المشبعة بالسلبية والصور النمطية للثقافات الأخرى، مما أدى إلى إدامة وجهة نظر سائدة فردية للحوار عن الآخر.

بدعم من المستشرقين وما بعد الاستعمار، ونظريات العرق النقدي، والتربية ذات الصلة بالثقافة / البيداغوجيا التحويلية، والتعليم النقدي متعدد الثقافات، وفي ضوء الدراسات السابقة حول هذا الموضوع التي توضح الحاجة الملحة إلى التغيير في تصميم المناهج الدراسية لتلبية احتياجات مجموعة متنوعة بشكل متزايد من الطلاب بالإضافة إلى برامج تدريب المعلمين والتطوير المهني ذات الجودة العالية والحساسية ثقافياً، وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق في مدى إثراء منهج البكالوريا الدولية لمدرسة ثانوية خاصة دولية ثنائية اللغة تقع في دبي بـموارد محو الأمية متعددة الثقافات والمكتوبة باللغة الإنجليزية لطلاب المرحلة الثانوية، مع التركيز بشكل خاص على تلك التي تصور المجتمعات الإسلامية.

عن طريق اعتماد تصميم أساليب مختلطة متسلسلة، كشفت الدراسة أن اختيار هذه الموارد بالإضافة إلى توفير ورش عمل التطوير المهني أثناء الخدمة التي تعزز ممارسات التدريس الحساسة ثقافياً لم تحتل مرتبة عالية جداً في ثقافة المدرسة. نتيجة لذلك، مع الأخذ في الاعتبار ثروة الآثار المفيدة التي قد تحدثها هذه الموارد على الطلاب المراهقين، قادة المدارس، متخصصي البكالوريا الدولية، والمعلمين، يتم تشجيعهم على تنفيذ استخدامهما في الفصول الدراسية، ومعلمي المعلمين لتوفير المتدربين والمعلمين أثناء الخدمة مع برامج تطوير مهني وإعداد حساسة ثقافياً عالية الجودة. نظراً لأن الدراسة الحالية أخذت بعين الاعتبار حالة معينة، فمن المستحسن إجراء المزيد من الدراسات في المستقبل ليس فقط في المدارس الدولية الخاصة الأخرى التي تقدم مناهج مختلفة ولكن أيضاً في المدارس الحكومية، والتي تقع في الإمارات الأخرى في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة. في النهاية، أثبتت الدراسة أهمية تعديل النظريات والسياسات والمناهج التعليمية المستوردة لتلائم السياقات الثقافية المختلفة التي يتم تنفيذها فيها.

## **DEDICATION**

**To my Daughters Federica and Caterina**

For being my source of inspiration and giving me strength and encouragement throughout this long learning journey.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATION**

ADEC	Abu Dhabi Education Council
ADEK	Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge
SPEA	Sharjah Private Education Authority
MoE	Ministry of Education
UAE	United Arab Emirates
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
KHDA	Knowledge and Human Development Authority
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States of America
IB	International Baccalaureate
4C	Critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity
6C	Citizenship, character
MYP	Middle Year Program
DP	Diploma Program
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
SEN	Special Education Needs
TCK	Third Culture Kids
CMCE	Critical Multicultural Education
CMGE	Critical Multicultural Geography Education
MDAF	Multicultural Content Analysis Form
MMDAF	Multicultural Description Analysis Frame
LBOTE	Language Background Other than English
MCLit	Multicultural Literature Course
IBL	Intervention-based learning
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
EFL	English
ESL	English
CRP	Culturally Relevant Pedagogy
LOMCE	Basic Law on Improving Educational Quality
RD	Rete Dialogues
YA	Young Adult
ACRAS	Aiding Culturally Responsive Assessment in Schools
MTCS	Multicultural Teaching Competence Scale
MMR	Mixed-Methods Research
QUAL	Qualitative
QUAN	Quantitative
CHE	Connectivity, Humanness and Empathy
BUiD	British University in Dubai
E1	Interviewee 1 (Teacher A)
E2	Interviewee 2 (Teacher B)
D1	Document 1 (literacy book selected)

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Overview of the Chapter

The chapter starts with a brief background of the current research, in which a discussion about how globalisation has triggered a worldwide reshaping process of the national educational systems and how the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has responded to the urgent need for providing a quality and accountable education for all the citizens as well as the residents take place. The section ends with the account of the researcher's personal motive for conducting the present study. The contextual analysis of the study, which gives a holistic view of the context where the study is taking place and discusses the UAE educational system and its goals, the statement of the problem, the study purpose, the research questions, the significance and rationale of the study, and finally, the structure of the study are presented in this chapter.

## 1.2 Background and Motivation to the Study

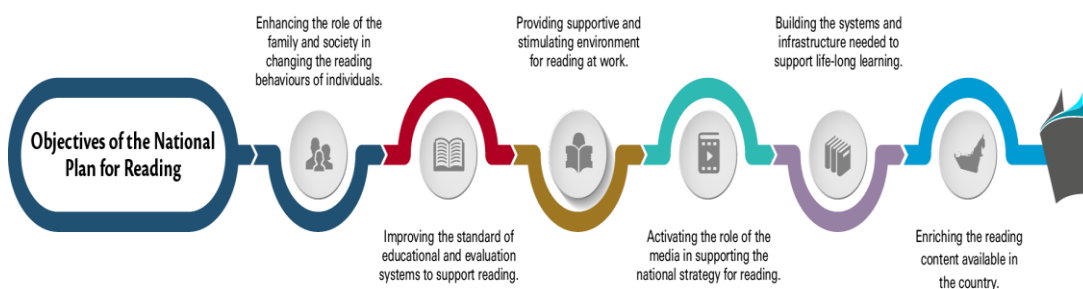
Identity fluidity, borders erosion and worldwide interconnectivity are the three major characteristics of the new era we are living in, which has resulted in the widely held perception that the world has become smaller and in certain ways *flat* (Friedman 2005). Globalization has produced an increasing cultural heterogeneity, which has inevitably posed new challenges and called for a worldwide reshaping process of the national educational systems. In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), it has resulted in an increase in the popularity of the concepts of accountability and quality applied to the educational sector for much of the last decade.

After experiencing an extraordinary economic growth based on oil exports, which was supported by the import of foreign expertise and workforce (Ridge 2009; Suliman 2000), the UAE federal government, under the leadership of Sheikh Khalif, taking over the visionary leadership of the founder of the country, is at present channelling its efforts into establishing a knowledge-based economy to compete internationally (Matsumoto 2019, Gallagher 2019), in line with the UAE's Vision 2021(UAE Vision 2021 2018) mission statement of making the UAE a leading country in the world and providing welfare to the nation.

Aware of the beneficial effects of high-quality education, his Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE's Armed Forces, stated that *[t]he true wealth of a nation lies in its youth... one that is equipped with education and knowledge and which provides the means for building the nation and strengthening its principles to achieve progress on all levels* (MoE School Development Plan 2019, p. 1).

The Ministry of Education (MoE), as the supervising body of education in the UAE, has actively participated in the educational reform process aiming at enhancing the standards and the quality of the national education system. In this respect, being education a fundamental element for the development of a nation, and, consequently, one of the eight pillars of the National Vision of 2021 launched in 2014, the development of a first-rate education system has become a priority. The UAE Vision 2021 aims at fostering teaching methods, projects, and research involving the use of Smart systems and devices, promoting enrolment in preschools, and helping students to excel in international standard tests as for reading, mathematics, science, and Arabic language are concerned through the concerted efforts of effective school leadership and high-quality teachers (UAE Vision 2021 2018).

To achieve those goals several quality-enrichment initiatives have been promoted: 2016, for instance, was declared the Year of Reading and the establishment of a national framework promoting reading skills among students in the UAE so that reading could become a part of their daily routines was urged (Dubai Ministry of Finance 2018). A ten-year national strategic plan (2016-2026) for reading was implemented, consisting, as shown in Fig. 1, of six objectives, five principles, and 34 strategic initiatives.

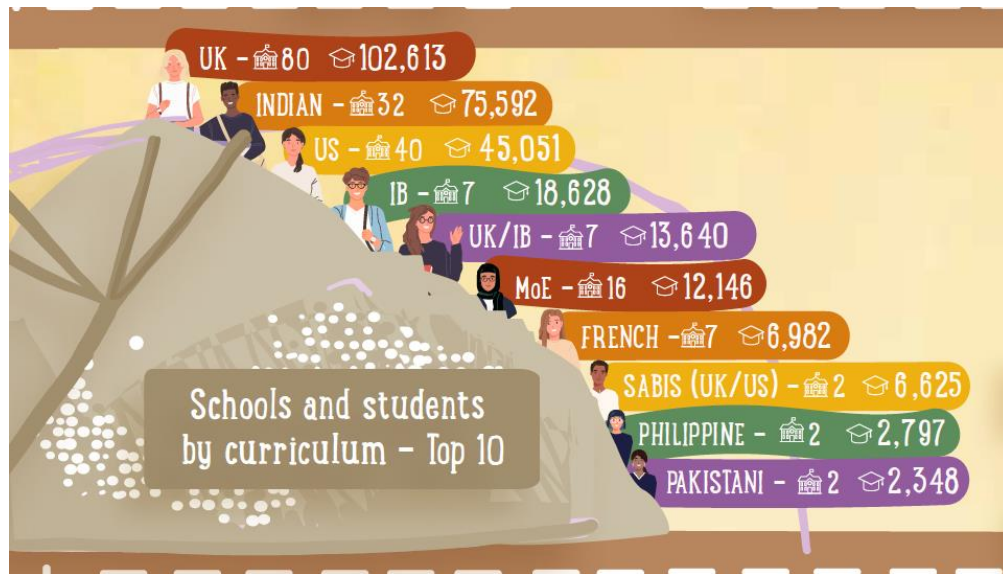


**Fig. 1. Objectives of the National Plan for Reading**  
(Ministry of Finance 2021)

The increasing demand for a professional and skilful workforce has attracted a large number of expatriates, who from across the world moved to the UAE with their families and children transforming the country into a cosmopolitan setting with its seven million of foreign citizens, culturally distributed upon Indians, Pakistani, Arabs, Americans, Australians and Europeans. Consequently, the demand for international schools has substantially risen to cater for the educational needs of the expatriate population and the number of fee-paying private schools is currently growing at a faster rate compared to public schools: in 2010-11, in Dubai 39% of schools were private and 61% were public, by the 2018–19 academic year, the percentage of private schools had increased to 49.6% while the percentage of public schools had decreased to 50.4% (Dubai Statistics 2019).

These schools offer several curricular options (17 in total), as Fig. 2 shows, the most common being the United Kingdom (UK), the United States (US), and the International Baccalaureate (IB) curricula, followed by the French, the Philippine, the Indian, and the Pakistan curricula (KHDA 2021-22), and use the English language as the primary language through which content is delivered while the Arabic language is only used for Arabic language and Islamic Studies classes.





**Fig. 2 Number of schools and students by curriculum**  
Source (Knowledge and Human Development Authority 2021-22)

In 2006, the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) was established in Dubai to regulate the growing private education sector. In Abu Dhabi, the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK), founded in 2005 as the Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC), was responsible for managing and implementing various educational development strategies and initiatives in the emirate. Starting in 2018, ADEC was restructured into ADEK, and its mandate was focused on the licensing, regulation and inspection of private schools in Abu Dhabi, including fees, and investments (ADEK 2020). Additionally, in the emirate of Sharjah, the Sharjah Private Education Authority (SPEA) was established in 2018 to both evaluate and regulate private sector schools and universities in the emirate.

In the remaining emirates, the MOE more directly regulates private schools through its Education Zones. While private schools follow their own national or international curriculum, four subjects are mandatory following MOE regulations: Islamic Education, Arabic Language instruction, UAE Social Studies, and UAE Moral Education. In private schools from grade 1 through to grade 9, students of all nationalities receive Arabic language instruction and participate in one weekly lesson of UAE social studies. For Arab and non-Arab Muslim students, Islamic Studies classes are provided from grade 1 through to grade 12. Moral Studies seek to encourage students to peacefully interact with people from different social and cultural

backgrounds and accept their different perspectives as well as become active global citizens (Ridge et al., 2016)

The sprawling proliferation of the English language as a global language in any sector has sparked a heated debate among scholars about the uncomfortable feeling of a loss in the prestige of the Arabic language in the Arabic countries (Raddawi & Meslem 2015). Since the replacement of the Arabic language with the English language in public schools and universities was perceived as a threat to the UAE national cultural identity (Hopkyns 2014), Habbash and Troudi (2015) emphasised how bilingual education could be the solution to safeguard Arabic as a component of the national identity and culture, while Badry (2011) posited that both the standard and dialectal varieties, coupled with English (or French), could represent the global aspect of a modern Arab identity.

In the attempt to preserve and diffuse the local culture of the UAE, at the initiative of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Community Development, National Studies in Arabic and in English was incorporated in the curriculum of each and every private school as a compulsory subject. The teaching and learning of this subject, following the principles of the multicultural education approach through the use of traditional Emirati terms, the performance of traditional dances, and other forms of Emirati folklore, was monitored by regular field visits to ensure that all the students could benefit from it equally.

This perception of endangerment of the national cultural identity becomes even stronger after considering that according to the KHDA Dubai Private Education Landscape Report (2018) the number of Emirati students enrolled in Dubai private schools in 2018-19 has grown from 32,911 pupils in 2017-18 to 33,630 in 2018-19: an increasing number of Emirati parents prefer to send their children to private schools not only on account of their belief that these schools provide a better-quality education compared to government schools (O' Sullivan 2015; Ridge, Kippels, & ElAsad 2017), but, according to some scholars, but also because they consider the Arabic language inferior to the English language (Raddawi & Meslem 2015).

### 1.3 Statement of the Problem

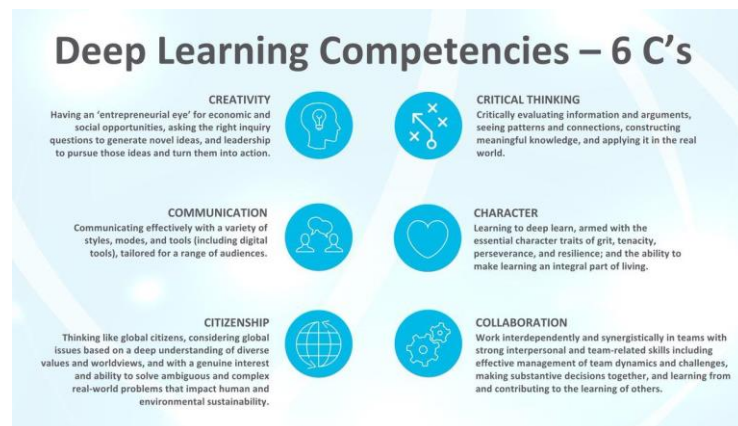
According to the researcher, international private schools were/are still struggling in reducing the dichotomy of *we* and *them* and the great majority of resources available at school, regardless of their formats, did provide the students with negative and stereotyped portrayals of other cultures, with the risk of perpetuating of a singular dominant view of the discourse about the other, to the detriment of the 21<sup>st</sup> social and cross-cultural skills' development (Trilling & Fadel 2009). If in the past, learning by heart rules, figures, and dates for each and every school discipline was considered a necessary learning practice, today, to survive in this rapidly-evolving world, and meet the demands of the future job market, students will need to acquire contents, not skills to apply in it.

According to the Knowledge-and-Skill Rainbow Framework (Trilling & Fadel 2009, Fullan 2017; Reimers & Chung 2016), commonly referred to as the 4 C's (critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity), as shown in Fig. 3, Learning and Innovation Skills, Information, Media and Technology Skills, and Life and Career Skills are the three macro-categories of skills that students are expected to develop for the 21st century. Given the global challenges we are facing, it becomes imperative for each nation to give birth to globally competent citizens and future leaders capable to cope with the complexities of the modern world and collaboratively work at the solution of issues such as climate change, conflict, poverty, hunger, disease, terrorism, equity, and sustainability.



**Fig. 3. The 21 Century Knowledge-and-Skills Rainbow (Trilling & Fadel 2009)**

Adding character and citizenship to the existing 4C skills, the New Pedagogies for Deep Learning (NPDL) proposed the Six Global Competencies of Deep Learning, referred to as the 6C's (Fullan, Quinn, & McEachen 2018). The following picture shows the dimension of each competence in detail (Fig. 4):



**Fig 4. The Six Deep Learning Competencies**  
(Fullan, Quinn, & McEachen 2018)

The 6 C's differ from the traditional ones in comprehensiveness, precision, and measurability: all disciplines and levels of growth should aim at developing these competencies, each competence is broken down into four or five dimensions that provide a precise idea of the skills, capabilities, and attitudes that students need to acquire, and Deep Learning Progressions enable teachers to monitor their students' progress and growth over time.

The philosophy underlying Deep Learning is the belief that it enables learners to act upon the world transforming themselves as well as the world itself. Furthermore, it serves several learning purposes, such as an increase in students' engagement through personalization and ownership, the establishment of students' connection to the real world, which can be particularly important for students from other cultures, the appreciation of spiritual values (whether secular or religious), the development of self-confidence, and self-efficacy skills through inquiry, the creation of new relationships with and between the learners, their family,

their communities, and their teachers, and the satisfaction of the human desire *to connect with others to do good* (Fullan, Quinn, & McEachen 2018, p. 13).

However, to fully avail of the benefits of the 6 C's, a pedagogical shift entailing the redefinition of the instructional practices and the roles of the main actors involved in the learning process becomes imperative, but at the same time, potentially painful for all stakeholders (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019). A *whole system change* is needed, which becomes feasible through a process of co-learning and co-development. Three phases of change have been identified: the first phase, *clarity*, involves the establishment of a clear and shared vision which fosters the teachers' collaborative inquiry; the second, *depth*, occurs when teachers and leaders have reached a greater precision in selecting pedagogical practices; and the third phase, *sustainability*, calls for the spreading of those pedagogical practices from schools to districts and clusters (Fullan, Quinn, & McEachen 2018).

The therapeutic use of literature or literary media (i.e., short stories, fiction, nonfiction, poetry) in educational settings among children and adolescents, namely bibliotherapy, has turned out to be a successful pedagogical tool for facilitating learners' social and emotional developmental growth by fostering self-awareness, self-esteem, and emotional maturity. It is also believed that it may encourage students to develop life skills, enhances self-image, and allow adolescents a deeper understanding of themselves (McCullis & Chamberlain 2013). It may involve reading and guided discussions of fiction (characters, themes, and plot) or nonfiction books with related writing activities, which can be done in small group settings or independent self-guided study.

The beneficial effects of using authentic multicultural literacy resources within the classroom have been emphasised by a considerable amount of literature published on the topic. Bishop (1990a) and Hefflin (2002) argued that not only students must be exposed to high quality and authentic multicultural literature in the classroom, but it is also important to integrate those culturally sensitive texts into the school curriculum. According to D'Angelo and Dixey (2001), more positive students' attitudes can be promoted through the use of authentic children's literature. Accepting Glazer's (1997) list of criteria, the authors posited the importance of

maintaining a balance of cultures in the books available to children and used by teachers at schools.

Multicultural literacy practices provide *mirrors* (Bishop 1990b) through which students can read about worlds that are similar to their own and learn to appreciate and respect the differences of cultures other than their own (Stallworth, Gibbons, & Faubern 2006, p. 480; Souto-Manning 2009; Landt 2006; Wanless & Crawford 2016). If they cannot find similarities in the books they read, they may be led to think that *they are devalued in the society of which they are a part* (Bishop 1990b, p. 557), and consequently grow up with an exaggerated sense of their own importance and value in the world reflected (Bishop 1990b, p. x). As maintained by Copenhaver-Johnson, Bowman & Johnson (2007), literature-based conversations may help students broaden their knowledge about race and power, and overcome *dysconsciousness*, which is defined as *an uncritical habit of mind (including perceptions, attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs) that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as given* (King 1991, p. 135).

Therefore, the adoption of a critical emancipatory multiculturalism approach for literature teaching using *diverse texts with authentic content and themes written by knowledgeable cultural insiders* was highly recommended (Möller 2012, p. 33; Oslick 2013), since it was found to help elementary students interact with the others, become more understanding and tolerant, develop their cultural and social identities as well as self-esteem and sense of belonging (Crowley, Fountain, & Torres 2012; O'Neill 2010). Furthermore, as maintained by a great number of scholars (Gay 2018; Al-Mahrooqi 2013; Christ & Sharma 2017; Ebe 2010; Keene & Zimmermann 2013; McCullough 2013; Ramirez & Meyer 2015), the use of culturally relevant books may enhance the students' literacy outcomes as well as their ability to make connections. Last but not least, culturally relevant texts, as pinpointed by Herczog (2020), may be used in the classroom to address the ten themes of Social Studies: Culture, Time, Continuity, and Change, People, Places, and Environments, Individual, Development, and Identity, Individuals, Groups, and Institutions, Power, Authority, and Governance, Production, Distribution, and Consumption, Science, Technology, and Society, Global Connections, and Civic Ideals and Practices.

To the researcher's best knowledge, nonetheless, this issue has received far too little attention in the local extant literature: all the recent studies found by the researcher failed to address the topic of the proposed study. Both Al-Qatawneh and Al Rawashdeh's (2018) research study and Sbai's (2020) doctoral thesis, for instance, focused respectively on gender representation in nine-grade students' Arabic language textbooks and on the values conveyed in the illustrations of MoE Arabic language and Moral Education textbooks for grade 1 to grade 4 students as an aspect of the hidden curriculum. On the other end, Affagard-Edwards (2016), opting for a qualitative case study, investigated how multicultural education and culturally responsive practices were implemented in a Dubai US curriculum international school, which revealed that Western views on education prevailed, as for the discipline subjects as well as the resources used in the classroom on a daily basis and assessment.

As for the international literature available on the topic, the present study is echoed by Rania's (2009) and Panjwani's (2017) doctoral thesis, which, however, are limited to addressing the issue only from the Muslim students' points of view. If the first focused on the challenges surrounding the inclusion of Muslim children's literature in the school curriculum for students attending public schools in Ontario, Canada, and the portrayal of Pakistan and Afghanistan characters within the children's and adolescent literature published and distributed in the US, the second examined the Muslim children's and adolescent literature through the lens of the post-colonial theory.

They both discovered a limited number of authors writing Muslim stories, which offered a stereotyped representation of Muslim cultures, along with a lack of publishers and not enough recognition of Muslim literature and authors in Canada. The enrichment of school curricula with resources portraying Muslim cultures and societies, according to Panjwani (2017), could serve as an effective tool to curb not only racism, the misrepresentation, underrepresentation, and stereotyped way of representing Muslim characters, but also the monolithic conception of Islam, and the recent worldwide spread phenomenon of Islamophobia. It could also be used to address the issue of identity crises, particularly affecting Muslim young adults living in the West.

Focusing on Islamic religious practices, Ahmed (2016) tried to debunk the misconceptions and stereotypes surrounding Islam and terrorism, which is conceived as its main tangible expression. The author investigated how Muslim students attending a public school in Ontario, Canada, were supported as Canadian citizens as well as members of the Islamic religious community through the involvement of the educational staff, administrators, parents, and the local Imam. The study reported that many teachers could not ensure equity while teaching Muslim students since they were not familiar with their beliefs, values, views, and needs. Even though secondary school Muslim-Canadian students admitted to experiencing three types of pressures, the pressure to represent the Islamic community, to express their Muslim-Canadian identity, and to express their personal self, they felt supported and heard by the teaching staff, which counterbalanced their longing to be taken into consideration for what they were.

Finally, Duncan and Paran's (2017) research project, commissioned by the International Baccalaureate Organisation, investigated IB secondary school teachers' use of literary texts in the classroom and teachers' and learners' views of the impact that these literary texts have on language learning. It only marginally touches on the issue of teaching culture through literature by underlying the challenges that the participants faced in defining the definition of culture. However, the authors identified six factors, described as *inherited curricular heritage* (p. 85), which, according to the findings, were deemed to inevitably influence teachers' actions and choices: curricular heritage of the IB, curricular heritage of the country, curricular heritage of the teacher, curricular heritage of the language, curricular heritage of the school, and curricular understandings of the learner. The IB DP curriculum with its assessment system, as a matter of fact, exerts a large influence on teachers' actions and choices, as well as the traditions of the place in which they were teaching, the traditions of teaching the literature of a specific language, the peculiar situation of the school in which they are teaching, the teacher's personal preferences, their approach towards teaching, and the perception they have of their students.

#### **1.4 The Researcher's Positionality**

The present research study owes its inspiration to the researcher's professional as well as personal experience as Teaching English as a second language (TESOL) and special educational needs (SEN) secondary teacher in her home country and ex-pat librarian first in



Hong Kong, and then in Dubai. As an educator, the investigator has always believed in the importance of developing a teaching approach tailored to the specific learning needs of each student to help them thrive not only academically but also socially and emotionally. Therefore, she has always promoted the adoption of teaching practices informed by the core values not only of equality, namely the belief that every single student should have equal opportunities to learn and should receive equal access to resources, but also equity, which, acknowledging the massive impact that the students' individual differences and the sociopolitical context of teaching and learning exert on the learning process, advocates the implementation of learning programs geared toward advancing the academic success of students from all backgrounds. As a librarian, on the other hand, the researcher has always tried to help students deal with the tsunami of information available by developing critical and creative thinking skills.

Moving to Dubai with her two English-speaking primary school daughters, the researcher realised that they were facing the same challenges experienced in the international schools attended in Hong Kong: a noticeable scarcity of culturally authentic multicultural literacy texts authored by insiders and, therefore, challenging the existing mainstream and Eurocentric view of the world for non-Chinese/non-Arabic students. The majority of the books used in the units of enquiry and/or available on the shelves in the school libraries were mostly authored by British or American writers, while very little was available written by local authors about Chinese/Hong Kong/UAE culture and/or in general about other cultures.

Besides, as observed already in Hong Kong, those texts were available only in their original language, therefore not accessible to English-speaking students, very often not even allocated in the school libraries, but confined in the Mandarin/Arabic Department classrooms, and selected according to their contents: books dealing with topics considered offensive and/or inappropriate were excluded from the library catalogues. Consequently, this lack of accessibility to authentic multicultural school resources for certain ethnic and /or linguistic groups of the student population was perceived as an alarming injustice.

Allowing herself some time to speculate on her positionality within the research study she was carrying out, the researcher found the *Social Identity Map* developed by Jacobson and Mustafa

(2019) highly conducive to identifying the multiple identities, personal and social, which coexisted in her: she was well aware that her being a middle-age, European, White Caucasian, bourgeois woman, mother, who has started her professional career as a secondary school teacher in her home country after completing her training and apprenticeship according to the nationally accepted pedagogical theories and practices, and, at the same time, being a teacher who had the opportunity to experience culturally different environments and get into contact with different educational realities might have resulted in the consolidation of personal education-related strongly-held beliefs. Nonetheless, the researcher made every effort to avoid that these preconceived ideas could take over and affect her research process, and a few moments before entering the field under investigation for the first time, she thought about herself as a *novice* researcher wearing a brand new pair of glasses.

### **1.5 Objectives and Research Questions**

The present study investigated the integration of English-written authentic multicultural literacy resources in the IB curriculum of a private international secondary school located in the UAE emirate of Dubai. A particular emphasis will be given to the English-written multicultural literacy resources included in the IB (International Baccalaureate) school curriculum and/or available at school representing Muslim societies (finding literacy resources portraying the UAE society was the researcher's main ambitious objective). The main goal of the proposed study was to investigate the extent to which the IB curriculum of the international private secondary school selected is enriched with English-written culturally authentic multicultural literacy resources.

The objectives of the present thesis were:

- To investigate the extent to which English-written literacy resources included in the IB curriculum of the international secondary school understudy addressed diversity-related issues;
- To investigate the cultural authenticity and appropriateness of these resources included in the IB curriculum of the international secondary school understudy in the UAE emirate of Dubai;

- To explore the secondary school teachers' beliefs and perceptions of their multicultural competence and their capability of using these culturally sensitive literacy resources included the IB curriculum of the secondary school understudy in the UAE emirate of Dubai as a pedagogical tool;
- To explore the IB curriculum secondary school librarian', teachers' as well as IB curriculum specialist' views on the importance of making space for culturally authentic resources (especially those portraying the host country) in the IB curriculum of the secondary school understudy in the UAE emirate of Dubai.

The researcher tried to answer the following research question: To what extent does the IB curriculum of the international secondary school selected in the UAE emirate of Dubai allow space for English-written authentic multicultural literacy resources? The following sub-research questions drove the present study:

**RQ. 1** How is multiculturalism represented in the IB curriculum of a private international secondary school in Dubai?

**Q2.** To what extent are these literacy resources included in the IB curriculum of the private international secondary school in the UAE emirate of Dubai culturally authentic?

**RQ 3.** What are the secondary school educators' self-perceptions of their intercultural competence in the secondary school in the UAE emirate of Dubai?

**RQ. 4** What are the IB secondary school librarian', teachers' as well as IB curriculum specialists' views on the importance and appropriateness of including these resources (especially those portraying the host country) into the school IB curriculum in the international secondary school under study in the UAE emirate of Dubai?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The present study is believed to be the first to address the issue from the perspective of *transnational* secondary school students, whose cultural capital is very different from that of other students attending government schools. There is no saying that the site selected for the investigation, a school located in a very cosmopolitan metropolis, is highly conducive to obtaining meaningful results. Bagnall (2017) posited that the great majority of the students attending international schools perceived themselves as *citizens of the world* (p. 120), and *third-Culture kids* (p. 116) and considered their schools as a substitute for their home countries. Revisiting Bhabha's concept (1990) of *identity* as a fluid entity and *third space*, Fitzsimons (2019) defined international schools as spaces of *hybridisation*, as *in-between spaces* where students' identities interacting with each other are forged.

Since the student population is becoming increasingly diverse, and the teaching force is, on the contrary, largely homogeneous, especially in international schools in the Arab world, where one of the essential selection criteria for educators is to be an English mother tongue, and, therefore, Western (Bishop & Berryman 2010), the investigator firmly believes that only through the educators' commitment to becoming familiar with the cultures of the students they teach the creation of a classroom social climate where students could safely develop their potentials, especially during the vulnerable age of the early adolescence, when children feel the need for a closer relationship with adults other than their parents outside their homes, will be possible (Eccles et al., 1993).

It is no coincidence that this racial, ethnic and cultural mismatch between the majority of public school teachers and the majority of public school students has been the focus of a great amount of teacher education research. To prepare white pre-service and in-service teachers to deal with cultural differences in public schools in the USA, White Teacher Identity Studies have thrived to such an extent that a first wave was followed by a second, which was more concerned about the complexities of racial white identities and the social contexts in which these white teachers' identities were forged (Jupp, Berry, & Lensmire 2016).

Furthermore, this study is significant not only because, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no other studies in the UAE and the Arab region have been found, which focused

on how secondary school literacy resources included in any school curriculum dealt with the concept of diversity, but also because it questions the positive effects of the UAE current practice of *borrowing* educational theories, policies, curricula, and products from abroad, mainly United States, England, and Australia, described by many scholars (Steiner-Khamsi 2004; Aydarova 2012; Ridge, Kippels & Farah 2017; O' Sullivan 2013) as part of the new way to conceive education as a form of investment in the country's economic development and growth (for which the expression *knowledge-based economy* has been coined), on students' academic performances without adjusting them to the different cultural contexts they are applied to.

## **1.7 Structure of the Dissertation**

The present study consists of five chapters: introduction, literature review, methodology, data analysis and findings, discussion and conclusion.

**Chapter One – Introduction:** The chapter starts with an overview of the background of the study, which provides an insight into the UAE educational system, educational vision and educational reforms. The problem statement, purpose, research question and sub-questions, and the potential significance of the study are introduced in this chapter.

**Chapter Two – Literature Review:** The chapter includes the conceptual framework, the theoretical framework, and the literature review of the relevant literature which is divided into two sections. One section focuses on how the worldwide demographical change of the student population has affected national school policies, curricula, and instructional practices, while the second emphasized how school instructional resources lack cultural authenticity. Since almost all the previous literature found on the topic took into consideration only school textbooks, and not literacy school resources, the existing gap which has prompted the need for this study was highlighted. The theoretical framework section discusses the theories selected underpinning the study.

**Chapter Three – Methodology:** This chapter includes the methodology implemented to answer the research questions. It provides a detailed description of the research paradigm and design, the target population and sampling techniques used, the site selected, the data collection tools, the measures taken to assure the trustworthiness of the qualitative data and the validity and reliability of the quantitative data, and the ethical considerations.

**Chapter Four – Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings:** The chapter presents the analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data gathered from the different data collection instruments (document analysis, survey and semi-structured interviews). A discussion of the study findings concerning the relevant literature and the theoretical foundation is also presented.

**Chapter Five - Conclusion, Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Further Research:** The scope of the study and the research key findings as related to the research questions are summarized. Moreover, the implications for school leaders, curriculum coordinators and teachers' educators are discussed, along with recommendations for future research are presented based on the attained results. The study limitations are also stated.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Overview of the Chapter**

This chapter includes four main sections: the conceptual analysis, the theoretical framework, the review of the relevant literature, and a summary. In the first section, the definition of several key terms relevant to the study is presented. To answer the research questions clearly stated in chapter one, an appropriate theoretical framework has been developed, including the Orientalist and Post-Colonialist Theories, the Culturally Relevant/Transformative Pedagogy, the Critical Race Theory, and the Critical Multicultural Education theory. The literature review section is devoted to the exploration of the relevant extant previous studies focusing on how the worldwide change in the demographic of the student population has impacted the design of school curricula as well as the educational staff instructional practices, and on the adequacy of the school resources selected to foster multicultural narratives.

### **2.2 Conceptual Analysis**

The present research study took place in a bilingual IB private international secondary school. Therefore, the first key concept, which needed to be explained, was that of *international school*, followed by a detailed description of the structure and the cardinal principles of the IB Middle Years (MYP) and Diploma programs (DP), Hall's definition of the concept of culture with the theory of the Iceberg (1976), Banks' classification of the different levels of multicultural content integration into the school curriculum with the Level of Integration Model (1999), and an exploration of the different dimensions in which the concept of curriculum can be declined.

#### **2.2.1 International Schools**

These educational institutions were initially founded to cater to the needs of expatriate families and families of transnational elites, who opted for an educational system different from the one of their home countries for their children as for the curriculum, the language the curriculum

was delivered in, class size, sports programs, and location. These schools allowed students either to go back to the educational system of their country of origin or to enrol in a higher educational institution (Tate 2012). However, a rapid diversification of the student population in international schools has taken place over the last two decades in the UAE, with the result that a growing number of Emirati students have chosen to attend for-profit international private schools instead of government schools (Fail 2011).

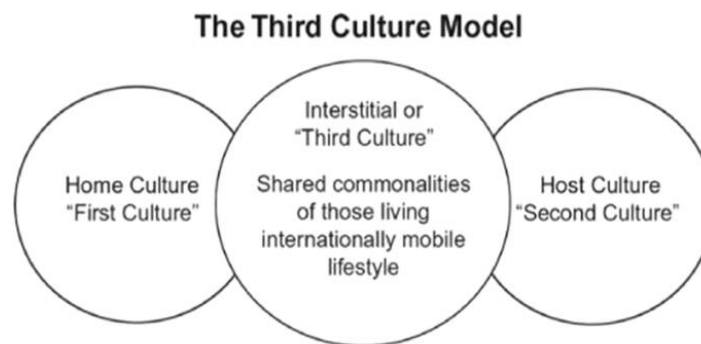
Unlike the term *international education*, which describes the purpose of the educational programs chosen, international schools are defined as *independent institutions charging tuition fees or offering scholarships*, mainly attended by foreign students, *some of whom will be transient*, offering an educational programme *which is usually different from that of the host country* in which they are located and using the English language as the main medium of instruction (Hill 2007, p. 253).

International education (Hayden, Rancic, & Thompson 2000; James 2006; MacDonald, 2007; Sylvester 2005) is perceived as an instrument through which students can acquire international mindedness, which plays an essential role in the students' becoming-a-global-citizen process, and through which they are encouraged *to develop understandings of the interdependence among nations in the world today, clarify attitudes toward other nations, and reflect identifications with the world community* (Parker 2002, p. 135).

To be defined as multicultural schools they should have the following characteristics: teaching staff and school administrators' great expectations for all the students and positive and empathic attitudes towards them, a curriculum that includes the experiences, cultures, and perspectives of other ethnical groups, the adoption of teaching styles which adapt to the students' needs, the promotion of multilingualism (students' first languages), the use of culturally sensitive school resources, school culture and hidden curriculum which reflect cultural and ethnical diversity, the use of a culturally sensitive assessment system, and school counsellors' high expectations for students belonging to cultural minorities (Banks 1999).



Furthermore, the investigator took into due consideration the peculiar nature of the students attending international schools and their challenging process of identity negotiations, namely the *third culture kids* (TCK) (Pollock & Van Reken 2017), who left their home countries and lived overseas but whose parents have decided to remain in the international education as the *returnee*, described as children without a sense of belonging to their *first culture* (country of origin) as well as to their *second culture* (of the country in which they are temporarily living). Furthermore, the growing number of *host country national students*, who share the nationality of the region in which the school is located and whose parents have preferred a private education system for several reasons was also taken into consideration (Hayden and Thompson 2008).



**Fig. 5 The Third Culture Model (Pollock et al. 2017)**

Three factors were analysed as producing changes in students' identities in Hayden and Thompson's study (2008): history and social studies, the acquisition of additional languages, and the exposure to Enquiry-based Learning which allowed students to learn about their country of origin and the cultures and history of other countries. Within international schooling, therefore, students' identity is affected by various influences from the students' and the parents' country/countries of origin as well as the schools attended, to the extent to which their families are/were globally mobile. Those influences form three different types of identity: an unknown identity, national identity, and global identity (Bagnall 2017).

Drawing on Bagnall's (2015) study, Omaigan's (2020) research, focusing on the perceptions of 16 to 18 years old students attending an international school, discovered that the majority of the students involved considered their school as their home and factors such as *who they came*

*to school with, how long they stayed in a particular school, whether or not they had any choice about attending a particular school, and the nature of the school itself* (Bagnall 2017, p. 75) turned out to have a significant effect on their perceptions.

### **2.2.2. IB Middle Years Program (MYP)**

The school curriculum taken into consideration in the study is the IB curriculum, a standardized program of education, which has rapidly expanded becoming the synonym for educational accountability and academic rigor. Educational global engagement, multilingualism, and intercultural understanding are its three main pillars (Belal 2017; Hill 2014; Metli, Martin, & Lane 2019; Singh & Qi 2013): internationally-minded learners are expected to demonstrate to possess ten attributes, which are included in the IB Learner Profile, in order to become active members of local as well as global communities. McGowan (2016) provided the following definition of international mindedness:

*an ongoing journey that begins with self-reflection and understanding of one's own culture and identity. This journey can lead to awareness of, and respect for, other people, cultures, and nations to inform one's understanding of different perspectives and ways of life* (p. 27).

If Heywood (2007) distinguished between different types of international mindedness (diplomatic, political, economic and commercial, spiritual, multicultural, human rights, pacifist, humanitarian, globalization, and environmentalist), Singh and Qi (2013) maintained that it encompassed *common humanity, cosmopolitanism, cultural intelligence, global citizenship, global competence, global mindedness, intercultural understanding, omni-culturalism, multiliteracies, and world mindedness* (p. 5). Global engagement is associated with the IB attribute of *knowledgeable*: internationally-minded learners are expected to value diversity between countries and to be aware of local and global issues. Haywood (2007) broke down the concept into the following components:

- *curiosity and interest in the world around us based on knowledge of the earth and on its human and physical geography,*

- *open attitudes towards other ways of life and a predisposition to tolerance as regards other cultures and their beliefs systems,*
- *knowledge and understanding of the scientific basis that identifies the earth's environment as a common entity of value to everyone,*
- *recognition of the interconnectedness of human affairs (in place and time) as part of the holistic experience of life,*
- *human values that combine respect for other ways of life with care and concern for the welfare and wellbeing of people in general (p. 87).*

On the other end, multilingualism, which is one of the distinctive features of the IB program offered by the school selected, offering a bilingual IB program, relates to the attribute of *communicator*, which encourages students to express themselves in more than one language and to use different forms of expression. Intercultural understanding refers to the attribute of *open-minded*, which entails the ability to appreciate one's own culture as well as the values and traditions of other cultures and to explore local/global issues from different points of view. It aims at equipping students with the necessary skills for developing cooperative relationships with people from different ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds with the intent to settle mutual problems (Walton, Priest, & Paradies 2013; Cushner 2015; Metli, Chang, & Martin 2018). The other seven attributes, as shown in Fig. 6, are grouped into the two categories of cognitive competence (inquirers; thinkers and reflective practitioners), and of disposition (principled, caring, risk-takers, and balanced) (International Baccalaureate Organization 2005-2020).

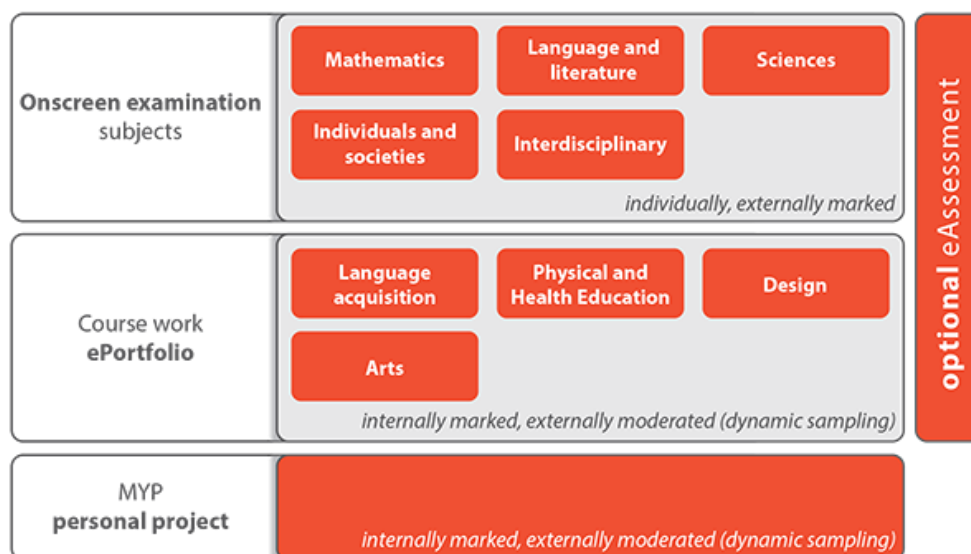


**Fig. 6 IB Learner Profile (International Baccalaureate)**

Perceiving the identity of the IB as the coexistence of *internationalist* and *globalist* traits, Gardner-McTaggart (2016) addressed the dilemma by maintaining that the *internationalist* aims to promote international-mindedness, peace, international understanding, and responsible world citizenship, while the *globalist* is more pragmatic, in line with the economic globalism and offers formal qualifications which are transferrable between countries (Cambridge & Thompson 2010). This dichotomy is expected to produce two different types of students' models: the *internationalist* and the *globalist*. In the IB they coexist since the university preparation and the academic transferability are the globalist souls and the IB mission is the internationalist one (Simandiraki 2006).

The **MYP curriculum** framework, designed for students aged from 11 to 16, as clearly shown in Table 1, consists of eight subject groups: language acquisition, language and literature, individuals and societies, sciences, mathematics, arts, physical and health education, and design. To gain the IB MYP certificate students are required to complete computer-based examinations in language and literature, individuals and societies, sciences, mathematics, and interdisciplinary learning as well as an e-Portfolio for a course in language acquisition, and at least one course chosen from Physical and health education, Arts, or Design. Furthermore, students are expected to complete a number of internal summative assessments, carry on a personal project which aims at evaluating students' self-management, research, communication, critical and creative thinking, and collaboration skills, and participate each year in service with and for their community.

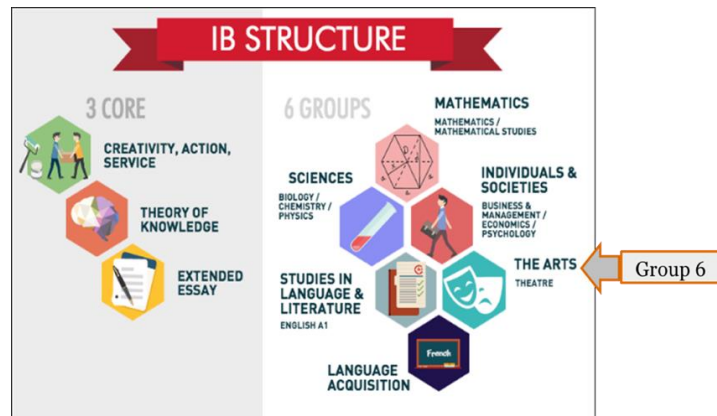
The students' participation in the community service programs will enable them to acknowledge their own strengths and areas for growth, develop new skills, discuss, evaluate and plan student-initiated activities, show perseverance in action, work collaboratively with others, develop international-mindedness through global engagement, multilingualism, and intercultural understanding, and consider the ethical implications of their actions.



**Tab. 1 MYP curriculum framework (International Baccalaureate)**

### 2.2.3 IB Diploma Curriculum (DP)

The IB Diploma Programme (DP) comprises six subject groups (Studies in language and literature, language acquisition, individuals and societies, sciences, mathematics, and the arts) along with three core elements: the learning of Theory of knowledge about the nature of knowledge, the extended essay, which is a 4,000-word piece of research, and a project relating to the three concepts of creativity, activity, service. Students may decide to take some subjects at higher level (HL) and some at standard level (SL): they should take at least three subjects at higher level and the remaining at standard level. The following figure (Fig. 7) clearly illustrates the structure of the programme.



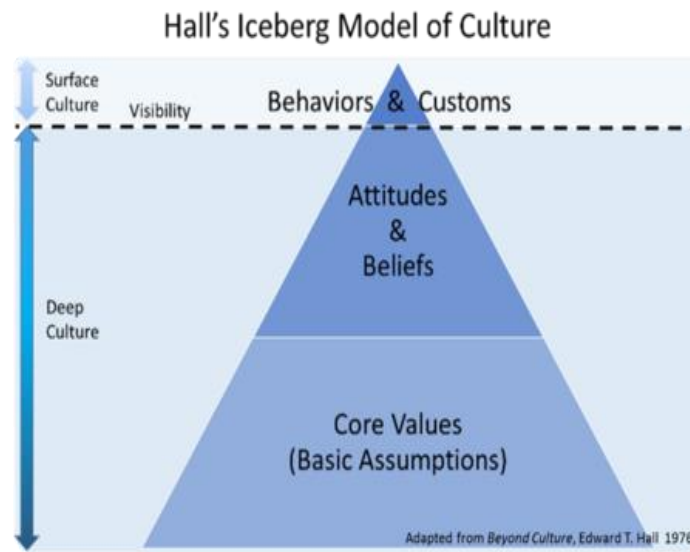
Source: The International Baccalaureate® (IB)

**Fig. 7 IB Diploma Structure (International Baccalaureate)**

## 2.2.4 Culture

Perceived as a dynamic, and continuous concept, which affects our lives infinitely (Hernandez 1989), culture was defined by the Cambridge English Dictionary (2008) as *the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time*. It is an artefact made by humans, it is transmitted from one generation to the next, learned, and shared. The investigator, while performing the critical content analysis of the multicultural texts included in the school curriculum, will embrace Hall's (1976) theory of the Iceberg.

Like an iceberg, the concept of culture encompasses visible and invisible components, that is the surface and the deep culture. The visible manifestations of culture, such as food, dress, music, dance, literature, and language, are just the tip of the iceberg, while the deep culture is the core of these visible manifestations, which is how people have learned to face life's problems. While the visible manifestations of culture are taught deliberately and learned consciously in learning environments, the hidden ones, on the contrary, are taught unintentionally and learned unconsciously (Fig. 8). Therefore, educators should be aware of the existence of the visible aspects of culture as well as of the invisible ones.



**Fig. 8 Hall's theory of the Iceberg (Hall 1976).**

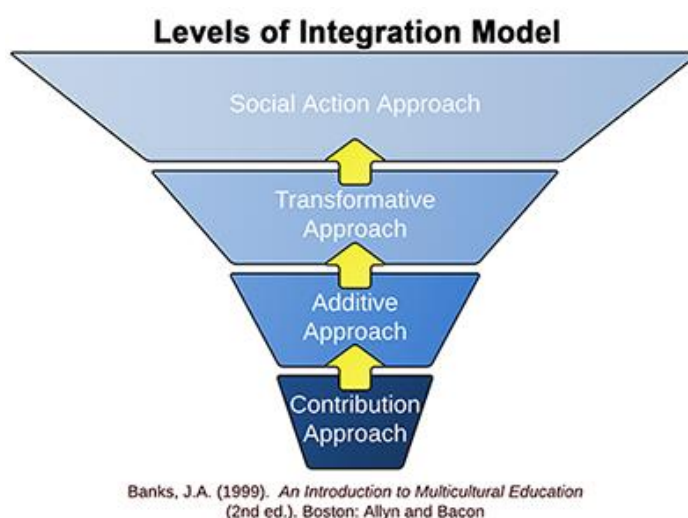
### **2.2.5 Multicultural Curriculum**

The researcher will rely on Bank's (1999) model of the four different levels of integration of multicultural content into the school curriculum while examining the extent to which multicultural content is integrated into the IB curricula of the selected international secondary school. The first level, the *contributions approach*, comes into being when the school mainstream curriculum, although enriched with ethnic heroes/heroines and cultural artefacts, remains unchanged in its basic characteristics. This type of approach is the easiest to use for teachers working in multicultural environments, however, it has several limitations: only the superficial cultural manifestations are taken into consideration, and issues such as racism, poverty, and oppression tend to be avoided with the result that stereotypes and misconceptions are consolidated, essentialised and trivialised and reified images of other cultures are promoted (Fraser 2000).

In the additive approach, concepts and themes are incorporated into the curriculum without changing its basic structure, purposes, and characteristics, but the content is selected using mainstream-centric and Eurocentric criteria. In the transformation approach (level 3 approach),

the curriculum undergoes major changes as for its goals, structure, and perspectives, so that students, when addressing issues, can look at them from different perspectives.

In the social action approach, which is considered by the investigator as the desirable level of multicultural embracement, the curriculum is enriched with elements that encourage the students to make decisions and take action when dealing with problems related to the unit of study. Educators, therefore, act as agents of social change by integrating democratic values into their teaching practices and by honing their students' critical skills (Fig. 9).



**Fig. 9 Banks' (1999) Level of Integration Model**

## **2.2.6. Curriculum Dimensions**

Defining the concept of *curriculum* is an arduous task since it has been used with quite different meanings. It has been defined as a product, which refers to the concrete document in which the school courses and syllabi are listed, as a programme, which refers to the courses of study offered by an educational institution, as intended learning outcomes, namely what is to be learned, and as planned learner experiences, which is related to the knowledge that the students acquire after going through different experiences.

Six different forms of curriculum planning have been identified: recommended, written, approved, supported, taught, tested, and learned curriculum. Four of these, the written, the



supported, the taught, and the tested can be grouped into the overarching category of *intentional curriculum*, defined as a set of learnings that the school consciously intends to provide, as opposed to the *hidden curriculum*. The recommended curriculum refers to the content and the sequence in which it should be delivered according to the scholars' suggestions, while the written curriculum is more detailed than the recommended, and comprises the curriculum underlying rationale, the general goals to be achieved, the specific objectives to be mastered, the sequence in which those objectives should be studied, and the kinds of learning activities that should be used. The supported curriculum takes into account how it is delivered and the resources used to deliver it, such as the time allocated to a specific subject, the personnel allocations and the learning materials to be used in the classroom, while the taught curriculum is the delivered curriculum which may or may not coincide with the written curriculum. The tested curriculum is the learning assessed with teacher-made and standardised tests, and the learned curriculum is what the learners have understood and learned from the intentional and the hidden curricula.

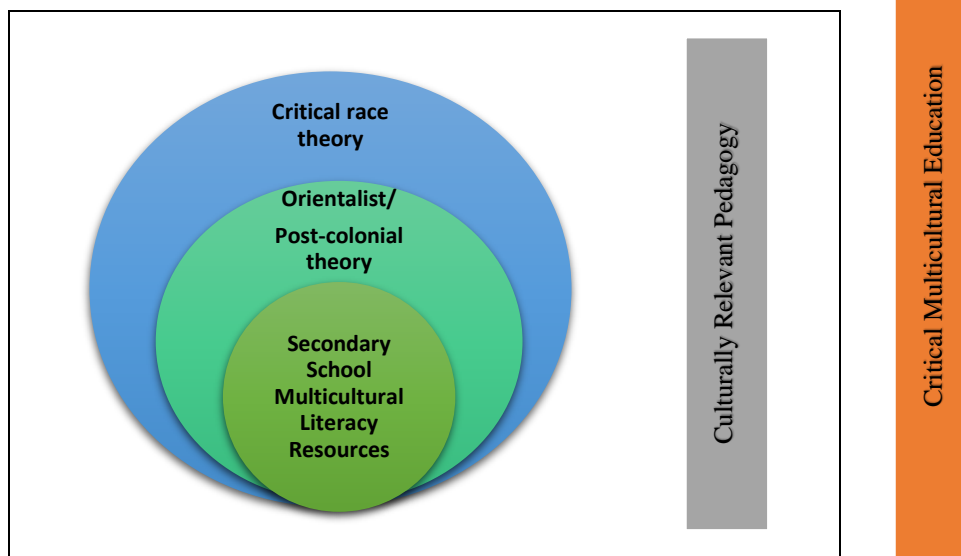
The term *hidden curriculum*, also called the *unstudied curriculum* or the *implicit curriculum*, was coined by Phillip Jackson (1968), who noticed a discrepancy in what students acquire and what is taught in schools, the *unpublicised features of school life* (p. 17). It refers to the unspoken, implicit and often unintended lessons and values that students learn and experience in the school. Organizational variables, social-system variables, and culture variables are the main aspects affecting the hidden curriculum. The practices of teachers' assignments and students' grouping for instruction have a major impact on curriculum planning and implementation, as well as the school's climate and culture, the well-being of the educational staff, and students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Unlike other forms of curriculum, the hidden curriculum is not written, is usually constructed during the curriculum implementation stage, leads to positive as well as negative outcomes, changes constantly according to the place, people, and time, and it does not comprise teaching values, ethics, and skills to be passed on to learners (Çobanoğlu & Demir 2014).

The relationship between hidden curriculum and multicultural education caught the researcher's attention. According to Jay (2003), Gramsci's notion of hegemony comes in useful to explain how and why the hidden curriculum becomes very often the vehicle through which

dominant power dynamics are maintained. Hegemony, as asserted by Gramsci (1971), namely the power exercised by the dominant groups over the subordinate ones, is made possible thanks to the consensus of the subordinate groups, who appear *to support and subscribe to values, ideas, objectives, cultural and political meanings which bind them to and incorporate them into the prevailing power structure* (Storey 1998, p. 124). As a consequence, schools, conceived as microcosmos of society, do nothing but reproduce the socio-economic status quo (Giroux 1983, p. 258), by teaching students to embrace the interests of the dominant group. The consensus and the absence of conflicts, which characterises the hidden curriculum, inevitably clash with the transformational principles associated with multicultural education to which the author of the present study adhere.

### **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical foundation of the present research thesis consists of five theories: the Orientalist and Post-Colonialist Theories, the Culturally Relevant/Transformative Pedagogy, the Critical Race Theory, and the Critical Multicultural Education theory. The criteria followed in the selection of these theories were their complementarity, relevance, and efficacy in finding full answers to the research questions. As shown in Table 2, three of the theories chosen (Orientalist, Post-Colonialist, and Critical Race theories) guided the analysis of the school literacy resource, while the other two, Critical Multicultural Education and Culturally Relevant/Transformative Pedagogy, were kept in the background as a *sine qua non* underlying assumption.



**Table 2. Visual of the Theoretical Framework of the Study**

### **2.3.1 Culturally Relevant & Transformative Pedagogy**

The Culturally Relevant/Transformative Pedagogy, together with the Critical Multicultural Education theory, were the overarching theories that defined the culturally sensitive learning environment, in which the Critical Race Theory and the Orientalist/Post-Colonialist theories were applied to grapple with the concept of cultural authenticity and accuracy while assessing the English-written school multicultural literacy resources included in the IB curricular units of enquiry.

The choice of the Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) is motivated by the fact that it is consistent with the students' diverse cultural backgrounds. Described as a pedagogical strategy that cares for the academic as well as the social needs of culturally diverse students, it makes use of their *cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles* (Gay 2018, p. 29), with the result of making the learning experience more engaging and stimulating not only for them. One of its foundational tenets is the belief that all students can be successful learners regardless of their ethnic/cultural and socio-economic backgrounds (Ladson-Billings 1995).

According to Gay (2018), an inclusive school culture, which benefits students' academic performance and wellbeing, is the result of the convergence of the institutional, personal and instructional dimensions which define the culturally responsive pedagogy. If the institutional dimension refers to the school policies and organizational rules, the instructional and personal dimensions include respectively the culturally sensitive teaching practices, such as collaborative teaching, responsive feedback, modelling, and instructional scaffolding, and the mindset and the professional competence of the educators, namely their intercultural competence.

Intercultural competence has been defined as the ability to interact and communicate in an empathic and tolerant way with people from other cultures and/or other socio-economic contexts, which is not innate but can be acquired through self and collective reflection. Borrowing Mason's (1995) first three levels of cultural competence attainment, namely cultural destructiveness, cultural incapacity, and cultural blindness, Banks (2004) developed three other stages, the emerging, basic and advanced cultural competence, which go from the acknowledgement of diversity and inequity, followed by the acceptance of differences, to the attempt to re-establish equity through change.

Furthermore, Banks (2004) maintains that being culturally responsive teachers implies the fulfilment of four main requirements: being endowed with cultural diversity knowledge, along with detailed information about the cultural and ethnic background of their students, and being knowledgeable about how to include the information into the school curriculum and in their teaching practices in order to help students recognize and react to racial and ethnic-related stereotypes and biases are the first two requirements. Culturally sensitive educators should also be able to create and maintain a positive and safe learning environment and, finally, be able to display remarkable cross-cultural communication skills. Robinson (2016) added to these four requirements also the judicious and daily use of differentiated instruction, explicit teaching, peer support, culturally responsive behaviour management practices, ongoing assessments, and a problem-solving approach.

To achieve the goal of enhancing multiculturalism in the classroom, teachers are expected to take advantage of unplanned opportunities to expose students to multicultural issues (teachable moments), and to supplement the curriculum with resources addressing multicultural topics, such as websites, blogs, Wikis, books, and videos on various cultures, races, and religions. They are also expected to include in their teaching strategies well-conceived diverse group activities, in which each group member is encouraged to achieve their potential and actively and equally participate in the group project, and to provide students with opportunities to discuss the impact of technologies on cultures in a healthy way, using conflict management and resolution (Blue et al., 2018).

A critical reflective process, enabling pre-service teachers to consider their racial and cultural identities and analyse the positive and negative impacts that they exercise on their students' learning experiences, as argued by Howard (2003), should become an essential component of teacher training programs so that teachers could develop appropriate culturally sensitive pedagogical practices. This process can turn out to be a painful process for teachers since it urges them to answer difficult questions and dig deep into their self-knowledge. Being aware that the traditional teaching practices are rooted in middle-class, European-American cultural values, this pedagogy perceives the students' individual cultural capital, which encompasses the norms, the social practices, the ideologies, the language, and the behaviour used by a specific group of people, as a resource rather than as an obstacle to their academic success.

The reflection process proposed by Howard (2003) is described in detail and a set of questions that teachers should try to answer with honesty, such as *How frequently and what types of interactions did I have with racially diverse individuals?*, *Who helped me develop my opinions on individuals from different racial groups?*, *Have I ever harboured prejudiced thoughts towards people from different racial backgrounds?*, is provided.

In line with Howard's argument, Milner et al. (2003) suggested, for instance, the use of *race reflective journaling*, a process which entails the discussion of race-related issues in a private mode through writing, while Schön (1987), emphasising the link between reflection and action, introduced the concept of *reflection-in-action*, which is described as a process during which

pre-service teachers have the opportunity to think about their own teaching practices and then to modify them.

Assuming that the statement that education can be neutral is fallacious (Horton & Freire 1990), educators should not be tempted to infuse their pedagogical practices with the notions of *educational niceness* and *neutrality*. With its four operational tenets, *Unwelcomed Acts are Unethical*, *Freedom is an Unqualified Good*, which considers the pedagogical practice of stimulating critical discussions with students and attempting to shape their views as a dishonest imposition, *Titular Authority is Inherently Superior to Other Forms of Power*, and *Power is a Weapon Wheeled by Malevolent Subjects, At Their Whim and Fancy* which assume that the power exercised by someone because of his/her status, position, or title should not be used to influence the students' beliefs, and is doomed to inevitably produce negative outcomes, niceness is perceived as a way through which the status quo, as well as Whiteness, is maintained (Bissonnette 2016). Attitudes of ignorance, which is defined as *an intentionally conscious state of not paying attention* (Wright, Ford, & Young 2017, p. 45), and indifference, which is considered as *a psychological situation centered on a lack of compassion, sympathy, empathy, or concern* (p. 45), should also be avoided to shake the foundation of the White privilege.

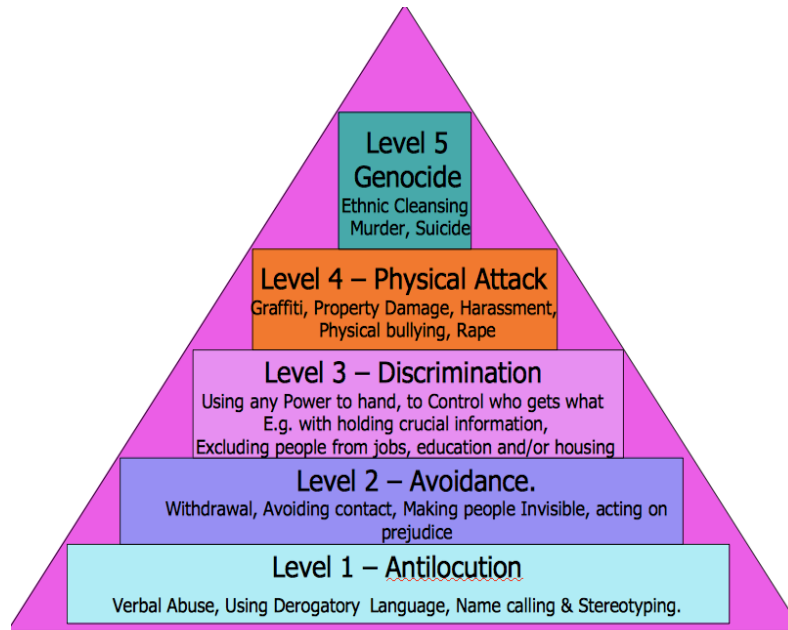
### **2.3.2 Critical Multicultural Education**

Drawing from culturally relevant pedagogy, critical multicultural education aims at empowering students to critique and question racism, discrimination, and the social norms which favour certain groups of people at the expense of others (Banks 2006; Gérin-Lajoie 2008; May & Sleeter 2010). To make their teaching practices culturally sensitive, educators should bring their students' unique cultural backgrounds, and home and community experiences into their classroom *to help them create meaning and understand the world* (Ladson-Billings 1995, p. 110), providing them with opportunities to be successful learners, to learn about not only their own culture but also other cultures and to develop critical thinking skills. Banks and Banks (2012) and Gorski (2010) emphasised the crucial role of multicultural education in the development of critical thinking: only through multicultural education students will become *reflective and active citizens of a democratic society* (p. 152).

Among the several approaches to multicultural education, such as educating for *assimilation*, for *amalgamation*, for *pluralism*, for *providing students with cross-cultural competence*, for *critical awareness*, and for social action (Banks 1994; Nieto 2004), the investigator will consider the last one as the best practice which each and every school should refer to when dealing with diversity. The first approach to education (Sleeter & Grant 2003) ignores or perceives diversity as a threat to the established social order: it can be represented as  $A + B + C = A$ , where A stands for the dominant group, which annihilates the diversities of each group (Newman 1973). Gibson's (1976) *benevolent multiculturalism*, McLaren's (1997) *corporate multiculturalism*, Kincheloe and Steinberg's (1997) *conservative multiculturalism* can all be included in this type of approach. King (2004) argued that the practice of *marginalizing knowledge* can occur in this type of approach through omission of information, bias, or selective incorporation of specific knowledge.

Educating for amalgamation, on the other end, can be represented as  $A + B + C = D$ , where D is neither the dominant group nor one of the minority group's cultures. This approach emphasizes the groups' commonalities in order to reduce prejudice and works toward the establishment of harmonious group social relations and the acceptance of their mutual differences while educating for pluralism emphasizes and values differences, and aims at creating a social and cultural context in which multiple cultural groups could co-exist without losing their group identities.

Educating for equipping students with cross-cultural competence entails providing students with the knowledge and skills necessary to deal with their own as well as other cultures, while educating for the acquisition of critical awareness focuses on teaching students to recognize and fight against prejudice, racism, sexism, homophobia, and oppression and to question the social relations of power. This task becomes even more urgent if the five escalating stages of prejudice according to Allport's (1954) Scale are acknowledged, as shown in Fig. 10: anti-location, namely the expression of hateful opinions about another group, avoidance, which may result in isolation and exclusion, discrimination, which shows itself by denying a group equal access to opportunities, goods, and services, physical attack, and extermination (genocide, ethnic cleansing).



**Fig. 10. Allport's Scale of Prejudice (Allport 1954)**

Finally, students should be prepared to play the role of active citizens, willing to engage in action to make the society they live in more democratic.

### **2.3.3 Orientalism & Post-Colonialism Theory**

Post-colonialism comprises a set of philosophical theories and approaches to literary analysis, which investigates the influence of European colonialism on those people who experienced it, its effects on various aspects of their lives, and its manifestations in Western literature, in particular in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, including the emergence of the literature of opposition and resistance in the ex-colonies. Orientalism, which is considered the first phase of post-colonial theory, is defined by Edward Said (1978) as *a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the 'Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident' (p. 2).*

Othering is one of its foundational principles, which is based on the dichotomy between the fascination of the primitive other and the fear of the savage and inferior other. The term



*orientalism* was used by Europeans to define themselves as the superior race, and justify their main duty and mission to civilize the uncivilized world. The concept of *diaspora* is another key concept in the Post-Colonial theory, which refers to people who, displaced from their homelands, share a collective memory of their homes. As a consequence, the country of origin ends up becoming an *imaginary homeland* – as pinpointed by Rushdie (1992) in his homonymous text, not an identifiable geographical place, where the negotiation between the native cultural identity and the host country's culture takes place.

*Writing my book in North London, [...] I was constantly plagued by this problem, until I felt obliged to face it in the text, to make clear that [...] what I was actually doing was a novel of memory and about memory, so that my India was just that: "my" India, a version and no more than one version of all the hundreds of millions of possible versions.* (Rushdie 1992, p. 10)

Significant contributions to the post-colonial theory were made by Bhabha (1990), who developed the concepts of *hybridity* and *mimicry* to undermine the stability of the Western identity and to unmask the interdependence of both the colonizer and the colonized's subjectivities. The attempt of the colonized to conciliate his multiple identities and find a perfect balance between his original cultural identity and that of the host country he/she lives in, without renouncing both, may result in a schizophrenic mental dissociation. Having a *double consciousness*, a term coined by Du Bois (1903) to describe the condition of Afro-Americans in the American White-dominated society, [...] *an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder* (DuBois 1965, p. 215), may become unhealthy if experienced unilaterally only by the colonized (Fanon 1967), while, on the contrary, it can engender a form of critical interracial dialogue (Black 2007), when it is multilateral.

Using the powers of hybridity defined as an *in-between* space, a *third space* of negotiation between the colonizer and the colonized, Bhabha envisaged the possibility for the subalterns to challenge the omnipotence of the colonizers. *Mimicry*, defined by Bhabha (1994) as the colonized's practice of mimicking the colonizer's cultural habits, language, and values, becomes a form of resistance against the misrepresentations of the colonized people. The critical content analysis of the English-written culturally sensitive literary resource selected included in the school curricula and/or available in the library was carried out in the light of the

Orientalist and Post-Colonialist theories by highlighting the presence (or absence) of a power-related balance in the depiction of the different characters as well as the adoption of explicit or implicit ideologies.

### 2.3.4 Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) relies on the assumption that racism is deeply rooted in the current American social status quo (Bell 1995). According to Solorzano & Yosso's definition (2002), *it seeks to identify, analyse, and transform those structural and cultural aspects of education that maintain subordinate and dominant racial positions in and out of the classroom* (p. 25). One of its main tenets is *counter-storytelling* which is defined as a method of telling the stories of those people whose voices are usually distorted or silenced, differing from fictional storytelling in the sense that it does not deal with fictional characters interacting in fictional scenarios but with composite characters who interact in real-life situations (Solórzano & Yosso 2002).

The use of the narrative approach as a pedagogical tool for instilling values, morals, and citizenship was promoted by Osler (2015) who, drawing on Bhabha's concept of the *right to narrate* (2003), believed in the importance of grappling with the deconstruction of the *hegemonic discourses* by ensuring that the minorities' voices could be heard (Adami 2015; Levinson 2012; Osler & Zhu 2011). Other CRT important principles are the concepts of *interest convergence*, challenges to *claims of neutrality*, and *colour blindness*. As for the concept of interest convergence, Bell (1980) argues that the Whites have always promoted the interests of people of colour only when these interests coincided with their own interests and they supported social justice and equity-oriented policies only when their implementation could be achieved without incurring personal losses. This principle is evident in the racial composition of the teacher education faculty members, and in the curriculum and syllabi of multicultural teacher education programs. The claims of neutrality and colour blindness are, on the contrary, a concealed means through which the Whites perpetuate their power and their privileges and this is manifest in the testing system required for teacher certification, and in the structure of teacher education provided by universities.

Furthermore, the principles of caring (Gay 2018), embracing constructivist views (Villegas & Lucas 2002), academic achievement, cultural competence, and socio-political consciousness (Ladson-Billings 2006) should be mentioned. CRT is deeply rooted in the belief that educators should care not only for their students' academic attainments, but also for them as people, and, therefore, they should play the role of mediators between their students and the cultural contexts, and hold high academic expectations.

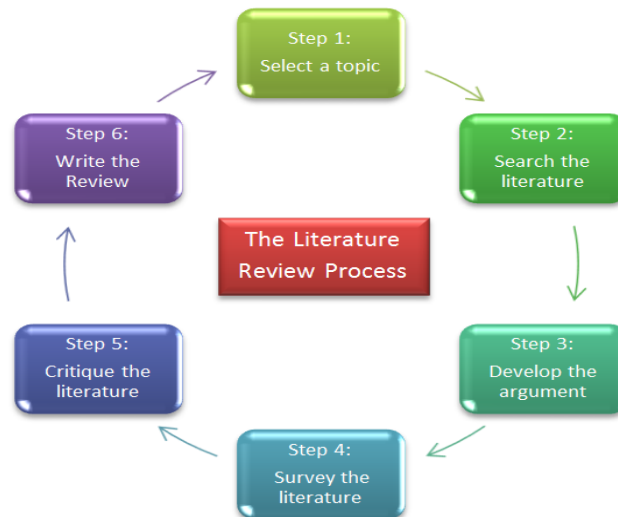
## **2.4 Review of Related Literature**

Literature review forms the backbone of research and provides a comprehensive survey of the published scholarly literature on a specific topic. It serves several purposes, which were clearly identified by Hart (1988):

- *distinguishing what has been done from what needs to be done;*
- *discovering important variables relevant to the topic;*
- *synthesizing and gaining a new perspective;*
- *identifying relationships between ideas and practice;*
- *establishing the context of the topic or problem;*
- *rationalizing the significance of the problem;*
- *enhancing and acquiring the subject vocabulary;*
- *understanding the structure of the subject;*
- *relating ideas and theory to applications;*
- *identifying the main methodologies and research techniques that have been used;*
- *placing the research in a historical context to show familiarity with state-of-the-art developments (p. 27)*

In writing the literature review of the present study, Machi and McEvoy's (2009) six critical processes were closely followed: from the selection of the topic, the search for the literature,

the development of the argument, the survey of the literature, the critique of the literature, to the writing of the review (Fig. 11).



**Fig. 11 Machi and McEvoy's Literature Review six critical processes (Machi and McEvoy 2009)**

In selecting a specific topic, the researcher took into account several issues such as her personal interests, how easily the data needed to answer the research question could be gathered, and who could be interested in that research. Once the topic was chosen, the researcher started the literature search in order to gain a deeper knowledge of topic-related previous studies. Then, the researcher interpreted the information found in the literature to form an argument that supported the thesis statement. According to Johnson and Christensen (2014), there are two schools of thought on when the literature review has to be carried out in qualitative research: before or after collecting data. In the present study, the literature was reviewed before the data collection, since it was the researcher's belief that it could help provide valuable information on the context that the investigator was about to investigate.

Scholarly literature from both primary and secondary sources was used. Also Internet resources, containing information whose reliability and accuracy were assessed, were included: following the criteria formulated by Johnson and Christensen (2014) on how to identify reliable websites, sites with .edu, .org, or .gov domains, with the name and contact details of the author of the

content, of the institution publishing the page, with a bibliographic reference, regularly updated were preferred. The peer-reviewed articles, books, dissertations, and further publications used in this literature review were found over many databases, including ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, Eric, EBSCOhost, GALE, JSTOR, WORLDCAT, and Google Scholar. The main key terms used in this literature review were multicultural education, interculturalism, multicultural curriculum, diversity in education in the United Arab Emirates, and multiculturalism in United Arab Emirates.

The literature review of the present study aimed at shedding light on the relevant related previous studies in the attempt to fill the research gap in this field. It was articulated in three main sections: the first section provided the readers with a comprehensive overview of the impact that the increasing student population diversity has produced on school curricula at a local, regional and international level. (Questions such as *What kind of changes, if any, were introduced in the school curricula in other countries to cope with the increasing diversity of the student population? Were they effective?* were addressed). The second section included previous studies examining school resources from a multicultural standpoint (*Which type of school resources were investigated? Were these resources used in the schools of other countries found devoid of bias and stereotypes?*). Each of these two sections consists of three sub-sections in which international, regional, and local studies are grouped. Finally, the third section focused on the definition of culturally authentic and accurate multicultural young adult literacy resources and the effects of their use in the classroom.

## **2.5 International Multicultural Challenges**

### **2.5.1 Eastern Studies**

Among the Eastern countries, the researcher took into consideration studies dealing with the challenges faced by the implementation of multicultural education in South Korea, Thailand, and Singapore. Even though a great effort was made to support students from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds in South Korea, the prevailing ethnocentric perception of the national

culture hindered their integration (Hong & Min 2013). In *Singapore* the “multiracial” educational framework in use, dealing with the Malay, Chinese, Tamil, and English streams, had to cope with the urgent need to move from a superficial culture approach taking into consideration only superficial manifestations of culture, such as physical features, food, and festivals, and fostering homogenization and stereotypes, to a deeper cultural approach (Tan 2017). This change became achievable, for instance, through the promotion of community projects, which enhanced the interaction of multi-ethnic students’ groups, in order to foster mutual understanding and appreciation of each other’s cultural aspects from an insider as well as an outsider’s perspective. In *Thailand* the multicultural approach to school curricula turned out to be unsuccessful: even in the schools where a multicultural curriculum was implemented, the cultural content provided did not take into consideration the personal experiences of the students and the community and did not challenge the perspectives of the dominant groups (Arphattananon 2018).

Huang, Cheng and Yang’s research study (2016), surveying the elementary school natural science teachers’ perceptions of multicultural education literacy and multicultural curriculum teaching practices in the Taiwanese Taitung County, highlighted their unpreparedness in infusing their teaching practices with multicultural concepts. Focusing on the implementation of the secondary school-based music curriculum in mainland *China*, Han and Leung (2017) found out that Chinese Folk Music and Western classical music were accorded different levels of prestige due to several reasons: Chinese folk music was, for example, included in pre-service teacher university training programs as a non-compulsory course, the teaching materials were limited, the teachers were not prepared to critically select and use them, and the time spent in teaching it in the classroom was extremely limited compared to the time spent teaching Western classical music. Since the authors believed that multiculturalism in music education could be achieved only through the students’ exposure to various types of international music, the placement of a higher value on the teaching of Chinese folk music was highly recommended to school administrators and policymakers.

According to Balakrishnan’s study (2017), even though the content of the Moral Education curriculum had been revised since 1983 several times in multicultural *Malaysia*, both primary and secondary syllabuses tuned out to be imbued with Muslim values and, consequently, are

not suitable for animist or pagan students, or students with no religious beliefs. The author voiced his hope for a reconstruction of the ME curricula based on the acknowledgement of the difference between teaching religion and religious values, which should be included in Islamic Education, and teaching morality and moral values in multicultural classrooms so that both subjects could promote understanding and unity among students regardless of their religious beliefs.

The same inconsistencies between policies and practices were detected by Raihani (2017) in his research. The author's starting assumption was that a multicultural curriculum from a critical multicultural perspective should first encourage educators to provide *the students of the majority* with critical descriptions of minorities and at the same time help them think critically about their status as a majority, and secondly ensure that schools are environments where all students are given equal opportunities to develop their potentials. Consequently, the author advocated a more holistic conception of multicultural education, where several dimensions merge, such as school vision and policies, curriculum and instruction, leadership and management, capacity and culture, student activism, and collaboration with wider communities. The findings revealed that the weakest links were the teachers, who, by instilling fear and suspicion towards other cultures into their students, violated one of the multicultural education tenets, the annihilation of prejudice.

### **2.5.2 European Studies**

In response to the increasing pluralism in the European societies and the alarming escalation of terrorist attacks, the European Union Education Ministers and the Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport issued the *Declaration on Promoting Citizenship and the Common Values of Freedom, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination through Education* in 2015. In the field of education a high priority was placed on the promotion of an inclusive educational environment, where teachers could meet the needs of their students, regardless of their cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious background, and take an active stand against all forms of racism and discrimination at national, regional and local levels (Informal Meeting of European Union Education Ministers 2015).

Both Kirkham's (2016) and Welply's (2018) studies offered an interesting perspective on the recent multiculturalism trends emerging in the *British* educational field. The findings of Kirkham's (2016) research revealed how diversity was used as a beneficial commodity to persuade parents into enrolment, and the absence of a real social mixing in the school taken into consideration: not only the whole student population was not involved in curricular activities addressing the issues of race, ethnicity, and multiculturalism critically, but students turned out to be also unaware of the aims of the support programs promoted by the school which were often perceived as *reverse racism*. Welply's (2018) study on the other end, centred on the concept of *micro-aggressions defined as subtle forms of racism that exist in daily life, which may be hard to pinpoint as racism but cause harm nonetheless* (Kholi & Solórzano 2012, p. 446). The findings highlighted the intersectionality of forms of implicit race, culture, religion, language, immigrant status, and national identity-related racism and micro-aggressions experienced by Muslim students when interacting with their peers at school. Therefore, the author encouraged schools to engage with diversity by breaking the silence around Otherness and helping children create positive images of the Other.

One of the initiatives set up to make the students' voices audible was the global school dialogue programme *Generation Global* implemented by the Tony Blair Faith Foundation. It sought to provide educational staff with pedagogical advice which could enable them to hone their students' skills of engaging in dialogues about faith and belief, values and identity as well as to create opportunities for their students to connect globally with other peers. The programme included the provision of classroom materials including activities aimed at helping students improve key skills, such as active listening, confidently speaking about global issues, answering and questioning, and upholding one's ideas without using generalisations through videoconferences and online dialogues. Additionally, experimental training workshops were provided for teachers. The results of the evaluation process of the programme pinpointed the limitless potential of the videoconferencing technology, which, letting students see the face of the other, had the beneficial effect of debunking the representation of the other as conveyed by the media and the society they lived in, and at the same time, contributed to the development of a deeper understanding of their own identity through the dialogic exchange (Jamison 2018).



The concepts of equality and cultural pluralism inspired Civitillo et al.'s (2016) study, which assessed the culturally sensitive school practices implemented in twenty-two schools located in *southwest Germany*. Two are the types of cultural diversity approaches at school: if the approach which promotes equality aims at undermining prejudice and stereotypes, paying little attention to the diversity of students' cultural backgrounds, the approach fostering cultural pluralism considers diversity as an added value (Banks & Banks 2012). Practices, which refer to events and activities implemented in the school and in the classroom, are closely intertwined with the artefacts, which include all the visible products displayed in public places on the school premises or on classroom walls, principals' offices, corridors, and libraries as tangible manifestations of the school cultural diversity approach. Another important element which is almost always omitted is the school website, in which information relating to every aspect of the institutionalized school life, values and mission can be retrieved. The school practices and artefacts aiming to promote cultural pluralism were found to be often related only to European or Western cultures and the low teachers' and students' perceptions of either or both equality and cultural pluralism were directly proportional to the absence of culturally sensitive-related practices and artefacts.

Investigating the challenges faced by teachers working in Swedish-medium primary school classrooms located in the rural *Swedish-speaking* areas of Finland, where not only Finnish and Sweden, but also several dialects and European and non-European languages were represented, Björklund's (2013) qualitative research identified the establishment of open relationships with parents coming from different cultural backgrounds and the lack of adequate culturally relevant teaching methodological skills as a major issue. Moreover, the need for specifically designed teaching materials for Sweden and minority language students and modified curriculum guidelines were also stressed.

Similar findings were obtained by Mansikka, Westvall and Heimonen's (2018) study, which investigated teachers' perceptions on the relationship between music and multicultural perspectives in Swedish-speaking minority schools in *Finland*. The teachers interviewed confessed to feeling more at ease when using an additive and inclusive multicultural approach rather than teaching music from a cross-cultural as well as a cultural-specific perspective. The same teachers' discomfort in addressing diversity in the classroom was found by Acquah,

Tandon and Lempinen (2015), the findings of whose study highlighted that the great majority of the teachers taking part in the study had low levels of awareness of diversity and, consequently, little prior experiences in dealing with culturally and linguistically diverse students, with major implications for preservice and in-service teachers' training programs, for curriculum development as well as for school systems in Finland.

Aerila, Soininen, and Merisuo-Storm (2016) went further by focusing on how challenging was for teacher training schools to equip prospective teachers with the skills required for teaching immigrant students in *Finland*. Assuming that learning through fiction is more efficient than learning through facts, since the reader is more involved in the process of making sense of the text, the authors explored the student teachers' perceptions of activities such as reading fiction in literature circles as part of their professional duties. If the findings emphasized the beneficial effects of these circles for teacher educators as well as for teachers, the need for a careful and appropriate selection of multicultural books was also stressed, since books containing distorted details may have increased intolerance rather than reduced it.

An overview of the challenges that the *Italian* education system is experiencing due to the continuous flow of immigrants is provided by Bussotti (2017). According to the Italian Ministry of Education's guidelines (MIUR 2010), foreign students were to be placed in different schools with a limit of 30% of foreign students per class, to learn the Italian language, and participate in the school social life. For instance, the subject *Citizenship and the Constitution* was recently added to the national curriculum. As for the foreign students' poor school attainments, the practice of placing foreign students in classes inferior to their ages to help them overcome their language problems proved to be a detrimental approach to the issue, increasing the gap between them and Italian students. Some successful efforts, however, have been made as shown by Barzanò et al. (2017).

In 2010 a national school network, Rete Dialogues (RD), was created to help students develop critical thinking and open-mindedness, and dispel prejudices and misconceptions. Students could get in touch with other students from different countries through face-to-face videoconferences, or they could write texts in online communities, topics were selected carefully, and specific time slots were arranged at school. Students could write freely about the

given topic, while the teachers could only read and stimulate discussions on students' texts. According to the authors, only through the involvement of the community and other schools, multicultural/intercultural education can be enhanced.

The relationship between the teachers' positive attitudes and beliefs towards diversity and their perspective-taking abilities, namely their ability to take their students' perspectives, was discussed in Abacioglu, Volman and Fischer's (2019) research study, which targeted school teachers from cities in all the regions of the *Netherlands*. Given the belief in the flexibility of these qualities, and therefore, in their openness to improvement, educators are encouraged to read texts on and authored by culturally and linguistically diverse populations, take part in social events within the local community and engage in critical conversations with colleagues on a regular basis (Warren 2018). According to the results gathered through an online survey, both multicultural attitudes and perspective-taking abilities could predict a higher level of teachers' engagement in culturally sensitive teaching practices, and teachers endowed with more positive multicultural attitudes and better perspective-taking abilities turned out to be working into schools with a higher concentration of ethnic minority students.

In the exploration of the *Portuguese* school practitioners' attitudes toward diversity, Szelei, Tinoca and Pinho's (2018) research investigated if and how students' voices were heard and used as pedagogical tools in the name of an empowerment pedagogy, and how these practices contributed to the student representation and participation. The findings reported that the student's voices seemed to be missing and underlined the importance for pre- and in-service teacher education programs to include learning opportunities aiming at the development of pedagogical strategies to implement student voice work. The authors concluded by recommending that cultural diversity be addressed from a whole-school perspective, involving families and community's voices.

Focusing on the multicultural education strategies adopted by primary school teachers in *Georgia*, Tabatadze's (2015) study highlighted that the adoption of culturally sensitive pedagogical practices relied heavily on the school material in use, such as textbooks, which very often offered a stereotyped representation of minority groups. Furthermore, the author

defined the *inactive action approach*, as the fifth approach to Banks' framework, which turned out to be the most popular approach among elementary teachers, entailing the informed choice of avoiding addressing multicultural themes.

Bernabé Villodre (2019) reported on the *Spanish* response to the migratory boom which started at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and continued up to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and led to the approval of the amended Basic Law on Improving Educational Quality (LOMCE, in its Spanish abbreviation). In the attempt of promoting interculturalism, which implies a real exchange and mutual enrichment of cultures sharing the same territory and not just a peaceful co-existence, the use of musical composition and improvisation in music education was presented as a very efficient tool, since it developed not only the students' creativity, but it also paved the way towards the creation of an intercultural situation through cooperative activities.

The distinction between the multicultural approach, which values cultural differences, from colour-blindness, which values uniqueness along with meritocracy and equality, and aims at nullifying prejudice and discrimination, and from the assimilationist approach, according to which minorities are expected to sacrifice their distinct cultural identities in the name of a common identity, which is the identity of the majority culture, was investigated in Baysu et al.'s (2019) research. The content analysis of diversity school policy documents as well as longitudinal surveys of adolescents attending *Flemish-Belgian* high schools were used to answer the research questions. Unexpectedly, colour-blindness was found to be the most frequent diversity approach adopted in Belgian schools covering the themes of individualism, anti-discrimination and the gap as for minority students' sense of belonging and achievements was lessened through the multicultural approach, while the colour-blind approach turned out to be detrimental as the assimilationist, whereas the gap related to achievement persisted.

Likewise, the findings of Agirdag, Merry and Van Houtte's (2016) study conducted in primary schools in the Flemish cities of Antwerp, Ghent and Genk confirmed that the contributions and the additive approaches according to Banks' classification were the teachers' most favourite approaches to multicultural education. It is worth mentioning that among the implications

carried by the findings the authors mentioned the influence of the local and national political discourse on choices taken in the educational field.

The implementation of intercultural education in Intercultural Primary Schools (ICPs) in Greece was achieved, according to Tsaliki's (2017) study, through a number of teaching approaches suggested by the teachers interviewed, such as encouraging students to use their mother tongue in the classroom, reading school books, fairy tales and myths from their home country to their classmates in their first language and then translating them in the official language spoken at school, and learning about the similarities and differences between different cultures. Moreover, the use of cooperative learning and a cross-thematic approach was highly recommended for foreign and repatriate students since the first allowed them to become autonomous thanks to the assignment of specific roles to each member of the group and the second gave them the opportunity to manifest their potentials in at least one discipline.

The use of music education as a pedagogical tool to defuse acrimonies among different ethnic groups and foster cohesion and unity in heterogeneous and/or conflicting communities such as Northern Ireland and Cyprus was advocated in Odena's (2018) research study. The author formulated a set of principles which could inspire educators, policy leaders and community organisers to conceive culturally sensitive music activities: 1) environments should be created where the students' voices could be heard and accounted for; 2) links between and across communities as well as across all types of schools and groups/programmes should be reinforced to foster cohesion; 3) activities involving different communities should be embedded into educational programmes; 4) a positive environment should be built through dialogue and constructive positive feedback between students and educators; 5) using a variety of stimulating musical resources, such as songs, recordings, slides, films, music software, instruments, body movements and/or dancing, which could be relevant to the students' likings; 6) creating opportunities for models to be heard to help students thrive; 7) the educators' expectations should take into consideration the students' progress; 8) develop the students' self-assessment skills; 9) music teachers should consider continuing professional development as a must either to increase their professionalism or discuss diversity issues at a deeper level.

The originality of Herzog-Punzenberger et al.'s (2020) research, which was part of a three-year European Union-funded project entitled *Aiding Culturally Responsive Assessment in Schools (ACRAS)*, ERASMUS+-Project *Aiding Cultural Responsive Assessment in Schools (ACRAS 2016)*, laid in its being one of the few studies focusing on how educators dealt with the assessment needs of culturally diverse students in the European countries of Austria, Ireland, Norway and Turkey. Among the culturally sensitive assessment strategies developed by the teachers involved in the research, time adaptation, format changes (from written to oral format), test language changes, giving additional support, peer assessment, language up-grading (grades are used according to students' progress and a distinction between content and language used to convey the content is made) were mentioned.

A key finding of the study was that the only aspect of diversity addressed in the classroom by educators related to the linguistic aspect, and that only a limited number of teachers were qualified to teach the mainstream language as a second language. Furthermore, even though some of the teachers did not feel they should change their assessment criteria in accordance to their students' cultural backgrounds, others, since they could not rely on school policies, institutionalised in-school teacher collaboration or regional/national policies, went to great length to tackle the issue and find a way to adapt their assessment and grading strategies to their culturally diverse students.

### **2.5.3 American Studies**

Multicultural education, as maintained by Childs (2017), should become part of the schools' curriculum and should be taught on a daily basis, not only during special events and festivals in America. Moreover, not only the majority of teacher education preparation programs should be innovated by including courses on multiculturalism, but also core subjects, such as Science, Math, Reading and Writing, and History should be addressed from a multicultural perspective. The need for a reconceptualization of multicultural education was also emphasized by Nieto (2017), with the inclusion of terms such as love and caring, and happiness, which did not necessarily exclude the nowadays popular concepts of standardization and accountability. Several studies pinpointed the need for a major review of the curriculum content of teacher

education programs, given the fact that only a few separate courses addressing the topic of diversity are included and that very often the design of these programs had no other purpose than the perpetuation of Whiteness (Sleeter 2017).

Creating opportunities for meet and greet sessions and discussions when new immigrant students join the classroom, as well as information sessions about different cultures and countries for both teachers and students, encouraging the involvement of school leaders in the process by empowering culturally responsive classrooms, and supporting initiatives aiming at increasing the engagement of immigrant students and their interaction with peers, are some of the suggestions put forward by Hansen-Thomas and Chennapragada (2018) in their ethnographic case study. Last but not least, building *knowledge banks* of case scenarios and solutions located in the school libraries was recommended as an extremely helpful tool for new teachers.

Holland and Mongillo's (2016) qualitative research, focusing on US elementary school teachers' views on their multicultural teaching practices and how their beliefs affected their teaching of multicultural literature, on the other end, revealed that children could learn more about themselves and others if teachers' pre-service training programs included internships in schools and diversity was valued by the school community. Moreover, other factors, such as if teachers were supported by their principals, parents, librarians, and the community while addressing those issues, if they were knowledgeable about multicultural literacy practices and used a good variety of high-quality, authentic multicultural literary resources and students had their parents' permission to learn every facet of the topics under study were mentioned. The implementation of a school curriculum based on a broader view of literacy, which made use of various forms of literacy (print-based and digital), as well as discourse practices to enable students, especially immigrant students, to develop self-reflexivity of self as well as of the others, was the suggestion put forward by Kim and Slapac (2015).

To provide their students with learning opportunities regarding race-related issues, according to Milner (2017), since the beginning of the school year teachers should create an environment of respect where students could feel free to question and get exposed to different perspectives

on issues related to race to acquire critical thinking skills, they should develop curriculum connections with the subject they teach and build networks to meet their students' needs by liaising for instance with counsellors, psychologists, and social workers as well as with parents, community members, and school administrators to complement race-centred discourses in and out of school.

Zoch's (2017) study voiced the concerns of four urban elementary school teachers struggling to develop teaching practices that could cater to their culturally and linguistically diverse students' needs and, at the same time, prepare them to be successful at standardized tests, which have been found to follow monolingual and monocultural standards. Analysing the teachers' practices of four elementary school teachers by using Paris's (2012) theory of *culturally sustaining pedagogy*, whose main component, unlike the relevant and responsive pedagogies, was critical consciousness, the researcher highlighted how the research participants had succeeded in reaching a compromise between test preparation and the promotion of linguistic, literate and cultural pluralism by fostering dialogue about social and racial issues.

Critical multiculturalism and critical anti-racism education were used as theoretical lenses to examine the experiences of students and teachers in a high-performing Afro-American urban school in the southeast by Wiggan and Watson-Vandiver (2019) in their qualitative case study research. According to the data analysis, learning from the African-centred perspective turned out to be an empowering and beneficial experience for students, since it provided them with inspiration as well as increased their academic confidence. Acknowledging the limitations of multiculturalism, the researchers urged for the adoption of a more critical approach to the hegemonic and racist perspective, for instance, by including lesser-known historical characters or incorporating elements of the students' heritage and cultures into school learning units.

Particularly interesting was Merchant's (2016) contribution to the literature on the topic, since, in response to the rising phenomenon of Islamophobia engendered by the terrorist attacks of September 11, he focused on the limitations of the traditional approaches to teaching about Islam in the classroom: the textual approach, which considered the religion's scripture/s as the most valuable source of authentic meaning, and the devotional approach, which, on the



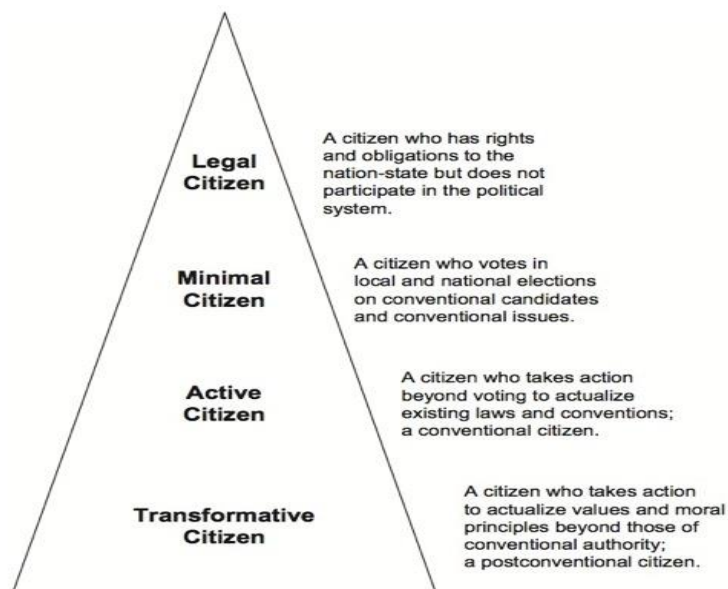
contrary, gave importance to beliefs and religious practices. Since many Muslim girls agreed on reporting their non-Muslim schoolmates' misperceptions of what being a Muslim meant, the *building bridges* strategy, which translated into the mutual effort (Muslims and non-Muslim peers) to create a connection based on accounts of personal experiences, was used as a countermeasure.

Even though there is no saying that some disciplines lend themselves to integrating multicultural perspectives more than others, such as language and Social Studies, Aceves and Orosco (2014) identified six themes that should be integrated into the planning of the curricular units of each and every subject to make them more culturally sensitive: culture, language, and racial identity, multicultural awareness, high expectations, critical thinking, and social justice. Secondary school science teachers, for instance, should take inspiration for their classes from the multicultural philosophy and develop a teaching style informed by the cultural context, equity, and social justice approaches. Therefore, teachers were encouraged to show their students how science could be influenced by society (cultural context approach), to come up with a reduced number of new terms per unit (equity approach) to avoid their students from experiencing feelings of discouragement, and to address topics such as human health and climate change in the classroom to disclose the structures which maintain power inequities and empower students to challenge the status quo (social justice approach) (Hebert 2020).

The beneficial effects of invention-based learning (IBL) approach to science teaching in middle schools in terms of student engagement and comprehension for bicultural students were described by Kim, Lim Kim, and Barnett (2021). The project, called *Home-Fun activity*, entailed the students' investigation of cultural objects with members of their families, which was conducive to the comprehension of scientific concepts. Furthermore, it also proved to be very effective in enabling students to transfer what they learnt at school into another context inside or outside school.

Starkey's (2020) research study investigated how transformative civic education could be used as a panacea to the contemporary plague of the *failed citizenship* (Banks 2008), experienced by minorities in multicultural societies being deprived of their rights of participation because they

are not considered full citizens. Banks' triangular model of types of citizenship, as shown in Fig. 11, had at the apex *legal citizenship*, which referred to those citizens who had the right to participate in the political debate of the nation-state in which they live but who decided not to exercise it, *minimal citizenship*, which applied to those who limited their political engagement to taking part in electoral processes, while *active citizenship* defined an active political engagement aiming at improving the community life. At the base of the triangle, the strongest form of citizenship, the *transformative citizen*, which *involves civic actions designed to actualize values and moral principles and ideals beyond those of existing laws and conventions* was placed. (Banks 2008, p. 136)



**Fig. 12 Bank's triangular model of citizenship (Banks 2008)**

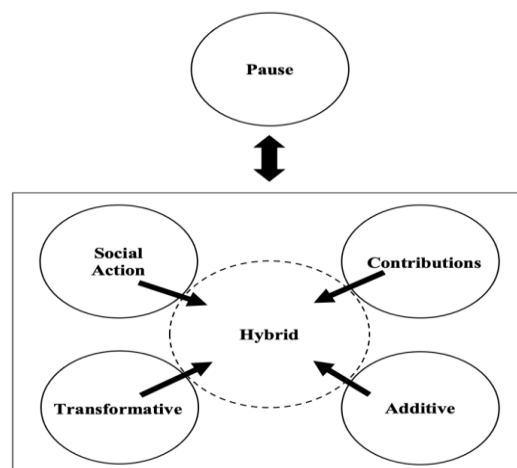
To foster the attainment of this stronger form of citizenship, the use of narratives as a powerful pedagogical tool not only in multicultural education but also in human rights education was highly recommended: teachers embracing this pedagogy, according to the research findings, attempted to reproduce in the classroom a fairer and more inclusive society.

In line with the previous study, Austin's (2020) qualitative doctoral thesis, exploring elementary, middle, and secondary school teachers' perceptions of cultural and linguistic diversity in schools located in the south-eastern area of Deep East Texas, recognized the

pressing necessity for teachers to sharpen their culturally sensitive teaching tools to meet the needs of their culturally diverse students through structured training programs. It is noteworthy to mention that the author correlated the students' development of values such as tolerance and acceptance of diversity with a higher level of their understanding of citizenship.

The Holistic Analysis of Multicultural Teaching Framework was introduced by Freire and Valdez (2021) as a useful tool to grasp the fluid aspects of the teachers' multicultural pedagogical practices. Drawing on Banks' (1988) model of the four levels of integration of multicultural content, the contributions, the additive, the transformative, and the social action levels, the proposed framework aimed at overcoming its weaknesses by paying attention to multicultural teaching practices' pause modes, which, according to the authors, should not be perceived as counterproductive but as physiological moments in the teachers' learning process.

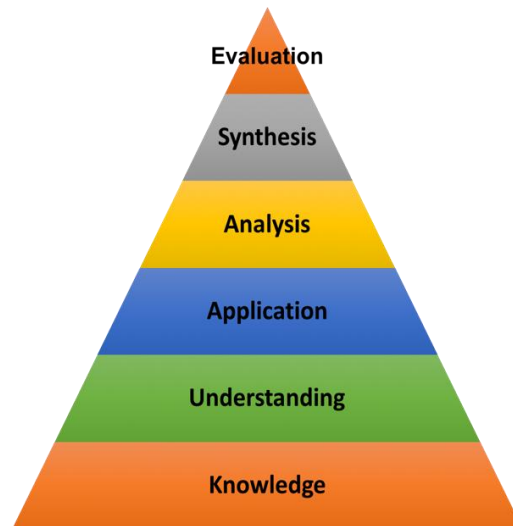
Therefore, the framework, as shown in Fig. 13, was based on three core concepts: the concept of pauses, when the multicultural content is not integrated into the lesson plans; the concept of hybridity when multicultural elements are incorporated into lesson plans, and the concept of fluidity when lesson plans move along a continuum without following a developmental sequence.



**Fig. 13 The Hybrid Mode of the Holistic Analysis of Multicultural Teacher Framework (Freire and Valdez 2021)**

One of the expected outcomes of the present research study was to emphasize the urgent need for higher-quality multicultural pre- and in-service professional development programs for educators. Several studies have been carried out on preservice teachers' perceptions, knowledge, and/ or skills regarding multicultural literature. Palmi et al. (2016), for instance, examining ninety-five preservice teachers' awareness and understanding of multiculturalism using young adult literature, found out that the majority of them gained a deeper knowledge of multicultural education and intended to make use of it in their future teaching practices. Casciola's (2014) study described similar findings as for the importance of using multicultural literature in the classroom. Robinson (2013) described the beneficial effects engendered by the use of multicultural literature to address race-, gender-, and ethnicity-related issues in the classroom among elementary students, such as the expression of empathetic feelings while engaging in the interactive reading of multicultural literature. According to Gunn (2016), as a result of a MCLit course with a social justice orientation comprising a civic engagement project for in- and pre-service teachers, they realized that they could develop a social justice-oriented curriculum using children and young adult literature thanks to the training received.

To provide teachers with a multicultural gifted education model, Ford (2011) developed the Bloom-Banks Matrix by merging Bloom's (Bloom 1956) Taxonomy of Educational Objectives and Banks's (2009) levels of multicultural content integration in the curriculum. Used to create activities that could cater to the students' individual and cultural needs, Bloom's Taxonomy, as shown in Fig. 13 which follows, enables teachers to determine if students are able to recollect information presented in the curriculum (knowledge); to recognize the concepts of the curriculum by explaining what they learned (comprehension); to demonstrate what they learned (application); to understand what was learned by being able to infer, predict, and compare-contrast information (analysis); to use the information to develop new, original, and/or improved approaches (synthesis); and decide if they are able to study, judge, critique, and support what was taught and learned (evaluation).



**Fig. 14 Bloom's Taxonomy**

Consisting of 24 cells based on the the six levels of Bloom by the four levels of Banks, the Matrix was color-coded (Fig. 14). It functioned as a valuable guide for teachers dealing with mixed-ability classrooms in the development and implementation of differentiated lessons (Trotman Scott 2014).

Red was associated with low levels on both Bloom's Taxonomy (i.e., knowledge, comprehension, and application) and Banks's Multicultural Integration model (i.e., contributions and additive), which entailed a scarce students' exposure to multicultural content, which, consequently, resulted in gifted students' lack of engagement. Yellow was linked to a high level on Bloom's Taxonomy but a low level on Banks's Model: gifted students are taught to use critical thinking and problem solving (i.e., analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) with superficial multicultural content (i.e., contributions and additive). Blue was used with a low level on Bloom's Taxonomy but high on Banks's model: even though little critical thinking and problem-solving are involved, students are exposed to cultural events, concepts, and themes through the lens of others, and gain additional and meaningful knowledge about different groups. Social action may take place, but it is not likely to have much impact. Finally, green was associated with high levels either on Bloom's Taxonomy or Banks's model: students think critically, solve problems, address a multitude of multicultural topics, issues, and themes, and seek to make social change in some way.

## Revised Ford-Harris/Bloom-Banks Matrix™: Cell Descriptions

	Knowing	Comprehending	Applying	Analyzing	Evaluating	Creating
Contributions	Students are taught and know facts about cultural artifacts, events, groups, and other cultural elements.	Students show an understanding of information about cultural artifacts, groups, etc.	Students are asked to and can apply information learned about cultural artifacts, events, etc.	Students are taught to and can analyze (e.g., compare and contrast) information about cultural artifacts, groups, etc.	Students are taught to and can evaluate facts and information based on cultural artifacts, groups, etc.	Students are required to and can create a new product from the information on cultural artifacts, groups, etc.
Additive	Students are taught and know concepts and themes about cultural groups.	Students are taught and can understand cultural concepts and themes.	Students are required to and can apply information learned about cultural concepts and themes.	Students are taught to and can analyze important cultural concepts and themes.	Students are taught to and can critique and evaluate cultural issues, concepts and themes.	Students are asked to and can synthesize important information about cultural concepts and themes.
Transformation	Students are given information on important cultural elements, groups, etc., and can understand this information from different perspectives.	Students are taught to understand and can demonstrate an understanding of important cultural concepts and themes from different perspectives.	Students are asked to and can apply their understanding of important concepts and themes from different perspectives.	Students are taught to and can examine important cultural concepts and themes from more than one perspective.	Students are taught to and can critique, evaluate or judge important cultural concepts and themes from different viewpoints (e.g., minority group).	Students are required to and can create a product based on their new perspective or that of another group.
Social Action	Based on information about cultural artifacts, etc., students make recommendations for social action.	Based on their understanding of important concepts and themes, students make recommendations for social action.	Students apply their understanding of important social and cultural issues; they also make recommendations and take action on these issues.	Students are required to and can analyze social and cultural issues from different perspectives; they take action on these issues.	Students critique important social and cultural issues, and seek to make change.	Students create a plan of action to address a social and cultural issue(s); they seek change.

(SOURCE: Ford & Harris, 1999; Ford, 2011. Multicultural Gifted Education) p. 116

Fig. 15 Bloom-Banks Matrix (Ford 2011)

A few studies conducted in the *Canadian Ontario Region* focusing on the experiences of Muslim students were found. Muslim Canadian students faced countless challenges due to their religion's association with terrorism, and the misconceptions related to some aspects and practices of Islam, such as wearing Hijab (the covering of women's hair) or fasting in Ramadan from dawn to dusk for 30 days (the ninth month of the lunar Islamic Calendar). Often teachers are not provided with adequate training programs enabling them to teach students global citizenship. *The Canadian government*, for example, as reported by Guo (2014), supported a three-year Global Classroom Initiative (2009-2012), with the aim of enhancing teachers' abilities to integrate into the curriculum the teaching and learning of human rights, peace, social justice, cultural competency, environmental awareness, and global citizenship, which turned out to be a precious learning opportunity. Among the suggestions put forward by the participants, inviting guest speakers to speak to classes and teachers during PD days, sharing teaching resources, and developing an understanding of children's rights were the most interesting.

To the dominant place of Western classical music and systems of musical notation in music primary school curricula across Canada, Hess (2015) opposed the vision of a broader, inclusive, non-hierarchical, student-centred curriculum, which did not run the risk of being lured by superficiality and tokenism, and which fostered the contextualization of all musics and the drawing of connections between them, resulting in the development of a deeper understanding of music as a social practice.

Chamlian and Kowalewski's (2016) research addressed the theme of multiculturalism in the *Brazilian* educational field. Following the democratization process with the approval of the Federal Constitution in 1988, special attention was devoted to cultural diversity in the Brazilian educational legislation. As a countermeasure to the existing profound inequalities caused by racism in the Brazilian society, the *National Curriculum Guidelines for the Education of the Ethnic and Racial Relations and for the Teaching of Afro – Brazilian and African History and Culture* (2005) were formulated. An interesting initiative was the enrichment of the Primary School Curricula with a mandatory discipline in the attempt to educate future citizens to value their ethnic and racial backgrounds, to contribute to the construction of a democratic nation based on equality, to promote the Afro-descendants' appreciation of their history, culture and identity.

The investigation of how three junior secondary schools different from each other as for the ethnic composition of their students, teachers and local communities located in three different districts of *Botswana* addressed the concept of diversity revealed that the school curricula were only superficially informed by the concept of equality of citizens' rights. The silence imposed on certain aspects of multiculturalism such as alternative historical understandings, economic and political inequalities between ethnic groups, or language rights resulted in students experiencing feelings of shame and embarrassment or treatment as inferior citizens. On the other end, the education policies implemented in secondary schools provided students with the possibility of being represented in the Student Representative Council and with opportunities to raise relevant issues as for their personal experiences (Mulimbi & Dryden-Peterson 2017).

The Omaheke region in east-central *Namibia* is the site in which Ninkova's (2020) research study, aiming to explore how educators dealt with diversity in schools, namely with learners belonging to the marginalized indigenous San people, was carried out. Despite the

independence from South Africa gained in 1990 and the implementation of a progressive education policy, which valued cultural and linguistic diversity, the findings revealed a clear mismatch between the theory and the practice which resulted in the permanency and consolidation of their biased representations also in the educational sphere. Therefore, the author advocated for the development of specific teacher education programs enabling teachers to effectively deal with minority students, including follow-up programs and support provisions for school principals, as well as for a larger number of minority teachers.

Also the educational physical environment, as discussed in the Australian Research Council Linkage Project Final Report 2015 (2015), could play a role in facilitating or hindering the intercultural capacities in schools. Schools' entrance spaces, such as front entrances, foyers and waiting spaces near the principal's office as well as the artefacts displayed throughout the school could all send messages about the school's values and mission. Moreover, in some schools, planning community arts projects with the students' participation and the construction of artefacts representing the different students' nationalities to build a bridge between the local and the global turned out to be successful initiatives.

The study of public primary and secondary teachers' attitudes towards multicultural education and anti-racist policy initiatives in New South Wales revealed that multiculturalism informed the teaching practices of the great majority of the research participants, who resorted to the introduction of measures such as the improvement of intercultural relations, the implementation of anti-racism strategies, greater involvement of parents from different culturally and linguistically background and the adoption of diverse learning styles to combat racism in schools. However, the homogeneity of the teachers' attitudes towards multicultural values was undermined by the different views of three minority groups: those who attached great value to bilingual skills (a pro-English as a second language bias), those who valued the Australian identity and Anglo-Australian heritage (an Anglo bias), and finally those who gave priority to the basics of literacy, and equity of academic outcomes (egalitarianism or a focus on academic basics) (Forrest, Lean & Dunn 2017).



The institutionalized events of Multicultural Days taking place in almost all the Australian schools are reviewed critically and defined as a form of *lazy multiculturalism* by Watkins and Noble (2019, p. 295). Designed to celebrate diversity as well as to cement the relationships with the surrounding community, the authors argued that, on the contrary, these events proved themselves to foster a reductive understanding of culture as a static concept and a tokenistic definition of difference. If the authors agreed that Multicultural Days could bring about beneficial results as for the relationships with parents and the community, however, they encouraged the educational staff to laboriously prepare these events to produce significant educational outcomes. The paper ended with the authors' recommendations of considering how globalisation, transnationalism, intermarriage, generational change, and cultural hybridization shaped the relation between culture and identity, and, consequently, how Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE) students' cultural identities should be considered as *situated* identities.

The importance for schools to be equipped with a sufficient number of resources about various multicultural topics, which can be used in the classroom, was acknowledged by several scholars. Hardie (2011), for instance, argued that the students of the selected fifty-eight schools within the New Zealand school district had limited access to texts which were representative of children who had same-sex parents or with themes of diverse family structure; while Spence (2010), on the other end, underlined the limited number of gay-themed texts available across the selected libraries.

Among the related research conducted in MENA countries, Alharbi's (2020) doctoral thesis investigated primary school educators' attitudes toward multiculturalism and multicultural education in the Holy city of Mecca, in Saudi Arabia. The influence of the Islamic religion and culture on the shaping of the concept of culture and, consequently, on the concept of multiculturalism and multicultural education turned out to be considerable. If some educators believed in the beneficial effects of multicultural education either on students' achievements or teachers' performance, others were convinced that the development of a multicultural education could end up losing Islamic and Arabic identities for Saudi Students. Among the initiatives much advocated, there were the development of an Arabic learning program not only for non-Arabic speakers but also for Saudi students facing difficulty in reading, writing, and speaking

skills in the Arabic language as well as the implementation of teacher professional development programs. Thanks to the implementation of these programs, educators could actively contribute to the building of the country by offering high-quality teaching practices to the future leaders of the country were mentioned.

In line with Alharbi's (2020) research, other studies emphasized the urgent need for higher-quality teacher education and professional development programs, such as Yilmazl's (2015) and Karacabey, Ozdere, and Bozkus's (2019) studies, which, respectively, focused on Turkish pre-service teachers' perceptions on multiculturalism and multicultural education and the attitudes toward multicultural education of 248 Turkish language teachers to the Syrian immigrants in Sanliurfa. The participants in both studies all agreed on the importance for the future generation's educators to be endowed with cultural awareness, cultural sensibility, and cultural skills, enabling them to cater for the diverse students' needs. They also wished for an increased quality of teacher training programs with the inclusion of classes on their own cultures as well as different cultures, in-service training, seminars, panels, and workshops, practical lessons for teacher candidates.

Abu Asbah's (2018) qualitative study examined the appropriateness of the attempt to infuse multicultural education in Muslim Arab schools in Israel, bearing in mind that the Arab society is facing a values crisis due to the Westernization transition from conservative traditional society to modern society. The main challenge which the national educational system had to face was the conflicting relation between the democratic values on which multiculturalism is based and the Islamic values based on God's laws.

As for the regional parallel studies on the topic, to the researcher's best knowledge, only Ahmad's (2009) doctoral thesis was found, which focused on *minority schools*, schools catering to the needs of students whose parents came from different countries and cultures to the United Arab Emirates to work and live there temporarily. It emphasised the need for curricular changes due to the increasingly multicultural and multilingual UAE population. Unfortunately, the study is perceived as outdated and does not reflect the current situation in the UAE, not to mention the unsuitable use of the term *minority*. According to the results, the educational system was found to be supportive of the minority students by enabling them to learn about the UAE

cultural identity and Arabic language, and by preparing them for higher education either in their own home country, or anywhere in the world.

## **2.6 Multicultural School Resources**

### **2.6.1 Eastern Studies**

Given the central role of textbooks in Asian countries' public education, many scholars investigated if and how multicultural contents are conveyed in instructional school resources. The relationships between the global dimension and the Taiwanese national curriculum, for instance, in the elementary school textbooks used in *Taiwan* were explored by Chou and Ting (2016), who discovered that being global education concepts too abstract, they were used more frequently in social studies, than in other subjects. The analysis of how multicultural content is represented in social studies, ethics and *Korean* language textbooks from third to ninth grade was conducted by Cho and Park (2016) using as frames *the multicultural content analysis frame* (MDAF) and the *multicultural description analysis frame* (MMDAF). The first frame consisted of three categories: identity, which included four subcomponents (dimensions of identity, various dimensions of identity, formation process of identity and positive disposition of identity) diversity and pluralism, and social justice. MMDAF comprised five categories: balance of material distribution (which focused on the main characters and their groups as well as the centredness of each group), accuracy and scope of information (the depth and accuracy of information provided about certain cultures), distortion and stereotypes, balance in perspectives (whether issues, and problems are described from different perspectives), and Korean-ethnic centredness.

The findings revealed that multicultural content was not sufficiently and evenly represented either in elementary or secondary textbooks since multicultural content was not included among the Korean curriculum learning objectives and that the superiority of the Korean and West cultures informed the content of the majority of textbooks used at school. Therefore, the study accounted for the ongoing situation of a country wrestling with the dilemma of choosing between the adoption of a nationalist, a multiculturalist, or a tailor-made nationalistic

multiculturalist model. A biased and unequal representation of women's roles compared to men's roles and the existence of a *hidden curriculum* through which students were exposed to an unequal gender-related social and economic engagement in society are the findings of Clark's (2016) case study which examined a textbook in use in *Japanese* public junior high schools.

### 2.6.2 European Studies

**Dutch** primary school history textbooks, workbooks, and in-class activity books were the focus of Weiner's (2018) research study. The findings revealed that immigrants were excluded from the great majority of the resources taken into consideration, they only appeared in separate sections and they were described as foreigners, no matter how long they lived in the Netherlands and represented in a stereotyped way or as a social problem for the white Dutch society. The adoption of a xenophobic perspective had an obvious impact on how white Dutch students perceived their immigrant peers not as equals, causing immigrant students continued suffering from marginalization. To prevent this from happening, the author vehemently stressed the importance for textbooks to include stories on immigrant oppression as well as stories on immigrants' contribution to national histories from a decolonizing perspective.

Kerkhoven et al.'s (2016) research study, on the contrary, aimed at identifying gender bias in the visual contents (images and videos) of primary school online science education resources, which included astronomy biology, chemistry, geology, maths, physics, and technology resources. According to the results, boys were represented more frequently than girls, men and women. As for the professions of the men and women depicted in the online science resources visuals, a gender imbalance emerged as men appeared more often than women and they were represented as scientists while more women than men were represented as teachers. Consequently, the authors stressed the importance of counteracting this gender-stereotyped representation of men and women to enable girls to see themselves as capable to become scientists and work in the scientific field.

In line with the findings of Weiner's research, Üllen and Markom (2016) authored a study, which examined a selection of *Austrian* secondary school geography and history textbooks through the use of content analysis in order to get a better understanding of students' perceptions of the representations of migration in their textbooks. They found out that history textbooks were still perceived as a source of the national memory, rather than as a source of a new form of memory, a memory devoid of national borders, a *cosmopolitan memory* (Levy & Sznajder 2002, p. 88), and that the history of migration was excluded and/or marginalised in the selected textbooks. Therefore, the adoption of an integrated approach in history teaching fostering the synergy of individual and collective memories through the practice of storytelling was highly recommended.

Usher's (2021) paper investigated how Africa and African countries/cultures were portrayed in *Irish* primary Geography textbooks and to what extent these textbook portrayals were informed by a *tough* form of critical multicultural education (CMCE). The author emphasized the potential of Critical Multicultural Geography Education (CMGE) as a pedagogical tool, through which students could be taught to look at the world critically using problem-solving, enquiry and investigative methods in order to unmask power inequalities as well as to create connections between the issues/places/people under study and their daily lives. Particularly noteworthy was the framework developed by the author to assess Geography textbooks which, as shown by the following table (Table. 3), included a set of questions pertaining to different characteristics such as different perspectives, diversity, critical thinking and enquiry, power relations and connections that the selected textbooks might have.

Characteristic	Does the textbook:
Different Perspectives	Provide different perspectives of the place and/or issue being presented to the pupils (i.e. many truths)?
Diversity	Show a variety of images and accounts pertaining to the place and/or issue being presented (i.e. acknowledging differences in cultures within a place – diversity)?
Critical Thinking and Enquiry	Encourage enquiry and critical thinking on 'why things are as they are' in relation to the issue and or 'Other' place?
Power Relations	Explore power relations between groups within the 'Other' place and/or between that place and pupils' own locations?
Connections	Allow for making connections between the 'Other' culture/place/issue and the pupils' locality, experiences and local/national contexts (i.e. thinking globally, acting locally)?

**Table. 3 Framework for Critical Multicultural Geography Education**

The results revealed that in the main the African textbooks selected provided the readers with negative, simplistic, and stereotyped representations of Africa and its peoples and the complete absence of stories about Africa written from the perspectives of African people which contributed to the perpetuation of a one-dimensional, Eurocentric account of the entire African continent as well as of the us and them dichotomy.

### **2.6.3 American Studies**

Defining cultural authenticity as the representation of values consistent with a particular culture, forty-five picture books portraying African Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans were analysed through a systematic and empirical analysis in Yoo-Lee et al.'s (2014) research. Even though the majority of the texts selected were deemed as culturally authentic, still few negative stereotypical elements were found in the African American picture books, which hindered the conveyance of culturally authentic themes. A noteworthy aspect of the study was that the picture books selected were reviewed by multiple insiders of the different cultures, considered the only capable evaluators of cultural authenticity.

The tenets of the Critical Race Theory were used by Yenika-Agbaw (2014) to examine the race/ethnicity, class, and gender-related dynamics embedded in four Africana (African, African American, and Caribbean) multicultural adaptations of the Cinderella fairy tale, with the intent of showing how complex a social category is race/ethnicity. The analysis of these fairy tales revealed how regionally and/or nationally different were the Black communities represented, which resulted in the eradication of practices of racial essentialisation. The inclusion of literary counter-narratives into the school curriculum because of their tremendous beneficial effects they could have not only on students, by providing them with the opportunity to hold stimulating conversations on cultural differences, but also on educators, by encouraging them to make pedagogical audacious choices was highly recommended. In the concluding note, the author stressed the compelling need for a careful revision of the criteria used to select school resources/texts.

Braden and Rodriguez's (2016) study, exploring the representation of Latinx characters in picture books published in 2013 through critical content analysis, highlighted that English was still the privileged language, that the cultural details were not authentic, the gender representations were still traditional, and that no references to the real world with its social justice issues were included. The researchers concluded their study by stressing the importance for teachers to allow their students to engage in critical conversations and to ask questions in order to discover the deepest layers of meaning of the texts.

In line with Braden and Rodriguez's (2016) study, Compton-Lilly et al.'s (2019) research examined how historical reading textbooks which had been used to teach generations of Americans addressed diversity. Since the great majority of the textbooks examined turned out to provide students with a stereotyped and inaccurate depiction of Black, Latin, and Native American people, the authors warned educators about the effects that reading textbooks not carefully selected could have on the educational experiences of immigrant children. They advocated, therefore, for the involvement of colleagues and/or parents of underserved communities in the process, as well as for the employment of alternative texts, and a critical analysis of how these reading resources address diversity.

#### **2.6.4 MENA Studies**

As for the gender representation in school textbooks, examining the image of women as portrayed in the national education books from first to ninth grades in Jordan, Al-Khalidi (2016) wished for a more accurate and faithful representation of the women's role concerning the equality between spouses, the distribution of occupations according to gender, and the right for women to participate in the political life of their country. Analysing the frequency and nature of the two genders across five categories including omission, firstness, masculine generic constructions, occupations, and activities in two of the Iranian high school EFL/ ESL textbooks compiled by the Textbook Curriculum Development and Planning Department of the Ministry of Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Amini and Birjandi (2012) discovered that sexist practices and stereotypes still permeated them.

Both Al-Qatawneh and Al Rawashdeh's (2018) research study and Sbai's (2020) doctoral thesis, focused respectively on gender representation in nine-grade students' Arabic language textbooks and on the values conveyed in the illustrations of MoE Arabic language and Moral Education textbooks for grade 1 to grade 4 students as an aspect of the hidden curriculum. If Al-Qatawneh and Al Rawashdeh's (2018) results confirmed not only that women were still underrepresented in textbooks but also that their representation was limited to certain roles, such as those of wives and homemakers; Sbai's (2020) study interpreted the biased representation of women and people of determination in the textbooks' images as an aspect of the hidden curriculum.

## **2.7 Multicultural Young Adult Literature**

The term multicultural may be used to refer to the dimensions of ethnicity and race (culture), but also those of racism, sexism (gender), classism (socio-economic status), religious intolerance (values/morals), xenophobia (fear of strangers and different cultures), and linguisticism (language/culture) (National Association for Multicultural Education 2003). The proposed study considered the dimensions of ethnicity and race, racism, sexism, religious intolerance, and xenophobia.

When the term multicultural is coupled with the term literature, it is inevitable to evoke the metaphor coined by Bishop (1990a), according to whom books can function as *mirrors* through which children and adolescents may recognize familiar physical, cultural, and emotional-related aspects of their lives reflected back, as *windows* through which they may learn about the worlds and the lives of characters who are distant from them, and/or *sliding glass doors* through which they *can become part of the whatever world has been created or recreated by the author* (p. 1). As for the last component of the metaphor, that is literature as a sliding glass door, the relationship with Freire's concept of *action* was emphasized in the present study (Johnson, Koss, & Martinez 2017), according to which the readers, establishing emotional connections with the texts, after undergoing the reading experience, feel changed and more motivated to assume a proactive attitude, and try to modify their lives as well as the world they



live in.

The term *young adult literature* (YA) came into use with the publication of *The Outsiders* in 1967 to define a category of literature marketed for teenagers, in which teenagers are the main characters, issues, and topics are relevant to teens, and outcomes usually depend on the decisions and choices of those main characters (Glaus 2013; Herz & Gallo 2005). Even though scholars disagree about the chronological ages which overlap the development stage of adolescence - according to Erikson's psychosocial theory (Erikson 1968) from age twelve to age eighteen - they all agree that it is a crucial moment during which adolescents develop their identity and channel their efforts into getting to know themselves and finding their place in the world (Landt 2006). Unfortunately, if a great wealth of research on the positive pedagogical effects of multicultural children's literature on early and/or primary school students has been found, on the contrary, the investigation of the effects that multicultural YA literature may have on secondary school students has been mostly overlooked.

Therefore, being the main characters, teenagers who embody the characteristics and concerns of adolescent readers, YA multicultural literary novels may contribute to providing students with opportunities to see themselves in the books they read, so that they can form their personal and racial identities while considering different perspectives on personal and social problems, and feeling represented in their classroom (Ivey & Johnston 2013). African American adolescent males, as maintained by Tatum (2009), should be exposed to *enabling texts* as opposed to *disabling texts*, which included characters who bore similarities with the readers as far as their physical and psychological features were concerned, but who also encouraged them to face their personal lives with a proactive attitude. The author, however, emphasized the essential role of the teachers, parents, and librarians' mediation while dealing with culturally sensitive texts.

While Thein, Beach, and Parks (2007) posited that, by allowing white students to get into the habit of trying on different perspectives while teaching multicultural literature, they may acknowledge the existence of many different ways of understanding the world and learn how beliefs are formed, Osorio (2018) emphasized the importance of using multicultural literature as a tool either to foster diversity acceptance and critical consciousness among students or for

educators to connect to their students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds and to listen to their voices. In addition, it provides students with a sense of belonging or affirmation about who they are. A substantial body of research has provided evidence in support of the thesis that reading multicultural fiction fosters the students' capacity to establish an empathic bond not only with the characters but also with other individuals.

The potential of trans-mediation as a tool which can be used in literacy education to foster critical thinking, enhance reading comprehension and support multicultural education was explored in Hadjioannou and Hutchinson's (2014) research. Defined as *the process of translating meanings from one sign system (such as language) into another (such as pictorial representation)* (Siegel 1995, p. 456), it allows students to choose modalities of expression which are meaningful to them through which they can convey their knowledge, and it encourages them to engage in open conversations on their manifold interpretations of the texts.

Of relevance to the present study is the reflection stimulated by the inclusion of the criterion of *cultural relevance* in the checklist used by Dillon et al. (2020) to assess how well the contents of English/Arabic dual-language picture books for young readers mirror the readers' cultural identities and linguistic heritage in the UAE using the ratings of *excellence* (reflecting children's cultural identities and literary heritage very well), *good* (reflect reflecting children's cultural identities and literary heritage moderately well), *fair* (including references to or pictures from a known culture, but not the local culture), and *poor* (including pictures of or references to aspects that are not appropriate in the culture). If Sneddon's (2008) theory, according to which to be culturally appropriate dual language books should be written from an insider perspective and then translated into English, is to be accepted, it becomes arduous to decide which cultures should be chosen to be portrayed considering the UAE cosmopolitan context (Hojeij et al. 2019). Furthermore, another issue worth mentioning is the teachers' erroneous belief that books representing a specific ethnic group are suitable only for readers belonging to that group (Williams & Haag 2012).

Since the concept of cultural authenticity has dominated the research about multicultural literature, the investigator found inspiration in the wealth of studies addressing the issue to develop a set of evaluating criteria to be used in the analysis of the multicultural literacy resource selected. A literary work was defined as culturally authentic by Mo and Shen (1997),

when it *resonates with values and beliefs of certain cultural groups and specifically projects the diversity within them* (p. 86). The accuracy or the avoidance of stereotyping and the representation of values and practices that are accepted as norms within a social group were identified as the two main components of authenticity: while accuracy focused on cultural facts, culturally authentic literary texts should not contain stereotypes and tokenism of the marginalized, which entails the illustration of tinted White characters or characters with no distinctive features (Boyd, Causey, & Galda 2015).

According to some scholars, only writers who are part of a culture can accurately portray it (Bista 2012; Landt 2006), therefore, white authors cannot write about a racial/ethnic group different from their own without being subjected to political correctness (Lasky 2003). Debating on the role of the author's cultural experiences, Cai (2003) argued that if imagination is needed for literary excellence, imagination without experience may engender bias and inaccurate representations. Simply relying on one's own perceptions is not enough for non-native authors, who decide to write about other cultures, they are expected to do research or to have had significantly long interactions with the members of that culture (Reese & Caldwell-Wood 1997).

According to Noll (2003), authors who choose to write for children about other cultures should be held responsible for providing them with accurate information and authentic cultural images, since through their books young readers gain knowledge about themselves as well as the others. Seto (1995) warned Euro-American authors against the issue of cultural thievery, which, by depriving them of a truthful representation of their heritage and providing a falsified image of other cultures, could bring about serious consequences for young readers such as racism and racial violence. Consequently, Bista (2012) stated that only writers with an emic perspective and members of that culture have the authority to portray it.

Of diametrically opposed opinion is Cai (2002), who believed that an author who goes to any length to understand a culture can be considered an insider. To evaluate the authenticity and quality of literary texts, the establishment of evaluating criteria, especially when the authors are culturally outsiders, should be a priority: literary quality, historical accuracy, portrayal of

lifestyles, authentic dialogue, standards of success, roles of female, elders, and family, author's and/or illustrator's background, illustrations, relationships between characters of different cultures, selection of heroes and heroines, copyright date (outdated books may contain misinformation and/or stereotypes) are the criteria formulated by Holland and Mongillo (2016).

## 2.8 Summary

To sum up, the researcher drew up a table (Table 4), in which the relevant reviewed studies describing how the different national educational systems had dealt with the challenges engendered by the phenomenon of globalisation are included, highlighting their major findings along with the research approach adopted.

International Multicultural Challenges		
Author (s)	Research Approach	Major Findings
<b>Eastern Countries:</b>		
Tan (2017) - Singapore	Historical approach	Urgent need to move from a <i>superficial cultural approach</i> to a deeper cultural approach through the promotion of <i>community projects</i> .
Arphattananon (2018) - Thailand	Qualitative approach	Even in the schools where a multicultural curriculum was implemented, the cultural content provided did not take into consideration the <i>personal experiences of the students</i>
Huang, Cheng and Yang (2016) - Taiwan	Quantitative approach	Elementary school <i>natural science teachers'</i> unpreparedness in infusing their teaching practices with multicultural concepts
Han and Leung (2017) - China	Mixed approach	Multiculturalism in <i>music education</i> could be achieved only through the students' exposure to various types of international music; consequently, the placement of a higher value on the teaching of Chinese folk music was highly recommended to school administrators and policymakers

Raihani (2017) - Malaysia	Ethnographic case study	A more <i>holistic conception of multicultural education</i> where several dimensions merge, such as school vision and policies, curriculum and instruction, leadership and management, capacity and culture, student activism, and collaboration with wider communities is embraced. The weakest links turned out to be the teachers, who, by instilling fear and suspicion towards other cultures into their students, violated one of the multicultural education tenets, the <i>annihilation of prejudice</i> .
<b>European Studies</b>		
Kirkham (2016) - England	Qualitative approach	Not only the whole student population was not involved in curricular activities addressing the issues of race, ethnicity, and multiculturalism critically, but students turned out to be also <i>unaware of the aims of the support programs</i> promoted by the school, which were often perceived as <i>reverse racism</i>
Welply (2018) - England	Qualitative approach	-The findings highlighted the intersectionality of forms of implicit race, culture, religion, language, immigrant status, and national identity-related <i>racism and micro-aggressions</i> experienced by Muslim students when interacting with their peers at school.  -The author encouraged schools to engage with diversity by <i>breaking the silence around Otherness</i> and helping children create positive images of the Other.
Jamison (2018) - England	Qualitative Case Study	The limitless potential of the <i>videoconferencing technology</i> , which, letting students see the face of the other, had the beneficial effect of debunking the representation of the other as conveyed by the media and the society they lived in, and at the same time, contributed to the development of a deeper understanding of their own identity through the <i>dialogic exchange</i> .
Civitillo and al. (2016) - Germany	Mixed-method design	-Practices, which refer to events and activities implemented in the school and in the classroom, are closely intertwined with the <i>artefacts</i> , which include all the visible products displayed in public places on the school premises as tangible manifestations of the school cultural diversity approach.  -Another important element is the <i>school website</i> , in which information relating to every aspect of the institutionalized school life, values and mission can be retrieved  - The school practices and artefacts aiming to promote <i>cultural pluralism</i> were found to be often related only to European or Western cultures and the low teachers' and students' perceptions of either or both <i>equality</i> and cultural pluralism were directly proportional

		to the absence of culturally sensitive-related practices and artefacts.
Björklund (2013) - Finland	Qualitative approach	-The establishment of <i>open relationships with parents</i> coming from different cultural backgrounds and the lack of adequate culturally relevant teaching methodological skills as major issues.
Mansikka, Westvall and Heimonen (2018) - Finland	Qualitative approach	Music teachers' feeling more at ease when using an <i>additive and inclusive multicultural approach</i>
Acquah, Tandon and Lempinen (2015) - Finland	Quantitative approach	<i>Teachers' low levels of awareness of diversity</i> and, consequently, little prior experiences in dealing with culturally and linguistically diverse students with major implications for preservice and in-service teachers' training programs, for curriculum development as well as for school system in Finland.
Bussotti (2017) - Italy	Qualitative approach	To help students develop critical thinking and open-mindedness, and dispel prejudices and misconceptions, students could get in touch with other students from different countries through face-to-face <i>videoconferences</i> , or they could write texts in online communities.
Abacioglu, Volman and Fischer (2019) – The Netherlands	Quantitative approach	Both <i>multicultural attitudes and perspective-taking abilities</i> could predict a higher level of teachers' engagement in culturally sensitive teaching practices.
Szelei, Tinoca, and Pinho (2018) - Portugal	Qualitative Case Study	The student's voices seemed to be missing and the importance for pre- and in-service <i>teacher education programs to include learning opportunities aiming at the development of pedagogical strategies to implement student voice work</i> is underlined.
Tabatadze (2015) - Georgia	Qualitative approach	The author defined the <i>inactive action approach</i> , as the fifth approach to Banks' framework, which turned out to be the most popular approach among elementary teachers, entailing the informed choice of avoiding addressing multicultural themes.
Baysu, Phalet, Meeussen, and Kende (2019)- Belgium	Quantitative approach	<i>Colour-blindness</i> was found to be the most frequent diversity approach adopted in schools, which turned out to be detrimental as the assimilationist.
Tsaliki (2017) - Greece	Mxed-method approach	A number of <i>teaching approaches</i> were suggested such as encouraging students to use their mother tongue in the classroom, reading school books, fairy tales and myths from their home country to their classmates in their first language and then translating them in the official language spoken at school, and learning about the similarities and differences between different cultures.
Odena (2018) – Northern Ireland and Cyprus	Qualitative approach	<i>Culturally sensitive music activities</i> were suggested, such as activities involving different communities should be embedded into educational programmes; using a variety of stimulating musical resources, such as songs, recordings, slides, films, music software, instruments, body movements and/or dancing, which could be relevant to the students' likings.

Herzog-Punzenberger et al. (2020) – Austria, Ireland, Norway and Turkey	Qualitative approach	<p>-The only aspect of diversity addressed in the classroom related to <i>the linguistic aspect</i>, and that only a limited number of teachers were qualified to teach the mainstream language as a second language.</p> <p>-Culturally <i>sensitive assessment strategies</i> included time adaptation, format changes (from written to oral format), test language changes, giving additional support, peer assessment, language up-grading (grades are used according to students' progress)</p>
<b>American Studies</b>		
Childs (2017) - USA	Historical approach	-Not only the majority of teacher education preparation programs should be innovated by including courses on multiculturalism, but also <i>core subjects, such as Science, Math, Reading and Writing, and History should be addressed from a multicultural perspective</i>
Nieto (2017) -USA	Historical approach	Use of the terms <i>love</i> and <i>caring</i> , and <i>happiness</i> , which did not necessarily exclude the nowadays popular concepts of standardization and accountability
Sleeter (2017) - USA	Historical approach	The need for a major <i>review of the curriculum content of teacher education programs</i> , since only a few separate courses addressing the topic of diversity are included and that very often the design of these programs had no other purpose than the perpetuation of Whiteness
Hansen-Thomas and Chennapragada (2018) - USA	Ethnographic case study	Creating opportunities for meet and greet sessions and discussions when new immigrant students join the classroom, as well as information sessions about different cultures and countries for both teachers and students, encouraging the involvement of school leaders, and , building <i>knowledge banks</i> of case scenarios and solutions located in the school libraries for new teachers.
Holland and Mongillo (2016) - USA	qualitative research	Children could learn more about themselves and others if teachers' pre-service training programs included <i>internships in schools and diversity was valued by the school community, if teachers were supported by their principals, parents, librarians and the community while addressing those issues</i> , if they were knowledgeable about multicultural literacy practices and used a good variety of high-quality, authentic multicultural literary resources and students had their parents' permission to learn every facet of the topics under study.
Kim and Slapac (2015)		The implementation of a school curriculum based on a broader view of literacy, which made use of various <i>forms of literacy</i> (print-based and digital), as well as discourse practices to enable students, especially immigrant students, to develop self-reflexivity of self as well as of the others.
Milner (2017) - USA	Quantitative approach	Development of curriculum <i>connections with the subject they teach and the building of networks to meet their students' needs</i> by liaising for instance with counsellors,

		psychologists, and social workers as well as with parents, community members, and school administrators to complement race-centred discourses in and out of school.
Zoch (2017) - USA	Ethnographic qualitative approach	<i>A compromise between test preparation and the promotion of linguistic, literate and cultural pluralism was reached</i> by fostering dialogue about social and racial issues.
Wiggan and Watson-Vandiver (2019) - USA	qualitative case study	-Learning from the Other's perspective turned out to be an empowering and beneficial experience for students  -The adoption of a more critical approach to the hegemonic and racist perspective
Merchant (2016) - USA	Qualitative case study	The <i>building bridges</i> strategy, which translated into the mutual effort (Muslims and non-Muslim peers) to create a connection based on accounts of personal experiences, was used.
Aceves and Orosco (2014) - USA	Literature review	<i>six themes</i> should be integrated into the planning of the curricular units of each and every subject to make them more culturally sensitive: culture, language, and racial identity, multicultural awareness, high expectations, critical thinking, and social justice
Kim, Lim Kim, and Barnett (2021)- USA	Qualitative multiple-case study	Use of the invention-based learning (IBL) in Science teaching: <i>Home-Fun activity</i> , entailed the students' investigation of cultural objects with members of their families
Starkey (2020) -USA	Qualitative case studies	<i>transformative civic education</i> could be used as a panacea to the contemporary plague of the <i>failed citizenship</i> . To foster the attainment of the stronger form of citizenship, the use of narratives as a powerful pedagogical tool not only in multicultural education but also in human rights education was highly recommended.
Freire and Valdez (2021)	Thematic analysis approach	The concept of <i>pauses</i> , when the multicultural content is not integrated into the lesson plans; the concept of hybridity when multicultural elements are incorporated into lesson plans, and the concept of fluidity when lesson plans move along a continuum without following a developmental sequence.
Casciola (2014) -USA Robinson (2013) -USA Gunn (2016) - USA	Qualitative approach Ethnographic case study Case study approach	-importance of using <i>multicultural literature</i> in the classroom  -the use of children and young adult <i>literature</i>
Guo (2014) - Canada	Qualitative case study approach	integration into the curriculum of the teaching and learning of <i>human rights, peace, social justice, cultural competency, environmental awareness, and global citizenship</i> , as a precious learning opportunity (through inviting guest speakers to speak to classes and teachers during PD days, sharing teaching resources, and developing an understanding of children's rights)
Chamlian and Kowalewski (2016) - Brazil	Qualitative approach	The Primary School Curricula was enriched with a <i>mandatory discipline</i> in the attempt to



		educate future citizens to value their ethnic and racial backgrounds, to contribute to the construction of a democratic nation based on equality
Mulimbi and Dryden-Peterson (2017)- Africa	Qualitative approach	The <i>silence imposed on certain aspects of multiculturalism</i> such as alternative historical understandings, economic and political inequalities between ethnic groups, or language rights resulted in students experiencing feelings of shame and embarrassment or treatment as inferior citizens
Ninkova (2020) - Africa	Qualitative approach	<i>Clear mismatch</i> between the theory and the practice which resulted in the permanency and consolidation of the Other's biased representations
Forrest, Lean and Dunn (2017) Australia	Quantitative approach	Public primary and secondary teachers' attitudes towards multicultural education: introduction of measures such as the <i>improvement of intercultural relations, the implementation of anti-racism strategies, greater involvement of parents from different culturally and linguistically background and the adoption of diverse learning styles to combat racism in schools</i>
Watkins and Noble (2019) - Australia	Ethnographic qualitative approach	<p>-Designed to celebrate diversity as well as to cement the relationships with the surrounding community, these events proved themselves to foster a <i>reductive understanding of culture as a static concept and a tokenistic definition of difference.</i></p> <p>- How globalisation, transnationalism, intermarriage, generational change, and cultural hybridization <i>shaped the relation between culture and identity</i></p>
<b>MENA Studies</b>		
Alharbi (2020) – Saudi Arabia	Qualitative case study	If some educators believed in the beneficial effects of multicultural education either on students' achievements or teachers' performance, others were convinced that the development of a multicultural education <i>could end up losing Islamic and Arabic identities for Saudi Students.</i>
Yilmazl' (2015) - Turkey Karacabey, Ozdere, and Bozkus (2019) - Turkey	Qualitative case study	Importance for the future generation's educators to be endowed with <i>cultural awareness, cultural sensibility, and cultural skills</i> , enabling them to cater for the diverse students' needs and wished for an increased quality of teacher training programs <i>with the inclusion of classes on their own cultures as well as different cultures, in-service training, seminars, panels, and workshops, practical lessons for teacher candidates.</i>
Abu Asbah (2018) - Israel	Qualitative approach	conflicting relation between the democratic values on which multiculturalism is based and the Islamic values based on God's laws.
Ahmad (2009) -UAE	Mixed-method approach	The educational system was found to be <i>supportive of the minority students</i> by enabling them to learn about the UAE cultural identity and Arabic language, and by preparing them for higher education either in their own home country, or anywhere in the world.

**Table. 4 Summary of Literature Studies**

A great wealth of studies, as shown in Table 4, has been found which agreed on the urgency for a change in the school policies and culture to meet the needs of a global increasing diverse student population as well as in the contents to be transmitted through school curricula to provide 21<sup>st</sup>-century students with the *powerful knowledge* (Young 2013) they need to fend for themselves and confront the complexity of the global multicultural society they live in. A leitmotif common to several studies is, in fact, the quest for innovation through a re-culturing process. Among the skills that learners should master to be in tune with the evolving world, creativity, empathy, and citizenship have grown in prominence and become the common ground where the Deep Learning 6 C's have thrived.

A more holistic conception of multicultural education, consisting of several dimensions, such as school vision and policies, curriculum and instruction, leadership and management, capacity and culture, student activism, and collaboration with wider communities, was embraced by several scholars. Therefore, as stated by Holland and Mongillo (2016), educators willing to engage in critical discussions about multicultural themes in the classroom should be knowledgeable about multicultural literacy practices, should be equipped with a good variety of high-quality, authentic multicultural literary resources, and should be able to rely on the support of their school leaders, the school librarians, their students' parents, and the community. The importance of a dialogic exchange between students and teachers, for instance through the storytelling technique, is emphasized as a means through which educators can sabotage the power relations within the classrooms and make their students' voices and perspectives heard. *Through dialogue, and not monologue, diversity can make a more active role in classrooms* (Kwan 2019, p 35)

If Banks' (1988) model of the four levels of integration of multicultural content into the curriculum, namely the contributions, the additive, the transformative, and the social action levels, was cited in several studies and used as a tool for evaluating the teachers' approach to culturally sensitive pedagogical practices, in Freire and Valdez's (2012) study the model was supplemented with the concepts of *pauses*, when the multicultural content is not integrated into

the lesson plans, *hybridity*, when multicultural elements are incorporated into lesson plans, and *fluidity*, when lesson plans move along a continuum without following a developmental sequence.

Moreover, in several studies the concept of diversity is intertwined with the notion of citizenship, which embraces the strong belief that students have the commitment to making a difference and contributing to the betterment of the world, becoming active agents of change. To foster the attainment of a stronger form of citizenship, specific disciplines, such as human rights education, should be included in the curriculum and the use of counter-narratives, for instance, should be perceived as a powerful pedagogical tool.

Finally, the great majority of the reviewed studies agreed on the urgent need for a major review of the curriculum content of teacher education programs, since only a few separate courses addressing the topic of diversity are included, and very often the design of these programs had no other purpose than the perpetuation of Whiteness (Sleeter 2017), with the inclusion of classes on their own cultures as well as different cultures, in-service training, seminars, panels, and workshops, and practical lessons for teacher candidates (Yılmazlı' 2015).

Even though several studies examining school textbooks and/or picture books through critical content analysis have shown how their contents were still imbued with gender and cultural-related stereotypes and culturally sensitive misrepresentations in the name of an assimilation ideology, and the beneficial effects that the use of authentic multicultural resources has on adolescent students was been abundantly discussed by scholars, none of them took a step further and focused on the importance of using authentic literacy resources as a pedagogical tool to address multicultural issues in the classroom at a secondary school level.

Since the selection and analysis of a multicultural suitable and authentic literacy resource form the backbone of the present research study, the researcher included in the review a detailed description of the copious amount of literature found about the intense debate on cultural authenticity and accuracy. *when can a literacy resource be defined as culturally authentic and accurate?* was the question that many scholars tried to deal with, coming up with the distinction

between insider and outsider writers, which led to facing another question, that is *When can an author be defined as an insider to the culture he/she depicted in his/her book?*

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. Overview of the Chapter

In this chapter, the researcher presents the research approach and design, the rationale of the study design and the paradigm, which explains the framework of methods and beliefs within which the research takes place. In addition, the scope, site, population, sampling, data collection instruments and data analysis descriptions are also presented. The main goal of this chapter is to describe the adopted methodological toolkit and to justify the research approach in light of the research questions and sub-questions as well as the relevant literature.

### 3.2 Research Approach

Defined as a systematic grouping and logical analysis of knowledge for a given purpose (McMillan & Schumacher 2010), research in social sciences is founded on paradigms, systems of beliefs built on epistemology, axiology, ontology and methodology. Therefore, the choice of the methodology depends on the researcher's values, beliefs and ethics, his way of looking at the nature of reality and his relationship with knowledge, which he/she may have developed as a result of the influence of advisors and mentors, of past working and/or research experiences.

The investigator took into consideration the three questions formulated by Guba and Lincoln (1994) to substantiate her choice of the paradigm informing the present research study, namely the ontological question (*What is the nature of reality?*), the epistemological question (*What is the nature of knowledge, and the relationship between the knower and the would-be known?*), and the methodological question (*How can the knower go about obtaining the desired knowledge and understandings?*). Defining paradigm as a *worldview*, according to Guba's definition (1990, p. 17), as *a basic set of beliefs that guide action, as a way of looking at the world*, of assuming how it looks like, how it is possible to gain an understanding of it (Hammersley 2013), the researcher opted for the interpretive/constructivism paradigm.

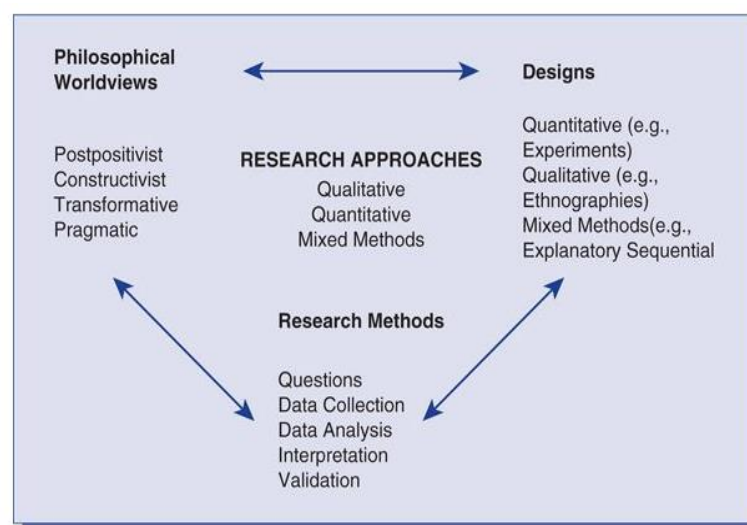
Positivism and its successor Post-positivism, interpretive/constructivism, and emancipatory are the three major paradigms. In a nutshell, the underlying assumptions of positivism are that the social world can be investigated as the natural world, and that there is a method which can be used to study it which is value-free. As for the ontological question, if the positivists maintained that there is only one reality and that it's the researcher's duty to study it, the post-positivists believed that reality could be known only imperfectly due to the researcher's human limitations. As for the epistemological assumption, unlike the positivists, post-positivists held that, even though research should aim at objectivity, the researcher's beliefs, opinions and background knowledge affect his/her work. If positivists borrowed their methods from the natural sciences, post-positivists recognized that those methods were not suitable for educational research, and consequently, developed quasi-experimental methods.

The basic assumptions of the interpretive/constructivism paradigm are that knowledge is socially constructed by the people who are actively involved in the research process, and the researcher should try to understand *the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it* (Schwandt 1994, p. 118). In addition, the idea that research could be independent of the researcher's values should be rejected. As for the ontological and epistemological assumptions, since reality is socially constructed, each and every individual can perceive it differently, their perceptions can even be in conflict with each other, interactive modes of data collection are preferred, and the investigator's values are made explicit. A specific section of the current study was devoted to the description of the researcher's values and beliefs. In this type of paradigm, qualitative methods are prevailing.

Finally, four characteristics differentiate the emancipatory paradigm from the previous ones: it attaches great importance to the lives and experiences of the groups who have been traditionally marginalized, it investigates how and why inequities related to gender, race, ethnicity and disability, are accompanied by asymmetric power relationships, and how the results of an inquiry on inequities are connected to political and social action, and it uses an emancipatory theory to develop the research approach (Mertens et al., 1994). From the ontological and epistemological standpoint, it emphasizes the influence of social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values in the construction of reality and the relationship between the investigator and the participants should empower those who have no power, and objectivity is

attained through a reflection on the influence of the research's values on his work. The criterion adopted to select the suitable methods is the inclusion and representation of diverse voices from the margin.

However, the approach to research involves not only philosophical assumptions, but also research designs, and specific methods. Creswell (2010) proposed the following framework to explain how these three components interact with each other (Fig. 12).



**Fig. 13** Components of research approaches (Creswell 2014)

The qualitative approach was defined as *an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world* (Van Maanen 1979, p. 520). Qualitative researchers strive to achieve a deep understanding of the phenomenon under study, which the existing literature fails to appropriately explain, from the participants' perspectives (from an *etic* point of view), not the researcher's (Merriam 2009).

Another important characteristic of this approach is that the pieces of information gathered by spending a considerable amount of time interacting directly with the participants in the field through observation, interviews and the analysis of documents are analysed inductively in an

attempt to build theories and/or hypotheses instead of testing them as in a quantitative study. The quantitative approach is, on the contrary, based on the researcher's belief that the social world as the physical world is ruled by principles and/or laws, which can be studied through objective and rigorous observation, and that the findings obtained, systematic, generalizable and replicable by other researchers, can unveil aspects of the human behaviour.

Before deciding on which methodology could most suitably be used to answer the research questions of the present study, the investigator read up avidly about them, taking into consideration either their strengths or their weaknesses. Then, examining the previous relevant studies addressing similar topics as for the method of investigation adopted, she realised that the qualitative method was the preferred method by the great majority of the scholars. Believing that the use of only one method, either qualitative or quantitative, however, would have been limiting, the investigator decided to embrace *the third research paradigm* (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004; Johnson et al., 2007, p. 112; Denscombe 2008), the mixed-method research (MMR), defined by Fetters and Freshwater (2015) as a method based on the synergy of both methods which turns out to be more than a mere sum of two individual components ( $1 + 1 = 3$  (p. 116)). Its central premise is that, since the world cannot be perceived as only qualitative or quantitative, but it is mixed, only through the collection, analysis and mixing of qualitative and quantitative data a deeper and broader insight into the phenomenon being investigated and the research questions can be gained (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011, p. 10; Creswell 2012, p. 535; Creamer 2017, Van Maanen 1979; Jick 1979).

The researcher decided to follow Johnson and Christensen's (2014) suggestion of *thoughtfully and strategically mixing or combining qualitative and quantitative research methods, approaches, procedures, concepts, and other paradigm characteristics* so that the overall design would have been endowed with *multiple (divergent and convergent) and complementary strengths (broadly viewed) and non-overlapping weaknesses* (p. 487). Rejecting the thesis according to which the QUAL and QUAN methods are incompatible (Hammersley 2013), MMR encourages the researchers to use *what works* (*methodological eclecticism* is one of its core characteristics) for their research problem and research questions, alternating deductive and inductive reasoning, emic and ethic perspectives (Teddli & Tashakkori 2012), as well as to use multiple sources of evidence to justify their conclusions.



The philosophy that best supports the mixed method approach is pragmatism, whose underpinning principle is that thought should not be limited to being a contemplative exercise, but it should elicit action, through which the world, which is believed to be in a constant state of becoming, can be changed. Therefore, pragmatism is *practice-driven* (Denscombe 2008, p. 280), since it wishes to find the solution of practical problems: as a result, frameworks, theories and categories are evaluated according to their utility and applicability in solving a particular problem in the practical world.


Morgan's (2014) approach to pragmatism, which drew on the work of John Dewey (1938), centred on three main ideas: *actions cannot be separated from the situations and contexts in which they occur* (p. 26), therefore, each and every human experience which takes place in a specific situation is unique, and the more the consequences of the actions taken are experienced the more warranted beliefs, and not universal truths, are produced. Secondly, *actions are linked to consequences in ways that are open to change* (p. 26), which means that if the context in which the action takes place changes, also the consequences of that action change, and finally *actions depend on worldviews that are socially shared sets of beliefs* (p. 27), according to which the chance that two people assign the same meaning to the outcomes of the actions taken depends on how similar are their perceptions of the world. Consequently, the perceptions of the world are unique and socially shared. Pragmatist epistemology holds that knowledge is socially constructed and each person's knowledge is unique since it is informed by her/his unique experiences. To deal with uncertainty and support action, Dewey developed the concept of inquiry, defined as *an investigation to understand some part of reality and create knowledge to change and improve that part of reality through action* (Kaushik & Walsh 2019, p. 5).

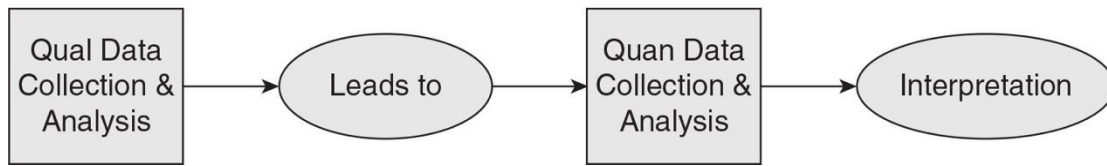
According to Greene, Caracelli, and Graham's (1989) framework, triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation, and expansion are the five broad rationales for using a mixed-methods design: when MMR is used for *triangulation* purposes, the use of different methods corroborates the results obtained and, consequently, increase their credibility or trustworthiness and strengthen the validity of the inferences that can be drawn from the findings, while when it is used for *complementarity* reasons, the findings from one method are

used to explain, elaborate and enhance those from the other. As for the *development* rationale, the main purpose is to implement one method first and use the results to help select the sample, develop the instrument, or inform the analysis for the other, while with an *initiation* intent, the purpose of combining qualitative and quantitative methods is to uncover paradoxes and contradictions. Finally, the purpose of *expansion* suggests that the use of different methods for different inquiry components aims to extend the scope, breadth, and range of inquiry.

Therefore, MMR was used in the present study for triangulation purposes, to corroborate the results obtained through the use of different methods and, consequently, to increase their credibility or trustworthiness, for complementarity reasons, to use the findings from one method to explain, elaborate and enhance those from the other method, as well as for development purposes, since the results of the survey administered to the IB secondary school teachers enabled the investigator not only to select the sample and develop the teachers' interview protocol, but it also informed the following data analysis process.

As for the level of interaction between the two strands, the researcher opted for an interactive interaction since the design and conduct of one strand will depend on the results from the other, while as for the stage of integration, which is defined as the point where quantitative and qualitative strands are mixed (Morse & Niehaus, 2009), it occurred during the data collection. Using the strategy of connecting, the results of the qualitative strand were used to shape the collection of the quantitative data by selecting participants and developing data collection protocols (Creswell 2014). As maintained by Yin (2006), *the stronger the mix of methods and their integration at all stages, the stronger the benefit of mixed methods approaches* (p. 46).

After deciding the level of interaction and the procedures used for mixing, the priority and the timing between the qualitative and quantitative strands were decided. Following Creswell and Plano Clark's (2011) classification of MMR designs and considering the research problem and the research questions, this study adopted an exploratory sequential mixed methods design, in which, as shown in Table 5, the collection and analysis of qualitative data were carried out before the collection of quantitative data, and utilized a qualitative priority (QUAL  quan).



**Table. 5 Mixed Methods Design of the Study**

### 3.3 Data Collection Plan

The procedure followed by the researcher to achieve the aims of the present study is illustrated in the following table (Table 6): the school library website and catalogue was evaluated as for the availability of either fiction or non-fiction, English-written multicultural literacy texts, paying particular attention to those portraying UAE and/or Muslim societies (Appendix E; Appendix F). Subsequently, the interview of the school librarian was carried out (Appendix G), and the analysis of the qualitative data gathered at that stage informed the selection process of the multicultural literacy text, which was examined through critical content analysis in order to assess its cultural authenticity and appropriateness. A specific checklist developed by the researcher was used (Appendix L), which also aimed at detecting the possible existence of operating *hegemonic* power relations and ideologies embedded in the text. (Fairclough 1989).

Then, the findings of the previous phase enabled the investigator to develop an online closed-ended questionnaire (Appendix J), which was administered to all the IB secondary school teachers to gain a deep insight into their cultural competence self-perceptions, and their confidence in adopting culturally sensitive resources in their teaching practices, with a specific emphasis on those involving the use of culturally authentic literacy texts authored by *inside* writers as well as on the usefulness of pre- and/or in-service training programs on multicultural issues they may have attended. Since the literature outlined in the previous chapter suggested that the development of positive attitudes toward cultural diversity had to take place not only in language classes, all the IB secondary teachers were invited to participate in the survey.

Finally, once again the analysis of the quantitative data informed the last phase of the study, the qualitative phase, in which semi-structured interviews as a data collection tool were used. The investigator interviewed the school IB curriculum specialist (Appendix H), and two secondary teachers who accepted the researcher’s invitation and decided to meet her and elaborate further on the topic in order to elicit their views on the availability of those resources in the school curriculum and the need for their inclusion in the curriculum as a valuable pedagogical tool.

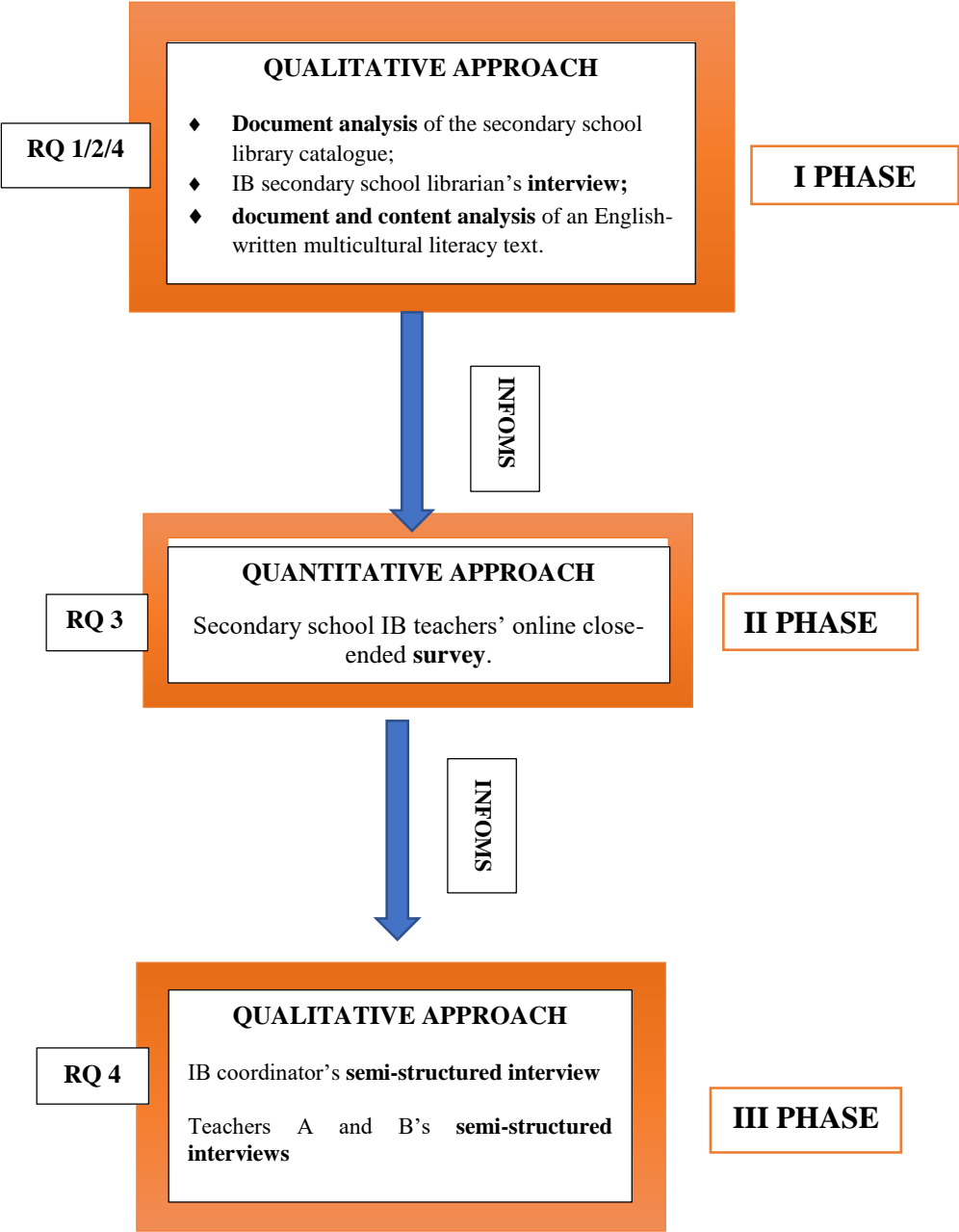


Table. 6 Research Approach of the Study

The methodology, which was used to answer the research questions, the data collection instruments, the sampling technique as well as the type of data analysis carried out for each of the research questions are elucidated in the following table (Table 7). The order of appearance of each research question matches the sequence of the phases in which the study was articulated.

<b>Research questions:</b>	<b>Paradigm</b>	<b>Instruments</b>	<b>Sampling technique</b>	<b>Data Analysis</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Phase</b>  <b>RQ. 1</b> How is multiculturalism represented in the IB curriculum of a private international secondary school in Dubai?  <b>RQ. 2</b> To what extent are English-written literacy resources included in the IB curriculum of the private international secondary school in the UAE emirate of Dubai culturally authentic?	Qualitative	<b>Document analysis</b> of the library catalogue;  secondary school librarian's <b>semi-structured interview</b>  <b>critical content analysis</b> of an English-written multicultural literacy text;	Purposeful sampling (the researcher interviewed the school librarian, and, as a result of the qualitative data analysis, an English-written multicultural literacy resource was selected.)	Theme analysis
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Phase</b>  <b>RQ 3.</b> What are the secondary school educators' self-perceptions of their intercultural competence in the secondary school in the UAE emirate of Dubai?  ?	Quantitative	Secondary school IB teachers' online <b>survey questionnaire.</b>	Random sampling	Descriptive & Inferential
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> phase</b>  <b>RQ. 4</b> What are the IB secondary school librarian', teachers' as well as IB curriculum specialists' views on the importance and appropriateness of including these resources (especially those	Qualitative	IB curriculum secondary school specialist and two teachers'(only those who volunteer) <b>semi-structured interviews</b>	Purposeful sampling (convenience sampling for teachers)	Theme analysis

portraying the host country) into the school IB curriculum in the international secondary school under study in the UAE emirate of Dubai?				
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**Table 7. Methodology of the study**

**Qualitative Research Phase.** The first phase of the research study was informed by the interpretivist paradigm according to which the reality is socially perceived and constructed and the researchers' role should be that of attempting to understand it from the points of view of those who live in it. Consequently, the researcher interacted with the participants in their social context for a sufficiently long period in order to gain a deep insight into their perceptions. The research methodology adopted was a qualitative ethnographic case study. Ethnography, focusing on human society and culture, is a method that enables the researcher to get an insider's view through observation and immersion *in social settings that reveal reality as lived by members of those settings* (Chatman 1992, p. 3). In addition, ethnographers can juggle the emic and etic perspectives by moving back and forth, so that none of them could prevail, avoiding the risk of going native or not understanding the group from the native perspective.

Bearing in mind Stake's (2000) use of the system metaphor, *the more the object of study is a specific, unique, bounded system, the greater the rationale for calling it a case study* (p. 237), the type of case study used in the present study was instrumental since it shed light on a specific case and at the same time the investigator made an attempt to portray the participants' different viewpoints.

**Quantitative Research Phase.** Phase II of the present research study was influenced by the post-positivist paradigm, whose underlying epistemology maintains that the researcher, even though well aware that his own perception of reality is biased by his own subjectivity, acknowledges that there is a limit to subjectivity. To investigate the teachers' cultural competence self-perceptions and their sense of self-efficacy and confidence in dealing with diversity in the classroom through authentic culturally sensitive literacy resources, a non-experimental cross-sectional survey design was used to discover if there was a relationship between the variables and determine if the relation was statistically significant (Creswell 2014).

### 3.4 Instruments

Three different data collection methods were used to answer the research questions: document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and a quantitative online survey questionnaire. Each data collection instrument was used to obtain the data needed to answer the research questions. The findings of the first qualitative phase helped the researcher to develop the online survey, while the results of the quantitative phase were used to develop the interview protocols. A detailed description of each data collection, as well as a discussion of its validation and reliability, are provided in the following sections.

#### 3.4.1 Qualitative Data Collection Tools: Document Analysis

The qualitative data collection tools used were document and critical content analysis, analysis and semi structured interviews. A detailed description of each qualitative data collection, as well as a discussion of its validation and reliability, are provided in the following section. Document analysis is defined as a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Bowen 2009). As maintained by Merriam (1988), *documents of all types can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem* (p. 118). The researcher assessed the secondary school library website using the CRAAP (Appendix E) test and the catalogue using a checklist (Appendix F) already in use among primary school librarians, which was properly adapted, while a checklist developed by the researcher, based on the Orientalist/Post-Colonialist theoretical framework focusing on focalization (*Whose story is told? From whose point of view?*), social processes of characters (*Who has power? Who has agency?*) and closure aspects (*How is the story resolved? What are the assumptions in the story closure?*), guided the examination of the selected multicultural literacy text.

The seminal monograph on Afro-American children's fiction authored by Sims (1982) played a key role in the development of both checklists. The author reviewed and analysed 150 books appropriate for young readers from pre-school through the eighth grade of contemporary

realistic fiction about Afro-Americans published from 1965 to 1979. Using as main criteria for the analysis the books' intended audience, the interpretation of the term *Afro-American experience*, and the cultural perspectives adopted, three different categories of books were identified: *melting pot* books, mostly picture books written for black and white readers, where Black children and their families were portrayed as racially integrated members of the American society and the illustrations were the only way to learn about the ethnicity of the characters, *social conscience* books, which, on the contrary, were written to foster empathy, sympathy, and tolerance in non-African readers for Afro-American children. In these books, four stories about school desegregation, white children's efforts to deal with prejudice and discrimination against Black peers, Blacks and whites' concerted efforts to achieve a goal, and the getting along with Whites are intertwined together with a few recurrent elements as for characters, stereotypes, and attitudes.

Finally, *culturally conscious* books were written for Afro-American readers, in which the characters were Afro-Americans, the story was told from their perspective, the setting was an Afro-American community, and the text comprised elements that identified the characters as Black. For the analysis of these books, Sims developed the following categories: *African and Down Home, Heritage and Traditions, Common Everyday Experiences, Surviving Racism and Discrimination, Living in the City, Friendships and Peer Relationships, Family Relationships, and Growing up and Finding Oneself*.

Both documents were revised respectively by two senior lecturers in Teacher Librarianship the researcher had the pleasure to meet while she was a student in Information Studies as well as two members of the major UK Librarians Association. The feedback received was avidly used to refine this data collection tool. In the catalogue checklist, for instance, the researcher borrowed the core principles of Anti-Bias Education for the content section: the exploration of the various aspects of identity, the appreciation of the concept of diversity, the ability to recognize and challenge bias, to act as change agents in the community to bring about a more equitable and just society (Derman-Sparks & Edwards 2010).

Critical content analysis (Johnson, Mathis & Short 2017) was used to investigate the possible



underlying meanings conveyed in the texts, especially related to issues of power. Discourse analysis, social constructivist analysis, rhetorical analysis, and content analysis was used as sub-methods. The researcher, therefore, indulged herself in reading the selected text, at least twice, the first time without stopping, and the second time taking notes about the passages that captured her attention while reading. Finally, each theme was defined by citing excerpts as well as their interpretations.

While using content analysis as a data collection instrument, three are the different phases the researcher should go through (Elo & Kyngäs 2008): preparation, organizing, and reporting. During the preparation phase, the researcher selected the multicultural literacy resource to be analysed, decided how in depth it was to be analysed, and which pages could be considered as representatives and, consequently, were to be included in the research study, while during the organizing phase a categorization matrix consisting of several categories was developed, through which data were coded and the hypothesis was tested. Lastly, in the reporting phase data were examined and the findings, based on the inferences made, were described. The matrix used for evaluating the multicultural literacy resource was assessed by the leadership team of the school where the researcher teaches (Appendix F).

The availability of the text to be analysed, the research questions, which the researcher tried to answer by examining the text, the researcher's choice of a specific text, the development of a model based on the researcher's knowledge of the context, the assumptions made through the data analysis, and the validation of the results were identified as the main conceptual components of content analysis. Furthermore, the six-phase process developed by Krippendorff (2004), comprising the design, unitizing, sampling, coding, drawing inferences, and validation was followed by the researcher. After defining the context (design phase), the IB curriculum of an international secondary school, the investigator first identified the content that had to be analysed (unitizing phase) as well as its representative parts (drawing phase), a multicultural literacy resource used by the teachers as a pedagogical tool in the classroom focusing on those passages which showed cultural authenticity or lack of authenticity, a certain number of categories to which data were assigned (coding phase), *Islamic religion, Arab identity, Islamophobia, Arabic Peninsula/UAE history, extremism, the concept of responsibility, fundamentalism, the Arab women's role, freedom of speech, Arab world/West world*

*relationship*, secondly pondered on the relation between the coded data and the phenomenon under study (drawing inferences phase), and, finally, validated the results (validation phase).

### **3.4.2 Semi-Structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were the major sources of data used to answer the research questions. According to Bernard (1988), one of the main advantages of semi-structured interviews is that the interviewer is not obliged to strictly follow the list of questions he/she has developed, but he/she is free to follow new leads as they arise. On the other end, semi-structured interviews differ from unstructured interviews, since they are free-flowing conversations on general topics (Madill 2011). A preliminary meeting was scheduled with the research participants, during which each and every interviewee was asked to sign an informed consent form, which included information such as the title and nature of the research, the procedures in which participants were expected to take part, a description of the measures that were to be taken to assure confidentiality, a list of people who could be contacted for questions and complaints and a description of the risks and benefits of the research (Brenner 2006).

The researcher used an interview guide encompassing a set of questions relating to the topic to be investigated (Appendix I). The questions were formulated using a familiar and straightforward language, the technical terms were followed by their definitions, and leading questions, double-barrelled questions, and double-negative were avoided. The researcher contacted two professors working for the Culture and Society Institute of a well-known university in Australia who published many studies on the topic for feedback. They both provided extremely valuable observations, which led the investigator to ponder deeply on how teachers with little teaching experience in Dubai or/and equipped with only professional teaching licences would have found the interview questions. One of the consequences of the Covid-19 health crisis in the educational field in the UAE was, in fact, that a high number of expat educators left the country due to a salary reduction resulting from a moderation of the school fees and a drop in job vacancies for teachers.

It is no coincidence that teachers A and B were very young by birth and/or at their first teaching experience abroad. A copy of the interview guide was e-mailed beforehand, and to avoid any discomfort, permission for audio-video recording the interviews was asked for to all the interviewees. They all accepted to be audio-video recorded. For the volunteer teachers' interviews, the investigator did not develop a guiding protocol, since they were invited to complete the questionnaire before the interview, and then voice their comments on their answers to some of the survey items.

Connectivity, Humanness and Empathy (CHE) were the principles followed by the investigator, which enabled her to put the participants at ease during the interviewing process (Brown & Danaher 2019). As for the connectivity principle, which implies the adoption of strategies aiming to gain access to the context under investigation and to establish an initial relationship based on credibility and trust with the participants, the researcher went to great lengths to show them gratitude for sharing their expertise and insights with her on the topic under study. During this initial phase of the researcher-participant rapport (the *other-orientation* phase), the researcher paid as much attention as possible to her physical gestures and body language to reflect openness, and a friendly approach relying on *immediacy behaviours* like maintaining eye contact, engaging in small talk, smiling and nodding, was used (Pitts & Miller-Day 2007).

However, the compliance with the safety measures in force to reduce the spreading of Covid-19 had a tremendous impact on the interviews: the social distancing measure forced the researcher and the participant to assume unnatural postures, while the mandatory use of face masks deprived the researcher of important additional data such as the analysis of the participants' facial expressions. There is no saying that the importance of non-verbal communication data, consisting of *kinesics* (i.e. behaviours reflected by body displacements and postures), *proxemics* (i.e. behaviours denoting special relationships of the interviewees/interviewers), *chronemics* (i.e. temporal speech markers such as gaps, silences, and hesitations) and *paralinguistics* components (i.e. behaviours linked to tenor, strength, or emotive colour of the vocal expression), should not be underestimated, since a great wealth of information could be collected from them as maintained by a considerable number of scholars (Denham & Onwuegbuzie 2013). The researcher had the chance to examine carefully the

interviewees' gestures, the paralanguage they used, but not the facial expression since the participants were wearing a mask, as per government guidelines.

The model partially used for assessing the participants' nonverbal communication combined the Ekman's (1972) neuro-cultural model of facial expression and Krauss et al.'s (1996) typology of Nonverbal Behaviours by matching the six fundamental emotions (happiness, sadness, anger, fear, disgust, and surprise) with facial expressions as shown in the following table (Table 8):

*Matrix for Assessing Nonverbal Communication Using Krauss et al.'s (1996) Typology of Nonverbal Behaviors and Ekman's (1972) Neurocultural Model<sup>a</sup>*

Emotion	Adapters	Lexical Movements	Symbolic Gestures
Happiness			
Sadness			
Anger			
Fear			
Disgust			
Surprise			
Other <sup>b</sup>			

<sup>a</sup> This matrix incorporates Krauss et al.'s (1996) typology of nonverbal behaviors and Ekman's (1972) neurocultural model of facial expression.

<sup>b</sup> Emotions placed in the "Other" category include 'alarmed,' 'bored,' 'contempt,' and 'excited.'

**Table 8. Matrix for assessing non-verbal communication**

Nonetheless, the principle of humanness was applied as much as possible to acknowledge the value of both actors in the research process, the givers and the receivers of information. During the interview process, the investigator spared no effort to reassure the interviewees that they were going in no way to be judged or evaluated and to show them an authentic interest in the context and in their stories: personal experiences were exchanged with the participants when the researcher felt it appropriate to do so, and sometimes the conversations were spiced up with humour. Finally, empathy caused the researcher to experience mixed feelings: she felt

privileged in being invited into the participants' context, and, at the same time, she experienced a feeling of inadequacy, which engendered a bit of anxiety. As a consequence, the researcher made use of responsive listening techniques and back-channelling and auditory responses as well as of probing and restatement techniques to elicit more information and/or clarify the participants' responses (Partington 2001).

Given the cross-cultural dimension of the proposed study (Keats 2000; Pelzang & Hutchinson 2018), the investigator safeguarded cultural integrity by applying the research methods in a culturally sensitive way. The term cultural integrity was defined by Lapan, Quartaroli and Riemer (2012) as the researchers' ability to establish a culturally trust-based relationship by respecting or behaving in accordance with the participants' cultural values. To achieve cultural integrity, the investigator paid attention to the principles of cultural relevance, contextuality, appropriateness, mutual respect, and flexibility (Im et al., 2004). The researcher, a total *outsider*, equipped with the essential knowledge of the context under investigation thanks to her personal and professional experience, fluent in English (therefore, there was no need for translation), never failed to show respect and esteem for the participants' cultures, beliefs, and values.

### **3.4.3 Quantitative Data Collection Tools: Survey**

The tool chosen to collect quantitative data was a web questionnaire since it allowed to gather responses from a large number of people in a very short amount of time. The school leadership team was invited to randomly provide the secondary teaching staff with the Google URL link of the survey. A short introduction presenting the topic of the research and explaining how the data gathered would have been used as well as how confidentiality would have been guaranteed preceded the questionnaire and functioned as an informed consent form. According to Singer, von Thurn and Miller (1995), assuring data confidentiality can increase the response rate, especially if the topic is sensitive.

The content of the questionnaire drew on the 16-item Multicultural Teaching Competence Scale (MTCS), developed by Spanierman et al. (2011) to assess multicultural teaching competence

consisting of two subscales: multicultural teaching skills and multicultural teaching knowledge. It took into consideration self-reported skills or behaviours in implementing culturally sensitive teaching practices and self-reported knowledge of culturally responsive theories, resources, and classroom strategies. According to Sue and Sue (2012), the concept of multicultural competence broke down in three dimensions: awareness, knowledge and skills. As for the *awareness* dimension, teachers are expected to have full awareness not only of their own cultural identity, but also of the others' cultural identities as cultural beings, which entails the painful acknowledgment of one's own biases toward other cultures as well as the ability to assume another culture's perspective when judgements are being made. The *knowledge* dimension, on the other end, relates to the teachers' competence to embrace the culturally responsive pedagogy by mastering culturally sensitive teaching strategies to deal with the students' cultural and ethnic diversity, to be aware that the socio-political and cultural realities may affect relationships between individuals in the classroom, and that cultural differences exist not only between but also within groups. Finally, the *skill* dimension includes the ability to devise, implement, and evaluate strategies that facilitate students' academic achievements and personal growth, and to review and evaluate policies, procedures, and practices designed to increase cultural responsiveness (Sue & Sue 2012). It is noteworthy to mention that Byram's (Byram et al., 2002) model, which can be a very useful tool for designing pedagogical experiences aiming at the development of multicultural competence, among the five *savoir* it encompasses, the importance of beginning the *decentering process* (Villalobos-Buehner 2020) taking attitudes of curiosity and openness to re-consider previously held ideas of the other is stressed.

All the items in the original version of the 16-item MTCS were retained with slight changes in order to make them more applicable to the context of the present research study. The item referring to the materials used in the classroom, for example, was modified as follows: from the original version the material I use in the classroom show at least three different ethnic groups or customs to the final version *I always use curricular resources about the traditions and customs of the country I live in* and the item relating to the professional development programs promoting multicultural awareness attended was added.

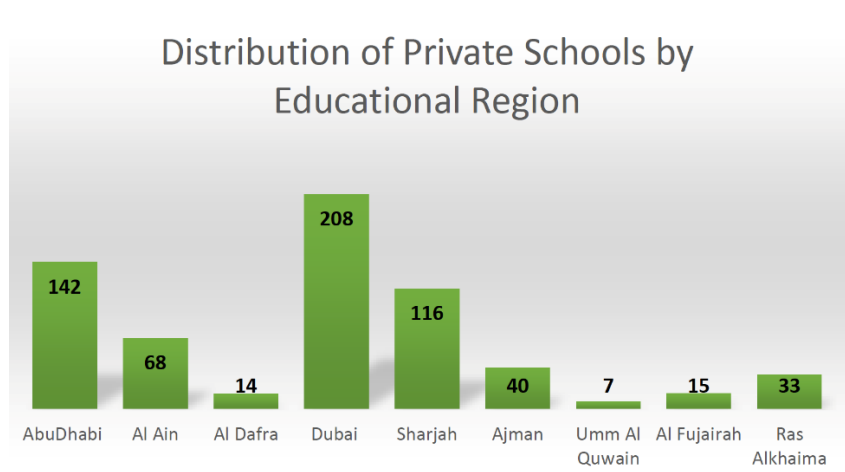
As for the questionnaire design, the researcher decided to postpone the demographic section of the questionnaire, as suggested by Dillman, Smyth and Christian (2014). Therefore, it consisted of two sections: a 19-item adapted version of the MTCS and a final demographic section with eight questions providing information about the participants' age, gender, race, level of education, years of teaching experience, years of teaching experience abroad, and years of teaching in the current school. The examination of the relationships between demographic characteristics, experiential variables, and multicultural teaching competence was performed. The researcher decided to present all the items on the same page so that respondents could scroll forward and backwards within it and, consequently, have a clear overview of all the items included in the questionnaire. Furthermore, this format helped the respondents be more at ease with their decision of completing the survey (Crawford, Couper, & Lamias 2001)

The questionnaire used a fully anchored 5-point Likert scale, to which the researcher assigned a specific value in order to be able to score each response (0=strongly disagree, 1= disagree, 2= neutral, 3= agree, 4= strongly agree). The researcher included a middle alternative (neutral) to avoid forcing the participants to take a stand on the issues addressed, which could end up causing them some discomfort. As a rule of thumb, items containing double negatives, specialized terms, or/and unfamiliar and abstract words were avoided, while short items with simple structures and no double negatives were used.

### **3.5 Research Site & Samples Selection**

Private international schools are no longer *isolated islands*, they play no longer a peripheral role on the educational stage, in many nation-states they have started imposing themselves as a competitive educational alternative not only for global elites but also local parents. Since the present study aimed at investigating if English-written resources, whose main characters were Arab and/or Emirati adolescents, were used to address multicultural topics in the classroom, ensuring that also non-Arabic speakers students could be exposed to diversity, the researcher chose a private international school located in Dubai attended by a small percentage of Emirati students as the site of the present research. In Dubai, the number of private schools has increased exponentially over the years. There are 208 private schools in Dubai at the moment, offering

17 different curricula. The following Fig. 15 shows clearly that the higher concentration of private schools is in Dubai.



**Fig. 14 Distribution of Private Schools by Educational Region (KHDA 2018-2019)**

Since one of the objective of the UAE Vision 2021 National Agenda was to develop a first-rate education system so that the UAE could rank among the top 20 countries in the *Programme for International Student Assessment* (PISA) test and the top 15 countries in the *Trends in Mathematics and Science Studies* (TIMSS) test, private schools were provided with the UAE National Agenda Parameter in 2015-2016, which required their participation in annual international and external benchmarking assessments other than PISA and TIMSS. Moreover, school leaders are encouraged not only to contribute to the creation of a learning environment fostering the students' academic achievements as well as their happiness and mentally and physically wellbeing but also to promote a culture of innovation, which could be seen in the curriculum design, in the teaching, learning and assessment approaches, in the infrastructure and classroom design, in learning technologies, and in teachers' and leaders' recruitment, training, development and reward.

The improvements in students' outcomes are assessed through yearly inspections carried out by the Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB), aiming at giving schools the information about their strengths and areas for improvement, and parents the information they need to make careful choices about their children's schooling. During the inspection, the BSIB appointees



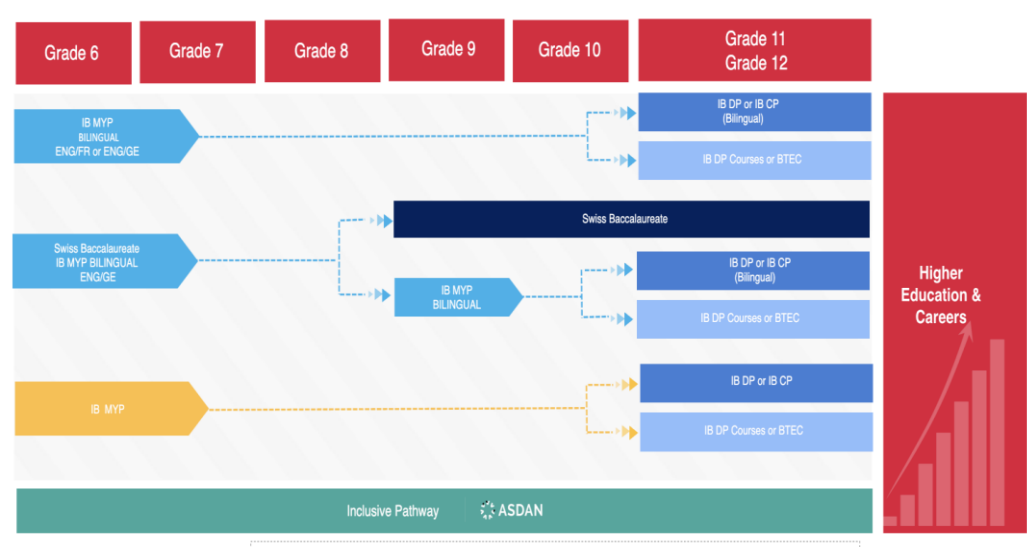
pay particular attention to the academic performance of specific groups of students, such as boys and girls, Emirati students, lower and higher attaining students, students with special educational needs, gifted and talented students, students for whom English is an additional language, and students whose first language is Arabic, is taken into account.

The teaching and learning of the Arabic Language for Emirati students (Arabic A for students with an Arabic nationality) and for non-Arab students (Arabic B), the teaching and learning of Islam Studies (Islamic A, which is taught solely in Arabic, and Islamic B taught in Arabic with English-language support for those students whose native language is not Arabic), of Moral Education and Social Studies using English as a mean of instruction (centred on the four pillars of character & morality, individual & community, civic studies and cultural studies) from grade 1 to grade 12 are mandatory.

The educational institution, which accepted to be part of the present study, was an IB co-educational international day and boarding secondary school located in Dubai, one of the only two schools offering international and bilingual programmes (English/French, English/German), which follow, as shown in Table 7, the framework of the International Baccalaureate (IB) from Pre-KG to grade 12 and the Swiss Baccalaureate programme from Grade 9 onwards (Table 9). According to its mission and underpinning values (bilingualism, excellence, sustainability, and together - BEST), the school was particularly attentive to the students' individual cultural heritage through the promotion of plurilingualism and could rely on an extremely diverse students' population thanks also to the possibility of attending the school through the boarding system.

At the end of the secondary cycle of study, students were/are expected to be able to communicate, think and reflect in different languages thanks to an authentic exposure to English, French, German, and Arabic, to be endowed with a spirit of enquiry, creativity, and critical thinking as well as social, cultural, economic and environmental awareness, and are/were encouraged to be active members of the community. Consequently, when the researcher received the head of school's permission, she was very pleased and convinced that the school represented fertile ground for her research study for its unique characteristics (no

other schools in Dubai provided a bilingual IB curriculum). According to the latest KHDA school inspection report, the number of enrolled students was 1144, with a very high percentage of Europeans (French) and 44 Emirati students. As for the teaching staff, French and British were the nationalities more represented out of a total of 125 teachers (KHDA 2018-2019). The ethnic homogeneity of the educational staff was deemed to validate even more the expected study’s findings.



**Table 9. Structure of the school’s secondary IB programme**

As mentioned by Saunders et al. (2010) and Cresswell (2009), gaining access to the institution selected may be challenging for many reasons, such as lack of knowledge of the topic and the beneficial effects the research might have on the institution, the confidentiality and sensitivity of the topic, or merely because the gatekeepers, namely those who are in the position to grant or deny access to the institution for research purposes, doubt the researchers’ skills and professionalism. Moreover, there is no saying that the current global outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic affecting the teaching and learning process across the whole world with the closure of almost all the educational institutions for months, has made this initial research phase even more challenging.

The researcher got in touch with the school leadership teams of several IB international schools after receiving the university approval with an initial email where the topic of the research was

explained in detail and a research business plan outlining the time required for each data collection instrument to be performed was provided (Appendix D ). Since none of them replied, the researcher started contacting them on the phone and through their social media contacts, but with no success. Eventually, after one month from the first e-mailed contact, when the researcher was on the verge of giving up hope, a positive response was received.

A sample population can be defined as a smaller group selected within the targeted population to represent it (Peck, Olsen & Devore 2015). During the first phase of the study, data were obtained through the document analysis of the English-written multicultural materials included in the school library website and catalogue and the critical content analysis of an English-written multicultural literacy resource available in the library whose plot was set in an Arabic country. Unfortunately, since the researcher could not locate a culturally sensitive literacy resource portraying a Muslim society included in the curriculum, she selected a literacy text available in the library.

Therefore, purposeful sampling was the sampling technique used by the investigator in both the study qualitative phases, since only the elements from the population with specific features to provide the best information to address the research problem were selected. During the last phase of the study, however, besides the curriculum coordinator, only two teachers accepted to be interviewed and, consequently, the sampling technique adopted was convenience sampling, in which respondents were selected because they are conveniently accessible to the researcher. In the quantitative phase, on the contrary, the random sampling technique was used. Since the researcher believes that the creation of an inclusive educational environment should be a school wide commitment rather than isolated in one or two teachers' classrooms (Gorski & Swalwell 2015), the targeted sample for the quantitative phase included IB secondary school teachers as well as heads of departments, who used the English language as medium of instruction, regardless of their gender, their age, nationalities, qualifications, years of experience. Therefore, the school head provided the researcher with a comprehensive list of school teachers and heads of departments, except for Arabic language and Moral Education secondary teachers and heads of departments, from which the participants were chosen randomly. Being the estimated number of IB secondary teachers 127, according to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sampling method, to represent the targeted population a sample size of 80 was considered acceptable.

After giving a number to each teacher on the list, the researcher blindfolded picked up the numbered notes previously prepared randomly. The emphasis was on the concept of representativeness of the elements of the population selected in the quantitative phase, while, on the contrary, in the qualitative phase information-rich participants were selected.

### **3.6 Data Analysis Plan**

In the following section the plan adopted for the analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data is described in detail.

#### **3.6.1 Qualitative Data Analysis**

The qualitative data was obtained from two different sources: document analysis, and semi-structured interviews. The investigator followed the six steps identified by Cresswell (2013) in the process of qualitative data analysis. The very first involved the manual transcription of the audio-video recorded interviews and the preparation of all the data gathered for analysis. According to Davidson (2009), transcription should not be conceived as a simple mechanical process, since it calls for subjective decisions about what to include (or not), whether to correct mistakes and edit grammar and repetitions. Therefore, between the *naturalized transcription* (or *intelligent verbatim*) which adapts the oral to the written form and the *denaturalized transcription* (or *full verbatim*) which includes everything, grammatical errors included (Bucholtz 2000), the transcriber opted for the full verbatim as the most appropriate for this study.

The second step was reading the data in order to get a general sense of the information, which was followed by the third phase during which the researcher organized the data using memos to record her thoughts on concepts, themes, and patterns that emerged during the analysis process as they occurred. After identifying meaningful analytical units, and labelling them with code names, the thematic analysis was carried out. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is *a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within data*” and is widely used in qualitative research (p. 79). A distinction is made between semantic themes, .....*within the explicit or surface meanings of the data and the analyst is not looking*

*for anything beyond what a participant has said or what has been written., and latent themes, .... the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations – and ideologies - that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data (p.84).*

A very useful framework used for conducting this kind of analysis was Braun and Clarke's (2006) six step model. As shown in the following table (Table 10), firstly, the researcher read and re-read the transcripts, to familiarise herself with the data corpus, secondly, data were grouped into small chunks of meaning. Since the investigator decided to carry out a theoretical thematic analysis rather than an inductive one, only the segments of data that could be used to answer the research questions were taken into consideration. Furthermore, no pre-set codes were used: they were developed throughout the coding process. Then, the codes were collated into preliminary themes, which were reviewed, modified and developed. Finally, the themes were defined and a map showing their relationships was created.

Phase	Examples of procedure for each step
1. Familiarising oneself with the data	Transcribing data; reading and re-reading; noting down initial codes
2. Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the data-set, collating data relevant to each code
3. Searching for the themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
4. Involved reviewing the themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data-set; generate a thematic 'map'
5. Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme; generation of clear names for each theme
6. Producing the report	Final opportunity for analysis selecting appropriate extracts; discussion of the analysis; relate back to research question or literature; produce report

**Table10.Six-step thematic analysis procedure (Braun & Clarke 2006)**

From *rationalized sections of messy reality* data pass to the *thematic organization* of data and finally to the *text of data analysis section or chapter* (Holliday 2002, p. 100). The researcher was open to exploring any emerging themes during the coding process. The findings were summarized in a coherent narrative discussion, which included, when necessary, relevant quotes from interviews. As for the document analysis of the library catalogue and of the multicultural literacy school resource, after identifying the portions of the contents relevant to the study, the researcher went on to analyse them according to the frameworks developed ad hoc. The document analysis dealt not only with the manifest but also with the latent content (especially in the school resource analysis), that is the underlying meaning of what is written.

Once the coding process was concluded, the tabulated data were analysed, and a narrative description of the findings was provided.

### **3.6.2 Quantitative Data Analysis**

The quantitative input of the teachers' survey was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 23.0. In order to prepare the data for the analysis, a unique identifying number was assigned to each questionnaire, and all the responses were clearly indicated. A codebook was created to link a number to a category for each of the variables. An individual score was assigned to each question for each participant. Teacher demographic variables included gender (male=1, female=2), age (less than 25=1; 25-35=2; 36-46=3; 47-57=4; 58 and above=5), teacher nationality (EU=1; American and Canadian=2; Arab=3; Australian and New Zealand=4; African=5; Asian=6), education (PGCE=1; BA=2; MA=3; PhD=4), number of teaching years (one year or less = 1; 2-7=2; 8-13=3; 14-19=4; 20 years and more=5), number of teaching years abroad (one year or less = 1; 2-7=2; 8-13=3; 14-19=4; 20 years and more=5), and number of teaching years in current school (one year or less = 1; 2-7=2; 8-13=3; 14-19=4; 20 years and more=5) (Check & Schutt 2012).

Through statistical analysis, raw data were converted into results. Descriptive statistics were used to indicate general tendencies in the data (mean, mode, median), the spread of scores (variance, standard deviation, and range), and how one score relates to all the others (z scores, percentile rank), while inferential statistics were used to analyse relating variables. *Inferential statistics*, as defined by Fraenkel and Wallen (2009, p. 216), *are certain types of procedures that allow researchers to make inferences about a population based on findings from a sample*. In addition, the reliability and validity tests were applied to evaluate the internal consistency of the survey questionnaire. Detailed information about the specific results of the descriptive and inferential statistical analyses was presented in the form of a discussion accompanied by tables and figures.

### 3.7 Trustworthiness of the Qualitative Data

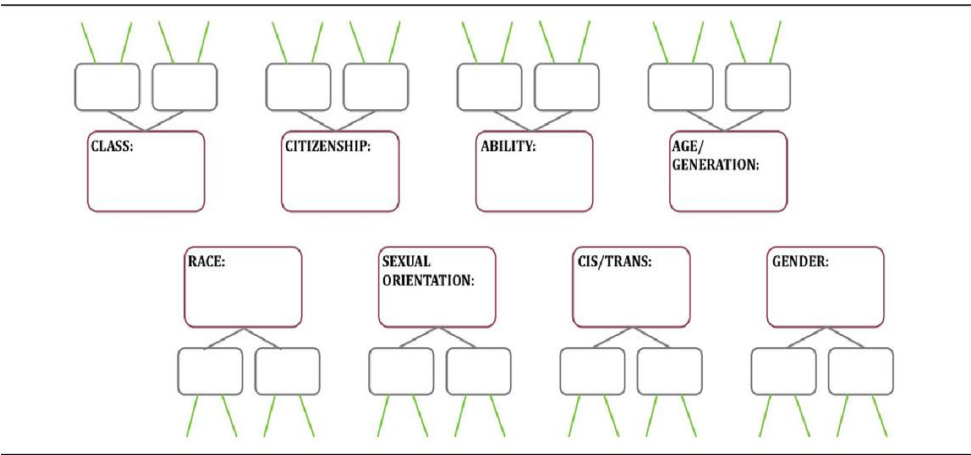
Trustworthiness is of paramount importance in qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained that trustworthiness has four aspects: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. The researcher enhanced the study's credibility by using the following techniques: member checking and a prolonged stay at the site under study to identify relevant issues. The study was carried out over a period of one month during which the researcher visited the school almost every day and could build up a positive rapport with the management team, the IB coordinator and the library staff.

As for the second trustworthiness criterion, transferability, it was achieved by providing the readers with a thick and detailed description of the methods and findings obtained to enable them to assess and make an informed judgment as to the possibility of transferring the conclusions to other contexts (Gay, Mills, & Airasian 2009). As for the third and fourth criteria, the researcher could always rely on the continuous feedback of her Director of Study throughout the whole research process while transferability was implemented through the member checking technique, which prevented the researcher's personal and theoretical values from having an impact on the data analysis process.

On the other hand, triangulation was used to answer questions such as *Do the findings of the study make sense?*, *Are they credible to the people we study and to our readers?*, *Do we have an authentic portrait of what we were looking at?* (Miles & Huberman 1994, p. 278). Among the different types of triangulation identified: 1) triangulation by data source (data collected from different persons, or at different times, or from different places); 2) triangulation by method (observation, interviews, documents, etc.); 3) triangulation by the researcher (comparable to interrater reliability in quantitative methods); 4) triangulation by theory (using different theories, for example, to explain results); 5) triangulation by data type (e.g., combining quantitative and qualitative data), triangulation by data source, by method and data type was applied in the present thesis (Miles & Huberman 1994).

As for the validity of the qualitative data, the internal threats that the researcher faced in the present research were the *experimenter effects*, namely the intentional and unintentional influence that she may have had on the topic, and the *subject effects* which referred to the alteration of the subjects’ behaviours because of their participation in the study (McMillan & Schumacher 2014). As for the first type of threat, there is no saying that the researcher’s way to see and give meaning to the world around him/her, his/her positionality, has impacted his/her research interests, how he/she has approached the research and participants, the questions he/she has asked, and how he/she has performed the data analysis.

Since understanding one’s position is not an easy task, especially for novice researchers like the author of the present thesis, she decided to avail of the *Social Identity Map* developed by Jacobson and Mustafa (2019), which consisted of three tiers: the identification of social identities (such as class, citizenship, ability, age, race, sexual orientation, and gender), a reflection on how these social positions affect our lives (i.e. how, for instance, being a woman has an influence on the way to approach research), and on the emotions linked with our social identities (i.e. being a woman, for instance, may be advantageous in research involving the participation of women). Therefore, the following map (Table 11) functioned as a guide for the investigator throughout the whole reflective process on her positionality.

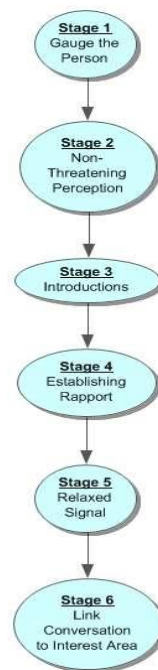


**Table 11. Social Identity Map (Jacobson & Mustafa 2019)**

Oswald, Sherratt and Smith’s (2014) six stage protocol, on the other end, developed for Hawthorne was used for effect mitigation. What has been considered the research *Achilles heel*



(Coombs & Smith 2003) is, in fact, the *Hawthorne effect* defined as *a change in the subjects' normal behaviour due to the knowledge that their behaviour is being watched or studied* (p. 98) with a marked tendency to accentuate the social desirability behavioural aspects. The first stage, as shown in the following Table 12, involves the assessment of the participants and the setting, since their behaviour changes if the setting changes.



**Table 12. Six stage protocol for Hawthorne effect mitigation**

Then, creating a reassuring perception is extremely important for the researcher who has to make his/her role clear to the participants and introduce herself in a calm and relaxed way. In the present study, even though the investigator already knew the school, since it was her daughters' former primary school, the leadership team members as well as the teaching staff had changed, therefore, the role of the researcher was that of an outsider. During the following stage (stage 5), the researcher tried to develop a friendly and trustful relationship by using the following strategies:

- using an open and accepting body language;
- maintaining some eye contact (if culturally appropriate);

- nodding and appearing interested, smile;
- trying to agree with the participant (even if you disagree with 90% of what is being said, make it clear you agree with the other 10%);
- trying to use their name early in the conversation. This makes the conversation more personal and helps the researcher remember it;
- being complementary, where appropriate;
- using previous conversations with the participant to build on for future conversations.

Once the participant has reached a state of relaxation, the researcher brought the conversation around the research topic.

### **3.7.1 Pilot Study for the Interviews**

Despite the tendency to link pilot studies with more positivist approaches (Sampson 2004), the investigator decided to pilot the protocols developed for the semi-structured interviews. As stated by Beebe (2007) and Lancaster et al. (2004), piloting can turn out to be very useful for novice researchers and can also be used as a self-assessment tool to measure the researcher's readiness and commitment. Furthermore, it may serve other critical functions such as providing qualitative researchers with training (Kilanowski 2006), helping them tackle ethical and practical issues which might hinder the research process (Kelly 2007; Sampson 2004), expanding or narrowing the topic of their research as well as sharpening the goals the investigator is trying to achieve (Denzin & Lincoln 1998; Sampson 2004; Seidman 1998; Williams et al., 2008), and finally enhancing the credibility of a study (Padgett 2008).

Therefore, the researcher decided to implement a pilot study with the primary aims to test the secondary school librarian and IB coordinator's interview protocols and to solve methodological as well as practical matters before starting the research process. The investigator asked for two of her daughters' mainstream teachers and two of her colleagues' teacher librarians' advice. They accepted to be skype-interviewed and review the interview protocols developed using the cognitive interview technique to verify the coverage and relevance of the questions and identify errors and problems that otherwise would have not been anticipated.

Since the meaning of the words may vary according to the different geographical, linguistic and cultural contexts in which they are used, cognitive methods have recently proved to be an effective instrument to tackle issues related to diversity, so that the research results could be translated globally (Hurst et al., 2015). The researcher utilized this diagnostic tool to understand how the interview questions and the survey items would have been interpreted by the participants, to identify errors and problems with the wording, the content organization and the language that otherwise would have not been anticipated, and to avoid misunderstandings and missing and/or incomplete data. Last but not least, it allowed the researcher to estimate the time needed to complete the survey or finish the interview.

To conduct cognitive interviews the investigator adopted the three techniques of think-aloud, of verbal probing and observation. The think-aloud technique entailed asking the participants to voice their thoughts and understanding as they read each question and try to answer it according to their understanding, while the verbal probing technique required the participants to paraphrase the questions using their own words and to explain the meaning of keywords (Hofmeyer, Sheingold, & Taylor 2015). Drawing on the question-and-answer model developed by Collins (2003) and Willis (1999), according to which to answer a question it is fundamental to understand it, retrieve the information needed to answer it, make a judgement about the information needed, and answer the question, the researcher drew up the following list of probe questions (Table 13):

<b>Think aloud</b>	1. How did you go about answering that question? Tell me what you are thinking 2. I noticed you hesitated before you answered – what were you thinking about? 3. How easy or difficult did you find this question to answer? Why do you say that? 4. How did you arrive at that answer? 5. Was that easy or hard to answer?
<b>Comprehension / Interpretation</b>	1. What does the term X mean to you? 2. What do you understand by X? 3. Could you tell me in your own words what the question is asking you? 4. How would you say that question yourself?
<b>Retrieval</b>	1. How did you remember that? 2. Was this hard or easy to answer?
<b>Confidence / Judgement</b>	1. How well do you remember this? 2. How sure of your answer are you? (where 10 is very confident and 0 is not at all confident)
<b>Paraphrasing</b>	Can you repeat the question I just asked in your own words?

<b>Response</b>	How did you feel about answering this question?
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**Table 13. Question and Answer Model - Adapted from Collins (2003) and Willis (1999)**

The following critical areas were taken into consideration: 1) the engaging level of the interview questions; 2) the format of the interview; 3) the duration and the participant's fatigue; 4) the correct use of the terminology; 5) the appropriateness of the questions and responses; 6) the order of the questions. Thirdly, the researcher paid attention to the respondents' non-verbal behaviour during the reading aloud process, like blushing and frowning, to identify problematic questions and items.

Then, the researcher revised the interview protocols used to collect data following the recommendations and suggestions provided by the participants: some questions needed to be rephrased for better understanding and new questions were added to better answer the research questions. As for the librarian's interview protocol, for instance, both the participants agreed on perceiving some of the questions as too challenging for the interviewee.

*I am afraid that the colleague you will be interviewing might find that you are asking for far too much work to be done - the questionnaire is very labour intensive..... I do not know every single book in the catalogue.....and I do not know the ethnicity of the authors of all the books available in the library!! I would need to retrieve information Internet for each one of them!!! (Participant A).*

Therefore, the researcher did decide not to overlook the participants' comments and adjusted two of the interview questions adding, for instance, the mitigating formula *as far as you know*.

### **3.8 Validity and Reliability of Quantitative Data**

Almost all educational studies, as maintained by Creswell (2014), have threats to internal and external validity, and sometimes it is difficult to eliminate them. However, identifying validity threats is vital, since it provides significant information needed for replication, which is the essence of research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004). There are two types of threats to validity: internal and external threats. A comprehensive description of the possible threats to internal validity was provided by Campbell and Stanley (1963).

Internal threats may be related to the participants (i.e., history, maturation, regression, selection and mortality), to the use of an experimental treatment (i.e., diffusion of intervention, and intervention replications) and to the procedures used in the experiment (i.e., testing and instruments). The internal threats related to the participants, the *history*, (all the uncontrolled events that occur between the beginning of the treatment and the measurement of the dependent variable, so that it becomes impossible to discern if the results are due to the treatment or the uncontrollable events, or a combination of both), the *maturation*, (the natural and biological developmental changes that the participants of a study undergo over time, i.e. growing older, wiser), the *statistical regression* (the tendency of subjects who scored very high or low on a pre-test to score closer to the mean on the post-test), the *selection* (the type of selection used to recruit subjects for the sample which can be reduced with random assignment), the *mortality* (the loss of participants during the investigation process and very often is the result of selection bias), did not concern the present study.

The *diffusion of intervention* and *intervention replications*, (respectively in an experimental design when the subjects of each group know the condition of the other and when the number of subjects is different from the number of separate interventions, i.e. even though each member of one class receives the intervention, it counts as one participant), and the *testing* and *instrumentation* threats (the influence that taking a test before the treatment is implemented and changing the instruments or the persons used to collect data may exercise on the results) as the previous ones did not concern the present study.

As for the internal threats to the validity of the quantitative data only the *subject effects*, which refer to the alteration of the subjects' behaviour because of their participation in the study (McMillan & Schumacher 2014) was considered, being the questionnaire based on the teachers' multicultural competence self-perception. External validity threats, on the other hand, comprise the construct validity threats (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell 2002), which are related to the nature of the measurement and intervention, and population and ecological external validity, which refers to the generalizability of the results. If the researcher tried to minimize the threat by referring to the *inadequate preoperational explication of constructs*, which occurs when the researcher fails to explain the nature of the construct which is being investigated, the *mono-operation and mono-method bias*, which occurs when respectively only one single method of

investigation is performed, and only a single way is used to measure variables, with the result that inferences are limited, is avoided by adopting the mixed-method approach and the use of a variety of data collection instruments (questionnaire, document analysis, and semi-structured interviews) (Denzin 2017; Golafshani 2003), increasing the results' reliability and validity (Johnson & Christensen 2014).

As for the quantitative research phase is concerned, coverage, sampling, nonresponse and measurement errors are the main risks that a researcher has to deal with when conducting a survey. The sample members were representative of the target population and the data was obtained from all the sample frame members to avoid committing respectively coverage and sampling errors. On the other end, the design of respondent-friendly questionnaires, of shorter survey instruments, and follow-up requests, were used as useful strategies to minimise nonresponse errors. Furthermore, to avoid the risk of having personal e-mail invitations labelled as junk e-mails, the investigator asked the principal to distribute it to the teaching staff. What was being asked from them, what the survey was about, how confidentiality was ensured along with the researcher's contact details in case of questions and the information on how to access the survey were clearly stated in the introduction to the survey. Few follow-up e-mails were sent to the school head, the secondary school principal and vice-principal asking for support in encouraging as many teachers as possible to complete the survey emphasising the invaluable contribution that their responses could have made to the educational research (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian 2014).

The researcher measured the validity of the questionnaire by using different techniques. To assess the questionnaire's face validity, defined by Gravetter and Forzano (2012) as the type of validity which guarantees that the questionnaire will measure what it is supposed to measure, the researcher asked for her husband's help as an external individual non-involved in the research process, and used Oluwatayo's (2012) face validity assessment criteria: the appropriateness of grammar, the clarity and unambiguity of items, the correct spelling of words, the correct structuring the sentences, the appropriateness of font size, the structure of the instrument in terms of construction and format were taken into account.

As for the content validity, which refers to the adequacy of the questionnaire items in the attempt to measure the phenomenon under study (Waltz, Strickland, & Lenz 1991; Sangoseni et al., 2013), the researcher got in touch with two professors working at the Culture and Society Institute of a well-known university, expert in the field who accepted to review the questionnaire items. Their feedback was used to do minor modifications to the questionnaire.

Unlike validity, reliability is defined by Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009) as the degree to which a test consistently measures whatever it is measuring and the degree to which a study is replicable or provides similar findings if administered to the same sample at diverse times. *It is a coefficient of inter-item correlations, which is the correlation of each item with the sum of all the other relevant items* (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison 2007, p. 148). As a statistical measure of the internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha coefficient, ranging from 0 to 1 with higher values indicating greater reliability, was calculated using SPSS. Spanierman et al.'s (2011) MTCS skill and MTCS knowledge reported that the Cronbach's alphas were .83 and .80 respectively, while the total scale was .88. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), the alpha coefficient > 0.9 is very highly reliable; 0.80-0.90 is highly reliable; 0.70-0.79 is reliable; 0.60-0.69 is marginally reliable; and <0.60 is unacceptable.

### **3.8.1 Survey Pilot Study**

The term pilot study can be used as a synonym for feasibility studies (Thabane et al. , 2010; van Teijlingen & Hundley 2001), that is *small scale versions, or trial runs, done in preparation for the major study* (Polit, Beck & Hungler 2000, p. 467) or it can be defined as a means, by which the pre-testing or *trying-out* of a specific collection data instrument is performed (Baker 1994, pp. 182-3). Thus, a pilot study should be regarded as a critical component of a good research design (Kim 2010; van Teijlingen & Hundley 2001, Malmqvist et al., 2019).

A pilot study can be undertaken for several different reasons: to develop and test the adequacy of the data collection tools developed to answer the research questions (Kim 2010; Yin 2014; Berg 2004), to assess the feasibility of a survey, such as the clarity of the words used and the order of the items, the time needed to complete it, the ways used to distribute and collect the

questionnaires (van Teijlingen & Hundley 2001), to investigate if the sampling frame and technique and the recruiting protocols are effective (Bickman & Rog 2009; Nunes et al., 2010; van Teijlingen & Hundley 2001), to identify logistical inconveniences and other practical issues that might occur during the whole research process and affect its outcomes (Kim, 2010; van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001), to evaluate the data analysis techniques planned, to enhance the researchers' skills and increase novice researchers' confidence (Berg 2004; Holloway, 1997; Ismail et al., 2018; Janghorban et al., 2014), and to convince funding bodies and/or other stakeholders that the study is worth supporting (van Teijlingen & Hundley 2001).

### 3.8.2 Sample profile

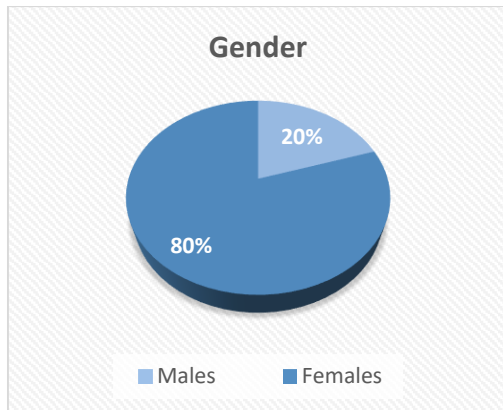
As for the sample size for pilot studies, some scholars posit that it should be between 10 and 30 (Isaac & Michael 1995), while others suggest that it should be 10% of the actual sample (Connelly 2008). The researcher piloted the questionnaire on 20 teachers (16 females and 4 males) from different secondary schools in the UAE before conducting the research study. Convenience and snowball sampling techniques were used since the researcher asked some of her colleagues to complete the questionnaire and to forward it to other teachers that they knew. As reported in Tables 14-15, the majority of respondents were females, while male participants were the minority. Furthermore, the substantial majority of the teachers involved were European, aged between 25 and 35 years old, and with a master's level of education. The results are graphically represented by pie charts (Fig. 16-17).

	Frequency	Percent
<b>Gender</b>	Males (4)	20%
	Females (16)	80%
<b>Age</b>	25-35 (13)	65%
	36-46 (5)	30%
	47-57 (1)	5%
<b>Nationality</b>	European (9)	45%
	American & Canadian (5)	25%
	Arab (5)	25%
	Australian and New Zealand (1)	5%
	African (0)	

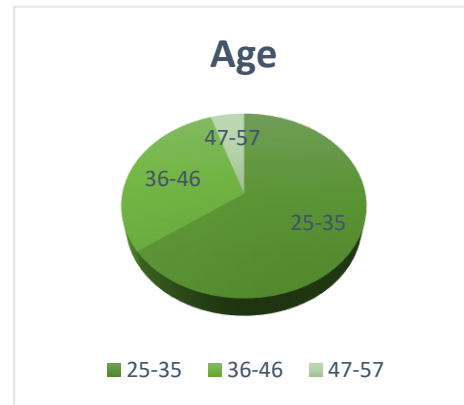


	Asia (0)	
<b>Education</b>	PGCE (2)	10%
	BA (7)	35%
	MA (11)	55%
	PhD (0)	

**Table 14. Sample demographic Profile – (N = 20)**



**Fig 15. Participants' Gender**



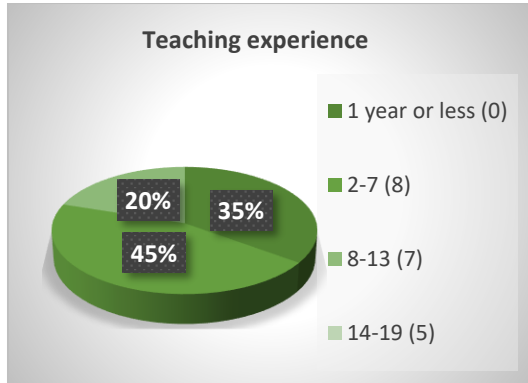
**Fig 16. Participants' Age**

As for their teaching experience, as shown in Fig. 18-19, most of the participants had been teaching for a minimum of 2 to a maximum of 7 years, had 2 to 7-year experience of teaching abroad, and had been working in the school no longer than 7 years.

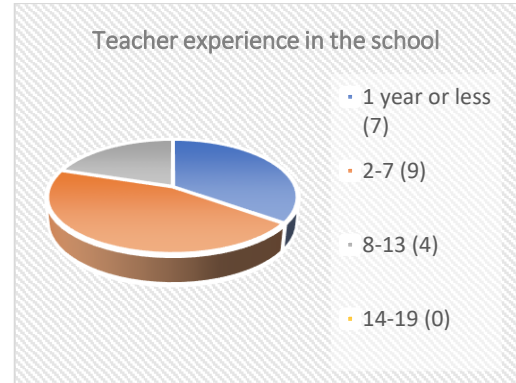
	Frequency	Percent
<b>Teaching experience</b>	1 year or less (0)	
	2-7 (8)	45%
	8-13 (7)	35%
	14-19 (5)	25%
	20 and more (0)	
<b>Teaching experience abroad</b>	1 year or less (0)	15%
	2-7 (12)	60%
	8-13 (3)	15%
	14-19 (5)	10%
	20 and more (0)	
<b>Teaching experience in the current school</b>	1 year or less (7)	35%
	2-7 (9)	45%
	8-13 (4)	20%

	14-19 (0)	
	20 and more (0)	

**Table 15. Teaching and Training Experience**



**Fig17. Teaching experience**



**Fig. 18. Teaching experience in the school**

### 3.8.3 Reliability Analysis for the Pilot Survey

The internal consistency among the questionnaire items was measured using the reliability coefficient Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ). The questionnaire reported an overall reliability level of  $\alpha = .597$ , as shown in Table 16. Although the generally agreed upon lower limit of Cronbach's alpha is 0.70, Hair et al. (2006) suggest that ... *it may decrease to 0.60 in exploratory research*. Also, substantially lower thresholds can be found in literature, proposing that even a minimum value of 0.50 is satisfactory in exploratory research (Pock 2007), such as the present study. Furthermore, the small number of participants could be the reason for the low Cronbach alpha value.

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.597	.631	18

**Table 16. Reliability statisticsTT**

The reliability could have been improved by removing the second item of the Teacher Knowledge section *I have a clear understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy* from .597 to .613, as shown by the following SPSS tabulated table (Table 17). However, despite the impact that the Hawthorne effect on this questionnaire item could have, the researcher decided to keep it and, on the contrary, preferred to delete the teaching skill item *Teaching students from different backgrounds is an enriching experience*. Finally, the last two items were merged into one which did not mention the school as the organiser of workshops on multiculturalism

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Teacher skills 1	51.65	28.345	.279	.914	.580
Teacher skills 2	51.35	26.345	.283	.909	.571
Teacher skills 3	49.05	27.945	.272	.948	.578
Teacher skills 4	51.30	26.747	.476	.937	.556
Teacher skills 5	51.00	27.895	.108	.775	.602
Teacher skills 6	49.45	28.261	.128	.952	.595
Teacher skills 7	48.95	28.471	.139	.812	.593
Teacher skills 8	51.10	28.726	.049	.964	.609
Teacher skills 9	48.90	29.253	.113	.841	.594
Teacher skills 10	49.80	27.747	.085	.856	.610
Teacher skills 11	51.15	23.924	.598	.979	.516
Teacher skills 12	51.15	27.713	.246	.971	.579
Teacher Knowledge 1	49.75	24.724	.333	.974	.559
Teacher Knowledge 2	49.95	28.787	.033	.840	<b>.613</b>
Teacher Knowledge 3	49.80	26.484	.254	.916	.576
Teacher Knowledge 4	49.25	28.934	.192	.960	.588
Teacher Knowledge 5	50.05	27.313	.168	.934	.591
Teacher Knowledge 6	51.60	26.989	.329	.980	.568

**Table 17. Reliability Statistics for the Pilot Survey**

Through the pilot study the researcher could refine her quantitative data gathering tool and make sure that all the items were clearly stated and understandable for all the respondents, and, above all, that the results could contribute to answering the research questions.

### 3.9 Ethical Considerations

As maintained by Elliott, all matters relating to *the relationship between the researcher and the research subjects or participants, and the impact of the research process on those individuals directly involved in the research* should be informed by ethical principles (2005, p.134). The investigator adhered to the 22 ethical standards set by the American Educational Research Association (AERA 2011) throughout the whole research process, and the five principles of professional competence, integrity, professional, scientific, and scholarly responsibility, respect for people's rights, dignity, and diversity, and social responsibility were taken into great account by the researcher (Johnson & Christensen 2014).

After receiving the approval from the Ethics Advisory Committee of the British University in Dubai (BUiD) (Appendix A), the researcher contacted the management team of several IB international secondary schools located not only in the emirate of Dubai. Unfortunately, only one school accepted to take part in the present research study. The school principal and vice-principal were informed in detail about the topic of the study and the data collection tools which had been developed to answer the research questions along with the time needed to perform each of them. Furthermore, they were provided with the researcher and her Director of Study's contact details in case of further enquiries.

Respect (Hammersley & Traianou 2012), a basic ethical principle, permeated the whole research process of the present study through the researcher's approach towards the participants characterized by genuine curiosity and interest in their views along with appreciation and gratitude for their contribution to the present study. Therefore, before starting the data collection process, each and every participant was orally informed about the topic of my research and made sure that they had understood clearly the responsibilities and the obligations entailing the participation in the research study before asking them to sign the informed consent document. Furthermore, the assurances that they could freely decide to refuse to participate and to withdraw at any time without any harmful consequences were included.

Two other important ethical principles are confidentiality and anonymity (Hammersley & Traianou 2012). As for confidentiality, the researcher made sure that all the information collected from or about the participants was used for research purposes only and not passed to any other parties under any circumstances unless otherwise agreed upon in advance and stored in a safe place, to which only the researcher could gain access. All participants' names were replaced with pseudonyms and any information that could reveal the participants' and the school identity were removed from the quotes used in this thesis. Furthermore, the researcher took every precaution to ensure that no physical and/or psychological harm would have come to anyone who decided to participate in the study. As advised by Fraenkel and Wallen (2009), *while researchers can never be sure how their findings will be received, they must always be sure to think carefully about the implications of their work, who the results of this work may affect, and how* (p. 434).

## CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

### 4.1. Overview of the Chapter

This chapter presents the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data with the purpose of answering the research study's question, *To what extent does the IB curriculum of the international secondary school selected in the UAE emirate of Dubai allow space for English-written authentic multicultural literacy resources?*, which was broken up in the following sub-questions:

**Q1.** How is multiculturalism represented in the IB curriculum of the international secondary school under study in the UAE emirate of Dubai?

**Q2.** To what extent are these literacy resources included in the IB curriculum of the private international secondary school in the UAE emirate of Dubai culturally authentic?

**RQ3.** What are the secondary school educators' self-perceptions of their intercultural competence in the secondary school in the UAE emirate of Dubai?

**RQ4.** What are the IB secondary school librarian', teachers' as well as IB curriculum specialists' views on the importance and appropriateness of including these resources (especially those portraying the host country) into the school IB curriculum in the international secondary school under study in the UAE emirate of Dubai?

Document analysis, semi-structured interview, and close-ended survey are the three data collection instruments used to answer the research sub-questions. This chapter encompasses three main sections: the first section of the study describes the first phase of the research process, which includes the document analysis of the school library catalogue, the school librarian's interview, and the critical content analysis of the English-written multicultural school literacy resource selected. The second section presents the second phase of the study, in which the analysis of the teachers' online close-ended survey is carried out. The final section

of this chapter shows the analysis of the IB curriculum specialist's and the two volunteer IB secondary teachers' semi-structured interviews.

## 4.2 Phase I Analysis

Once the researcher received permission to start off the data collection process from the leadership team, the researcher paid a visit to the secondary school library and met with the secondary school librarian, who always supported her during her several visits.

### 4.2.1 Analysis of the School Library Catalogue

The researcher started with the analysis of the school library website, through which students could gain access to a considerable number of online resources. During the research planning phase, the researcher did not mean to focus on the library website, however, on seconds thoughts, after visiting the library, and bearing in mind that many resources were no longer physically available due to the Covid-19 pandemic, she decided that the analysis of the website should have been included (Table 18).

<b>Academic Integrity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Honesty in the IB</li> <li>• Academic Integrity October 2019</li> <li>• Citation Machine: EasyBib</li> <li>• Citing Electronic Resources (OWL)</li> <li>• Citing Website PDFs</li> <li>• MLA 8 Guide and Citation Machine</li> <li>• MLA Complete Guide</li> <li>• MLA Style Center</li> <li>• Online Writing Lab (OWL)</li> <li>• X Academic Integrity Policy</li> <li>• Turnitin</li> <li>• Website Credibility</li> </ul>
<b>Arabic Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Al Manhal</li> <li>• AraBase (Dar Almandumah)</li> </ul>
<b><i>Global Issues</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Global Goals</i></li> <li>• <i>Global Issues Overview</i></li> <li>• <i>Human Rights Watch</i></li> <li>• <i>International Labour Organization</i></li> <li>• <i>Kids Go Global</i></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Out of Work and into School</i></li> <li>• <i>Oxfam</i></li> <li>• <i>UN Refugee Agency</i></li> <li>• <i>United Nations – Special Agencies</i></li> </ul>
<b>History</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Churchill Archive</li> </ul>

<b><i>Interesting Video Channels</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Crash Course</i></li> <li>• <i>It's OK to be SMART</i></li> <li>• <i>PBS Idea Channel</i></li> <li>• <i>PBS Space Time</i></li> <li>• <i>Royal Society for the Arts Channel</i></li> <li>• <i>SciShow Psych</i></li> <li>• <i>SciShow Space</i></li> <li>• <i>The Art Assignment</i></li> <li>• <i>Thought Cafe</i></li> </ul>
<b><i>Interesting Websites</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Big Think</i></li> <li>• <i>Brainpickings</i></li> <li>• <i>Edge.org</i></li> <li>• <i>Medium</i></li> <li>• <i>Open Culture</i></li> <li>• <i>The Globalist</i></li> </ul>
<b>Literature</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literary Review, Essays, Interviews and Book Reviews</li> </ul>
<b>Music</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music Magazine</li> <li>• Piano Research</li> </ul>
<b>Online Magazine Subscriptions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Times</li> <li>• The Economist</li> <li>• The Economist-Graphs &amp; Charts</li> </ul>
<b>Research Papers for EE and TOK or Other Subjects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academia</li> <li>• Core</li> <li>• EE TOK Scholarly articles</li> <li>• RefSeek</li> </ul>
<b>Sports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sports illustrated for Kids</li> </ul>
<b><i>Countries: Arts &amp; Culture</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Caribbean Culture</i></li> <li>• <i>Country Reports</i></li> <li>• <i>Drama Online</i></li> <li>• <i>Food in Every Country</i></li> <li>• <i>World Digital Library</i></li> </ul>
<b>Databases</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directory of Open Access Journals</li> <li>• Renaissance Learning: Accelerated Reader</li> </ul>
<b>Encyclopaedias</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Britannica</li> </ul>
<b>Literary Magazine in English, French and German</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literary Articles</li> </ul>



<b><i>Resources for Teachers/Students/Parents, Learning Languages</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Commonsense Media</i></li> <li>• <i>Link to Agha Khan</i></li> <li>• <i>Vengage</i></li> </ul>
<b>Learning languages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn languages</li> </ul>
<b>Free Multilingual Books Online</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free e-books</li> <li>• Read books online</li> </ul>

<b>Learning languages</b>	Learn languages
<b>Free Multilingual Books Online</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free e-books</li> <li>• Read books online</li> </ul>
<b>Resources for Renaissance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz ueber die Renaissance</li> <li>• Renaissance: Kultur und Geschichte 16-18 Jahrhundert</li> <li>• Zusammenfassung der Geschichte der Renaissance</li> </ul>
<b>Secondary School MEGAPORTAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portals for all secondary subjects</li> </ul>
<b>Free e-Books</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Novel</li> <li>• Et après ....Roman de Guillaume de Musso</li> <li>• Inconnu à cette adresse – roman</li> </ul>
<b>English, French and German Newspapers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Football Magazine Online</li> <li>• International News and videos in German</li> <li>• Italian Newspaper</li> <li>• Khaleej Times</li> <li>• Khaleej Times (Arabic)</li> <li>• Politics, Culture, Lifestyle in Germany (German)</li> <li>• Spanish newspaper</li> <li>• Swiss newspaper in French: Le Temps</li> <li>• The Guardian</li> <li>• The National (English)</li> <li>• The New York Times Online</li> </ul>
<b>Unit Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carthago</li> <li>• The Carthaginian Warrior</li> </ul>

**Table 18. Map of the School Library Website**



The document analysis of the online library catalogue was carried out using the already existing *CRAAP test* checklist (Appendix E), which relies on the five criteria of currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose: the homepage of the library website gave the readers the









opportunity to choose among several sub-sections containing web resources. Table 18, above, reproduces the map of the website in detail. Only the English sections, which were deemed to contain information relevant to the topic of the present research study, were examined.


<i>Global Issues</i>	
<a href="http://www.globalgoals.org/">http://www.globalgoals.org/</a> vef	<p>It describes the initiatives undertaken to meet the 17 Global Goals, known as the <i>Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs</i>, set by the world leaders in 2015 and provides teachers and educators with useful resources. Goal 10, <i>Reduced Inequalities</i> (“equality and prosperity must be available to everyone - regardless of gender, race, religious beliefs or economic status”) is the closest goal referring to multicultural themes.</p> <p>✗ <i>Not usable for secondary students. No explicit multicultural content found.</i></p>
<a href="https://www.un.org/en/global-issues">https://www.un.org/en/global-issues</a>	<p>It describes the UN organization and addresses several global issues. <i>Migration and Youth</i> are the relevant global issues with embedded videos.</p> <p>✗ <i>Not really age-appropriate for secondary students. No explicit multicultural content found.</i></p>
<a href="https://www.hrw.org/">https://www.hrw.org/</a>	<p>It reports on abuses happening globally and the infringement of minorities’ human rights.</p> <p>✗ <i>Not relevant.</i></p>
<a href="http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/child-labour/lang--en/index.htm">http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/child-labour/lang--en/index.htm</a>	<p>International Labour Organization (ILO) since 1919 brings together governments, employers and workers of 187 member states, to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men.</p> <p>✗ <i>Not relevant.</i></p>
<a href="https://www.kidsgoglobal.net/the-issues">https://www.kidsgoglobal.net/the-issues</a>	<p>In the education section, teaching activities for grade 7-12 are provided for teachers.</p> <p>✗ <i>Age appropriate as for the site layout, but the content may be used <b>only</b> by educators and school leaders.</i></p>
<a href="https://www.oxfam.org.uk/">https://www.oxfam.org.uk/</a>	<p>It describes Oxfam’s manifesto and initiatives to end poverty around the world.</p> <p>✗ <i>Not relevant.</i></p>
<a href="https://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home">https://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home</a>	<p>It describes UNHCR’s mission and initiatives to safeguard the rights and well-being of people who</p>

	<p>have been forced to flee (refugees, returnees, stateless people, internally displaced, asylum seekers).</p> <p>✗ <i>It provides information about the organization and its initiatives, but it is not age-appropriate for secondary learners.</i></p>
--	--

Interesting Video Channels	
<a href="https://www.youtube.com/c/crashcourse">https://www.youtube.com/c/crashcourse</a>	<p><b>#11 Cultures, Subcultures, and Counter - cultures: Crash Course Sociology</b> (<i>High/Low culture, Mainstream/Subcultures, Eurocentrism, Multiculturalism, Countercultures</i>)</p> <p>✓ Content is relevant even though USA-context based. The amount of information delivered might be overwhelming for a secondary school student.</p> <hr/> <p><b>#35 Racial/Ethnic Prejudice &amp; Discrimination: Crash Course Sociology</b> (<i>Explicit/Implicit bias, cultural interaction: pluralism, assimilation, segregation, genocide</i>)</p> <p>✓ Content is relevant even though USA-context based.</p> <hr/> <p><b>#34 Race &amp; Ethnicity: Crash Course Sociology</b> (<i>Race and Ethnicity in USA</i>)</p> <p><b>#29 Race, Ethnicity, and the Cultural Landscape: Crash Course Geography</b></p> <p>✗ not related to the topic</p> <hr/> <p><b>#41 Schools &amp; Social Inequality: Crash Course Sociology</b> (<i>Social Conflict Theory</i>)</p> <p>✗ Not related to the topic</p>
<a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/itsokaytobesmart">https://www.youtube.com/user/itsokaytobesmart</a>	<p>✗ Not relevant content found</p>
<a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/pbsideachannel/videos">https://www.youtube.com/user/pbsideachannel/videos</a>	<p>✗ Not relevant content found</p>
<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7</a>	<p>✗ Not relevant content found</p>
<a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/theRSAorg">https://www.youtube.com/user/theRSAorg</a>	<p>✗ Not relevant content found</p>
<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/">https://www.youtube.com/channel/</a>	<p>✗ Not relevant content found</p>
<a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/scishowspace">https://www.youtube.com/user/scishowspace</a>	<p>✗ Not relevant content found</p>

<a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/theartassignment">https://www.youtube.com/user/theartassignment</a>	 <i>Not relevant content found</i>
<a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/ThoughtBubbler">https://www.youtube.com/user/ThoughtBubbler</a>	 <i>Not relevant content found</i>

Interesting Websites	
<a href="https://bigthink.com/">https://bigthink.com/</a>	 <i>Not relevant content found</i>
<a href="https://www.themarginalian.org/">https://www.themarginalian.org/</a>	 <i>Not relevant content found</i>
<a href="https://www.edge.org/">https://www.edge.org/</a>	 <i>Not relevant content found</i>
<a href="https://medium.com/">https://medium.com/</a>	 <i>Not relevant content found</i>
<a href="https://www.openculture.com/">https://www.openculture.com/</a>	 <i>Not relevant content found</i>
<a href="https://www.theglobalist.com/">https://www.theglobalist.com/</a>	<p>Even though the “Issues” section contains several interesting articles about Education, Immigration &amp; Migration (such as Comparing Textbooks: Even Afghanistan scores better than Pakistan by Dorsey 2021), they are likely not to be holding any appeal for secondary students</p> <p> No appeal for secondary students</p>
Countries: Arts and Culture	
<a href="https://repeatingislands.com/">https://repeatingislands.com/</a>	<p>It provides news and commentary on Caribbean culture, literature, and the Arts. The author is an expert: she is a professor of Spanish and Director of Latin American and Caribbean Studies at Marist College. The contributions are up-to-date.</p> <p> Interesting and age-appropriate multicultural-related content</p>
<a href="https://www.countryreports.org/">https://www.countryreports.org/</a>	<p>It delivers content on Culture, Countries and Travel from around the world.</p> <p> Content is not critically developed: just a list of geographical details about each country (the embedded video “Dubai in 4K----- City of Gold. Recreation (You Tube) Devin Graham” contains stereotypes)</p>
<a href="https://www.dramaonlineibrary.com/">https://www.dramaonlineibrary.com/</a>	<p>It is an online research tool which combine available play-text content and scholarly publications with filmed live performances, film adaptations, and audio plays.</p>

	 By typing the word “multicultural” in the search space, several dramas addressing multicultural issues pop up.
<b>Countries: Arts and Culture</b>	
<a href="http://www.foodbycountry.com/index.html">http://www.foodbycountry.com/index.html</a>	<p>A list of recipes grouped according to the country in which they are popular. Not all countries are present.</p> <p>✗ No appeal for secondary students</p>
<a href="https://www.loc.gov/collections/world-digital-library/about-this-collection/">https://www.loc.gov/collections/world-digital-library/about-this-collection/</a>	<p>It contains cultural heritage materials gathered during the World Digital Library (WDL) project. Books, manuscripts, maps, and other primary materials in the WDL collection are presented in their original languages; more than 100 languages are represented, including many lesser known and endangered languages.</p> <p>✗ Even though users can visit African and Middle Eastern, European, and Hispanic Reading Rooms, the contents do not seem to be age-appropriate and of interest for secondary students.</p>
<b>Resources for Teachers/Students/Parents, Learning Languages</b>	
<a href="https://www.common sense.org/education/top-picks/most-reliable-and-credible-sources-for-students">https://www.common sense.org/education/top-picks/most-reliable-and-credible-sources-for-students</a>	<p>It provides teachers with reviews, lesson plans, videos and advice to help K-12 students develop Digital Citizenship skills (<i>digital footprint, cyberbullying, online privacy, news and media literacy</i>).</p> <p>✗ Interesting and age-appropriate, but not related to the multicultural issues teaching practices.</p>
<a href="https://www.khanacademy.org/">https://www.khanacademy.org/</a>	<p>It enables teachers to identify gaps in their students’ understanding, tailor instruction, and meet the needs of every student.</p> <p>✗ Interesting and age-appropriate, but not related to multicultural issues.</p>

**Table 19. Analysis of the library’s websites**

The table presented above (Table 19) describes the relevant sites included on the library homepage along with the researcher’s analysis of their relevancy and age-appropriateness. To sum up, the great majority of the websites analysed did not provide relevant information on multiculturalism issues: only one site about the Caribbean culture, literature, and the arts was found, which could be used by teachers in the classroom as well as by students independently. On the contrary, the youtube videos included on the topic were perceived as overwhelming for secondary school students as for the massive quantity of information delivered in a small

amount of time, while the learning resources offered for teachers and students did not touch on multicultural issues.

As for the library catalogue, the researcher filled in the checklist adapted and improved thanks to the comments of the two experts contacted (Table 20 -Appendix F). Since no audio-video materials and magazines were available for students' borrowings due to the current health emergency situation, multicultural English-written fiction and non-fiction resources, as well as comic novels addressing multicultural topics were assessed. French, German, and Arabic-written resources, as well as teaching resources, were not taken into consideration. To determine the authors' ethnicity, the researcher checked their biographies on the jacket of each book, or, when not available, online. The most common metadata used in the research of relevant resources were *women, minorities, globalization, multiculturalism, identity, civil rights, refugees, Black nationalism, United Arab Emirates, history of Dubai, culture and civilisation in the Middle East, Middle East, migration, immigrants, justice, and equality*.

Taking the analysis of the novel entitled *Daring to Drive: A Saudi Woman's Awakening* included in the school catalogue as an example, (1) the country represented was Middle East (Saudi Arabia); (2) the author's ethnicity was Middle Eastern (Manal al Sharif is a Saudi writer); (3) the main character was Middle Eastern (the novel recounts the author's experience as a Saudi woman living in Saudi Arabia); (4) the religious representation was Islam with its dictates about the women's role in society; (5) the main character was a working woman, employed as information security expert at the Aramco oil company (the only IT woman employed during her 10 years there), and wife; (6) she lived in the poor community of Mecca; (7) the author became a feminist activist after experiencing circumcision at the age of 8, segregation (separate entrances, covered windows, high walls, and the necessity for a guardian or close male relative to accompany women anywhere and sign any legal documents and her parents' permission to go to university or get married). She was arrested by the religious police because she was caught driving her own car.

<i>The setting is ....</i>			
Asia	F <sup>1</sup> 9	NF 42	O 1

<sup>1</sup> F= Fiction, NF= Non-fiction, O= Other types of resources (graphic novels & magazines)

Africa	F 18	NF 54	O 2
Central/South America	F 4	NF 44	O
<b>Middle East</b>	<b>F 6</b>	<b>NF 59</b>	<b>O 2</b>
India	F 5	NF 49	O 3
Oceania & Indigenous Regions	F 11	NF 28	O
Antarctica	F 2	NF 10	O
are set in different <b>geographic settings</b> (urban, rural, suburban)	F10		O 2
<b>Author's ethnicity:</b>			
<b>whose author is White/Western</b>	<b>F 54</b>	<b>NF 80</b>	<b>O 5</b>
<b>whose author is Black</b>	<b>F 8</b>	<b>NF 6</b>	<b>O 1</b>
whose author is <b>Latin/Latinx</b> <sup>2</sup>	F 3	NF	O
whose author is <b>Asian</b>	F 5	NF 2	O
<b>whose author is Middle Eastern and/or Muslim</b> <sup>3</sup>	<b>F 6</b>	<b>NF 20</b>	<b>O 1</b>
whose author is <b>African</b>	F 8	NF 9	O
whose author is <b>Indian</b>	F 3	NF 5	O 1
whose author is <b>Jewish</b>	F 1	NF 4	O
whose author comes from <b>Indigenous Regions</b>	F 1	NF 7	O
<b>Racial representation (only for fiction books)</b>			
whose main character is <b>White/Western</b>	F 35		O 3
whose main character is <b>Black</b>	F 21		O 1
whose main character is <b>Latin/Latinx</b>	F 3		
whose main character is <b>Asian</b>	F 7		O 2
<b>whose main character is Middle Eastern and/or Muslim</b> <sup>4</sup>	<b>F 10</b>		
whose main character is <b>Jewish</b>	F 2		
whose main character is <b>Indian</b>	F 6		O
whose main character comes from <b>Indigenous regions</b>	F 3		O
<b>Religious representation</b>			
Christianity	F 1	NF 18	O
<b>Islam</b>	<b>F 13</b>	<b>NF 32</b>	<b>O</b>
Judaism	F 1	NF 8	O
Asian religions (Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism, Buddhism)	F 2	NF 17	O 1
Indian religion (Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism)	F 2	NF 18	O 2
African religions	F 2	NF 16	O
Indigenous religions	F 5	NF 10	O
<b>Gender representation (only for fiction books)</b>			
Men as central character	F 34		O 4
Women as central character	F 23		O 1
<b>Women's age</b>			
School age girls	F 14		O 1
Women	F 9		O 1
Mature women	F 2		O
<b>Women's Social Roles</b>			
<b>Daughters</b>	<b>F 18</b>		O 1
Wives	F 6		O
Female Workers	F 5		O 1
Professional	F 1		O
Retired	F		O
<b>Social class representation</b>			
Lower class	F 17		O 1

<sup>2</sup> **Latinx**: people of Latin American cultural or ethnic identity in the United States.

<sup>3</sup> Muslim countries include **Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.**

Working class	F 9		O
Middle class	F 5		O
Upper class	F 1		O 1
<b>Anti-bias education' <sup>5</sup> domains addressed:</b>			
<b>Identity</b> (Promoting a healthy self-concept and exploration of identity)	F 39	NF 41	O 3
<b>Diversity</b> (Fostering intergroup understanding)	F 74	NF 23	O 2
<b>Justice</b> (Raising awareness of prejudice and injustice)	F 15	NF 17	O 1
<b>Action</b> (Motivate students to act by highlighting individual and collective struggles against injustice)	F 7	NF 8	O

**Table 20. School Library Catalogue Assessment Checklist**

During the evaluation process, the investigator paid particular attention to English-written literacy library resources in which the main story unfolded in a Muslim country, the UAE being the best-case scenario. As the table clearly shows, the number of fiction resources addressing multicultural themes included in the catalogue was significantly inferior to the non-fiction ones, which were mostly authored by Western writers. The following table (Table 21) offers the list of the fiction books/graphic novels found during the assessment process out of a catalogue of 10,000 books, in which the story takes place in a Muslim country:

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Date of Publication</b>
<i>Does my head look big in this?</i>	Abdel-Fattah	2007
<i>I was told to come alone: my journey behind the lines of jihad</i>	Mekhenet	2017
<i>Persepolis I</i>	Satrapi	2003
<i>Persepolis II</i>	Satrapi	2004
<i>Daring to Drive: A Saudi Woman's Awakening</i>	al Sharif	2017
<i>No turning back: life, loss and hope in wartime Syria</i>	Abouzeid	2018
<i>No ballet shoes in Syria</i>	Bruton	2019
<i>A hope more powerful than the sea</i>	Fleming	2017
<i>The girl from Aleppo: Nujeen's escape from war to freedom</i>	Mustafa & Lamb	2016
<b>Zenobia – graphic novel</b>	Dürr & Horneman	2018
<i>The Arab of the future: a graphic memoir: a childhood in the Middle East (1978-1984)</i>	Sattouf	2015
<b>Escape from Syria – graphic novel</b>	Kullab, Roche & Freiheit	2017
<i>Midaq Alley</i>	Mahfouz	1992



<i>From sleep unbound</i>	Chedid	1995
<i>The monk of Mokha</i>	Eggers	2017
<i>Dare to disappoint growing up in Turkey - <b>Graphic novel</b></i>	Samancı	2015
<i>The forty days of Musa Dagh</i>	Werfel	2012
<i>Berji Kristin: tales from the garbage hills: a novel</i>	Tekin	2004
<i>Istanbul: memories and the city</i>	Pamuk	2006
<i>The elephant in the room</i>	Sloan	2021
<i>The good daughter: a memoir of my mother's hidden life</i>	Darznik	2011
<i>Window horses: the poetic Persian epiphany of Rosie Ming – <b>graphic novel</b></i>	Fleming	2017
<i>Everything sad is untrue: (a true story)</i>	Nayeri	2020
<i>The white donkey: terminal lance</i>	Uriarte	2016
<b><i>Letters to a Young Muslim</i></b>	<b>Ghobash</b>	<b>2017</b>
<i>The kite runner</i>	Hosseini	2011
<i>Illegal</i>	Colfer & Donkin	2018
<i>Daring to Drive: A Saudi Woman's Awakening</i>	Manal al Sharif	2017

**Table 21. List of books portraying Islamic societies.**

The total number of English-written multicultural literacy resources found in the catalogue was twenty-seven (with four graphic novels), among which only one novel was set in the UAE, *Letters to a Young Muslim*, which consisted of a series of letters written by Omar Saif Ghobash, the former UAE Ambassador to Russia, to his eldest son about what it meant to be Muslim in the 21st century, and only one novel set in Saudi Arabia, which has been already mentioned above.

#### **4.2.2 Analysis of the School Librarian's Interview**

To further investigate the results of the school library catalogue document analysis, the researcher interviewed the secondary school librarian. The researcher wanted to get a broader picture of the extent to which the IB school culture supported the inclusion of multicultural themes in the teachers' daily teaching practices by assuring the availability of a significant number of authentic and appropriate English written literacy resources and encouraging the teaching staff to use them. The interview was scheduled in the morning before the library

opening time in one of the library study room, so that it could be carried out without interruptions.

Sitting around a table facing each other at a convenient distance, we had to comply to the government safety regulations, which demanded that teaching staff and students should wear a mask. The librarian was asked to read and sign the consent form before the interview, and to answer nine questions in addition to extra questions that were asked to get more details. She received the interview protocol beforehand via email. At the beginning of the interview, the participant granted permission to videotape the session to facilitate the researcher's qualitative data analysis. The interview lasted around 40 minutes and started with the researcher's brief presentation as well as with a few personal questions to create a positive and relaxed atmosphere.

While the researcher was introducing herself, the librarian burst into loud laughter when she realized she had something in common with her interviewer: they shared the same nationality. After a brief informal chat in the researcher's native language about this unexpected commonality, which contributed to defusing the librarian's initial tense and detached attitude, the interview continued. To the librarian's concerned statement *This is the first time I take part in a research study. I am not sure I can be of help!! I've read the questions you sent me.....I hope I can help you!!* (E 1), the researcher spared no effort to thank her for her participation in her research study and to assure that the findings would have helped educators to improve their culturally sensitive teaching practices through the use of culturally authentic and age-appropriate multicultural school resources.

Having broken the ice, the researcher continued the interview by posing some questions about her professional background: she had worked in academic/specialist and public libraries for twenty years as well as in school libraries for ten years, with only four years spent working in public libraries in her home country. When asked to compare her heterogeneous working experiences in her home country and abroad, she confessed that drawing a comparison between the two was too difficult, being the systems too different.

***Q1. Can you describe your collection development and maintenance strategy?***

The librarian's collection development and maintenance strategy heavily relied on the teachers' requests, who were asked to express their needs by filling in a template on a four monthly basis. At that point, with suppressed laughter she commented on the incapability of some teachers to understand what an ISBN was – *Some of them simply prefer sending me an e-mail with their requests!!* (E1). This procedure – she confessed -was particularly helpful when it came to ordering books written in languages she was not knowledgeable about, such as Arabic and German. On the other end, as far as she was concerned, throughout the whole school year she would take into consideration the students' requests (mostly graphic novels), and, after carrying out the weeding or/and stock-taking, she would proceed with the re-ordering of missing/lost books and with filling in the gaps in the series.

To elicit more information, the researcher decided to mention her experience, while working as a librarian in Hong Kong, with the leadership team's interference, especially as far as budget decisions were concerned, in the development and maintenance of the school library catalogue policy. The librarian asserted that in her case their involvement was limited to the setting of a budget limit and/or the request for the purchase of specific books, *not motivated by their real knowledge of the contents of the library catalogue, since they have never asked me to issue any documents.....!! Maybe just in terms of space to be filled in* (E 1). Moreover, she added that no books showing nudity, sex-related images, or addressing politics and religion-related themes could be purchased: some science and art non-fiction books were kept in a storeroom with limited access for students.

***Q2. How is multiculturalism represented in your school library catalogue?***

The catalogue includes non-fiction books about multicultural issues, which are prescribed by the IB curriculum, especially for Diploma students. The teachers have never addressed the librarian asking for IB units of enquiry-related resources in the library, they have their own.

*I guess that the head of each department and /or the secondary school curriculum specialist provides them with the relevant resources, mostly online. I learn about the themes they are discussing in the classroom from the students' requests.....I am not in the loop about this.... The shelf facing the borrowing/return desk contains all the books which could be of interest to DP students. For these books, I added a specific code (DP) to the Dewey classification system" (E 1).*

Unfortunately, she admitted, students are not into books about multicultural issues unless they are obliged to use them for school assignments: they usually are interested in books about cooking, travel, and animals.

***Q3. If your role as a librarian in the school allows you to choose new books, what kind of selection criteria do you follow when choosing multicultural books?***

*I do not use specific criteria....they are the same as for the other types of books (E1).*

***Q4. Are you aware if the library collection includes English-written literacy resources authored by minority authors?***

The librarian does not pay much attention to the authors' biographies while selecting new books. She could not remember any book titles. The researcher mentioned the scholars' heated and unsolved debate about insider/outsider author to define a book as multicultural accurate and authentic. She argued that even though she had lived in Dubai for over six years, she could not think of herself as a writer of the Islamic culture, due to the impossibility to establish a relationship with Emirati people. *It is a matter of different lifestyles: for a while, I would hang out with some wealthy Emirati colleagues, but it did not work out. We are too different!!! They do not let you in!!* (E 1)

***Q5. Are you aware if the library collection includes English-written literacy resources authored by Muslim/Emirati writers?***

Unlike Western literature, Muslim literature blossomed only recently as mainly celebratory literature and addressing religious themes: the first picture books for children in Arabic, which

were available in the library, had been recently published. *As far as I know, there are no books whose plots portray the adventures of Islamic teenagers...the fiction books you are interested in are mostly authored by Muslim writers who have emigrated abroad, for instance, Muslim authors living in Canada.* (E1)

***Q6. Are these literacy resources available in the languages the students use in and out of school?***

Since the school offered a bilingual IB curriculum and considering the heterogeneous composition of the student population, the catalogue included resources written in English, French, German, Arabic, Italian and Spanish. Even though the school was attended by an increasing number of Russian boarding students, no Russian-written resources were available.

***Q7. Where can these literacy resources be found in the library? (physical location, subject headings)***

The secondary school library, located on the second floor of the secondary school building, underwent a complete renovation in 2019. Besides some displays with the books of the month, the first shelves that one encountered, once entering the library, were those with the non-fiction English/French/German books and the English/French resources for diploma students; then, the English/French fiction collection, and at the back the teachers' professional resources (some of them touching on culturally sensitive teaching practices, but a bit out-dated) along with graphic novels. The fiction and non-fiction books addressing multicultural themes followed the Dewey classification system. It is noteworthy to mention that at the time of the researcher's visit, the books displayed in close proximity to the library entrance were *Shaula* and *Lesath*, authored by the Dubai writer A. M. Kherbash, and *Amazing Women of the Middle East: 25 Story from Ancient Times to Present Day* by Wafa', and *My Vision. Challenges in the Race for Excellence* by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, and *Father of Our Nation* by Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan.

***Q8. According to your circulation statistics, are these resources avidly read by the students? Are they used by the educational staff for their units of enquiry?***

The librarian checked personally the circulation details of two culturally sensitive resources: a fiction book and a graphic novel. Unfortunately, the information retrieved was not at all encouraging: the fiction book was taken out only once, and the graphic novel, only twice. Given the school closure for over a year due to the global pandemic, however, this data was considered not reliable by the researcher.

***Q9. If a member of the teaching staff asked you for a book addressing race-related or religion-related discrimination issues, which tools would you use in selecting such a book?***

*No one ever did since I started working here!* (E 1) was the librarian's reply, but for some Diploma students (grade 12), whom she knew personally since they would spend several hours in the library study rooms and helped find resources for their research. She provided the researcher with an example of the topic the students were expected to address in one of their assigned research: *ethnic discrimination and refugees*. On that occasion, she looked up the catalogue and found the relevant resources....*with a catalogue amounting to 10.000 books, I could find around 20 English/French books on the topic* (E 1).

The researcher conducted the semi-structure interview data analysis following three steps: first, she familiarized and organised the interviews' responses, then coded those responses, and finally interpreted and summarized them. Table 22 shows the summary of the interviewee's key responses.

Interview questions	Results summary	Themes
<b><i>Q1. Can you describe your collection development and maintenance strategy?</i></b>	The librarian places orders according to students' as well as teachers' requests and after stock-taking the catalogue, missing and lost books are replaced.	-Teachers' and students' requests are taken into consideration.  -The management is not aware of the library resources needs, the only

		involvement relates to the setting of a budget limit.
<i>Q2. How is multiculturalism represented in your school library catalogue?</i>	Multicultural themes may only be of interest for DP students (Grade 12), teachers work with their materials and never relies on the librarian	-There is <b>no communication</b> between the educational staff and the librarian about units of enquiry-related materials.  - <b>Students are not interested</b> in these resources as independent readers. They may ask for books about cooking around the world or travels.
<i>Q3. If your role as a librarian in the school allows you to choose new books, what kind of selection criteria do you follow when choosing multicultural books?</i>	The same general criteria are applied: dates of publications. The order of German and Arabic is accomplished exclusively according to the teachers' suggestions.	- <b>The order of new resources does not go by themes</b> , but by numbers for each of the 4 major languages, and replacement of missing/lost ones.
<i>Q4. Are you aware if the library collection includes English-written literacy resources authored by minority authors?</i>	Even though the librarian was not aware of the writers' bios, she was aware that Muslim literature was still very much in its infancy.	-This aspect of the issue has always been underestimated by the librarian.
<i>Q5. Are you aware if the library collection includes English-written literacy resources authored by Muslim/Emirati writers?</i>	The librarian could not provide the title of any books authored by Muslim/Emirati writers.	-The librarian is aware that most of the Muslim literature available is celebratory or addresses religious themes. -She is also aware of the <b>absence of Emirati writers</b> , while on the contrary there are many Muslim writers, who emigrated to foreign countries, such as Canada.
<i>Q6. Are these literacy resources available in the languages the students use in and out of school?</i>	The catalogue includes resources written in English, French, German, Arabic, Italian and Spanish.	-In tune with the school's mission and curriculum, students can choose among <b>resources written in several foreign languages</b> .
<i>Q7. Where can these literacy resources be found in the library? (physical location, subject headings)</i>	Diploma Students' resources (English/French) are placed next to the library borrowing table, followed by non-fiction books (English/French/German) among which multicultural books can be found classified according to the Dewey system, then fiction books (English/French/German) and finally at the back professional resources for teachers and graphic novels are placed (English/French).	-Some multicultural resources are highlighted through their placement in displays at the library entrance, <b>but their mostly non-fiction books or UAE celebratory resources</b>
<i>Q8. According to your circulation statistics, are these resources avidly read by the students? Are they used by the educational staff for their units of enquiry?</i>	No. (Q2)	- <b>Students are not interested in culturally sensitive resources</b> . Only if asked by their teachers, they might decide to borrow those resources.

<i><b>Q9. If a member of the teaching staff asked you for a book addressing race-related or religion-related discrimination issues, which tools would you use in selecting such a book?</b></i>	It never happened.	<b>Teachers rarely visit the library</b> in search of additional resources or suggestions.
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**Table 22. Summary of the interviewee's key responses.**

As for the analysis of the nonverbal data, the researcher paid attention to the posture she assumed during the interview (kinesics), the silences and hesitations during the conversation and the paralinguistic components, but the analysis of the facial expression following the matrix provided above incorporating Krauss et al.'s (1996) typology of nonverbal behaviours and Ekman's (1972) neuro-cultural model of facial expression, could only be used partially. The librarian was sitting comfortably in her chair, with her legs crossed and, at the start of the interview, she was fidgeting with her school badge. Once she discovered that she shared the same nationality as the investigator, the feelings of surprise and relief were clear in her pausing and in her look. During the interview she appeared to be always confident, she never hesitated while answering the questions, but for the most challenging one about the existence of fiction books for adolescent readers written by minority authors: she admitted that regrettably she was not aware of that, and after a short pause tinged with a bit of embarrassment, she advised the researcher to look up in the catalogue. However, she never showed any sign of discomfort during the whole length of the interview.

#### **4.2.3 Document Analysis of the School Literacy Resource**

As a result of the school library catalogue assessment and of the librarian's interview, the only English-written literacy resource found portraying the UAE Muslim society was analysed: ***Letters to a Young Muslim***, written by Omar Saif Ghobash (2017). Even though according to the borrowing statistics, this resource had been suffering neglect from the students' as well as from the teachers' side, the researcher acknowledged the enormous potential that the use of this resource in the classroom might unlock as for multicultural reflection. Furthermore, there was no saying that the author's choice of the epistolary form made this resource even more authentic and conducive to being used as a pedagogical tool. As stated by Barnes (2007), since the



epistolary format *allows the conversation or dialogue between two or more correspondents to be broken down into smaller segments, similar to short stories* (p. 3), it was particularly suitable for the 21<sup>st</sup> century-generation, whose attention span was increasingly deteriorating due to the high speed they were supposed to receive and process information by switching between media devices.

The three elements that characterise this format, the presence of an official addressee, namely the person to whom the correspondence is directed at, who plays a specific role in the narrative and the use of the present tense in the narration are maintained, except for four letters: *Wealth, Opportunity, and Repentance, Fragments of Memory, The Limits of What We Can Now, My First Dark Days*. In these letters, the autobiographical memories, such as the assassination of his father, were intermingled with the recount of the history of the UAE. The author wrote a series of letters to both his sons as well as to all young Muslim men and women, *with the intention of opening their eyes to some of the questions they are likely to face and the range of possible answers that exist for them*. He wished that his sons as well as their generation of young Muslims could realise that they have the right to make their own choices freely, to distinguish between *what is Islamic and what is peripheral to the faith*, with the consequence that *It is their burden to bear whatever decision they make* (Preface D1).

The world of today is very different from the world the author grew up in, and, according to him, young Muslims could fight back its current uncertainty and volatility only through the communal prayer at dawn, or after work and on Fridays in a mosque as well as the through the recitation of the Quran. The author encouraged his son Saif *to emulate the Prophet Mohammed* in order to become a good Muslim, to accept the idea that Islam is a religion of peace by *refusing categorically to consider anger or violence as a response to our interactions with others*, and to shoulder the responsibility that this idea entailed. This sense of responsibility had nothing to do with acts of violence, which engendered Islamophobic feelings: *the way for us to take responsibility is to go out into the world and do, take action, make the first move forward*. The condemnation of violence was one of the book leitmotif:

*The greatest crime that some of our clerics commit is to tempt our youth with the promise of heaven if they undertake a suicide mission. This insane idea, which*

*unfortunately is presented as the greatest sacrifice that we can make, is misleading. It may be true that the greatest sacrifice that a person can make is to give his life for a cause. But it is not the most difficult sacrifice a person can make. (D 1, p.7).*

Going against the grain, the author voiced his belief that it is much more difficult to face the complexities of the modern world than decide to commit suicide in the name of a cause. Being a half-race Arab with poor knowledge of the Arabic language, the author had to come to terms with his inability to fit into the Arab society and with racism, which is defined as *a reaction to people who do not fit the dominant mould of what people should be or look like*. This experience triggered a desperate search for his true identity as a Muslim as well as his deepest wish for his son and his generation of young Muslims to succeed in building their own individual identity.


The importance of education was reiterated in more than one letter, and not only as men's exclusive privilege: *Every single one of us has the right to an education. And I believe every single one of us has the right to seek out the best education possible* (D1, p. 75). Going further, the author argued that female students outperformed male students as for academic attainments: *In fact, when given the chance, Muslim women far surpass the skills and education levels of Muslim men. We, as Muslim men, have no right to stand in their way* (D1, p. 75) .






The last paternal advice Saif received was not only to maintain his individuality, his independence of mind but also to acknowledge the individuality and independence of mind of the others so that the peaceful coexistence of all the peoples could be accomplished: *Neither as Muslims nor as Arabs are we the only people in the world. We can and should live in harmony with other people in a crowded world. As long as we do not recognize the individual within our societies, we will not be able to live with humanity outside of our faith* (D1, p. 74)

The checklist (Table 23) developed by the researcher for the analysis of the literacy resource selected is reported below.

<i>Letters to a Young Muslim (2017)</i>
<b>Author:</b> Omar Saif Ghobash
According to the author's bio, is he entitled to write material relating to the culture portrayed?

<p>Author, businessman, and diplomat, currently serving the United Arab Emirates as Assistant Minister for Culture and Public Diplomacy. Previously, he served as Ambassador to France (2017-2018) and Ambassador to Russia (2008-2017). In addition to his diplomatic work, Ambassador Ghobash sponsored the Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize for Arabic Literary Translation and was a founding trustee of the International Prize for Arabic Fiction in collaboration with the Man Booker Prize in London. He served on the acquisition committee of the Louvre Abu Dhabi, the advisory body of the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation at King's College London, and the board of trustees of the Emirates Diplomatic Academy in Abu Dhabi.</p>
<b>Story</b>
<p><b>Is the story appealing to adolescent students?</b></p> <p>The use of the epistolary format makes the book extremely appealing to adolescent students. Furthermore, the author's choice of presenting himself as a father passing on advice to his sons makes the book even more fascinating.</p>
<p><b>Does the story contain stereotyped language?</b></p> <p>No. The meaning of the Arabic words used are fully explained in their true connotation. (<i>i.e. I remember when I was your age the importance of the idea of <b>hassanat</b> and <b>sayiat</b>. Good deeds and bad deeds is how I would put this in English. These were and remain very powerful words that resonate in my mind every day. I still mentally count things as good deeds and bad deeds (D1, p. 58).</i>).</p>
<p><b>Are factual and historical details accurate?</b></p> <p>Yes, they are. The events that brought to the author's father are faithfully described.</p>
<b>Characters</b>
<p><b>Are the characters believable?</b></p> <p>Yes, they are. The main characters are the members of the author's family.</p>
<p><b>Are universal human emotions, attitudes, needs, and experiences reflected?</b></p> <p>The author, reflecting on his autobiographical experiences and emotions, does not provide his sons with universal teachings: he encourages them to build up their individuality and take responsibility.</p>
<p><b>Do characters represent people from a variety of ethnic groups?</b></p> <p>The other ethnic groups are referred to as non-Muslims.</p>
<p><b>Are females depicted as well as males?</b></p> <p>There is a whole letter in which the role of the women in the Islamic society is discussed and the religious grounds on which their subordination to men are shaken by the author.</p>
<b>Setting</b>
<p><b>Does the story reflect a variety of places and times?</b></p> <p>The story takes place in the UAE cities of Dubai and Abu Dhabi. The time varies from the 70s, when the author was a child, and 80s, when he was a teenager, to the present time.</p>
<p><b>Are urban, suburban, and rural settings represented realistically?</b></p> <p>When the author talks about the changes that the discovery of oil brought about in the Arabian Peninsula, he takes into consideration all types of setting. (<i>i.e. Life in the desert was tough and literally a place of black and white, with few colors and little diversity until the late 1950s, when oil wealth began to trickle down. Today's modern Arabian Peninsula is a far cry from the environment of the 1940s and 1950s. Many homes in the Gulf have countless coffee table books with glossy photographs of the pre-oil Arabian Peninsula. [...]Dysentery and diarrhea were frequent killers (D1, p. 19).</i></p>
<p><b>Are cultural settings and geographical features represented accurately?</b></p>

<p>Cultural settings such as the description of the mosques, where the communal Muslim prayer takes place, as well as geographical features are accurately represented. (i.e. “When we are far away from traditional Islamic societies, we feel a brotherhood and a sense of recognition when we gather in a mosque. The mosque in faraway places is a gathering place, a refuge, a place to sit with your community and Allah.” (D1, p.13)</p>
<b>Plot</b>
<p><b>Are real situations depicted?</b></p> <p>The several autobiographical anecdotes embedded in the narration make the book a modern piece of art.</p>
<p><b>Does the story offer secondary school students a variety of situations, concepts, and new ideas on which to reflect, question, and consider?</b></p> <p>Yes, it does. One example is the anecdote of the summer Quran school: “I was twelve and had just spent a summer month in a school to memorize the Quran. [...]. I was out of my element. I felt very lonely. [...] The lessons consisted of reciting lengthy passages of the Quran. Each student took turns facing the teacher and reciting. This could often be a comic affair as the lazier students attempted to cheat with open Qurans lying about or by having a friend whisper forgotten words to prompt another memorized verse. [...] Years later I realized how deeply this short period at Quran school affected me. Both positively and negatively. (D1, p. 41)”</p>
<p><b>Are values explored, rather than preached?</b></p> <p>Yes, they are. The author gives a broader connotation to the term “freedom”.</p>
<p><b>Are adolescents exposed to multiple perspectives and values?</b></p> <p>Yes, they are.</p>
<p><b>How does the story promote understanding of our diverse society?</b></p> <p>The dualism Muslims/Non-Muslims is not accepted and tolerance towards other ethnic groups is promoted.</p>
<b>Language</b>
<p><b>Do characters speak in dialect? Does that dialect have a legitimate purpose?</b></p> <p>The language used is English. The author attended educational institutions where the medium of instruction used was English.</p>
<p><b>How are different languages incorporated into the text?</b></p> <p>A few Arab words incorporated into the text, followed by the explanation of their true meanings, are written in italics.</p>
<p><b>If non-English words are used, are they spelled and used correctly?</b></p> <p>They are correctly spelled, since the writer is an Arab native speaker.</p>
<b>Illustrations</b>
<p><b>Are diverse populations represented?</b></p> <p> No illustrations are used, not even on the front cover, whose layout is extremely plain and the colours used are sombre. According to the researcher, the absence of illustrations is the major weakness of the book. The use of eye-catching illustrations, at least on the front cover, would have aroused the students’ curiosity, and consequently, increased the chance of being borrowed.</p>
<b>Developmental Appropriateness</b>
<p><b>Is the plot age appropriate; can secondary school students understand what is presented?</b></p> <p>The plot is suitable for adolescent readers. Even though sensitive themes are addressed, such as homosexuality in the Arab society, they are treated with elegance.</p>

<p><b>Will the story encourage meaningful and relevant discussions?</b></p> <p>Yes, it will. The book could be used as the starting point for several relevant discussions in the classroom (i.e. about Islamophobia, about the women condition in the Arab world...)</p>
<p><b>Could the text be a mirror, a reflection of identity and experience?</b>  <b>Could the text be a window into the identities and experiences of others?</b></p> <p>Yes, it could, thanks to the literary format adopted. It mirrors the autobiographical adolescent quest for identity as a Muslim child and teenager living in the UAE and at the same time it is a window through which students from other cultural backgrounds can learn about the Muslim culture.</p>
<p><b>How could this text motivate and connect with the interests and concerns of my students?</b></p> <p> The book can be used by adolescent readers independently as well as by teachers to address multicultural themes in the classroom. However, only out of curiosity adolescent readers may decide to take out the book from the library.</p>
<p><b>To what extent does this text access and build upon the knowledge my students bring with them?</b></p> <p>The text aims at undermining the readers' beliefs and stereotypes which characterise the discourse about the Islamic culture and traditions.</p>
<p><b>Perspective/Power relations</b></p>
<p><b>Whose perspectives and experiences are portrayed?</b></p> <p>The author's.</p>
<p><b>Which characters are in roles of power or significance within the book?</b></p> <p>The author warns young Muslims against those who have knowledge, <i>"the ulema, those who have a vision of a world where Islam and the Muslims are the centre. Where the Muslims set the agenda, deploy power, develop technologies, decide outcomes. The ulema online have a plan for how this is all going to happen. You are told that it is inherent within our religion to be the dominant player. All the rules that we know about are written for an Islamic society that dominates others or at least confidently holds them at bay, at arm's length."</i>(D1, p.11)"</p>
<p><b>Are racial and ethnic minorities portrayed as successful problem solvers rather than dependent on white saviours?</b></p> <p>While the writer traced the history of the UAE, he mentioned the demographic changes that the discovery of oil brought about in the UAE <i>"Today, we have a population approaching ten million, with over 180 nationalities represented. People live, work, and worship in peace alongside one another"</i>(D1, p. 7).</p>
<p><b>Anti-bias education domains addressed</b></p>
<p><b>Identity</b> (Promoting a healthy self-concept and exploration of identity) </p>
<p><b>Diversity</b> (Fostering intergroup understanding) </p>
<p><b>Justice</b> (Raising awareness of prejudice and injustice) </p>
<p><b>Action</b> (Motivate students to act by highlighting individual and collective struggles against injustice) </p>

**Table 23. Literacy resource analysis checklist**

Using Sims's (1982) classification criteria mentioned in the previous chapter, the selected literacy resource could be classified as *culturally conscious* resource, since it was written for Muslim as well as non-Muslim readers, whose characters were Muslim, the story was told from their perspective, and the setting was the UAE cities of Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Surprisingly the categories developed for books on the Afro-American culture published from 1965 to 1979 could be applied to the analysis of the resource chosen.

### **4.3 Phase II Analysis**

In the second phase of the present research study, IB secondary school teachers were invited to complete a close-ended online questionnaire. The leadership team provided the teachers with the Google Docs URL link through which they could have access to the questionnaire. Being the main purpose of the study to investigate to what extent English-written authentic multicultural literacy school resources were imbedded into the IB secondary school curriculum, the survey aimed at gaining a deep insight into the teachers' self-perceptions of their multicultural competence, with a specific emphasis on their ability to incorporate culturally sensitive resources in their teaching practices, in particular those written in English portraying the society of the country they are living in, namely the UAE society.

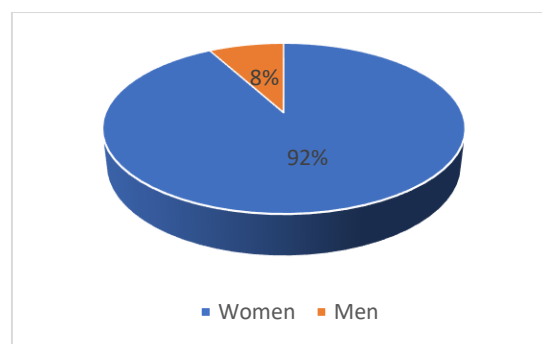
Since the literature outlined in the second chapter has suggested that the development of positive attitudes toward cultural diversity should take place not only in language classes, the teaching subject was not used as a sample selection criterion, and, consequently, the variable of the subject taught was not included in the survey demographic section. The data collected were transcribed in Excel, and subsequently entered and analysed in IBM SPSS Statistics 26 (Ibm.com 2019). Based on the results of the pilot study, the improved survey was administered, and the data collected was analysed. A descriptive summary of the sample profile and their responses are provided, followed by the results of the reliability analysis. Correlation analysis findings are also reported to find significant relationships between the study variables and themes. The significance level was set at  $\alpha = 0.05$

#### 4.3.1 Descriptive Analysis of the Survey

A descriptive summary of teachers' gender, age, nationality, level of education, teaching experience, teaching experience either abroad or in the current school, and the self-perception of their multicultural competence are presented in this paragraph in terms of frequencies and percentages. Means and standard deviations are used to summarise teachers' perceptions in addition to frequencies and percentages. The sample profile is graphically illustrated by pie charts, while the teachers' perceptions are graphically represented with bar charts.

#### 4.3.2 Teachers' Surveys Demographic Statistics

The sample of surveyed secondary teachers consisted of a total of 80 teachers. There were 72 females and 8 males. Figure 20 shows that the participating female teachers formed 92% of the sample population, while the male teachers represented only 8% of the total sample. This disparity in the genders' participation in the present research study was an expected outcome, being this professional role the preserve of women, especially in Europe, where the great majority of participants came from.



**Fig. 19 Percentage of teachers by gender**

Figures 19 and 20 show respectively the age and the academic qualifications of the participants. The great majority of the teachers were aged between 25 to 35 years old, a data which is in line with the high turnover of teaching staff brought about by the pandemic. A large portion of the secondary teachers' population of the secondary school had earned a master's degree in the

subject they were teaching, while only a small percentage was found to have been awarded only with a Post-Graduate Teaching Certificate.

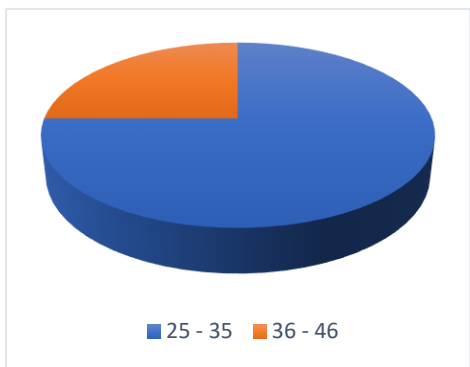


Fig. 20 Teachers 'percentage by age

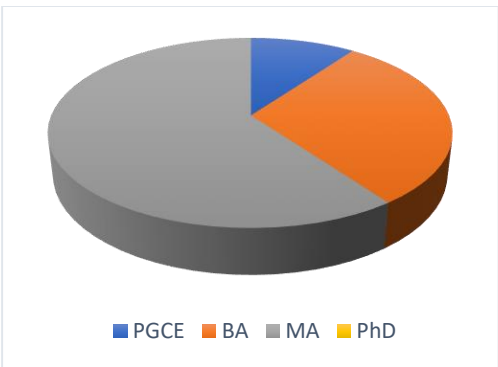


Fig.21 Teachers' percentage by academic qualifications

**4.3.3 Teachers' Perceptions analysis**

Overall, the percentage of agreement including “agree” and “strongly agree” responses was very high for all the survey items: the majority of teachers showed a high tendency to agree with the survey statements, and rarely resorted to choosing the Likert neutral option. The mean and standard deviation scores were calculated and shown in the following table (Table 24).

**4.3.4 Teachers' Perceptions analysis**

Overall, the percentage of agreement including “agree” and “strongly agree” responses was very high for all the survey items: the majority of teachers showed a high tendency to agree with the survey statements, and rarely resorted to choosing the Likert neutral option. The mean and standard deviation scores were calculated and shown in the following table (Table 24).



	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
TS 1	80	341	4.26	.651
TS 2	80	300	3.75	1.061
TS 3	80	310	3.88	.960
TS 4	80	254	3.18	1.100
TS 5	80	310	3.88	.960
TS 6	80	177	2.21	.567
TS 7	80	280	3.50	1.102
TS 8	80	333	4.16	.702
TS 9	80	328	4.10	.880
TS10	80	258	3.23	1.180
TS 11	80	270	3.37	1.195
TS 12	80	316	3.95	.884
TK 1	80	303	3.79	1.087
TK 2	80	285	3.56	1.146
TK 3	80	325	4.06	.946
TK 4	80	181	2.26	1.052
TK 5	80	186	2.33	.897
Valid N (listwise)	80			

**Table 24. Survey questionnaire descriptive statistics**

The frequencies and percentages tabulated for each survey statement are reported below.

**1.Teacher skill:** I integrate the cultural values and lifestyles of racial and ethnic minority groups into my teaching.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	3	3.8	3.8	3.8
Agree	50	62.5	62.5	<b>66.3</b>
Strongly Agree	27	33.8	33.8	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The majority of the participants agreed with the statement referring to the integration of multicultural aspects into their teaching practices.

**2.Teacher skill:** I modify my curricular content area to include different perspectives

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	19	23.8	23.8	23.8
Agree	43	53.8	53.8	<b>77.5</b>
Strongly Agree	18	22.5	22.5	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The high percentage of the participants agreeing with the statement referring to the multicultural adjustment of the curricular IB units is significantly counterbalanced by the percentage of those disagreeing with it. This outcome is substantiated by the IB curriculum specialist's, teacher A's and B's perceptions of the differences between the IB MYP and DP programs.

**3.Teacher skill:** I plan many activities to celebrate diverse cultural practices in my classroom

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	14	17.5	17.5	17.5
Agree	48	60.0	60.0	<b>77.5</b>
Strongly Agree	18	22.5	22.5	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

A high percentage of the participants claimed to make use of several strategies to value the concept of diversity in the classroom. This outcome was complemented by the data gathered through the interviews: all the interviewees stated that they spared no effort to bring their students' cultural experiences in the classroom.

**4.Teacher skill:** My curricula integrate topics and events from racial and ethnic minority populations

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly disagree	3	3.8	3.8	3.8
Disagree	25	31.3	31.3	35.0
Neutral	4	5.0	5.0	<b>40.0</b>
Agree	35	43.8	43.8	<b>83.8</b>
Strongly Agree	13	16.3	16.3	100.0

Total	80	100.0	100.0
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The outcome of this survey statement was expected because of the different scope of the two programs included in the secondary IB curriculum: the MYP program, which allows more freedom to teachers, and the DP program, which is more test-driven, as well as because of the different subject taught.

**5. Teacher skill:** I always examine the multicultural materials I use in the classroom for racial and ethnic bias.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly disagree	3	3.8	3.8	3.8
Disagree	25	31.3	31.3	35.0
Neutral	4	5.0	5.0	<b>40.0</b>
Agree	35	43.8	43.8	<b>83.8</b>
Strongly Agree	13	16.3	16.3	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The outcome of this survey statement was expected for the same reason as above: the teachers' selection of the school resources for DP students is subject to rigid IB guidelines.

**6. Teacher skill:** I always use curricular resources about the traditions and customs of the country I live in.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly disagree	3	3.8	3.8	<b>3.8</b>
Disagree	25	31.3	31.3	<b>35.0</b>
Neutral	4	5.0	5.0	<b>40.0</b>
Agree	35	43.8	43.8	83.8
Strongly Agree	13	16.3	16.3	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The outcome of this survey statement was substantiated by the fact that the great majority of the participants had joined the school only recently and/or had moved to Dubai from their home country only recently, consequently, they might not have been aware of the UAE cultural resources available.

**7. Teacher skill:** I often include examples of the experiences and perspectives of racial and ethnic groups during my classroom lessons.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	14	17.5	17.5	17.5
Agree	48	60.0	60.0	77.5
Strongly Agree	18	22.5	22.5	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

A high percentage of the participants agreed with this survey item. One of the most evident examples of the school's commitment to the enhancement of racial and ethnic inclusiveness is the adoption of an IB bilingual curriculum.

**8. Teacher skill:** I plan school events to increase students' knowledge about the cultural experiences of various racial and ethnic groups.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	14	17.5	17.5	17.5
Agree	48	60.0	60.0	77.5
Strongly Agree	18	22.5	22.5	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

Even though the outcome of this survey entry was expected, given also the considerable number of events celebrating diversity promoted locally, it contradicted the data gathered through the interviews: according to teacher A and teacher B, in fact, these events did not take place in the school.

**9. Teacher skill:** I make changes within the general school environment so that racial and ethnic minority students will have an equal opportunity for success.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	10	12.5	12.5	12.5
Neutral	3	3.8	3.8	16.3
Agree	48	60.0	60.0	76.3
Strongly Agree	19	23.8	23.8	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The multi-layered outcome of this survey statement may be the result of the challenges that teachers have to face to make culturally sensitive changes within the school environment. During her visits, the researcher had the chance of noticing the absence of artefacts hung on the school walls or near the administrators' and school leaders' offices. Only in the library, the disposition of the book displays showcasing books written in all the languages represented in the school was conducive to all the diverse students' academic and personal success.

**10. Teacher skill:** I consult regularly with other teachers or administrators to help me understand multicultural issues related to instruction.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	26	32.5	32.5	32.5
Agree	42	52.5	52.5	<b>85.0</b>
Strongly Agree	12	15.0	15.0	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The outcome of this survey item was validated by the interviewees' words: they all emphasised the pivotal role played by some of their colleagues in the adjustment process to the new cultural and learning environment. On the contrary, school leaders were not mentioned as facilitators of this change.

**11. Teacher skill:** I often promote diversity by the behaviours I exhibit.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	3	3.8	3.8	3.8
Neutral	5	6.3	6.3	10.0
Agree	48	60.0	60.0	<b>70.0</b>
Strongly Agree	24	30.0	30.0	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The presence of a small percentage of participants who chose to remain neutral about this survey item may be a symptom of a lack of knowledge about how diversity can be enhanced through behaviours.

**12. Teacher skill:** I establish strong, supportive relationships with racial and ethnic identities of all students

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	9	11.3	11.3	11.3
Agree	45	56.3	56.3	<b>67.5</b>
Strongly Agree	26	32.5	32.5	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

Even though a high percentage of the participants agreed with this survey item, from the librarian' and teacher A's interviews emerged that establishing positive and meaningful relationships with their culturally and ethnically diverse students' parents was very challenging for them.

**1. Teacher Knowledge:** I am knowledgeable about particular teaching strategies that affirm the racial and ethnic identities of all students

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	28	35.0	35.0	35.0
Agree	38	47.5	47.5	<b>82.5</b>
Strongly Agree	14	17.5	17.5	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The outcome of this survey item was validated by the outcome of another item included in the demographic section: since the great majority of the participants had completed a MA in Education, they were aware of the different teaching strategies they could use to meet their students' needs.

**2. Teacher Knowledge:** I am knowledgeable about racial and ethnic identity theories

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	25	31.3	31.3	31.3
Neutral	2	2.5	2.5	33.8

Agree	36	45.0	45.0	<b>78.8</b>
Strongly Agree	17	21.3	21.3	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The multi-layered outcome of this survey statement revealed that the participants lacked a theoretical preparation in multicultural education.

**3. Teacher Knowledge:** I understand the various communication styles among different racial and ethnic minority students in my classroom

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	11	13.8	13.8	13.8
Agree	42	52.5	52.5	<b>66.3</b>
Strongly Agree	27	33.8	33.8	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

**4. Teacher Knowledge:** I am knowledgeable about the various community resources within the city I live in.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly disagree	18	22.5	22.5	22.5
Disagree	41	51.2	51.2	<b>73.8</b>
Neutral	3	3.8	3.8	<b>77.5</b>
Agree	18	22.5	22.5	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The outcome of this survey item was validated by the interviewees' words: they all shared the same feeling of *social detachment*, of *cultural disorientation*, even though the IB coordinator stated that the school leaders were tirelessly engaged in the improvement of the new joiners' professional and social networks.

**5. Teacher Knowledge:** I have attended professional development programs promoting multicultural awareness

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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Valid	Strongly disagree	7	8.8	8.8	8.8
	Disagree	56	70.0	70.0	<b>78.8</b>
	Neutral	1	1.3	1.3	80.0
	Agree	16	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The great majority of the participants claimed to be capable of adapting their communication styles to their students' needs, which is one of the core principles of the culturally sensitive pedagogy.

The outcome of this survey statement was expected since, as maintained by the school librarian and teacher A and teacher B, the school had never promoted professional development workshops on multicultural issues, considering a priority, on the contrary, training sessions about the IB philosophical and teaching principles.

#### 4.3.5 Correlational Analysis

The researcher conducted a correlation analysis to study the relationship between the teachers' level of education (Independent Variable) and the survey item 1 in the Teacher Knowledge section (*I am knowledgeable about particular teaching strategies that affirm the racial and ethnic identities of all students- Dependent Variable*). Therefore, the question underlying the present statistical analysis was: *Was there a relationship between the teachers' level of education and their knowledge of culturally sensitive teaching practices?* Pearson's  $r$  correlation coefficient (Pearson 1895) was calculated for quantifying the relationship between the two variables. Correlation coefficients are reported in Table 25. The analysis revealed that the two variables taken into consideration were significantly positively correlated,  $p < 0.001$ .

		Education level of participants	Teacher Knowledge
Education level of participants	Pearson Correlation	1	.680**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	80	80



Teacher Knowledge	Pearson Correlation	.680**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	80	80

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 25. Correlation Coefficients Analysis**

#### **4.4 Phase III Analysis**

To further investigate the results of the survey questionnaires, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews aiming at getting a vivid and broader picture of the secondary school IB curriculum specialist and two of the secondary teachers who had previously consented to participate in the online survey questionnaire and voluntarily accepted to elaborate further on the topic. Participants were requested to sign the informed consent form prior the commencement of the interviews, which were scheduled late in the afternoon after the school activities had ceased. All the interviews started with a few personal questions about their role and their experience in that role.

##### **4.4.1 Analysis of the IB Curriculum Specialist's Interview**

The interview with the IB curriculum specialist took place in his room in the afternoon after the school activities had finished, and it was video-recorded after receiving permission from the participant. Both the researcher and the participant wore a mask and sat around a table. The researcher started with a series of personal questions such as what motivated his choice to become an IB secondary school curriculum specialist. To break the ice and establish a positive and relaxed rapport with the interviewee, the researcher decided to confess her almost complete ignorance of what entailed his professional role, since in her home country in public schools it does not exist. The IB specialist agreed with the researcher's reflection (*Yes....you are right....also in Canada, where I come from, before joining the IB curriculum, I myself wasn't familiar with the professional role of the curriculum specialist (E 2)*) and posited that due to the uniqueness of the IB curriculum this role was essential in IB schools.

Even though the school's name referred to a specific country in Europe, the curriculum was not affiliated with any government per sé, given that the headquarters of the IB system are in Geneva. The participant had been involved in IB schools for over ten years in Germany as well as in Dubai, and confessed to falling in love with this curriculum and becoming a passionate proponent of this curriculum, especially for its core components of international mindedness and enquiry-based teaching and learning, which is alien to other types of curriculum.

*"It is not prescriptive...students are encouraged to learn on their own, they ask their own questions and they are asked to find their own answers through investigation. I, for example, teach Science and adhering to the principles of the enquiry-based teaching, I do not provide my students with the procedure, the steps they have to follow to come up with an answer! They have to develop their own procedure, instead of following steps which are already given, which fosters the development of high thinking as for Bloom taxonomy... The Theory of Knowledge (TOK ) IB subject (Grade 11) also helps students question how we know what we know, and the different perspectives, including also the cultural perspectives, people may bring"(E 2)*

**QS1. Can you describe your duties and responsibilities?**

The participant maintained that one of his main tasks is to oversee that the teaching and learning took place according to the IB philosophy and underlying principles, which he could fulfil thanks to the considerable experience he had gained working as an IB teacher and Head of Department. Furthermore, another important duty was to become the school ambassador of the IB philosophy.

**QS 2. What factors do you consider when evaluating curricula, instructional methods, and materials? Can you share one of your personal experiences?, QS 3. What factors do you consider when selecting instructional materials and equipment? How do you ensure that they meet the students' educational needs?**

Students are allowed to take part in curriculum-related decisions through, for instance, surveys: the Diploma program is much more structured, more content-and exam driven compared to the MYP program; consequently, teachers have more limitations since they need to provide the

necessary subject-related notions to allow their students to pass the exams. However, he confirmed the existence of a certain scope for students to let their voices be heard.

*Recently, I asked grade 10 students to express their preferences on the subjects they would like the school to offer through a survey: the school does not provide subjects such as Sports Science, and according to the results of the survey, they would be interested in it. Thus, next year we will probably enrich the curriculum with subjects such as Sports Science, as well as Spanish, Design Technology, and Economics (E 2)*

Furthermore, within each subject students can choose which topic they want to investigate, for example, in biology they can choose between doing a database investigation or an hands-on investigation (that is collecting data by themselves).

#### **QS4. Are you aware if resources supporting diversity are available in the classroom?**

In the secondary school, there are no classroom libraries: for their research they go to the library. The school adheres to the BYOD policy.

#### **QS5. Can you describe if and how the IB school curriculum is inspired by multiculturalism?**

Given the school's diverse student population, the school promotes the students' leadership (*There are several posters around the school!! I bet you have already spotted them walking around!!*). Students are encouraged to take up the role of Community and International Ambassador, where they are responsible for connecting with parents and guests of the school, they guide them on tours or accompany them to events. If a student decides to volunteer to be an **International Ambassador**, they are asked to represent their native country/language, and talk to new students who speak the same language and who might not feel comfortable communicating in English.

Moreover, besides the Extended Essay and the Theory of Knowledge, the DP program is centred on the **CAS** (creativity, activity, and service) programme, which requires students to undertake a series of experiences based on Creativity, Activity and Service and reflect upon

their personal growth during this journey. Its purpose is to involve students in experiences that will make a significant difference in their lives and also in the lives of others, as well as challenge themselves to improve existing skills and/or learn new ones.

**QS6. What is your role regarding IB *international mindedness*?**

As an IB coordinator, the participant ensures that the fundamental principle of *international mindedness* is put into practice by the teachers in their classrooms, by, for instance, adopting the strategy of sharing their cultural background with their students: in Biology by focusing on scientists coming from the same country as the teachers', in English literature by choosing authors from different countries, in P. E. by studying the biography of athletes coming from all around the world. Multiculturalism runs through the whole IB curriculum in this school.

**QS7. What kind of support/obstacles are there in the school as for the development of *international mindedness*?**

Since Dubai has become a multicultural setting, it is easy to take full advantage of the IB principle of *international mindedness*: in the same class, you can find an extraordinary mix of school nationalities. It is easy to extract from them their cultural experiences as well as for teachers to use them in a fruitful pedagogical way. On the other side, however, it might be difficult for teachers to deal with the culture of the country they have decided to live and work in. In that case, the teachers' mindset is what matters: in his personal case, the participant stated he had always thought of himself as a global citizen since her parents were originally from Czechoslovakia. There is no saying that for young teachers their first experience abroad it might be overwhelming, cultural-shocking. Not only the physical new environment but also the whole idea of international-mindedness on which the IB curriculum is based may trouble new teachers who had never taught abroad or in an IB school: in that case, it takes more time for them to adjust.

**QS 8. (New question) How are teachers, especially young teachers, supported in settling in a new and different environment?**

One of the curriculum coordinator's duties is to safeguard the teachers' well-being and help them overcome the difficulties they might encounter in adjusting to a new cultural environment, with also the involvement of the administration and the school leadership. As a matter of fact, every year at the beginning of the school year we organise induction training with the participation of an Arab culturalist who introduces new teachers to the Emirati culture, by explaining what you can and cannot do in the UAE and dispelling misconceptions. Events which encourage teachers to engage with the local community are organised as well as activities such as going to local restaurants are promoted by the school to let them feel less intimidated and embrace the new culture.

**QS 9. What about implicit bias the teachers may have?**

Not only teachers, but also students may have implicit bias. For French and German students, for instance, who are accustomed to a system which is very content-heavy, it takes time to adapt not only to the new cultural environment but also to the new teaching philosophy. Teachers, especially those new to the IB systems, have to attend workshops organised by the IB or companies which work for the IB and accredited by the IB.

**QS 10. In your opinion, is multiculturalism represented at a deeper level in the IB curriculum of this school?; QS 13. Can you share with me your personal beliefs on the need for a multicultural curriculum?**

According to the interviewee, the only way to avoid making use of the concept of multiculturalism in a superficial way is to adopt a student-centred teaching practice: to put the personal and cultural experiences of the students at the centre. By letting students bring in and contribute to the teaching daily activities with their personal experiences, the concept of multiculturalism acquires an authentic and truthful meaning. But at the same time, it is important to teach students the importance of a common language: in Science, for instance, the

topic of whether the existence of binominal nomenclature is important is addressed in the classroom: the outcome of the discussion he had with his students was that having a common way of classifying organisms was beneficial for the scientists' interaction at international level. Last but not least, this school is the only one in Dubai offering a bilingual curriculum with some subjects taught in French and German, which allows students to keep and enhance their native languages.

**QS11. To what extent is the integration of authentic multicultural literary resources into the curriculum important? Why?**

Resources are chosen by each subject coordinator. As IB coordinator, the participant chooses suitable resources across the whole IB curriculum, such as *Kognity*, which is a subject-based digital book engaging, in particular, those students who prefer reading online instead of opening a book, and it allows them to challenge each other to strength tests. Each subject is embedded into the syllabus, so that, for instance, under the section *international mindedness*, students can find IB texts which explain, as far as Science is concerned, why a unifying system of classification of micro-organisms is needed. Moreover, another strength of this resource is that teachers can keep record of their students' progress and their engagement.

Taking about textbooks, the interviewee confessed that, although the IB curriculum tends to eliminate any kind of bias, textbooks still suffer from "Eurocentrism". The strategy he uses to counterbalance the bias still present is to make connections with the local context (such as the sustainability theme could be linked to the UAE Sustainable City), which is beneficial either for the students or the reduction of bias in the teaching and learning practice.

As for literature and literacy resources, he agreed with the researcher that there are very few Emirati resources embedded in the IB curriculum. It is up to the teacher to bring them in: since ethics varies from culture to culture, and every culture has a completely different framework from which they operate, it is up to the teacher to address the issue, the book will not do it. Furthermore, recently, grade 10 students visited the Expo and they were asked to take pictures and use them in the TOK subject. Local trips can be another way to bring local culture in the

curriculum: a connection with a bio-local company, which recycles the school canteen oils, was created. As for the sensitive topics which are included in the curriculum, it is important to accept all the perspectives, without imposing one.

**QS12. Have you ever had meetings on the topic with the teaching staff? What was their feedback?, QS14. Have you ever planned and/or conducted a teacher training program or conference on the topic?**

So far no meetings about the topic were organised: the only workshop the teachers had attended since the beginning of the school year was about inclusion. New teachers are provided with induction sessions before the first day of school. IB curriculum offers a wide range of workshops (now with virtual mode due to the Covid-19 situation) about multicultural teaching practices taking place in Dubai or abroad which teachers may decide to attend. While the workshops about multiculturalism are optional, those on the IB teaching philosophy are compulsory for teachers. Next year the school will have an IB audit and the professional qualifications of the educational staff will be checked.

As for the analysis of the nonverbal data, the researcher paid attention to the posture he assumed during the interview (kinesics), the silences and hesitations during the conversation and the paralinguistic components, but the analysis of the facial expression following the matrix provided above incorporating Krauss et al.'s (1996) typology of nonverbal behaviours and Ekman's (1972) neuro-cultural model of facial expression, could only be used partially. After greeting the researcher with enthusiasm, he sat at the table at the opposite end of a rectangular table. He looked always at ease during the interview, but never too relaxed or informal, and very knowledgeable about the IB philosophy and the underlying pedagogical principles. Not only he never hesitated in answering a question, but on more than one occasion he added more than requested with concrete examples from his daily teaching practice as Science and DP coordinator teacher.

The following table (Table 26) shows the summary of the IB coordinator's interview key responses.

Questions	Themes
QS1. Can you describe your duties and responsibilities?	- <b>Tasks as IB coordinator:</b> to oversee that the teaching and learning took place according to the IB philosophy and underlying principles.
QS2. What factors do you consider when evaluating curricula, instructional methods, and materials? Can you share one of your personal experiences?	- <b>Students' interests</b> are taken into consideration.
QS3. What factors do you consider when selecting instructional materials and equipment? How do you ensure that they meet the students' educational needs?	<p>-<b>Students' participation:</b> 1) students are allowed to take part in curriculum-related decisions through, for instance, <b>surveys</b>, 2) within each subject students can choose which topic they want to investigate</p> <p>-<b>MYP vs DP program:</b> Diploma program is much more structured since it is made up of subjects which are more content-and exam driven.</p>
QS4. Are you aware if resources supporting diversity are available in the classroom?	-The <b>library</b> is the only place where they can find school resources.
QS5. Can you describe if and how the IB school curriculum is inspired by multiculturalism?	<p>The principle of "international mindedness" is one of the core values of the IB philosophy.</p> <p>The school promotes the <b>students' leadership</b> and the CAS program is at the heart of the DP</p> <p>The school offers a bilingual IB curriculum</p>
QS6 What is your role regarding IB "international mindedness"?	<p><b>Tasks as IB coordinator:</b> ensuring that the fundamental principle of "<b>international mindedness</b>" is put into practice by the teachers in their classrooms</p> <p>International mindedness should not be limited to mainstream classes.</p>
QS7. What kind of support/obstacles are there in the school as for the development of "international mindedness"?	<p>The principle is supported:</p> <p>The <b>setting</b> (Dubai) and the extremely diverse <b>student population</b> make the school an international multicultural school</p> <p>-<b>Students' personal experiences:</b> teachers are encouraged to create a welcoming and inclusive environment in which their students could express their personal experiences freely and at the same time use their personal story-telling in a pedagogical way.</p> <p>Obstacles</p>



	<b>New teachers' well-being</b> may be at risk because they may find it difficult to adapt to the new cultural environment
<b>QS 8. (New question) How are teachers, especially young teachers, supported in settling in a new and different environment?</b>	<p>-Every year at the beginning of the school year we organise <b>induction cultural training</b> with the participation of an Arab culturalist who introduces new teachers to the Emirati culture</p> <p>-The school offers to new joiners who are not familiar with the IB system IB workshops.</p> <p>- In the hiring process, the candidates' answers on their multicultural competence are carefully assessed.</p>
<b>QS 9. What about implicit bias the teachers may have?</b>	-Not only teachers may have biased perceptions of the new environment and of the IB teaching system, but also students.
<b>QS 10. In your opinion, is multiculturalism represented at a deeper level in the IB curriculum of this school?</b>	-By letting students bring in and contribute to the teaching daily activities with their <b>personal experiences</b> , the concept of multiculturalism acquires an authentic and truthful meaning.
<b>QS11. To what extent is the integration of authentic multicultural literary resources into the curriculum is important? Why?</b>	<p>-The IB coordinator chooses suitable resources across the whole IB curriculum (i.e. digital resource <i>Kognity</i>).</p> <p>- The strategy he uses to counterbalance biased textbooks is to <b>make connections</b> with the local context.</p>
<b>QS12. Have you ever had meetings on the topic with the teaching staff? What was their feedback?</b>	No. The school offers every year a workshop on Emirati culture held by an Arab culturalist.
<b>QS 13. Can you share with me your personal beliefs on the need for a multicultural curriculum?</b>	Already answered
<b>QS14. Have you ever planned and/or conducted a teacher training program or conference on the topic?</b>	No

Table 26. Summary of the interviewee's key answers

#### 4.4.2 Analysis of the IB Secondary School Teachers' Interviews

Two secondary IB teachers volunteered to dive deeper into the topic under investigation with the researcher: the IB German (Teacher A) and English literature and literacy coordinator teachers (Teacher B). The interviews took place in the afternoon, at the end of the teaching activities respectively on the second floor of the canteen and in the English literacy

coordinator's office. The researcher did not develop an interview protocol as for the previous interviews: the list of the themes addressed in the survey questionnaire, on which the teachers were asked to make their comments, functioned as interview protocol (Table 27).

Themes	Teacher Skills
(1)	<i>Support the students' exposure to different perspectives</i>
(2)	<i>Selection of authentic literacy resources</i>
(3)	<i>Use of resources which offer the authentic portrayal of the local society</i>
(4)	<i>Planning of multicultural events</i>
(5)	<i>Teachers' well-being in a culturally different environment</i>
(6)	<i>Establishment of strong relationships with students' parents</i>
	Teacher knowledge
(1)	<i>Teachers' education program and professional development</i>
(2)	<i>Culturally sensitive teaching practices</i>
(3)	<i>Establishment of connections with the school community</i>

**Table 27. List of themes used for the teachers' interviews**

Teacher A was an IB secondary teacher of German Literature. Even though her room was empty, she preferred to move to the second floor of the school canteen, which was quieter than the first floor where groups of students were still lingering in chit-chat. Perceiving this choice as an attempt to make the meeting less formal and intimidating, the researcher willingly accepted. She was a German native speaker, a new school joiner, at her first experience of teaching abroad as well as of teaching according to the IB philosophy. Consequently, the first theme addressed in the interview was the *Teachers' well-being in a culturally different environment* (5). She admitted that moving from a village in Germany to Dubai was a major change in her life, and that the first months were challenging, despite the school provided her with initial induction sessions not only about the new cultural setting but also about the IB philosophy and principles she was not familiar with. What was really helpful in her settling in process was the support she received from some of the teachers even before leaving Germany.

As for *Culturally sensitive teaching practices* (2), teaching in a multicultural environment was also new to her, since she had always taught in German secondary schools, where all the students were German, even though, being a German Literature teacher in the school from grade

7 to 12, her students were mainly native speakers, with at least one parent coming from Europe, if not both. She added that she perceived a difference between the students she used to teach in Germany and the school students: she found them more open-minded and global learners, capable to see the same issue from different perspectives. She defined her teaching style as adaptive to the students' needs and cultural backgrounds by avoiding, for instance, the topics which were considered sensitive. Given the little experience she had teaching students with different multicultural backgrounds, the researcher avoided going into the theoretical aspects of the topic, not to make her feel uncomfortable and/or judged.

Addressing the theme of *the selection of authentic literacy resources* (2), she mentioned the German literature resource she was using to deal with the topic of the Holocaust with her students at that time: *Andorra* by Max Frisch. To the researcher's enquiry about her selection criteria, she replied that she had already been familiar with the text, and she admitted that collecting information about the author and/or examining if the text contained biased and stereotyped representations did not affect her selection process. Furthermore, when the question about the strategies used to make the resource she was using meaningful for the students living in the present society arose, she could only genuinely reply that she had never reflected on the importance of making connections with the present time. Lastly, as for *Teachers' education program and professional development* theme (1), she posited that she had never taken any university course on the topic, while she was a student teacher in Germany, and that the only workshop she could attend organised by the school was about inclusion.

As for the *establishment of strong relationships with students' parents* (6) and *the establishment of connections with the school community* (3) themes, teacher A replied by saying that she did not succeed in establishing a strong relation with her students' parents yet also because no social events had been organized by the school because of the pandemic (all the parent-teacher contacts had been carried out on virtual mode), but also because of the existence of cultural barriers. Lastly, she admitted that she was not aware of the cultural and social events taking place in the community around her.

In order to mitigate the Hawthorne effect and to build a trustful relationship with the interviewee, the researcher followed the six-stage protocol mentioned above in the previous chapter by using an open and accepting body language (we set very comfortably around a small circle table), trying to maintain eye contact during the whole interview, and trying to appear/be interested in what the interviewee was saying and complementary when appropriate. Unfortunately, even though the interview was audio-video recorded, the researcher could not examine the participant's facial expression because of the mask; however, her eyes very often betrayed a smile and, sometimes, a small laugh.

Teacher B was an IB English Language and Literature teacher as well as the English Literacy coordinator, with only one year of teaching experience abroad in that school. Since the question about the existence of a literacy resource which could fall in the category of being a mirror and window of the Emirati culture remained still unanswered, being teacher B the school literacy coordinator, the researcher rushed to start the interview with this question on the *Selection of literacy resources* theme. Unfortunately, he replied that since he had never addressed the topic in his classroom he was not aware of any literacy resources with those characteristics and that this typology of resources was more likely to be used in Moral Education than in mainstream classes. As the IB coordinator, he reiterated the fact that in the DP program teachers have more guidelines to follow than in the MYP, such as the list of the prescribed English/French/German literature texts they should refer to (PRL).

Nonetheless, he argued that whenever it was possible, he would take into consideration his students' needs and inclinations and prepare lesson plans, in which different perspectives were provided, and not only the official one (*The exposure to different perspectives* theme (1)). He illustrated his point with an example drawn from the topic he was addressing at that time: the controversial historic character of the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Through the reading of some extracts from his biography *Into the darkest hour*, he aimed at showing not only the conventional but also the contradictory aspects of this well-known historic character: besides being a man who withstood Nazism and helped save the Western democracy, he was also known for his racist and imperialist attitudes.

As for *the teachers' education* theme, he stated that to get his teaching certificate in South Africa, he had to be proficient in German language and one of the four South African languages

(Afrikaans, Northern Sotho, Tswana, and Zulu), along with other specific modules on diversity and social justice education. As for the professional development courses taken, when he joined the school he attended an Arab Culturalist's workshop on the concept of cultural intelligence during the orientation week before the beginning of the school lessons (*I found the workshop very interesting....I had the opportunity to realise how biased was my perception of the Arab world!! I was totally unaware that honesty, honour and hospitality were the dominant values of the Emirati culture!!*).

Unlike Teacher A, he confessed that moving to Dubai was not a traumatic experience and settling in the new multicultural educational setting was quite easy for him, being South Africa a very cosmopolitan country. Moreover, he acknowledged the help he received from his more experienced colleagues, the school leadership team as well as the school counsellor during his first year in the UAE. The participant's mention of the beneficial effects that the intervention of the school counsellor had in his adaptation process made the researcher realize that she had failed to consider how also school counsellors could play an active role in the implementation of multicultural education at school.

Teacher B appeared extremely at ease from the beginning of the interview, sitting in comfortable armchairs around a coffee table in his office, crossing his legs in a very relaxed posture and sipping a cup of coffee during the whole duration of the interview. He started by confessing that, since he himself was a part-time Ph.D. candidate in English Literature, he volunteered to take part in the present research study without hesitation. The only question, which affected his confidence and interrupted the smoothness of his speech, was the one about the existence of English-written culturally sensitive literacy resources written by Emirati authors on the UAE culture and society for adolescent readers which could be used in class. The embarrassment was palpable for a moment, but shortly after he succeeded in getting out of the impasse. The researcher, to avoid any discomfort, decided to change question, and, as in the previous interview, nodded and tried to appear interested in the participant's answers.

#### 4. 5. The Triangulation of All Data Findings

The meaningful combination of both the qualitative and quantitative strands allows the researcher to get a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation .The following table (Table 27) displays the integration of the results obtained from the participants by using qualitative and quantitative data collection instruments: the content analysis of the library catalogue and website, the critical content analysis of the literacy resource selected, the librarian, the curriculum specialist' and the teachers' semi-structured interviews, and the teachers' survey. The categorization of the results is based on the set of themes developed by the researcher for the analysis of the teachers' semi-structured interviews.

Themes	Document Analysis & Critical Content Analysis	Semi-Structured Interviews	Survey
(1) Support the students' exposure to different perspectives	The selected literacy resource if used in the classroom may offer interesting topics of conversation relating to the main tenets of the Islamic religion.	All the interviewees agreed on the importance of providing students with learning opportunities in which multicultural topics are explored from different perspectives	<b>Teacher skill 7:</b> the great majority of respondents agreed with the survey item.
(2) Selection of authentic literacy resources	The number of culturally sensitive resources found in the library is extremely limited.	CC: the head of each department provides the teachers with the IB appropriate school resources  TA: no specific criteria for the selection of these resources are used. The author's biography has never been considered a selection criterion. TB: in the DP teachers are expected to choose the school resources from a list of prescribed texts.  L: teachers never show up in the library in search of new resources.	<b>Teacher Skill 5:</b> The outcome of this survey statement was expected since the teachers' selection of the school resources for DP students is subject to rigid IB guidelines.
(3) Use of resources which offer the authentic portrayal of the local society	The total number of English-written multicultural literacy resources portraying Islamic societies found in the catalogue was twenty-seven (with four graphic novels).  There were no artefacts hung on the library's walls or the corridors which lead to the school library.	All the interviewees were not able to provide the researcher with the titles of resources set in the UAE or in an Islamic country  TB: this type of resources are only used in Social Studies	<b>Teacher skill 6:</b> A significant number of participants disagreed with the item. This outcome could be explained by the fact that the great majority of the participants had joined the school only recently and/or had moved to Dubai from their home country only recently, consequently, they might not have been aware of the UAE cultural resources available. <b>Teacher skill 9:</b> A significant number of participants (discrepancy)
(4) Planning of multicultural events		CC: the school promotes events celebrating cultural and ethnic diversity.  TA & TA: no school events are planned	<b>Teacher skill 8:</b> Even though the outcome of this survey entry was expected, given also the considerable number of events celebrating diversity promoted locally, it <b>contradicted</b> the data gathered

			through the interviews: according to teacher A and teacher B, in fact, these events did not take place in the school <b>(discrepancy)</b> .
(5) Teachers' well-being in a culturally different environment		<p>CC: school leaders are highly committed to easing off the new joiners' adjustment to the new environment</p> <p>TA &amp; TB: they could rely on the other teachers' and the school counsellor's support.</p> <p>L: It is very difficult, almost impossible, for expats to blend in the UAE society.</p>	<b>Teacher skill 10:</b> the majority of the participants agreed with the statement.
(6) Establishment of strong relationships with students' parents		TA & TB: They could establish strong relationships with their culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students; however, they found it challenging to build supportive and collaborative relationships with their parents.	<b>Teacher skill 12:</b> a high percentage of the participants agreed with this survey item.
(7) Teachers' education program and professional development		<p>CC: the school provides new joiners with an induction program at the start of the school year to help them settle in the new cultural environment as well as in the new teaching environment, in case they are not familiar with the IB philosophy.</p> <p>TA &amp; TB: they have not attended a workshop on multicultural topics yet: the only workshop promoted by the school was about inclusion.</p>	<b>Teacher Knowledge 5:</b> the great majority of the participants disagreed with the item <b>(discrepancy)</b>
(8) Culturally sensitive teaching practices		CC: the IB core principle of "international mindedness" makes the curriculum highly conducive to the implementation of culturally sensitive teaching practices.	<p><b>Teacher skill 1, 2, 3:</b> the great majority of the participants agreed with the item</p> <p><b>Teacher skill 4:</b> the difference between the MYP program, which allows more freedom to teachers, and the DP program, which is more test-driven, as well as because of the different subject taught may explain the multi-layered outcomes</p> <p><b>Teacher skill 9:</b> high percentage of participants agreeing with the item</p> <p><b>Teacher knowledge 1,2,3:</b> a relationship between the teachers' level of education and their knowledge of culturally sensitive teaching practices was found.</p>
(9) Establishment of connections with the school community		CC: the key role of the community is acknowledged, the school leaders and himself are highly committed to helping teachers establish connections with the local community.	<b>Teacher Knowledge 4:</b> high percentage of participants disagreeing or neutral with the statement.

**Table 28. Triangulation of data findings**

Table 28 shows the overall results obtained from the different data sources grouped and organised by themes. The findings from all the different instruments show that there is a clear alignment in the findings, except for themes 3, 4, and 7.

The number of literacy resources on multicultural topics included in the school library catalogue or available online through the library website was extremely limited: only one book portraying the UAE contemporary society was found, and only a few others set in the Arabian Peninsula or other Islamic countries. This finding was validated by the librarian's words, who admitted that finding resources which described the contemporary Islamic societies was extremely challenging, since the great majority of Islamic writers did not live in their country of origin (this was the case of Islamic writers who emigrated in Canada) any longer, or, still living in their home countries, could not succeed in seeing their work translated into English published. The researcher had no other choice than select the only school resource found and examine its content to evaluate if it could be defined as a culturally authentic and accurate literacy school resource. Even though it was not used in the classroom, and, according to the borrowing information held by the librarian, it was completely neglected by the students, the researcher, after a first quick reading of the book, decided to show that not using it in the classroom as a *window* and *mirror* of the native culture of the host country would have been a missed pedagogical opportunity.

The leadership team appeared not to pay much attention to the contents of the books included or to be included in the library catalogue, considering more important ensuring the availability of a sufficient number of resources in all the languages represented in the school, and the teaching staff preferred to rely exclusively on the resources provided by the head of their departments, which especially for the Diploma program, were already set by the IB system instead of leaving their comfort zones and make more audacious choices. All the participants stressed the difference between the MYP and the DP programs, in line with other studies included in the literature review, which stressed how the attempt to comply with both the concepts of accountability and multiculturalism on a daily basis, may cause discomfort and stress in educators (Perez & Flores 2018), imposing a limit in their teaching practices and, consequently, having a negative impact on their students' academic achievements.



The quantitative data analysis revealed that there was an alignment in the findings attained from the data collected in the other phases of the study: the data that the great majority of the participants, especially new joiners, found it challenging to adjust to the new teaching and multicultural environment and that they had attended an extremely limited number of in-service professional development workshops on culturally sensitive teaching practices was validated by the analysis of the qualitative data obtained during the semi-structured interviews. According to the interviewees, in fact, the school prioritized training programs on the IB basic philosophical principles and teaching practices in order to comply with the local educational requirements.

#### **4.6 Summary**

This chapter presented the findings which answered the research question and sub-questions introduced at the beginning of the study. The study implemented the sequential mixed methods approach and it included three stages. During the first stage, qualitative data were collected through the document analysis of the school library catalogue and website, the librarian's semi-interview and the critical content analysis of the only multicultural resource portraying the contemporary UAE society included in the library catalogue. During the second stage quantitative data were gathered through an online teachers' survey questionnaire, and, finally, during the third stage, two secondary teachers along with the school IB secondary curriculum coordinator were interviewed.

The findings revealed that no specific criteria were used to select authentic multicultural resources, which resulted in an imbalanced composition of the school library catalogue, where only one book portraying the UAE contemporary society was found, and only a few others set in the Arabian Peninsula or other Islamic countries. Even though the resource selected, written by an Emirati writer still living and working in the country, turned out to provide adolescent readers with an authentic, accurate and critical representation of the society of the host country they were living in, the fact that similar resources represented only a limited percentage of the total number of the books included in the catalogue and that the school leaders did not consider

the issue a priority consolidated the researcher' s assumption that the dichotomy between *us* and the *other* still needed attention.

On the other hand, the analysis of the quantitative data aligned with the data obtained in the other phases of the study, highlighting the challenges that the teaching staff had to face to adjust to the new learning environment and to create meaningful relations with the school community. Moreover, even though the teachers agreed with most of the survey items, showing a high perception of their multicultural competencies, the number of the in-service and/or professional development workshops addressing culturally sensitive teaching practices attended turned out to be extremely limited.

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 Overview of the Chapter**

The present study aimed to investigate the extent to which the IB curriculum of the bilingual international private secondary school selected was enriched with English-written culturally authentic multicultural literacy resources used in the classroom as a pedagogical tool and/or available in the school library, with a particular emphasis on those portraying Muslim societies. Considering the lack of literature on the topic, which, on the contrary, focused on the examination of children's literature texts or primary and secondary school textbooks, it is the researcher's intention to draw the stakeholders' attention to the beneficial effects that a careful and conscious selection of the school resources could produce on students' academic achievements and, on the contrary, the disastrous impact that resources still imbued with negative and stereotyped portrayals of other cultures could have on their identity formation process, and, consequently, on their becoming 21<sup>st</sup>-century successful citizens.

### **5.2 Discussion of the Study Findings**

This chapter encompasses an extensive discussion of the findings, with reference to the research questions, the underlying theoretical framework and the previous relevant international regional and local studies included in the literature review. It summarizes and discusses the results of each research question, in connection to the current knowledge and the study's theoretical framework. The chapter ends with recommendations for further research, implications of the current research study, limitations of the study, and a concluding note.

#### **5.2.1 Discussion of Findings of RQ. 1**

- ♦ *RQ. 1 How is multiculturalism represented in the IB curriculum of a private international secondary school in Dubai?*

Bearing in mind Banks' (2012) concept of school as *a social system*, during the librarian's interview emerged that two of its components, the leadership team, lacked interest in supporting multiculturalism, by preferring to purchase library books by number, instead of by subject, while the teaching staff relied almost exclusively on IB already-made resources provided by the heads of each department. They believed that taking the time to pay a visit to the library, snoop through the shelves and learn about the existence of authentic culturally sensitive resources authored by local authors, which could have become a precious pedagogical tool for their students' acquisition of the IB principle of international mindedness, was not worth it.

There is no saying that the synergetic professional relationship between librarians and teaching staff is essential: modifying the layout of the book displays, for instance, to showcase the latest literacy/literature works, especially the local ones, to arouse the attention of potential readers, and promoting various forms of literacy, not only print-based but also digital, as argued by Kim and Slapac (2015), could contribute to imbuing the teachers' mindset with multicultural concepts.

As for *the community participation and input*, another component of Banks' conceptualization of a school as a social system, according to the data gathered through the interviews, no social events celebrating cultural diversity and aiming at cementing the relationship between the school's diverse students' population and their families with the school leadership team and the teaching staff had been held at school for the whole duration of the health-related emergency situation. However, as maintained by Watkins and Noble (2019), these annual events, such as Multicultural Days, risked becoming a form of *lazy multiculturalism, saris, samosas and steel bands* as defined by Troyna (1987) or *brown holidays and heroes* (Nieto 1995), which resulted in producing counterproductive effects such as the proliferation of the concept of culture as a static entity along with the tokenistic interpretation of the concept of difference.

According to Castagno (2014), these events could apparently engender a feeling of *niceness*, which had nothing to do with the conventional positive meaning of the word, when used by whiteness to establish its dominance and express its power in schools and among educators. Therefore, viewing things in a different way, as if wearing *a new pair of glasses* (p. 9), enabling

the concealment of inequity and oppression ingrained in the society, as well as the practice of educators' silence and acts of silence not to create discomfort were strategies used for perpetuating the status quo. According to Watkins and Noble (2019), these institutionalized practices, which are still taking place in schools in the name of multiculturalism, could become pedagogic opportunities only through a greater amount of intellectual as well as emotional teachers' engagement and through the acknowledgement of a more *global* connotation of the concept of identity, taking into consideration the process of hybridization resulting from the contacts between the country of origin and the host country societies.

Furthermore, the IB curriculum has been found highly committed to the development of international-mindedness, whose definition as a unity of multilingualism, intercultural understanding, and global engagement (Sriprakash et al. 2014) has recently moved toward the principles of globalization, sustainable development, awareness of global issues, international cooperation, and understandings between individuals (Wright & Buchanan 2017). According to Singh and Qi (2013), international-mindedness was made up of five components: *planetary intellectual conversations*, which entailed the establishment of peaceful relations with other people in the world, *pedagogies of intellectual equality*, based on the assumption of the intellectual equality of Western and non-Western students, *planetary education*, which fostered a view of the world in its wholeness, where the dichotomy between *we* and *them* was replaced by *we humans* (Bilewicz & Bilewicz 2012, p. 333), *post-monolingual language learning*, which marked the shifting from monolingual language learning to plurilingualism, and *bringing forward non-Western knowledge*, based on the belief that Western and non-Western students could benefit from the usage of Western and non-Western linguistic resources.

*Plurilingualism*, defined as the ability to speak more than two languages, was the dominant component of the concept of international mindedness, which permeated the selected school's mission. Even though not affiliated with other international schools located abroad, the name of the school shared certain similarities with the educational system of a specific European nation, whose national languages are French, Italian, and German, by offering a bilingual IB curriculum K-12 program (English/French, English/German). The benefits that accrue from learning several languages are enormous, especially for adolescent students grappling with their identity formation process.

As emphasized by Jurasaitė-O'Keefe (2022), research has noted that the exposure to diverse cultural beliefs and practices makes it more likely for adolescents to develop intercultural and multicultural identities, which may result in the daunting task of juggling multiple identities (Jensen et al. 2011); not to mention a more complex identity, the global identity, which is forged when the ability to see oneself as a citizen of the world is acquired. In the attempt of dealing with these identities successfully and develop a well-balanced identity, it is noteworthy to bear in mind that *language constitutes a key part of one's (multi)cultural identity* (Jensen 2011, p. 64) and exercises a considerable influence on the cultural identity formation process of many adolescents.

Furthermore, the way the IB curriculum is structured lends itself to incorporating multicultural-oriented contents: besides the Extended Essay and the Theory of Knowledge, for instance, the DP program is centred on the **CAS** (creativity, activity, and service) programme, which requires students to undertake a series of experiences based in Creativity, Activity and Service and reflect upon their personal growth during this journey. Its purpose is to involve students in experiences that will make a significant difference in their lives and also in the lives of others, as well as challenge themselves to improve existing skills and/or learn new ones. Moreover, as mentioned by the IB school specialist, initiatives which require the students to take the lead, such as the one implemented by the selected school, the Community and International Ambassador, offer a great opportunity either to represent their cultural background to other students or for connecting with the school community.

### **5.2.2 Discussion of Findings of RQ. 2**

- ◆ ***RQ. 2 To what extent are English-written literacy resources included in the IB curriculum of the private international secondary school in the UAE emirate of Dubai culturally authentic?***

To answer the first research question, data was collected from the document analysis of the secondary school library catalogue and website to determine if the number of the literacy

resources available addressing multicultural issues was significant. According to the results, along with an extensive collection of award-winning Western authored resources, only a small percentage of fictional multicultural resources was found, some of which published before 2010, and authored by Western writers: only 28 books were found portraying Muslim societies, and only one set in the UAE. As for the library website, on the contrary, the great majority of the online resources were either not relevant or not age-appropriate and appealing for independent young adult readers.

As pinpointed by the librarian, unlike Western literature, one of the reasons for the scarcity of these resources was that Muslim literature blossomed only recently as mainly celebratory and addressing religious themes: if English-written picture books authored by Emirati/Islamic writers for primary school students had already caught the interest of mainstream, western publishing houses, contemporary English-translated Muslim fiction works for adolescent readers, on the contrary, were still relegated to a literary niche. It was no coincidence that the book displays placed at the entrance of the library, when the investigator visited the library, showcased books such as *My Vision: Challenges in the Race for Excellence*(2004), written by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, *Father of our Nation* (2017), a collection of inspirational quotes from Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the first president of the United Arab Emirates, *Histoire de Dubaï* (2010), a collection of photos taken by Sobik, and the controversial *Amazing Women of the Middle East*, written by Tarnowska (2020).

As discussed above, manifold were the positive effects that the inclusion of authentic culturally sensitive resources could have especially on adolescent students dealing with the shaping of their fluid identities, ranging from an increasing eagerness to read not only to carry out their assignments but also for pleasure, to build and improve critical thinking skills, to fostering mutual understanding and respect across cultures and countries, which represented the central core of the IB philosophy.

An additional interesting finding, which emerged implicitly from the participants' words, was the perception that lack of communication and sense of collegiality characterized the

relationships either among the teaching staff members or between the teachers and school leaders. The researcher's question relating to the identification of a school literacy resource, whose plot was set in an Islamic society, even better in the UAE society, posed during the librarian and Teacher B's interviews, for instance, could have been dealt with respectively by asking for the help of a school Arabic teacher or by avoiding considering the question not related to the subject taught.

### **5.2.3 Discussion of Findings of RQ. 3**

◆ ***RQ 3. What are the secondary school educators' self-perceptions of their intercultural competence in the secondary school in the UAE emirate of Dubai?***

To answer this research question, data was collected from an online survey questionnaire which was distributed randomly to the whole body of the secondary teaching staff. The outcomes showed that a great majority of the participants agreed with the survey items, but for the one about their active involvement in the organization of school events inspired by multiculturalist values: as explained during the teachers' interviews, these events hardly ever took place at school. However, this data should not be taken at face value, since a great number of teachers joined the school during the pandemic when classes were still attended through virtual mode. Furthermore, the majority of the school's new joiners, mostly European, expressed their feeling of detachedness from the new reality they were living in. This is one of the incongruities which emerged from the data analysis: even though the IB coordinator posited that the school leadership team was strongly committed to helping the teaching staff set up meaningful working as well as social networks, both the interviewees voiced their sense of social estrangement.

If in teacher's A case, this sense was acute, being a new school joiner who found herself propelled from a little village in Germany to the multicultural metropolis of Dubai, it was less intense in the teacher's B case, due to his country of origin, South Africa, a more cosmopolitan country, which made his moving to Dubai less traumatic. They both could rely on their colleagues to-be's guidance, even before the joining date, but no structured formal program was run by the school but for a workshop held by a local culturalist, who was hired to explain



to new teachers the dos and don'ts in the country. To the researcher's surprise, Teacher B argued that also the school counsellor played a key role during his adjustment process.

As recent literature has revealed, as a matter of fact, also school counsellors have the capability to implement multicultural education in their schools (Merlin 2017). Academically, it is the school counsellors' duty to help students acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to be successful, while, emotionally, they should help them develop respect and understanding for others who are different from them and build stronger relationships with the school staff. Considering Banks' classification of the different approaches to multiculturalism, at a content integration level, secondary school counsellors may, for instance, invite a culturally diverse group of speakers to join their school sessions and provide students with advice on university or career options or create a library specialized in multicultural instructional resources for teachers. At the knowledge construction level, they are expected to support the teachers' efforts to teach their students to acknowledge biases and stereotypes embedded in the academic knowledge and understand how they are created.

Therefore, school counsellors can also contribute to the development of their students' critical thinking skills by, for instance, asking them to select a school subject, make a list of the main topics included in their textbook in use, examine other material in search for subject-related topics not included in it and consider why they have been omitted. If the prejudice reduction dimension can be implemented through experiential activities, which enable students to effectively interact with their peers, even though they come from different racial and ethnic cultural backgrounds, the equity pedagogy dimension can be promoted through the use of cooperative learning techniques and constructivist teaching approaches. Finally, as far as the empowering school culture dimension is concerned, which entails the promotion of social action among the students, school counsellors can encourage students to engage in community projects and volunteer experiences. The structure of the IB curriculum, in this case, is extremely generous thanks to core subjects such as CAS.

#### **5.2.4 Discussion of Findings of RQ. 4**

- ♦ *RQ. 4 What are the IB secondary school librarian', teachers' as well as IB curriculum specialist's views on the importance and appropriateness of including these resources (especially those portraying the host country) in the school IB curriculum in the international secondary school under study in the UAE emirate of Dubai?*

The importance for the IB curriculum to include authentic culturally sensitive instructional resources was fully recognized by the curriculum specialist during the interview. When the conversation dealt with the topic of biased school resources, however, the interviewee mentioned only the case of textbooks filled with stereotypes and averred that the school culture was strongly committed to the creation of a prejudice-free learning environment also through appropriate scholastic resources. Moreover, his statement was contradicted either by the librarian who grumbled about his feeling lonely in the library, or teacher A, who adopted as who adopted as a main resources selection criterion her familiarity with them and Teacher B, who, on the other end, struggled to come up with the title of a book portraying an Islamic society, or even better, the local society, used in one of his literacy classes, by explaining that these resources were more suitable for Social Studies classes.

In line with the UAE national priorities and the Dubai strategic plan 2021, in fact, international schools in Dubai are required to incorporate the Ministry of Education UAE social studies curriculum standards into their curricula from KG to Grade 9, to provide students with in-depth knowledge, skills and understanding in history, geography and civics, which emphasise the links and relationships between diverse groups, people, science and society. However, as emphasised above, the use of culturally sensitive content in the classroom should represent a precious pedagogical tool for all the teaching staff regardless of the subject they teach.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Drawing on the findings obtained within the scope of the present research, the researcher came up with a series of recommendations from which school leaders, curriculum specialists and teachers' educators may benefit. A more structured approach should be adopted in the selection

of school instructional and library resources: clear selection criteria should be in place in order to have a well-balanced library collection according to the students' ages, the theme addressed, and the language used. In more than one research study mentioned in the literature review, for instance, a specific framework was developed supporting teachers and librarians asked to choose the appropriate culturally sensitive resources to be used in the classroom.

School leaders should consent to play an active role in the development of school culture and climate centred on the concept of inclusion (Chennapragada 2018), taking into consideration all the different school components (Banks 2012), literacy resources included, and should make every effort to avoid promoting school initiatives informed by *lazy multiculturalism* (Watkins & Noble 2019).

Each and every teacher, regardless of the subject taught, should make a firm commitment to adjusting their teaching practices to meet up with their students' (including minority students') learning needs. Positive learning environments can be created, for instance, during music classes through the students' participation in engaging activities entailing the use of a variety of stimulating musical resources, such as songs, recordings, slides, films, music software, instruments, body movements and/or dancing, which could be relevant to the students' likings, and which could also enable the establishment of links between and across communities as well as across all types of schools and groups/program should be reinforced to foster cohesion; (Odena 2018). Furthermore, teachers should opt for the adoption of a more critical approach to the hegemonic and Western perspective, for instance, by including lesser-known historical characters or incorporating elements of the students' heritage and cultures into school learning units (Wiggan & Watson-Vandiver 2019).

A higher quality and more comprehensive in-service professional development training programs should be offered by schools, focusing not only on topics deemed as essential to comply with the local Ministry of Education requirements. In the case of the school selected, the leadership team opted for the workshops held by a local culturalist, which was certainly a successful initiative, however, a one-off initiative. Furthermore, specific separate modules on culturally sensitive teaching practices should be added to the number of foundation modules

included in teachers' education programs, as stressed by several studies mentioned in the literature review (Child 2015; Sleeter 2017). This is the case of the MA program in English language of the Department of Education of the School of Philosophy and Education at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, which, to cater to the students' diverse population's needs, acquired an interdisciplinary and comparative perspective, by giving special emphasis to the concepts of multiculturalism, democracy and citizenship education, the rights of immigrants and refugees, human rights, the status and the education of minorities in Greece, the refugee crisis and its impact on children, the main aims and practices in Intercultural Education in general and in Greece (Kesidou 2019).

## **5.4 Implications**

The current research study yielded some key findings that have implications for different stakeholders such as IB school leaders, teachers, librarians and teacher educators. The findings of the study highlighted that the literacy resources selection criteria in use in the selected secondary school were still influenced by a hegemonic western view and that the positive effects that the use of authentic culturally sensitive materials in the classroom may have on adolescent students are undervalued. Therefore, there are still steps that should be taken to maximize the promotion of a school culture authentically imbued with the key IB concept of international mindedness at all levels starting from the school leadership, teachers, librarians, counsellors and ending with the students. Furthermore, the researcher firmly believes that it is essential for teachers' educators to acknowledge the urgent need for teachers -to-be to be prepared to face the challenges that multicultural learning environments may pose.

## **5.5 Limitations**

Every researcher may face challenges that might affect the findings of his/her research: one of the major limitations, for instance, is ending up with a number of participants which is not representative of the population (Creswell 2014). The researcher had planned to ask for the participation of two IB international secondary schools in her research project and saved no efforts to do so; nonetheless, among all the schools contacted in all the UAE emirates, only one

accepted. The impact of the health-related emergency situation was huge on the researcher's attempts to get in touch with the schools' leadership teams. Therefore, since the sample size used was smaller than expected, the generalization of the results to the whole population was limited.

Moreover, as for the data collection instruments, the interviews would have provided the researcher with more meaningful data if carried out without wearing a mask, as mentioned above, and the observation of a class addressing a multicultural theme could have been used as an additional data collection tool. Since the first contact process was particularly painful due to the research personal situation, when asked for the data collection plan, she had to set a realistic limit in order to receive positive feedback from the school leadership teams. There is no saying that more valuable data would have been collected, if a greater number of teachers, including also other subject specialists, such as PE, Music, and Arabic teachers, had been accepted to be interviewed.

## **5.6 Scope for further studies**

The current study focused on investigating the extent to which authentic multicultural literacy resources were integrated into the IB curriculum of an international secondary school located in Dubai. Based on the findings, several issues were found to be in need of a deeper investigation. Future research is recommended to broaden the scope and include schools from other UAE emirates as well as schools offering other types of curriculum and public schools. It would be interesting to investigate further other more *daring* forms of gender-related misrepresentations, or how the other dimensions of the concept of multiculturalism, such as physical and/or mental impairment, are treated in school resources. Furthermore, there is no saying that the inclusion of the students' points of view through class observation or survey could add to the existent literature illuminating insights. On the other end, a broader investigation on the academic path that UAE citizens and residents should follow to become competent 21<sup>st</sup>-century teachers should be carried out, especially considering the absence of previous studies on the subject at local and regional levels.

## 5.7 Original Contribution of the Study

If several studies have been found investigating the beneficial effects that using culturally authentic literacy resources may have on primary school students, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no other studies in the UAE and the Arab region have been found focusing on how YA resources, if included in the school curriculum, can function as an efficient pedagogical tool for adolescent students. More specifically, reviewing a great wealth of studies carried out on the IB curriculum, the topic of cultural diversity has never been treated within the scope of this specific curriculum and from the perspective of secondary school students attending international schools located in countries different from their own.

Since these *transnational* adolescent students are endowed with a cultural capital, which is very different from that of other students attending, for instance, government schools, and, because of their age, are going through a very critical phase of their physical and psychological development, the selection and use of appropriate culturally sensitive instructional materials become crucial in the fight against the spread of racism and gender/ethnicity-related stereotypes .

Moreover, if the great majority of the previous international, regional, and local relevant studies included in the literature review, as shown in Table 4, are qualitative case studies, the researcher's choice of using the mixed-methods research approach, based on the synergy of both the qualitative and quantitative methods, through the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data and the integration of the findings obtained from the analysis of the different data, makes the present study a valuable contribution to the extant literature on the topic.

## 5.8 Concluding Note

The main purpose of the present study was to investigate the extent to which the IB curriculum of the bilingual international private secondary school selected is enriched with English-written

culturally authentic multicultural literacy resources, with a particular emphasis on those portraying Muslim societies. The findings confirmed that the creation of multicultural inclusive learning environments, where each and every student could equally thrive, regardless of their race, gender, religion and linguistic backgrounds, could be achieved through the implementation of higher-quality teacher preparation education and professional development programs, given also the large homogeneity of the teaching force.

Therefore, the investigator agrees with Young and Sawyer (2018) that additional guidance about how to shift from teacher-centred to student-centred culturally sensitive teaching practices should be provided to educators through effective, long-term context-based training programs designed on *an adaptive model* (Koellner & Jacobs 2015), instead of through single workshops, which would not give teachers enough time to process the new knowledge and, most importantly, to put it into practice (Biasutti et al. 2021). It has also been proved that teaching can become more effective when teachers join forces to develop strong professional learning communities in their schools (Abdo & Nichifor 2019), and when collaborating initiatives are promoted not only among the teaching staff of the same school but also among different schools.

Finally, the study proved that the practice of *importing* educational theories, policies, and curricula from Western countries requires adjustments to the different cultural contexts in which they are implemented, and in doing so, it is essential for stakeholders to bear in mind that culture is a very fluid and multi-layered concept and that globalisation has inevitably modified the relationship between culture and identity.

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## Appendix A



Saturday, 13 November 2021

### **To Whom It May Concern**

This is to certify that **Ms. Lucia Bersotti** with Student ID number **20191762** is a registered in the **Doctor of Education** offered by **The British University in Dubai** since **September 2019**.

Ms. Lucia has successfully completed her taught modules and is currently working on her thesis titled **“Investigating if Authentic Multicultural Young Adult Literary Resources Are Integrated in the School Curriculum: An Exploratory Study of Two IB International Private Secondary Schools in Dubai”**

She needs your support in conducting surveys and interviews to complete her research.

This letter is issued on Ms. Lucia's request.

Yours sincerely,

  
**Dr. Amer Alaya**  
**Head of Student Administration**



## **Appendix B**

### **First e-contact with the management team of the schools**

Dear Ms/Mr Principal/Vice-Principals,

My name is Lucia Bersotti, I am an English Language as a Second Language (TESOL) and Special Needs secondary school teacher. I am currently a doctoral student in the program of Educational Management, Leadership and Policy at the British University in Dubai (BUiD). I am conducting a research study aiming at investigating if English-written authentic multicultural literacy resources are integrated into the school IB curriculum of private international secondary schools, as well as the teaching staff's perceptions on the importance of using these resources in the classroom. Therefore, I am writing to you to ask for your permission and support to conduct my doctoral research study at your secondary school.

The research will require the involvement of secondary IB teachers, secondary school librarians and IB curriculum specialists/coordinators. The data collection instruments which will be used to answer the research questions are the following:

- the visit of the secondary school library;
- the document analysis of the library catalogue and of an English-written authentic multicultural literacy resource included in the school library catalogue;
- librarians and curriculum specialist/coordinators' interviews;
- teachers' survey (only teachers who volunteer will be interviewed to express their views on the topic).

Since only through a wide participation I will be able to achieve the clarity and validity that will make the outcomes of my research data analysis genuinely useful for me, I am encouraging the participation of as many secondary teachers as possible. Therefore, I would be grateful, if

you could allow me to conduct my research at your school and support me in stimulating your teaching staff's interest in the topic of my research.

The researcher will comply to the Ethical Principles in the Conduct of Research with Human Participants (APA 1982) while collecting and analysing data: the participants' identities will be protected and their responses will be treated confidentially, and nobody else, except the researcher, will have access to the data, which will be used only for the purpose of this study, stored in secure server electronic files and appropriately encrypted. Moreover, the researcher will carry out the data collection process following the Government regulations as far as Covid-19 prevention is concerned.

Since my Ethics application has been approved, I would like to start my data collection process. If you have any further enquiries about my study, please do not hesitate to contact me right away at my email address [20191762@buid.ac.ae](mailto:20191762@buid.ac.ae). You may also contact my Director of Study (DoS), Dr. Solomon Arulraj David, via email at [solomon.david@buid.ac.ae](mailto:solomon.david@buid.ac.ae).

I appreciate your support, and I look forward to the opportunity to share the results with you.

Sincerely,

Lucia Bersotti

PhD Student in Education

(Mat 20191762)

## **Appendix C**

### **Introductory letter for secondary teachers**

Dear secondary teacher,

My name is Lucia Bersotti. I am an English Language as a Second Language (TESOL) and Special Needs secondary school teacher. I am currently a doctoral student in the program of Educational Management, Leadership and Policy at the British University in Dubai (BUiD). I am conducting a research study aiming at investigating if English-written authentic multicultural literacy resources are integrated into the school IB curriculum of private international secondary schools, as well as the teaching staff's perceptions on the importance of using these resources in the classroom.

I am writing this e-mail to ask for your participation in my study which will entail taking part in a 10-minute survey through which your views and beliefs on the pedagogical use of English-written authentic multicultural literary resources integrated into the IB school curriculum of the international school you are working for will be investigated. In case you are willing to take time out of your busy schedule to meet me and elaborate further on the topic of my research study, I will be very grateful .

I cannot stress enough how valuable can be your participation in my research study, since only through a wide participation the outcomes of my analysis will be genuinely useful for me. A meeting will be scheduled at your convenience at school during which you will be kindly asked to read and sign the informed consent form, and to complete the questionnaire.

I assure you that the strictest confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study: your identity will be kept confidential and, in the survey, all the distinguishing data that could identify you, other member of the staff or your school will be deleted. Furthermore, as clearly stated in the informed consent form, your participation is totally voluntary, and you may decide to withdraw at any time. Moreover, the survey along with the interview, if you consent to take part in it, will take place according to the Government regulations as far as Covid-19 prevention is concerned.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [20191762@buid.ac.ae](mailto:20191762@buid.ac.ae).  
You may also contact my advisor, Dr Solomon Arulraj David, at BUID via email at:  
[solomon.david@buid.ac.ae](mailto:solomon.david@buid.ac.ae).

I appreciate your support, and I look forward to the opportunity to share the results with you.

Sincerely,

Lucia Bersotti

PhD student in Education

## Appendix D



Student name: Lucia Bersotti  
Student ID: 20191762  
Thesis Supervisor: Dr Solomon Arulraj David

Principal [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Dubai (UAE)

Subject: PhD Data Collection Proposal

Dear Principal [REDACTED],

Please find below a detailed plan which outlines the resources needed for my data collection.

As you will see the impact on the school activities will be minimal and I estimate to complete my data collection in a period not exceeding two weeks, subject to staff availability. My availability will also be extremely flexible to accommodate the school staff availability.

Many thanks in advance for your cooperation and if you need additional information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kindest regards,

*Lucia Bersotti*

Lucia Bersotti

Email (personal): [lucia.bersotti@gmail.com](mailto:lucia.bersotti@gmail.com)

Email (University): [20191762@student.buid.ac.ae](mailto:20191762@student.buid.ac.ae)

Student name: Lucia Bersotti  
Student ID: 20191762  
Thesis Supervisor: Dr Solomon Arulraj David

**Title: Investigating if Authentic Multicultural Young Adult Literary Resources are integrated in the School Curriculum: An Exploratory Study of two IB International Private Secondary Schools in Dubai.**

### **Working Plan**

Secondary School Library Visit	Time: 1 hour
Interview with the IB Secondary School Librarian (interview protocol will be sent beforehand)	Time: approx. 40 m.
Interviews with <b>2/3</b> IB Secondary School teachers (any subject) (interview protocol will be sent beforehand)	Time approx. 40 m (each)
Interview with the Secondary School IB curriculum specialist (interview protocol will be sent beforehand)	Time: approx. 40 m.
Teachers Survey (at school or online)	Time: 10 m

The strictest confidentiality will be maintained throughout this study and the handling of the data will be consistent with the Ethical Principles in the Conduct of Research with Human Participants (APA, 1982).

The participants' identities will be protected, their responses will be treated confidentially, and nobody else, except the researcher, will have access to the data, which will be used only for the purpose of this study, stored in secure server electronic files and appropriately encrypted. There will be no distinguishing data in the survey and interviews that will identify members of the staff or your educational institution.

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FB.com/BUiD.Team



BUiD\_Team



youtube.com/BUiDadmin



@BUiD\_Team



BUiD



## Appendix E

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

**Title of Study:** Investigating If Authentic Multicultural Literacy Resources are integrated into the School Curriculum: An exploratory Study of two IB International Private Secondary Schools in Dubai.

**Researcher Name:** Lucia Bersotti

**Researcher Department:** British University in Dubai (BUID) - School of Education

**Researcher Phone number:** +971 0561181861

**Researcher Email Address:** 20191762@buid.ac.ae

**Director of Studies (DoS):** Dr Solomon Arulraj David

**Faculty Director of Studies (DoS):** Associate Professor of Education, The British University in Dubai

**Director of Studies (DoS) Phone Number:** + 971 42791462

**Director of Studies (DoS) Email Address:** solomon.david@buid.ac.ae

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*Please read carefully the following information so that you can come to an informed decision about taking part in this research study. Should you have any further questions, please contact the researcher and/or the DoS listed above.*

**Purpose of the study.** This study aims to investigate to what extent English-written authentic multicultural literacy resources for secondary students are integrated into the IB curriculum of private international secondary schools, as well as to look into the stakeholders' perceptions and beliefs on the impact that the use of these school resources may have in the classroom. A particular emphasis will be devoted to the multicultural resources included in the school curriculum and/or available at school representing Muslim societies.

**Study procedures.** If you decide to participate in the study, you will be asked to complete a **questionnaire** consisting of two sections: in the first, you will be asked to express your perceptions, beliefs and experiences about culturally teaching practices, while the second part will ask some personal information. In total it will take between 10 to 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. You may decide to skip one or more questions which make you feel uncomfortable, or to answer all the questions included in it. Once you have completed the questionnaire, you may decide to comment further on your responses by taking part in an **interview**, which will take approximately 40 minutes and will be audio-recorded only with your

consent. Furthermore, the secondary school librarian and IB curriculum specialist will be asked to take part in an interview which will take approximately 40 minutes and will be audio-recorded only with your consent. The interview protocol will be emailed beforehand.

**Benefits.** Your participation in the study will not bring about any material benefit to you. However, as firmly believed by the investigator, the analysis of the information obtained from the participants may benefit society by gaining new knowledge.

**Confidentiality.** Your responses obtained through the questionnaire as well as the interviews will be treated with confidentiality. Your identity will never be disclosed and all the distinguishing data that could identify you, other member of the staff or your school will be deleted: the researcher will assign to each and every participant a number that will be used on all research notes and documents. Nobody else, except the researcher, will have access to the data, which will be used only for the purpose of this study, stored in secure server electronic files and appropriately encrypted.

**Voluntary participation.** Your participation in the study is voluntary. Even after signing the informed consent form, you may decide to withdraw at any time. If you decide to withdraw from the study before the data collection is completed, all the information you have given will be returned to you or destroyed. Moreover, the survey along with the interviews, if you consent to take part in it, will take place according to the Government regulations as far as Covid-19 prevention is concerned.

### **Participant's Agreement**

I have read the information provided above and I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Research Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Research Participant

## Appendix F

### CRAAP TEST FOR EVALUATING ONLINE SOURCES

<i><b>CURRENCY</b></i>	
When was the information published?	
Has there been any updates or revision to the information?	
Are the sources used by the author current or outdated?	
Is the information out-of-date for the topic?	

<i><b>RELEVANCY</b></i>	
Does the information answer your question?	
Is the information related to your topic?	
Have you looked for other sources before settling on this one?	
Is the information appropriate to your level of study? Is it too simple or too sophisticated?	

<i><b>AUTHORITY</b></i>	
Who is the author?	
Is the author qualified to write on the topic?	
Has the material been peer-reviewed or reviewed by editors?	
Has the author been cited elsewhere?	

<i><b>ACCURACY</b></i>	
What types of other sources have been cited?	
Does the information line up with your own knowledge on the topic?	
Are there any spelling or grammar errors in the text?	

<i><b>PURPOSE</b></i>	
What is the purpose of the information? Is it to inform or persuade?	
Is the author clear what their intentions are?	
What biases might the author have?	

(University of Wollongong, <https://www.uow.edu.au/student/learning-co-op/finding-and-using-information/evaluating-the-quality-of-online-information/>)

## Appendix G

### SCHOOL LIBRARY MULTICULTURAL COLLECTION EVALUATION PROTOCOL

<b>Country/ setting represented:</b>			
Asia	F <sup>6</sup>	NF	O
Africa	F	NF	O
Europe	F	NF	O
North America			
Central/South America	F	NF	O
Oceania & Indigenous Regions	F	NF	O
Antarctica	F	NF	O
are set in different <b>geographic settings</b> (urban, rural, suburban)	F	NF	O
<b>Author's ethnicity:</b>			
whose author is <b>White/Western</b>	F	NF	O
whose author is <b>Black</b>	F	NF	O
whose author is <b>Latinx</b>	F	NF	O
whose author is <b>Asian</b>	F	NF	O
whose author is <b>Middle Eastern and/or Muslim</b> <sup>7</sup>	F	NF	O
whose author is <b>Jewish</b>	F	NF	O
<b>Racial representation</b>			
whose main character is <b>White/Western</b>	F	NF	O
whose main character is <b>Black</b>	F	NF	O
whose main character is <b>Latinx</b>	F	NF	O
whose main character is <b>Asian</b>	F	NF	O
whose main character is <b>Middle Eastern and/or Muslim</b> <sup>8</sup>	F	NF	O
whose main character is <b>Jewish</b>	F	NF	O
<b>Religious representation</b>			
Christianity	F	NF	O
Islam	F	NF	O
Judaism	F	NF	O
Asian religions (Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism, Buddhism)	F	NF	O
Indian religion (Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism)	F	NF	O
African religions	F	NF	O
Indigenous religions	F	NF	O
<b>Gender representation</b>			
Men as central character	F	NF	O
Women as central character	F	NF	O
<b>Women's age</b>			
School age girls	F	NF	O
Women	F	NF	O
Mature women	F	NF	O
<b>Women's Social Roles</b>			
Daughters	F	NF	O

<sup>6</sup> F= Fiction, NF= Non-fiction, O= Other types of resources (digital resources, audio-video resources, graphic novels, magazines, encyclopaedia)

<sup>7</sup> Muslim countries include Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

Wives	F	NF	O
Female Workers	F	NF	O
Professional	F	NF	O
Retired	F	NF	O
<b>Social class representation</b>			
Lower class	F	NF	O
Working class	F	NF	O
Middle class	F	NF	O
Upper class	F	NF	O
<b>Language used</b>			
Languages of Europe	F	NF	O
Languages of Asia	F	NF	O
Languages of Africa	F	NF	O
Languages of the Americas & Caribbean	F	NF	O
Languages of Australia & the Pacific Island	F	NF	O
<b>Anti-bias education' <sup>9</sup> domains addressed:</b>			
<b>Identity</b> (Promoting a healthy self-concept and exploration of identity)	F	NF	O
<b>Diversity</b> (Fostering intergroup understanding)	F	NF	O
<b>Justice</b> (Raising awareness of prejudice and injustice)	F	NF	O
<b>Action</b> (Motivate students to act by highlighting individual and collective struggles against injustice)	F	NF	O

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<sup>9</sup> (Derman-Sparks et al. 2015)

## **Appendix: H**

### **E-confirmation of interview date, time, and location**

Dear teacher/librarian/curriculum coordinator,

As agreed, I will be meeting you \_\_\_\_ (day) \_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_ (date) \_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_ (time) \_\_\_\_ . The location we will meet in is \_\_\_\_\_. If you need to reschedule, please let me know and I will arrange another appointment.

Thank you for volunteering to participate in my research study!

Lucia Bersotti  
20191762@buid.ac.ae

## Appendix I

### MULTICULTURAL TEACHING COMPETENCE SCALE

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/16nUw4niUB0U7o7Otg-K9vAgp70E85o11IDdt669ob8A/edit>

#### How to Answer each Question

*The questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes. Please read each item of the questionnaire carefully and indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with it. The information collected from this questionnaire is anonymous and confidential. Your honest responses to all questions will be greatly appreciated.*

*Thank you for being part of this research. Your cooperation is highly appreciated!*

	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	<b>Teacher Skills</b>					
1	I integrate the cultural values and lifestyles of racial and ethnic minority groups into my teaching					
2	I modify my curricular content area to include different perspectives					
3	I plan many activities to celebrate diverse cultural practices in my classroom					
4	My curricula integrate topics and events from racial and ethnic minority populations					
5	I always examine the multicultural materials I use in the classroom for racial and ethnic bias.					
6	I always use curricular resources about the traditions and customs of the country I live in					
7	I often include examples of the experiences and perspectives of racial and ethnic groups during my classroom lessons.					
8	I plan school events to increase students' knowledge about cultural experiences of various racial and ethnic groups.					
9	I make changes within the general school environment so that racial and ethnic minority students will have an equal opportunity for success					
10	I consult regularly with other teachers or administrators to help me understand multicultural issues related to instruction					
11	I often promote diversity by the behaviours I exhibit.					
12	I establish strong, supportive relationships with racial and ethnic identities of all students					

	<b>Teacher Knowledge</b>					
13	I am knowledgeable about particular teaching strategies that affirm the racial and ethnic identities of all students					
14	I am knowledgeable about racial and ethnic identity theories					
15	I understand the various communication styles among different racial and ethnic minority students in my classroom					
16	I am knowledgeable about the various community resources within the city I live in					
17	I have attended professional development programs promoting multicultural awareness					

*To finish this questionnaire, please fill in a few questions about you:*

<b>General Information</b> (Please tick one box for each question)		
<b>Gender:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	<b>Age</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 25 <input type="checkbox"/> 25-35 <input type="checkbox"/> 36-46 <input type="checkbox"/> 47-57 <input type="checkbox"/> 58 or above	<b>Education:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> PGCE <input type="checkbox"/> High Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelors <input type="checkbox"/> Masters <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
<b>Teaching experience:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> One year or less <input type="checkbox"/> 2-7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8-13 <input type="checkbox"/> 14-19 <input type="checkbox"/> 20 years or more	<b>Nationality</b> <input type="checkbox"/> EU <input type="checkbox"/> American and Canadian <input type="checkbox"/> Arab <input type="checkbox"/> Australian and New Zealand <input type="checkbox"/> African <input type="checkbox"/> Asian	<b>Teaching Experience abroad:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> One year or less <input type="checkbox"/> 2-7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8-13 <input type="checkbox"/> 14-19 <input type="checkbox"/> 20 years or more
<b>Number of years worked in the current school</b> <input type="checkbox"/> One year or less <input type="checkbox"/> 2-7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8-13 <input type="checkbox"/> 14-19 <input type="checkbox"/> 20 years or more		<b>In-service PD programs on multiculturalism attended:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 <input type="checkbox"/> more than 5

*Thank you for completing this questionnaire!  
I would like to know more about your views on the topic.  
Please let me know if you are willing to meet me!*



## **Appendix: J**

### **SCHOOL LIBRARIAN INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

#### **Personal questions to start with.**

- How long have you been working as school librarian?
- How long have you been working as school librarian abroad?
- Can you tell me how your working experience abroad differed from your working experience in your home country?
  
- ◆ Can you describe your collection development and maintenance strategy?
- ◆ How is multiculturalism represented in your school library catalogue?
- ◆ If your role as librarian in the school allows you to choose new books, what kind of selection criteria do you follow when choosing multicultural books?
- ◆ Are you aware if the library collection includes English-written literacy resources authored by minority authors? If yes, how many and what titles?
- ◆ Are you aware if the library collection includes English-written literacy resources authored by Muslim/Emirati writers? If yes, how many and what titles?
- ◆ Are these literacy resources available in the languages the students use in and out of school?
- ◆ Where can these literacy resources be found in the library? (physical location, subject headings)
- ◆ According to your circulation statistics, are these resources avidly read by the students? Are they used by the educational staff for their units of enquiry?
- ◆ If a member of the teaching staff asked you for a book addressing race-related or religion-related discrimination issues, which tools would you use in selecting such a book?
- ◆ Is there anything else (in relation to the study) that you would like to add?

*Thank you very much for your cooperation during the interview and the time taken to have the interview.*

## **Appendix: K**

### **SCHOOL CURRICULUM-COORDINATOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

#### **Personal questions to start with.**

- Why have you decided to become a curriculum coordinator?
- How long have you been working as curriculum coordinator?
- How long have you been working as IB curriculum coordinator?
- How long have you been working as IB curriculum coordinator abroad?
  
- ◆ Can you describe your duties and responsibilities?
- ◆ What factors do you consider when evaluating curricula, instructional methods, and materials? Can you share one of your personal experiences?
- ◆ What factors do you consider when selecting instructional materials and equipment? How do you ensure that they meet the students' educational needs?
- ◆ Are you aware if resources supporting diversity are available in the classroom?
- ◆ Can you describe if and how the IB school curriculum is inspired by multiculturalism?
- ◆ What is your role regarding IB "international mindedness"?
- ◆ What kind of support/obstacles are there in the school as for the development of "international mindedness"?
- ◆ In your opinion, how is multiculturalism represented in the IB school curriculum?
- ◆ To what extent is the integration of authentic multicultural literary resources into the curriculum is important? Why?
- ◆ Have you ever had meetings on the topic with the teaching staff? What was their feedback?
- ◆ Can you share with me your personal beliefs on the need for a multicultural curriculum?
- ◆ Have you ever planned and/or conducted a teacher training program or conference on the topic?
- ◆ Is there anything else (in relation to the study) that you would like to add?

*Thank you very much for your cooperation during the interview and the time taken to have the interview.*

## Appendix L

### CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATING MULTICULTURAL LITERACY RESOURCES

<b>Author</b>
According to the author's bio, is he/she entitled to write material relating to the culture(s) portrayed?
According to the information available, has the author conducted related research? If not, has he/she lived among (either as a member of or as a visitor to) the groups of people represented in the book?
<b>Story</b>
Is the story appealing to adolescent students?
Does the story contain stereotyped language?
Are factual and historical details accurate?
<b>Characters</b>
Are the characters believable?
Are universal human emotions, attitudes, needs, and experiences reflected?
Do characters represent people from a variety of ethnic groups?
Are females depicted as well as males?
Are Black, "Latinx", Asian, Native American" and other non-white cultures portrayed as diverse or homogeneous?
<b>Setting</b>
Does the story reflect a variety of places and times?
Are urban, suburban, and rural settings represented realistically?
Are cultural settings and geographical features represented accurately?
<b>Plot</b>
Are real situations depicted?
Are rigid boundaries of class, culture, religion and ethnicity dismissed?
Does the story offer secondary school students a variety of situations, concepts, and new ideas on which to reflect, question, and consider?
Are values explored, rather than preached?
Are adolescents exposed to multiple perspectives and values?
How does the story promote understanding of our diverse society?
<b>Language</b>
Do characters speak in dialect? Does that dialect have a legitimate purpose?
Is the dialect representative of real-life ways of speaking for certain groups or has it been made up? If it has been made up, does it contain elements of stereotypical or racist depictions from real life?
How are different languages incorporated into the text?
If non-English words are used, are they spelled and used correctly?
Is gender-related stereotyped language used (e.g. women chatting/men discussing")?
<b>Illustrations</b>
Are diverse populations represented?
Is there diversity represented within cultural groups?
Are characters realistically and genuinely represented?
Do the illustrations avoid reinforcing societal stereotypes?
Do the illustrations and text use authenticity to demonstrate respect for other cultures?
Do the illustrations and text convey characteristics common to all people and cultures?
<b>Developmental Appropriateness</b>
Is the plot age appropriate; can secondary school students understand what is presented?
Will the story encourage meaningful and relevant discussions?

Could the text be a mirror, a reflection of identity and experience?
Could the text be a window into the identities and experiences of others?
How could this text motivate and connect with the interests and concerns of my students?
To what extent does this text access and build upon the knowledge my students bring with them?
<b>Perspective/Power relations</b>
Whose perspectives and experiences are portrayed?
Who is telling the story?
What do I know about the author's attitudes, beliefs or point of view in relation to the topic? How might this affect author and reader positioning?
Which characters are in roles of power or significance within the book?
Are certain people or groups left out or given roles that don't enable them to be heard?
Are racial and ethnic minorities portrayed as successful problem solvers rather than dependent on white saviours?
<b>Anti-bias education domains addressed:</b>
<b>Identity</b> (Promoting a healthy self-concept and exploration of identity)
<b>Diversity</b> (Fostering intergroup understanding)
<b>Justice</b> (Raising awareness of prejudice and injustice)
<b>Action</b> (Motivate students to act by highlighting individual and collective struggles against injustice)

Adapted from "Checklist for Selecting and Evaluating Multicultural Picture Storybooks"  
(Harper & Brand 2010)