



**An investigation on the Impact of the Western Teachers' Values and Cultures  
on Emirati Students' Moral and Character Development**

by

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**A thesis submitted in fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
PhD in Education**

at

**The British University in Dubai**

**February 2016**

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Date: 27 July 2016

# **An investigation on the Impact of the Western Teachers' Values and Cultures on Emirati Students' Moral and Character Development**

## **Abstract**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of the Western teachers' values and cultures on the Emirati students' character and moral development in the international schools that follow the British curriculum. Moreover, the study explored the UAE national students' perceptions of character development in the international schools as well as investigated the Emirati parents' perceptions of the influence of the Western teachers' values on their children's character and moral development. A total of forty- nine Western teachers, forty- nine UAE national students from different grades and forty nine parents participated in the quantitative part of the study. While in the qualitative part of the study, fifteen Western teachers, ten UAE national students and ten parents were interviewed in semi structured interviews to get deeper insights on the effect of the Western teachers on the students' character and moral development. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) programme was used to analyse the quantitative data, while the thematic interpretive approach was used to analyse the responses of the interviewees. Available documents related to character education, including ten lesson plans and behaviour polices of the three sample schools were analysed. Quantitative data suggested that the majority of parents believe that parents are the best teachers of character (mean of 1.55) and social skills are more important for their children than academic skills (mean of 1.73). Moreover, the quantitative data revealed that the majority of students do not treat each other with respect (mean of 2.32) and the majority of teachers do not treat students with respect (mean of 2.90). Students felt that their voice and thoughts are not heard and valued in their schools (mean of 2.65). While most of the teachers believe that character education enhances academic achievement (with a mean of 1.37) and develops good character (with a mean of 1.48). They also agreed (with a mean of 1.69) that teachers participate in providing character education to their students.

The qualitative data revealed that the UAE national students are influenced by the values and the cultures of their Western teachers in various ways, including their personalities and their perspectives in life. According to the parents of the UAE national students, the Western teachers who act as role models for their children have impacted their children positively as well as negatively. The results also demonstrated that there is a big gap in the Western teachers' knowledge about the UAE culture as their Western values and cultures are completely different from those in the UAE; therefore, this situation needs to be highlighted to make sure that the Western teachers' teaching and practices do not contradict with what the Emirati students are expected to learn.

## تحقيق حول تأثير معلمي الغرب على التطور الشخصي والأخلاقي عند الطلبة الإماراتيين

### ملخص

الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو دراسة تأثير المعلمين الغربيين وقيمهم ووجهات نظرهم على تطور شخصية وأخلاق الطلاب الإماراتيين. علاوة على ذلك، عمدت هذه الدراسة الى استكشاف آراء الطلاب من مواطني دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة حول التطور الاخلاقي والشخصي في مثل هذا النوع من المدارس. بالإضافة الى استكشاف آراء أولياء أمور الطلبة حول تأثير المعلمين الغربيين على تطور شخصيات وأخلاق أبنائهم.

تم جمع البيانات لهذه الدراسة التي تجمع بين الدراسة الكمية والنوعية من ثلاث مدارس خاصة تتبع المنهاج البريطاني في إمارة أبوظبي. أما عن المشاركين في الدراسة الكمية فلقد قام ما مجموعه تسعة وأربعون من المعلمين الغربيين، تسعة وأربعون طالباً وطالبةً من مواطني دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة من مختلف الصفوف وتسعة وأربعون من الأهالي الإماراتيين بالإجابة على استبيان خاص في كل منهم، أما الجزء النوعي فلقد شارك خمسة عشر من المعلمين الغربيين، عشرة طلاب من مواطني دولة الإمارات وعشرة من الاهالي الإماراتيين في مقابلات فردية للحصول على نظرة عميقة وشاملة حول تأثير المعلمين الغربيين على شخصية وأخلاق الطلاب.

لتحليل البيانات الكمية تم استخدام برنامج الحزم الإحصائية (إس. بي. إس. إس) ، في حين تم استخدام المنهج التفسيري لتحليل اجابات المشاركين في المقابلات. وقد تم تحليل الوثائق المتاحة المتعلقة بتطوير شخصية وأخلاق الطلاب بما في ذلك خطط الدروس وسياسات السلوك في هذه المدارس أيضاً. ولقد أشارت البيانات الكمية إلى أن غالبية الآباء والأمهات يعتقدون أن الآباء هم أفضل المعلمين لأطفالهم (بمتوسط 1.55)، وأن المهارات الاجتماعية أكثر أهمية لأطفالهم من المهارات الأكاديمية (بمتوسط 1.73). وعلاوة على ذلك، أظهرت البيانات أن غالبية الطلاب لا يعاملوا بعضهم بعضاً باحترام (بمتوسط 2.32)، وغالبية المعلمين لا يعاملون الطلاب باحترام (بمتوسط 2.90). كما عبر الطلاب عن استيائهم من أن أصواتهم وأفكارهم لا تسمع ولا تقدر في مدارسهم (بمتوسط 2.65). في حين أن معظم المعلمين يعتقدون أن تعليم وتطوير شخصية الطالب يعزز التحصيل الدراسي (بمتوسط 1.37) ويطور الأخلاق (بمتوسط 1.48). واتفقوا أيضاً (بمتوسط 1.69) أن المعلمين يشاركون بدورهم في تطوير شخصية الطلاب في هذه المدارس أيضاً. ولقد أظهرت نتائج الدراسة النوعية أن الطلاب الإماراتيين يتأثرون بقيم وثقافات المعلمين الغربيين بطرق مختلفة، بما في ذلك شخصياتهم ووجهات نظرهم في الحياة. ووفقاً لآراء أولياء أمور الطلبة من مواطني دولة الإمارات، وباعتبار المعلمين الغربيين قدوة لأبنائهم فانهم يعتقدون أن ابناءهم قد تأثروا سلباً وإيجاباً والدراسة توضح ذلك بالتفصيل. كما أظهرت النتائج أيضاً أن هناك فجوة كبيرة في معرفة المعلمين الغربيين بثقافة وعادات دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة التي هي مختلفة تماماً عما هو متداول في بلادهم، لذا يحتاج هذا الوضع إلى المزيد من الاهتمام من قبل أصحاب القرار بحيث لا ينقل هؤلاء المعلمين إلى الطلبة ما يتناقض مع ثقافة وعادات هذا البلد الاصيل.

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## ***DEDICATION***

*I would like to dedicate all my work to the soul of my parents, may they rest in peace as without them, I would have never been the person that I am today. This thesis is also dedicated to all teachers who have desire and dedication to teach children and to help them develop their characters and morals to be good members in their communities to make our world a better place to live in. Finally I dedicate this work to my family who helped me to complete my educational journey, as without their sacrifice, love, sincerity and support, this work would never been possible*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Above all, I should start my acknowledgment by thanking Allah for providing me with the strength and the ability to conduct this study and finish it, as writing this thesis required me to do a tremendous amount of work.

I would like to take this opportunity and acknowledge the professionalism and guidance I got from the directors of my study, Dr. Clifton Chadwic and Dr. Abdulai Abukari from the British University in Dubai who kept on pushing me past my limits in many ways to make me a better researcher and a stronger woman. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Sufian Al Forawi, who was too patient with me; he provided me with advice and encouragement when I was in real need of them. I would like also to extend my warm and heartfelt gratitude to Prof Eman Gaad for her continuous support and encouragement. I am also thankful to Dr Christine Szwed my co-advisor from Birmingham University, who was supportive with her valuable comments.

Special thanks go to the participants of this study including teachers, parents and students. I would like also to express my gratitude to all scholars that I cited their works in my dissertation. A big thank you should go to all my fellow doctoral students who supported me in my toughest challenge and made this work a big success. I will never forget the difficult times we shared together and I am so thankful for their help, care and guidance. I would like to thank my dear friend, Rehab who put up with me through my entire educational journey; she both cried and celebrated my ups and downs with me.

A huge thank you goes to my family especially my amazing children; Jihad, Dania, Abdul Rahman and Mohammed who gave me space when things became overwhelming. They tried so hard throughout this journey to understand why their mother had to spend most of her time reading and writing. And finally, thanks to all my dear friends, who believed in me, and provided me with encouragement, motivation love and best wishes.



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**ABBREVIATIONS:**

ADEC .....	Abu Dhabi Education Council
BUID .....	British University in Dubai
CCA .....	Co-Curricular Activities
CE.....	Character Education
EI.....	Emotional intelligence
KHDA .....	Knowledge and Human Development Authority
MoE .....	Ministry of Education
PSHE .....	Personal, social and health education
SCCP .....	School as caring community profile
SCF.....	Student Competency Framework
UAE.....	United Arab Emirates
UK.....	The United Kingdom
UNESCO.....	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA.....	The United States of America
VIA .....	Values in action

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction to the Problem

Schools usually aim at providing students with good education, improving their academic success and having less behaviour issues. Character education can be used as an effective tool to achieve those targets. Character education is as old as history; it is "instilling in children good habits and values based on traits such as honesty, respect, kindness and courage" (Farlow, 2005, p. 4). It is worth noting that before defining character education, one should realise that it can be referred to, in different terms, such as, moral reasoning, moral/values education, religious education, civic education and the teaching of virtues.

It is asserted by McClellan (1999) that the main target of establishing schools is to inculcate moral values in children. Lickona (1989, p. 6) has demonstrated that, "down through history, in various countries, education has had two great goals: to help young people become smart and to help them become good". In other words, the education system's main aim is to develop pupils into two main domains, intellectual and moral domains. McBrien and Brandt (1997, p. 17) clarify that,

The goal is to raise children to become morally responsible and self-disciplined citizens. Problem solving, decision making, and conflict resolution are important parts of developing moral character. Through role playing and discussions, students can see that their decisions affect other people and things.

However, it can be seen that educators and parents believe that it is crucial to educate children to adhere to the morals and values of their societies. Hence, one of the most important aims of schools is to develop children's character, intellectually and morally through values-based atmosphere in order to be good moral members in their communities.

In this light, teachers are expected to provide learners with a set of core virtues and morals in a healthy and safe school climate where students can build up, promote their characters and develop a sense of wisdom in their life.

The current mixed methods study explores the effect of the Western teachers' perspectives and cultures on the Emirati students' morality and character development, as currently, a large percentage of the Emirati children go to international schools that follow different international curricula, mixing with a variety of students from different backgrounds, different nationalities, different cultures and different religions. In addition, they are taught by Western teachers coming from various Western countries and holding various values and cultures. Therefore, and as a result of this situation, many questions start to emerge on the horizon and need to be answered: are the Emirati students in the international schools, directed by Western people, getting the right moral education and guidance? What kind of values do the Western teachers teach them? Do the Western teachers' backgrounds and cultures influence the UAE youth's morality? To what extent do they influence the UAE children? Are the Western teachers' effects positive or negative? Do these teachers have sufficient awareness of the UAE culture, heritage and values? Are the Western teachers good role models to be followed by the UAE national students?

However, one should not ignore the fact that the situation of the Emirati students in the international schools that follow different international curricula is not the same as it is in the public schools that follow the national curriculum where the majority of the teachers are Arabs, having the same cultures, language and religion. All the subjects taught in these schools are guided and directed to one aim which is to develop students' character academically and morally, following the Islamic guidance.

The UAE leaders believe that education is a fundamental element for economic and social development; therefore, attention has been drawn to all issues related to education, mainly the students. On the other hand, as previously mentioned, the Arab's perspectives on the Western culture vary from one to another, including the UAE society in which some of them encourage the Western cultures' influence in general and see it as a tool for development while others

consider it as a threat to their own country's values, heritage and culture (Mrabet, 2000). Ahmed (2011) believes that "many feel that cultural loss is inevitable in such circumstances. Those who are affiliated with Arabic language and culture feel they are being erased" (p. 125). Consequently, according to Findlow (2006), "culture' should be taught according to traditional Arab-Islamic models, and in Arabic, despite the availability of international frameworks – particularly among the Islamisation lobby" (p.27). Following Sheikh Zayed's saying: "we should preserve our traditions and national heritage; we should stick to our roots and our Arabic and Islamic traditions", the youth should be raised up in a way that enables them to face the rapid and continuous changes of life by taking all the good of other cultures and maintaining the Arabic and Islamic culture. Hence, this study investigates the effect of the Western teachers' culture on the Emirati students' morality and character development.

## **1.2 Background of the Study**

The United Arab Emirates is a country that is located in the Arabian Peninsula and surrounded by other Arab countries which form the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) which was created in 1981. There are seven emirates in the UAE: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Ras Al-Khaimah, Umm Al Quain, and Al Fujairah (Ghaad et al. 2006). The 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 1971 was the date of the union between the seven emirates, forming one country which the Emirati people celebrate every year. A federal system of governance is followed by the seven emirates, although, each emirate has its own ruler. Prior to federation, the UAE was considered as one of the less developed countries in the world which depends on farming, agriculture, sea faring and the industry of pearls. The federation in 1971 overlapped with the increase in oil production and export which resulted in supporting the country's economics and achieving developments. Although the UAE did not go through the stages of the development that other industrialised countries usually tend to pass through, currently, it can be compared with the industrialised countries that went through several phases and took time to reach its present level (Shihab 2001). The demography of the population of the UAE is extremely diverse. Per the federal and Emirate-level statistical bureaus, in 2013 the UAE's total population was 9.2 million, of which 1.4 million

are Emirati citizens and 7.8 million are expatriates, therefore the majority of the population were expatriates . Non-Emiratis comprised 40 percent of the UAE's public sector's workforce in 2013, but as much as 99.5 per cent of those employed in the private sector.

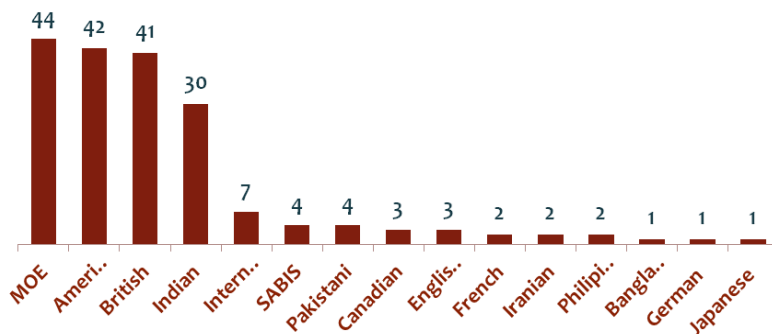
In this light, giving a quick glimpse of the educational system in the UAE before seeking solutions for the research concerns is useful as it paves the way for discussing the topic of the effect of the Western teachers' values and its implications on the national students' character in the international schools clearly. Forty years ago, only 48% of UAE adults were literate; today, over 93% are literate, with nearly equal rates for men and women. However, even educational attainment is also much higher, with mean years of schooling rising from 3 years in 1970 to 9 years in 2010.

Education since the beginning was considered as a procedure that involves the whole person, including the mental, psychological, and social aspects. According to Al-Attas (1979), the holistic approach to education in Islam is guided toward the "balanced growth of the total personality...through training Man's spirit, intellect, rational self, feelings and bodily senses...such that faith is infused into the whole of his personality" (p. 158). As any other Islamic Arabic country and before the establishment of any school, education in the UAE was primarily based on *Kuttaab* (the traditional religious school) where the holy Qur'an was the main source of knowledge, in addition to the *Sunnah* of Prophet Mohammed (AS). Education started in teaching the Quran by the *Mu'alleem* mainly in mosques, private homes, tents, and sometimes out in the open. The focus of teaching during the early history of Islam was on the teaching of the religious obligations, including praying, fasting, paying Zakat and other Islamic rituals. Islamic education in all its stages encourages critical thinking and *Tafakkur* in the instructions of Islam in order to learn. It encourages "thinking in the perspective of the revelation of the Qur'an and the teachings of the Hadith and accepting every single Islamic truth (Blaik-Hourani et al., 2011, p. 345).

Muslims believe that raising children on the right principles was a sacred responsibility of Muslim parents and society. Tibawi (1972) stated that the mind of the child was believed to be "like a white clean paper, once anything is written on it, right or wrong, it will be difficult to erase it or superimpose new writing upon it" (p. 38). The teaching approach of the *Mua'alleem* was usually harsh and strict. The memorisation of the Qur'an and the understanding of its verses were the main duties of students.

Education in the UAE emerged officially in 1953 when a few educational Kuwaiti leaders established the first school in *Sharija*, followed by different educational projects by Egypt, Qatar and Saudi Arabia (Gonzalez et al. 2008; Ridge 2010). All schools during the beginning of the educational system were applying different curricula taken from different countries around the UAE. A big change took place in 1985 when all public schools and some of the private ones started applying what is called national curriculum following the UAE Ministry of Education's rules and regulations (Gardner 1995; Gonzalez et al. 2008).

Referring to the Ministry of Education's report 2010/2011, there are 725 public schools following the Ministry of Education curriculum, while 473 schools are private, with 187 of these schools situated in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi as seen in figure: 1.1. These schools follow 13 other different curricula.



**Figure 1.1: Types of private schools with different curricula (adapted from [www.adec.ac.ae](http://www.adec.ac.ae))**

The majority of those private schools teach British, American or Indian curricula; they are licensed and supervised by either a government entity called Knowledge and Human

Development Authority (KHDA) in Dubai or Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) in Abu Dhabi (Ministry of Education Research and Studies Department 2011; UNESCO 2011; UAE National Bureau of Statistics 2011). The number of students rose from 200,000 students to 262,373 students; those students are taught by 22,732 teachers. The percentage of Emirati pupils in private education rose from 31.9 in the 2010-11 academic years to 34.7 percent in 2013-14, according to figures from the Statistics Centre Abu Dhabi.

The structure of the educational system in the UAE is not complicated. It consists of primary and secondary schools. In public schools, students start at the age of six and they have to spend five years in the (level 1-5), four years in the (level 6-9) and three years at the secondary school (level 10-12). The basic education in the UAE is free and compulsory for those 6 to 12 years old.

Based on the national curriculum, all subjects taught in public schools are guided by Islamic and Arabic culture, which means that, students are guided and taught according to Arabic and Islamic culture upon which they are raised with at home by their parents; hence schools' responsibility will be a continuation of the parents' guidance following the same approach and the same path without any contradictions. Comparing the current situation of international private schools with those schools that follow the national curriculum is very crucial; as aforementioned, schools with national curriculum are led by Arab teachers who speak the same language (Arabic) and have the same culture, religion and destiny of the students; their teaching is based mainly on the core values of Arabic and Islamic culture within all subjects taught implicitly and explicitly. Even if one thinks about those schools during under the reform and the existence of the Western teachers as well, the situation is still under control as the presence and the influence of the Arab teachers is much more than the Western teachers' influence, as the majority of the teachers in those schools are Arabs. On the other hand, thinking about the private sector and mainly the international schools, one can find a different environment and a different structure than that of the public schools. The majority of teachers and administrators are Western, in addition to a minority of Arab teachers to teach the three Arabic core subjects; Arabic, Islamic Studies and

Social Studies. Because of the good reputation of the Western education in general and the British in specific, especially in the UAE country, the demand for those schools increases and the result is a large number of the UAE students are enrolled in those schools at the present time.

It is worth noting that the education system in the UAE has a clear vision and specific targets that aim at enhancing certain good values and developing students' characters in all kinds of schools. *Al-Watheeqa*h of the MoE (The Ministry of Education) (2014) has drawn a comprehensible vision and shared values for all school teachers and administrators; these values are:

1. Citizenship and responsibilities: represented in strengthening national identity and social responsibilities.
2. Principles and values of Islam: reinforce the human values in dialogue, tolerance, moderation, peace and volunteerism.
3. Commitment and transparency: commitment to professionalism and transparency in performance.
4. Contribution and accountability: commitment to partner with the society in the educational system while being accountable for the performance of students.
5. Right to education for all: represented in the equality of opportunities for all the constituents of the society.
6. Quality and innovation: represented in the preparation of a human workforce that effectively contributes in accomplishing the sustainable development while being globally competitive (p. 2).

However, there is another important document issued by ADEC (2012) called: "The Student Competency Framework for Private Schools in Abu Dhabi". This document acts as a guide for all private schools, including the international schools with different curricula in order to know how to develop young students' competencies to be effective members in their communities



based on the Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030. This framework is part of ADEC's strategic plan which aims at assisting private schools' students with what they need of soft skills and behaviours to face the 21st century and Abu Dhabi's evolving economy, no matter what curriculum the schools choose (ADEC, 2012). Therefore, all teachers in the country including Western teachers should be aware of and abide by the MoE regulations and ADEC's guidance.

In this context, the following questions should be answered:

Are all teachers committed toward those regulations and to what extent?

Are the teachers familiar with these documents?

ADEC should ensure the consistency of implementing the above principles in all schools including the international private schools. As mentioned previously, those schools follow different curricula and are administered and monitored by Western teachers who speak different languages and have different cultures, values and backgrounds. However, it is one of the teachers' roles to develop students' character and to implement ethical values among them.

It is believed that even the understanding of values differs from one culture to another; therefore, the importance of values is not the same in all cultures.

For example, Western culture places a great deal of importance on explicit knowledge about the physical world, and indeed this knowledge is central to much of the educational system.....However, at the same time, in such cultures as Japan and India, knowledge about the social world and how one negotiates one's way within it is valued much more and harnesses far more energy than does knowledge about the physical world (Gardner, 1984, p.227).

Thus, there must be some differences between the Western teachers' culture and the Emirati students' culture which is expected to be enhanced and reinforced by their teachers.

However, morality, which is identified in Webster Merriam dictionary as the beliefs about what is right behaviour and what is wrong behaviour, is also one of the UAE top priorities.

Consequently, schools should care about and take the importance of character/moral education into account, especially in the international schools which follow a variety of curricula and whose teachers are from different nations, different cultures and different religions as mentioned above.

In those international schools, character /moral education has been mainly integrated within the Islamic studies curriculum, (UAE Ministry Islamic Studies Curriculum Document 2011), but is it enough for students to depend only on Islamic Studies to develop good character? Unfortunately, there is a dearth of studies that address moral/character education in the UAE schools, especially, in the private sector, in addition to the fact that most of the research studies related to character/moral education have been conducted in the US, UK, Canada, Australia and other different countries all around the world. Thus, this study is intended to fill a gap in this area and contribute to a thorough understanding of the impact of the Western teachers' personal beliefs and values on the Emirati students' character development and morality in the private international schools administered by Western people and to surface any hidden assumptions. Furthermore, the difference between the culture of the UAE and the culture of the Western teachers who come from their countries having different values and virtues makes this study significant to be conducted, firstly, to raise the profile of character education in the international schools in the UAE managed by Western educators and secondly to identify the effect of the Western teachers on the students' morality and character development. The privilege that the researcher has good experience in teaching in international schools makes it easy for her to realise the importance of investigating such an important topic. This exploratory study used mixed methods, hoping to be able to gather invaluable results that add and contribute to the current literature of character education. It investigated the perceptions of the Western teachers, the Emirati students and their parents towards moral/character education in the international schools, using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

### **1.3 Research Problem**

This exploratory study investigates the impact of the Western teachers' values and personal beliefs in the international schools that mainly teach the British curriculum on the development of the national students' moral and character development. While on the other hand, the majority of the teachers in the international schools are Western and they are unfamiliar with the Islamic and Arabic values; in addition, the international curricula that the international schools teach which are always directed towards the international issues rather than towards Arabic Islamic issues. Furthermore, international schools usually have students who come from different backgrounds, different countries and have different nationalities. However, a large number of the UAE nationals tend to enrol their children in the international schools due to their good reputation of providing students with a high quality of education, in addition to fluency in English language which is highly appreciated in UAE, due to the diversity in the UAE population. Consequently, there are different results of being students in the international schools, including but not limited to the fact that they start using English language in most of their daily dealings and communications, neglecting the valuable Arabic language which, certainly, affects their culture and identity negatively in return. Ahmed criticised the dominance of the English language, saying that "English is beginning to be seen as a threat, dominating all aspects of life" (2010, p. 13). At the same time, the influence of the Western teaching can be a double edged sword as no one can deny the positive effect of adopting the Western style education in the Gulf countries which helps students understand some perceptions of Western culture and so decreases the gap of the understanding between the Arabs and the Western countries (Roger, 1995). Therefore, the challenge is so big; The UAE decision makers have to find smart ways of how to prepare the current generations to be great leaders in the future and good members of the society without being influenced by the negative aspects of Western cultures. Hence, this study investigates the effect of the Western teachers' cultures and perspectives on the Emirati students' morality and character development.

As mentioned previously, it can be seen that some people may think that character education is not a topic of interest for the UAE people due to the belief that religion can solve all young people's problems. Thus there is no need for character/ moral education. However, as mentioned earlier, with globalisation, modernisation, the vast spread of technology and the ease of social interaction with different people from various types of societies who may have different values and manners around the world; a crucial need has emerged to call the educators and the stakeholders to consider moral/character education to our current young generations. Furthermore, although there is a clear vision and shared values among all education leaders in the UAE, it seems that not all schools have drawn clear guidance in which they achieve the required moral objectives, especially those related to personal responsibilities.

On the other hand, it can be hypothesised that some educators believe that the school's community has a substantial effect on developing students' character. Hence, schools are expected to provide students with high levels of quality intellectual and moral education. Schools help students develop their morality and work on the required skills to be independent, successful members in their societies, capable of contributing locally and globally. In the international schools in the UAE, the need for considering character education seems to be vital. Most of the teachers in those schools are Western teachers hired from different countries with different cultural backgrounds, different values and beliefs to teach young Emirati students, help them foster their personalities and preserve their culture and traditions. Hence they have to work on both students' academic and moral success. Various studies (Campbell, 1997; Lasley, 1997; Lickona, 2001; Miller, 2006; Milson, 2002) show that teachers have crucial influence on enhancing strengths in their student's character in all aspects of life, including, emotional, social, intellectual and behavioural skills as they are considered as their students' role models. It can be suggested that as a result of the daily interaction between the UAE students and their Western teachers, a negative or a positive effect is expected to influence those students at such schools.

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

This thesis primarily aims at investigating the influence of Western teachers' values and perspectives on Emirati students' characters and moral development, answering the main question: do Western teachers' personal beliefs and values influence Emirati students' moral and character development?

Specifically:

- 1- How do Western teachers perceive any influences that they may have on the development of their students' morality?
- 2- What are the Emirati students' perceptions of character development in the international schools?
- 3- How do Emirati parents perceive the influence of the Western teachers on their children's character/ moral development?

#### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

Evidence shows that there is a lack of educational research related to the area of character education in the Gulf countries in general and the in the UAE in specific and this is reflected in its absence in education literature. My search on literature in character education shows that most of the studies in this field took place in the US, England, Canada, Turkey and other Western countries but not in the Arab world. This study is one of the pioneering studies that extend the study of character/moral education and its importance to construct a successful community in the UAE. This study is significant as it has presented important evidence about influence of the Western teachers' personal beliefs and values on the national students' morality and character development in the international schools. It also addresses the perspectives of parents, teachers and the students towards the quality of character and moral education that international schools offer to the national students. It investigates the level of understanding of this important topic from different points of view. This study is significant for educators and the stakeholders, as it provides them with sufficient information about the current situation of the national students'

morality and character development in the international schools. It highlights the effect of the Western teachers' values on those students, consequently, they can prepare pre-service programmes that help Western teachers understand the UAE culture, values and heritage and enhance their abilities and skills in dealing with the UAE students the right way without committing any unintentional mistakes that may influence the UAE youth characters negatively.

On the other hand, this study can help us understand the challenges that Western teachers may face in developing the character and moral education of Emirati students, and so, helps in removing some of those obstacles if they exist, allowing an appropriate moral/character education to take place easily and effectively. Moreover, this study tends to draw the community's attention to such an important pivotal issue as it is conducted to find out some valuable results that could be helpful for educators, policy makers, administrators and stakeholders to plan and create a suitable framework for an effective optimal character education programme that suits the UAE culture, traditions, values and religion. Finally, this study adds to the educational literature in the field of character education in general and character education in schools that follow Western curricula in Arabic Islamic countries specifically, so it fills a gap in research literature regarding this specific area.

### **1.6. Delimitations of the Study**

This study investigated the effect of the Western teachers' values and cultures on the Emirati students' moral and character development in the international schools that follow the British curriculum. The study did not evaluate religious education in those schools as this subject has a separate comprehensive curriculum provided by the Ministry of Education in the UAE and it is one of the core subjects in all schools; it teaches Muslim students about Islam, the official religion of the country. Furthermore, citizenship education is not included in this study as it is a compulsory subject that is taught in Arabic language to the Arab students in all public and private schools starting from grade 1 through Social Studies curriculum. It provides students with sufficient information about the UAE as a country, its history and the importance of

understanding the national identity and citizenship. On the other hand, this study is interested in character education that focuses on the moral and character development of the Emirati students; it examined the way Western teachers' values affect the moral and character development of the Emirati students as the influence is a normal result of the daily interaction between the Western teachers and their students.

### **1.7. Definition of Terms**

The purpose of this section is to clarify character-education-related definitions as used for the purposes of this study throughout the thesis. A list of key words are presented and defined accordingly.

**Character:** As used in this study, a character “consists of habits that pattern our actions in a relatively fixed way” (Niegorski& Ellrod, 1992, p. 143).

**Character education:** The effort that schools inject to provide its students with, in order to learn morals and ethical values such as, caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility and respect (Lickona, Schaps, & Lewis, 2007).

**Curriculum:** What an educational organisation provides its students with in order to learn, including any activity or material (Goodlad, 1984).

**Good character:** A person with good character always chooses to do good acts and never to do evil or illegal acts, such as, cheating and insulting others. A person with a good character always shows honesty, kindness, trustfulness and integrity. He/she responds ethically and morally in all situations based on his/her good character.

**Morality:** This term is used when referring to values, virtues and good conduct.

**Perception:** Understanding.

**Role Model:** A person who acts showing good manners and behaviours for others to emulate (The American Heritage, 2006).

**Values:** As used in this study, they are a set of ideals, beliefs and perspectives shared by groups of people in a culture representing what is acceptable and unacceptable. Individuals' values have influential effects on their attitudes and manners. Values of a culture act as guidelines that should be followed by all its members.

**Virtues:** according to (Lickona, 1997), they are qualities of good character. Virtues provide the moral content that defines good character. Every virtue has three parts: moral knowledge, moral feeling, and moral behaviour (p. 46).

**Culture:** according to (Hofstede, 1980), it is “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group from another”; it is passed from generation to generation (pp. 21-23)

**Western teachers:** non Arab expatriate teachers from different parts of the world who live, work and socialize in the UAE, namely, British, Americans, Asians, and Africans.

**Emiratis:** citizens of the United Arab Emirates (UAE)

**International school:** a name for non-Arab or non-Islamic schools (usually British, American Indian, or Western expat schools that apply internationally recognized Western curricula such as IGCSE).

## **1.8. Organisation of the Chapters**

This thesis is composed of five chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the introduction of the research study; it includes the research problem, research questions, significance of the study delimitations of the Study and the definitions of terms related to the topic of this study. The



second chapter presents the theoretical framework of the study represented by the moral psychological approach, in addition to the socio-cultural theory. Besides, chapter two reviews the literature related to the main theories associated with the topic of this study. It also presents an overview of the historical background of character education and its roots. Furthermore, the importance of character education and its effect on different aspects of life are explained. The definition of universal values and its importance in relation to this study are discussed too. Moreover, different educational policies of different countries relating to character/moral development of students, the influential role that teachers and parents play in developing young people's characters and the Islamic religious education are also included in chapter two. Chapter three focuses on the methodology used in this study; it includes the research design, participants, data collection instruments, procedures of collecting data, and methods of data analysis. Chapter four presents the analysis of the collected data for both the quantitative and the qualitative parts. The quantitative part of the study analyses the data collected through the three kinds of questionnaires using the SPSS programme for the analysis, while the qualitative part analyses the semi structured, face to face interviews conducted with students, teachers and parents qualitatively, in addition to the open-ended questions in the teacher's questionnaire. This chapter provides the readers with the findings of the study in the light of the research questions and the relevant literature of the topic. Chapter five includes a thematic discussion of the major findings and limitations of the study, in addition to the implications for practice, suggestions for further future research, a summary of the discussion and the conclusion of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

This study is designed to investigate the effect of the Western teachers' values if any, on the national students' morality and character development in the international schools following the British curriculum in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Having this goal in mind, a review of the related literature provided a thorough and in-depth understanding of some of the relevant factors related to the topic of this study. The primary sources of the related literature were taken from educational books, a variety of studies in research literature from various journals, international or national educational publications on various internet sites, educational reports and associated documentation from Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) and the Ministry of Education (MoE).

This chapter is devoted to the theoretical framework of this study which is based on Lickona's moral psychological theory (1993) and the socio-cultural approach by (Vygotsky, 1978). Relevant bodies of literature related to other theories of character education are discussed in this section such as Kohlberg's cognitive theory (1958), moral development approach by Piaget (1932) and others. This section also includes an overview of literature on the history of the Western character education, different approaches to character education, teachers' role and professionalism and their effect on developing students' character education. The role of parents in developing their children's character and different educational policies of character education in various countries including the UAE context are explored. Several studies related to moral education are presented and looked at from different angles. Each part in the literature review highlights key ideas associated with the research topic and research questions.

## **2.2 Research Framework**

The main aim of this study is to investigate the impact of the Western teachers' values and backgrounds on the Emirati students' moral and character development in the international British schools in the UAE. As mentioned earlier, the framework of this study adapts the moral psychological model by Lickona (1993) which is consistent with the purpose of the study, as it focuses on various virtues that students should acquire and the appropriate methods to be adopted and learnt comprehensively so they can maintain acceptable moral character. The study also adopts the socio-cultural approach by Vygotsky (1978); this approach presents the importance of social interaction in developing one's moral character.

### **2.2.1 The Moral Psychological Theory (1993)**

The moral psychological theory relates children's character/moral education to the learning of moral virtues as Lickona points out that schools should help students understand core values such as honesty, responsibility, respect and courage. Character education should emphasise the importance of learning values through (VIN) 'values in action' (Lickona, 1991, p.51). In one of his studies, Lickona (1989, p. 51) asserts that:

Character has three interrelated parts: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behaviour. Good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good—habits of the mind, habits of the heart, and habits of action. We want our children . . . to judge what is right, care deeply about what is right, and then do what they believe to be right—even in the face of pressure from without and temptation from within.

Lickona clarifies that in order to make values effective, certain points should be taken into consideration, such as, caring for the emotional human aspect (empathy, respect, self -discipline, etc.) and having certain skills to communicate with others properly, for example listening to others. Additionally, having the will to act upon those good values, and finally, responding habitually, which means having an inner response to any situation in an acceptable manner.

To sum up, Lickona asserts that, to strengthen students' moral side, they do not only need to know the right, but also to understand it, feel it and have the desire to do it (1989). They need to construct their ethical knowledge by means of doing through facing different situations that enable them to apply values they have learnt such as honesty, respect, kindness and other various values, in real life situations. On the other hand, ethical and academic learning should not be dealt with separately; Lickona asserts that, "character education must be approached comprehensively to include the emotional, intellectual and moral qualities of a person or group" (1993, p. 7).

Moreover, according to Lickona's theory, character education is based on shared objectives and significant ethical values, such as caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility and respect (1996). Therefore, character education is a shared responsibility of parents, teachers and other members of the whole community, who are viewed as key players in supporting and enhancing positive character. However, it could be postulated that schools committed to moral education should share ethical values, enabling everyone at school to model them and use them as the heart of their communication. To sum up, character education involves the application of a holistic approach that enhances and supports core values that develop morality in students' character; it should be supported by all and integrated into all aspects of the school's scenarios, including classrooms, playgrounds, cafeterias and buses.

Character education, wherever it occurs, must provide many and varied opportunities for young people to act—to live out their developing values and ideals, and to reflect on what they value in light of their lived moral experience (Ryan & Lickona, 1992, p. 20).

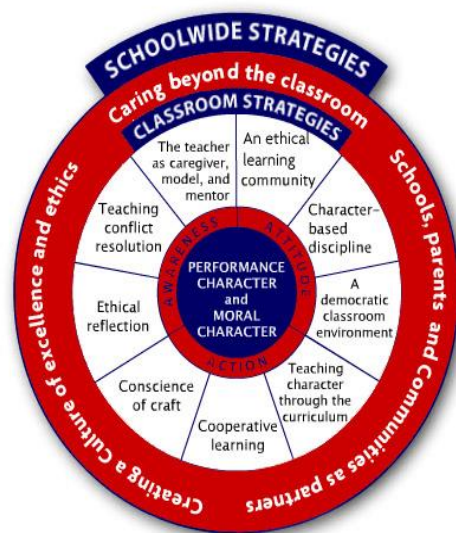
The U.S. Department of Education describes character education as a "learning process that enables students and adults in a school community to understand, care about, and act on core ethical values such as respect, justice, civic virtue and citizenship and responsibility for self and others" (Ed.gov, 2006, p.1). Hence, character education can help students learn core qualities that assist them to respect themselves, appreciate others and seek excellence in all aspects of their lives. In a study by Boyer (1987), he focuses on the need for values/character education in

different ways, asking various questions to draw people's attention to the importance of values and ethical life for all. However, based on Lickona's comprehensive model, Lickona, Schaps, and Lewis (1994) have developed eleven principles of effective character education, in order to help in evaluating the efficacy of character education programs at schools; these principles are:

1. Character education promotes core ethical values as the basis of good character.
2. Character must be defined to include thinking and behaving.
3. Effective character education requires an intentional, proactive, and comprehensive approach that promotes core values in all stages of life.
4. The school should be a caring community.
5. To develop students' character, students need opportunities for moral action.
6. Character education includes a meaningful and challenging curriculum that respects and helps all learners succeed.
7. Character education should strive to develop student intrinsic motivation.
8. All school staff should act as a moral and learning community sharing responsibility of character education.
9. Character education requires moral leadership from staff and students, parents and members of the community to promote character education initiatives.
10. The school must engage parents and community members as partners in character-building efforts.
11. Evaluations of character education should take place regularly, assessing the functioning of the school educators as well as to what extent students demonstrate good moral character.

These principles could be very helpful in evaluating character education in any school, including the schools under the study, as they are comprehensive covering all aspects of character education, such as, teachers, parents and the whole school as a learning atmosphere.

Lickona introduced Character Education Holistic Approach (1993), which explains that every aspect of the school matters as seen in Figure 2.1.



**Figure 2.1: Comprehensive CE model. Adapted from T. Lickona’s Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility**

This approach can be divided into two dimensions: classroom strategies and school wide strategies. Classroom strategies contain nine components:

- 1- The teacher should act as a role model/ mentor to be able to provide his students with care and love. The caring atmosphere usually encourages children to act ethically, forming a strong relationship with their teachers. The role of teachers is vital in enhancing students’ good manners through modelling the right behaviour and providing them with clear instructions and strategies that foster their ethical learning.

- 2- Creating an ethical learning community in which students care and respect each other. Moreover developing peer culture in which the effect of one's peers is so effective and helpful in assisting and accepting other children from different groups and respecting them for what they are. On the other hand, if teachers do not encourage peer culture, then children will go the opposite direction and start showing disrespect to other students and to adults' guidance. Furthermore, when students practise ethical manners daily, they become part of their habitual life and, of course, part of their character.
- 3- Using discipline as a means of enhancing and promoting self-reliance and ethical reasoning. Children should realise the moral behind each rule or regulation. Schools should not focus on extrinsic rewards as children should know that they have to do right, not to receive a reward but because it is right. They should also understand when breaking any rules the reason behind the obligation of that rule, so they can avoid doing it again. Teachers can sometimes ask students to help with the discipline of the classroom, so they feel the responsibility of keeping the classroom disciplined all the time.
- 4- The classroom should provide students with an environment of democracy where they can share decisions and responsibility together to make their classroom the best place for learning. This approach can strengthen the relationship between teachers and students and it can help students and teachers build a culture of morality in classroom. It also encourages and enhances the peer culture as students help each other to maintain a good level of morality in a democratic environment where they feel that they are valued and respected.
- 5- Using the content of the curriculum as a means of teaching character. It should help children understand the significance of morality in life. The teacher's role is to teach the values through the curriculum so students can reinforce their love for goodness all the time and through all subjects.
- 6- Providing students with cooperative learning sessions in which they develop their knowledge academically at the same time they practise working on being a part of a team whom they respect and appreciate.

- 7- Having a conscience of craft in which students develop their responsibilities toward academic success and make sure that they develop a habit of doing their best in everything they do. In such a case, teachers should be good role models showing responsibility toward the quality of their own teaching and punctuality of their lessons.
- 8- Encouraging ethical reflection through research, discussions and reading, therefore the cognitive part of character will be developed. Students can enhance their abilities to understand the meaning of virtues and so, they can be part of their real daily life. In addition, their moral reasoning will be promoted so they can explain why certain things are good while others are bad and they can make the right moral decisions accordingly.
- 9- Teaching conflict resolution is an important component in classroom strategies in which students can listen, understand each other and express themselves without insulting each other and find a solution that meets the needs of both sides. This strategy is vital not only for children to solve their problems in the classroom but also for their real life situations.

School wide strategies:

- 1- To create a whole school culture of excellence and ethics is fundamental. Morality and ethical behaviour is reflected by everyone at school. Having a positive ethical culture for the whole school encourages students to develop good character easily as all people around the school show a good level of ethics and morality.
- 2- To teach students that caring is not only for those around them in the classroom, but also to those who are beyond the classroom. They should understand the importance of feeling with others, respecting their needs and having the desire to help them. However, schools should provide students with opportunities of service in their schools, for their families and in their communities to develop the sense of helping those who are in need.
- 3- To encourage parents and communities to be partners in the building and developing of students' character. Schools should involve parents who are the primary ethical educators of their children in planning and in the implementation of character education. Furthermore, the whole community should also have a share in character education,



including youth organisations and media which help in enhancing and fostering good character.

Leming (1993) noted in one of his studies that there is sound progress in students' achievement whenever there is a positive school climate. Similarly, Williams (2000) found that the teachers who participated in his study agreed that three aspects are necessary for developing students' character, including having teachers as their role models, conducive classroom and school climate and an atmosphere of mutual respect.

In a different study, Peterson and Skiba (2001) explained that students' success is directly related to the parental involvement and cooperation between the school and the parents. Hence, schools cannot function effectively without involving parents in their plans to help develop their children's characters as they are the basic elements in building and fostering goodness in their children's character.

In light of the school's role in moral education and character building, Stott and Jackson (2005) conducted a study in one particular school where a plan was prepared for the students' character development. The educators planned a kind of comprehensive guidance that fulfils the philosophy of the school. The study proved that within the school's positive atmosphere, teaching certain values and concepts such as being responsible and showing respect to others is influential. The project was immensely successful and students proved that they become better people, able to face difficult situations in life and capable of solving their problems by the usage of what they have learnt at school. Bulach (2002) also believes that for any character education programme to succeed, it should be comprehensive; covering all aspects of the children's daily life, including, school's culture, teachers, parents and the whole community. In summary this study would like to highlight Lickona's holistic model in which an awareness of the importance of building a positive school culture where students' character can be nurtured and flourished should be spread around.

### **2.2.2 Socio-cultural Theory (1978)**

This study adopted Vygotsky's socio cultural approach in which he believes that cultural development passes through two levels, firstly the social level and then the individual level. Parallels can be drawn here with Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory of human learning (1978), as Vygotsky considered learning as a social procedure that firstly takes place in societies and then integrates into the person's intellectual structure as a result of interaction with others.

Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57).

Therefore, according to the present study, it can be seen that interaction between teachers and students also has an influential effect on students' behaviour. Campbell has described some standards for a teacher to be a moral teacher, capable of guiding students' morality as the following:

the first relates to the exacting ethical standards the teacher as a moral person and a moral professional holds himself or herself to do, and the second, concerns the teacher as a moral educator, model, and exemplar whose aim is to guide students towards a moral life (Campbell, 2003, p. 2).

Vygotsky's socio cultural approach to learning and development of moral character are discussed and applied also by Wertsch, (1985) who focuses on the fact that human activities are influenced by social life and cultural differences. Moreover, Wertsch asserts that social interaction plays a crucial role in the development of cognition. In other words, moral development has to be connected to cognitive development via social and cultural interactions.

On the other hand, Vygotsky's model refers also to Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which describes what a child can do independently and his real potential when he gets help and guidance from others. Thus, it can be constructed that all of the surroundings of a child can affect

his character development, including his peers, parents and teachers, especially if they are more capable so they can act as guides for them. Vygotsky defined ZPD as:

the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86)

A number of scholars applied Vygotsky's theory of learning and development through the socio-cultural dimension in their studies for different purposes like (Van der Veer & Valsiner, 1999; Cole and Scribner, 1978; John-Steiner & Soubelman, 1978; Tappan, 1998; Wertsch, 1985, 1991). Therefore, this study emphasises Vygotsky's greatest contribution to moral education by explaining the importance of social interaction in the development of students' characters. This approach highlights the interdependence of social and individual processes in the co-construction of knowledge. Vygotsky (cited in Eun, 2010, p. 401) states that, "social interaction among two or more people is the greatest motivating force in human development". Vygotsky believes that there is significant cultural differences regarding moral education, thus, there is an ongoing interaction between children and the different culture around them. Another important component of Vygotsky's approach is that, teachers, parents and caregivers play an important role in the child's moral and character development. In other words, transmitting moral values or ethics among individuals that originate from societal rules or ethics is a normal phenomenon. Mehrdad (2011, p. 64) points out that in the "socio-cultural perspective, learning occurs through interaction, negotiation, and collaboration". John-Steiner and Mahn (1996) used Vygotsky's socio-cultural approach as a framework to investigate the relationship between an individual's learning and development. Their study has resulted in presenting an effective framework of socio-cultural approach to learning and development and its implications for classroom learning and teaching.

Cultural differences can be shown clearly in the purposes of education and in the importance given to certain values according to the culture they come from.

From birth, the social forms of child-caretaker interactions, the tools used by humans in society to manipulate the environment, the culturally institutionalized patterns of social relations, and language, operating together as a socio-semiotic system, are used by the child in cooperation with adults to organize behaviour, perception, memory, and complex mental processes. For children, the development of language is a development of social existence into individuated persons and into culture (John-Steiner and Tatter, 1983, p. 83).

It can be postulated that socio-cultural approach clarifies the way that children develop their characters academically and morally taking into account the differences between cultures. Hence, the rationale behind choosing Vygotsky's approach for this thesis is that this approach is seen as appropriate to the topic of this thesis as children usually learn the desired ethics and morals from people around them. They gain the required knowledge through the influence of their social life as a result of interacting with different people including people with different cultures around them. In other words, children learn through observing and interacting with others, whether they are parents, teachers, or their peers.

The routine arrangements and interactions between children and their caregivers and companions provide children with thousands of opportunities to observe and participate in the skilled activities of their culture. Through repeated and varied experience in supported routine and challenging situations, children become skilled practitioners in the specific cognitive activities in their communities (Rogoff, 1991, p. 351).

Furthermore, there are some important studies which have applied Vygotsky's socio-cultural approach like that of De Roserand Mercer, (2007), who focuses on the importance of using different socio-cultural learning techniques in developing students' behaviour, such as, peer interaction and collaboration, taking into consideration the role of teachers as guides for their students, directing them through their instructions and planned, structured activities. Other studies, such as Berkowitz and Bier, (2007), and (Gulay, 2011), support the positive effect of socio-cultural approach on developing good character of children.

As values should be embedded indirectly in school and classroom life (Campbell, 2003; Hansen, 1993; Fenstermacher, 1990; Tom, 1984), the UAE's educators and decision makers are keen to cultivate and promote their young generation's morality and character development according to the right teachings and ethics, taking into consideration all aspects that are included at schools such as, curricula, teachers, classroom instructions and peers.

In this light, the socio cultural approach is relevant to this study as individuals are influenced by other people in their societies as a result of social and cultural effect, taking into account that values vary from one culture to another. Moreover, as mentioned above, cultural development happens as a result of the interaction among people. However, at schools, students and teachers interact on a daily basis in which teachers are the role models and the guides of their students, hence, it is a normal result for the students to be affected by their teachers' guidance, perspectives and cultures. Thus, the application of Vygotsky's theory in this thesis is for the purpose of investigating the effect of the Western teachers who come from different cultures with different perspectives and different values on the Emirati students' moral and character development. Based on Vygotsky's theory, it can be suggested that, as a result of the continuous daily interactions between students and teachers, students at international schools are definitely influenced by their teachers who come from different cultures, including the Western culture. However, although there are several studies that investigate the effect of the teacher's culture on children's learning in general, (Elmore, 1992 & 1996; Goodlad, 1984; Sarason, 1990; Schlechty, 1997; Peterson at al. 1996), there is a lack of studies in this field in the Gulf area in general and in the United Arab Emirates in specific which makes it necessary and useful to conduct such a study in this important area.

### **2.2.3 Other Theories Related to Character Education**

In addition to the theories mentioned above, there are various theories explaining moral and character development from different perspectives. Although the researcher does not use them in the framework of the study, she believes that mentioning some of those theories is useful to enrich the readers' knowledge about other theories that explain moral and character development

from different angles and have significant effect on the literature of character education at the same time.

### **2.2.3.1 Moral Development Approach by Piaget (1932)**

Piaget's approach is related to the way that children think rather than the way they act; he coined his theory as a result of observing a game played by children; he used to watch children playing and to act ignorantly to be able to ask them questions about the rules of the game he observed (Piaget, 1932). He focused mainly on studying the boys' moral development while playing the game of marbles which gave him later a serious criticism by others for his theory.

Piaget thinks that this kind of observation can reflect the whole culture of those boys through the way they understand the rules of the game, the way they compromise it, and the way they deal with each other during playing. While Piaget's method of studying children's moral development may give the impression that this technique is not enough to give accurate results about moral development, Ginsburg and Opper explained that Piaget's technique in studying moral development is effective:

On closer inspection it would seem as if the rules governing the game of marbles fulfil all the defining conditions of a moral system. The rules control how individuals behave toward one another in terms of the actions which comprise the game, they determine individual and property rights, and they are a cultural product which has been passed down from generation to generation . . . The rules have been developed largely by children. Therefore, the child's conception of the game . . . is subject to little adult influence (1988, p. 96).

Piaget used another way of studying morality by presenting a story that reflects misbehaviour of a child or an adult, followed by providing children with possible corrections to that kind of misbehaviour and asking them about the fairness of those actions to the offender or the doer of the misbehaviour and the reasons behind their answers. Depending on Piaget's studies on morality through the observations of children's behaviour during playing games, he believes that children's morality develops through four phases:

- The first phase describes children under the age of four years old in which the child depends completely on his motor system and his senses, so their playing is an individual effort “ . . . one can talk only of motor rules and not of truly collective rules” (Piaget, 1932, p. 27).
- The second phase starts at about four to seven years old when the child does not understand the rules of the game very well. This phase can be described as the phase of selfishness as the child has no sense of either cooperation or competition with others.
- The third phase describes children at seven to ten or eleven in which the child starts socialising and cooperating with others showing more understanding of the rules of the game. While in this phase cooperation and competition are obvious, understanding of all rules of the game is incomplete because the child usually does not understand all the rules in full at that age.
- The fourth stage starts at eleven or twelve when children understand the rules of the game in a more legalistic way. This phase is the phase of true cooperation as it is described by Piaget:

[T]he older child shows a kind of legalistic fascination with the rules. He enjoys settling differences of opinion concerning the rules, inventing new rules, and elaborating on them; he even tries to anticipate all the possible contingencies that may arise (Ginsburg & Opper, 1988, p. 98).

### **2. 2.3.2 Moral Reasoning Theory by Kohlberg (1963)**

Lawrence Kohlberg’s theory demonstrates that a child’s moral development has six stages within three levels (Power, Higgins, and Kohlberg, 1989). Kohlberg develops his theory by extending Piaget’s theory of moral reasoning development in which he divides moral development of children into six stages within three levels in which each level has two stages. Kohlberg asserts that moral development is an ongoing process that continues throughout the lifespan. He also highlights the importance of “moral dilemmas” for the development of the moral levels. Hence, schools, including, principals and teachers should thrive to help students develop their moral sense. Kohlberg (1981) stated that:

Principals help guide decision making and ensure that teachers develop a sound moral system by being good role models to young people, assess conflict situations, gain valuable attitudes and values, and assist students in implementing appropriate behaviours in adverse peer situations (p. 11).

Kohlberg presented his theory, depending on stories such as Heinz dilemma in which he used to ask people to explain their choice if they were put in similar situations. He was interested in moral reasoning more than moral conclusion which was considered as a defect in his theory later. As he believes that morality has six levels grouped within two stages and it is an ongoing process that continues throughout a lifespan; hence, children should be given suitable opportunities to discuss and participate in moral issue discussions to develop, foster and promote their moral development (Solomon, Watson, and Battistich, 2001). Kohlberg (1963) believes that a human being's moral progress towards maturity has six stages as seen in Table 2.1.

### Kohlberg's Theory

Level/Stage	Age Range	Description
I: Obedience/Punishment	Infancy	No difference between doing the right thing and avoiding punishment
I: Self-Interest	Pre-school	Interest shifts to rewards rather than punishment – effort is made to secure greatest benefit for oneself
II: Conformity and Interpersonal Accord	School-age	The “good boy/girl” level. Effort is made to secure approval and maintain friendly relations with others
II: Authority and Social Order	School-age	Orientation toward fixed rules. The purpose of morality is maintaining the social order. Interpersonal accord is expanded to include the entire society
III: Social Contract	Teens	Mutual benefit, reciprocity. Morally right and legally right are not always the same. Utilitarian rules that make life better for everyone
III: Universal Principles	Adulthood	Morality is based on principles that transcend mutual benefit.

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**Table 2.1: Kohlberg's Stages Moral Development**

Level1. Pre-conventional morality



Stage 1 - Obedience and punishment, which means to obey the rules just to avoid punishment and not because they understand them

Stage 2 - Individualism and exchange: this level indicates that children will be able to evaluate and judge actions according to what serves their needs.

Level 2 Conventional morality

Stage 3 - Interpersonal relationships: at this stage, the focus is on what is called good boy- good girl orientation and the importance of being nice to others.

Stage 4 - Maintaining social order: at this stage, people start thinking of society as a whole while making judgments. They should respect and follow rules and laws as part of respect to the authority.

Level 3 Post conventional morality

Stage 5 - Social contract and individual rights in which people start realising the existence of different values, at the same time, they have to accept that they must follow certain rules and laws in their society.

Stage 6 - Universal principles: this stage focuses on respect for universal ethical principles and abstract reasoning that people follow even if they contradict with their own rules.

Kohlberg's theory faced serious criticism as in the cognitive development field, various studies approached the same issue from different angles and criticised Kohlberg's theory, such as, Gibbs 2006; Gilligan, 1982; Mischel & Mischel, 1976; Narvaez, 2001 and Rest, Narvaez, Thomas, & Bebeau, 2000. For example, Gilligan (1982) criticised Kohlberg's theory in the sense that it is a theory that cannot be applied for both men and women as it ignores women completely. She has proposed that the orientation of the moral development in women is not the same as in men; women's morality is related to caring and responsibility while men's morality is related to the

feeling of fairness. Hence, Kohlberg's theory cannot be generalised for both man and woman as it deals only with one part of the equation. Gilligan asserts that:

In [Kohlberg's] version of moral development, however, the conception of maturity is derived from the study of men's lives and reflects the importance of individuation in their development, (1982, p. 18).

On the other hand, Carr (1991, 1999) criticised Kohlberg's theory as it only works on the reasoning abilities in which children are able to choose the way they like to live their life without guiding them to the right way of living.

Rest (1984) and Rest et al, (2000) refined Kohlberg's stages of moral development theory in which every human being exists in a certain stage within the six stages; Rest's model follows the developmental process, but gives it more gradual transition across the range of moral development. Rest's model (1984) describes the process of moral action as consisting of "(a) rational decision-making, (b) moral evaluation, (c) moral choice, and (d) moral fortitude. According to Rest, this model was based upon "processes" and not "virtues" or personal "traits" (p. 5).

On the other hand, Kohlberg's theory focuses on the value clarification approach which means that the concentration is only on the process of thinking. Therefore, the role of teachers and the school have been ignored. Advocates for this theory claim that students are to distinguish between right choices and wrong choices depending on their moral reasoning and not on their teachers' guidance. Teachers in this approach are neutral and they are not allowed to direct students to any personal or societal value; simply, this approach means that all values are acceptable and they do not have any wrong or right and teachers are only facilitators for values and for moral dilemmas (Lickona, 1991& Ries, 1999).

### **2.2.3.3 Emotional Intelligence Theory (1995)**

Another theory related to character education is Goleman's theory called emotional intelligence (EI). This theory starts with self-awareness in which the human beings recognise and understand their own emotions. They know the reasons behind their emotions and feelings as well as the way they should react to emotions. This theory focuses on the idea of having a high developed level of self-awareness which provides the person with abilities to make decisions logically and sensibly. Goleman believes that human beings are born with a certain level of emotional intelligence which determines their future of EI competency. Moreover, in the emotional intelligence model, it is believed that having the ability to control emotions enables people to control their feelings, such as, anger, sadness and worrying. For instance, if a person can control his emotions, then he will be able to stop his anger and control the reason that makes him angry and, of course, his decisions, accordingly, will be reasonable and will not be affected by any emotions. Another example is the feeling of sadness; a person who is able to control his emotions will be able to stop the feeling of sadness before it becomes a case of depression (1995).

Goleman acknowledges the idea of being able to manage emotions as it helps one in relieving worries and concerns and makes it easy for him/her to avoid various undesired situations that may affect his/her life negatively. He adds that empathy is a very important quality that is mentioned in Goleman's study; he demonstrates it as the ability to judge when and how to help others. It seems that children usually show empathy to others in various situations; for example, trying to calm down a child by offering him/her a toy or any other pleasing treat. The importance of having such a quality for children is vital as it leads them to stop being violent towards each other. Thus, empathy is important for children at schools to control violence cases (1995).

According to Goleman's theory, people with self-motivation, tend to be able to control their emotions and to be more focused on their desired goals, and so, being able to achieve them while others may give up easily. They can adjust their moods for better performance and direct all of their emotions towards the best achievement (1995).

Being able to have an effective communication with others as a result of having the ability to handle successful relationships is the last concept of Goleman's emotional intelligence model. It is the ability to understand other people's feeling through their reactions and expressions. The example that was drawn in Goleman's study is about people who get presents that they do not like. It can be shown clearly on their faces that they dislike the presents which may, of course, hurt the feelings of the present giver; however, this situation can create the opposite feeling of happiness to the present giver if the people (receivers of the presents) understand and appreciate other people's feeling and show happiness and satisfaction instead (1995). All of the above qualities mentioned in Goleman's model help a person to act effectively in life by having good communication and interaction skills with others. To sum up, Goleman's approach acknowledges five aspects of EI:

- To know one's emotions.
- To know how to manage and control one's own emotions.
- To have motivations to be able to control one's emotions.
- To understand other people's emotions and feelings.
- To manage one's relationships with others.

Based on the emotional intelligence theory, it can be hypothesised that understanding one's own emotions and other people's emotions can affect people's interaction with others positively; it helps them interact and communicate well, taking into account the importance of not to embarrass or hurt other people's feelings.

In summary and after presenting some of the theories that are related to moral development from different aspects, the researcher chose Lickona's approach from among various theories as she wants a model that covers all sides of the student's life. She finds that Lickona's holistic approach better suits the situation in the UAE international schools in which all the employees of schools, parents and the whole community are put in the place of responsibility towards the morality of the children.

Goleman's theory focuses on emotions and the importance of understanding oneself and other people's emotions and it faced a lot of criticism, for instance, it is considered as a misleading theory and is not justified scientifically. Similarly, Kohlberg's theory met a lot of criticism especially since it focuses only on moral reasoning without giving any solutions of how to lead a moral life, in addition to the fact that the role of teachers is limited according to this theory as they act as facilitators, so they are not allowed to guide their students' behaviours to any desirable manner. Moreover, in this approach and in Piaget's, as well, there is no wrong or right value as each person can rely on his reasoning to judge any value. Therefore, moral reasoning theory was not chosen in the framework of this study as it does not reflect the Arabic community including the UAE in which there is clarity in recognising good and bad values as known by for everyone in the society. Furthermore, teachers are dealt with as role models who should guide their students toward the right directions.

### **2.3 Historical Background**

Moral/character education aims at providing children with virtues and moral habits that help them live happily, and be productive members in their societies. Schools are places that are expected to present this kind of education as they have a crucial role in teaching morality (Murphy, 2002). When conducting such a study about character education (CE) in the UAE, it is found that, although education in the UAE strives to build and develop student's character (UAE Ministry of Education 2008), there is not a clear reference to character education as a means of developing students' character. Consequently, it is worth introducing this term to provide the reader with an overview of the history of CE in the US and the UK; the history of CE includes the way it began and developed until the present time, in which one can find various organisations, courses, literature and programmes for curriculum materials aiming at enhancing moral and character education that one may benefit from or adjust to suit the UAE context.

### **2.3.1 History of Character/Moral Education in the US**

Early, in the sixteenth century, the Puritans of the New England advocated for the learning of the Bible as they believed that it included all aspects of morality. After that period of time and during the colonial period, public schools sprouted almost everywhere throughout the colonies, where students were provided with moral teachings. In the nineteenth century, schools started providing children with both secular and moral reasoning education. Horace Mann, a very well-known scholar in the nineteenth-century known as the champion of the common schools, advocated moral education as a result of wide spread crime and poverty. In (1849) Mann strongly felt that:

The elevating influences of good schools, the dark host of private vices and public crimes, which now embitter domestic peace and stain the civilization of the age, might, in 99 cases in every 100, be banished from the world (p. 96).

Thus, teaching was overly directed by morality and teachers were expected to enhance moral education (Lawrence, 1957). However, with the arrival of people coming from Ireland, Germany, and Italy during the mid-nineteenth century and with other religious groups, such as Jews and Muslims arrival into the New World, every group was trying to establish its own moral school to raise up their children on a strong foundation of morality and good manners.

In the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, different theories emerged from Darwin, the German political philosopher Marx, and the German philosopher and poet Nietzsche and Piaget. Furthermore, the Austrian neurologist and founder of psychoanalysis Freud, was the caller for separation of church and state doctrine. This situation struck a negative blow to moral education.

In the late twentieth century, it was realised that schools were ignoring moral education, thus, voices started to be heard again advocating for moral education and accusing the secular education as the cause for all behavioural problems among young people. Thus, educators started

expressing their concerns towards morality and they tried to solve their problems through following two approaches: values clarification and cognitive developmental moral education (Barry, 1985).

The approach of values clarification is based on a theory in which students can choose any moral alternative without any interference from any teacher whose job is seen as a facilitator; teachers are encouraged to work with their students to implement seven steps, so students can choose their values:

1. Choose their values freely
2. Choose their values from alternatives
3. Choose their values after weighing the consequences of each alternative
4. Prize and cherish their values
5. Share and publicly affirm their values
6. Act on their values
7. Act upon their values repeatedly and consistently (Raths, Harmin, and Simon, *Values and Teaching*, 1966, pp. 27-28 as cited in Hunter, 2000).

The second approach, cognitive developmental moral education, was propounded by the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1965), who believes in the importance of schema for cognitive development. He articulated that a schema's structure is changed by time through the process of assimilation and accommodation. His studies are based on his theory that moral development has four stages to be developed in children. Piaget's theory was further developed by Lawrence Kohlberg (1969) who believes that children's morality develops through six stages. Kohlberg clarified that moral development as an ongoing process continuing throughout a person's lifespan. Each stage of the six stages has its own characteristics. Kohlberg calls teachers to

involve students in moral discussions in order to develop their morality and reasons. Kohlberg's theory is widely used in several studies (Rest 1979; Krebs & Denton, 2005). As discussed previously, his theory has been heavily criticised in different ways, such as the focus on the moral thoughts rather than moral development, which resulted in the Rest model (1986) that concentrates on moral behaviour (Walker, 2002). Carol Gilligan (1982) criticised Kohlberg's theory that it was derived from researches conducted mainly on men rather than on both sexes. Therefore, Gilligan refused the theory because moral development of men and women has different orientation. Furthermore, Kohlberg's theory was criticised as it led to underestimating the role of the family in the child's development (Reimer, 1993).

Back to the eighteenth century when the poor academic and moral achievements were clear, educators started thinking about moral education again which was not easy to be accepted by all as it indicated religious education, (Kreeft, 1986). Consequently, the term religious education was replaced by character education, which means the development of good individuals with good habits.

It is worth mentioning that the return of character education was mainly initiated by the parents of the children who wanted their children to learn morality in their schools by knowing, feeling, and doing it (Lickona, 1997). More importantly, the state and national politicians who responded to parents' desire for including character education for their children also advocated for the return of CE.

Furthermore, it is believed that character education for many people is seen as a means of producing good citizens for their communities, while for other people, CE means only civic and secular teaching with the aim of forming good members in society. Other groups of people think of it as a kind of teaching that includes both religious and civic elements simultaneously (Chazan, 1985).

This history of CE contributed to various approaches in teaching character education, through programmes that are added to the school's curriculum to reinforce certain universal values in



students' character. This has happened mostly in the US, Canada, Europe, Australia, and very few Arab countries such as Egypt, and Lebanon. However, the most prominent approach for teaching character education is called the infusion approach in which character is the focus of all subjects whether it is literacy, science, or math. Thus, character education is encouraged through the whole school experience. This approach concentrates on encouraging good habits that help students form good characters that enhance their abilities in all aspects of life including their academic life. It connects the content of each lesson with character education. It advocates all people involved in teaching children to be good role models with good characters as they cannot help students develop good character while they do not have it. Thus, the role of the curricula in this approach is to provide children with academic knowledge and morality at the same time. It is important to be noted that the focus of the advocates for the infusion approach is not only the formal curricula, but also the hidden one, including the culture of schools, their routines and traditions, so it is deemed as comprehensive. In other words, everything at school that could affect students' characters should be taken into account.

Superka, Ahrens and Hedstrom (1976) summarized five approaches to CE:

1. Inculcation which means that living and mixing in a society in which its members are modelling the norms and values and giving rewards for good behaviour.
2. Moral development: to let students go through the stages of moral reasoning and facing "moral dilemmas" to increase their level of morality.
3. Analysis: to help students analyse certain cases scientifically to decide on choosing certain values and ethics.
4. Values clarification: to let students recognise their own values as well as other people's values through different activities such as role playing, discussion and games.
5. Action learning: providing students with opportunities to apply values practically in real life context. This approach is similar to what is called community service, which is taken from

Aristotle's concept of character formation who believes in the idea that a man gets virtuous when he performs virtuous actions (Kraut, 2010). It is important to develop different community service projects to foster children's sense of responsibility and to supervise them on their decision making, engaging all the community including parents in this process (Antes and Norton, 1994). However, children should always be provided with guidance and supervision to act morally in their societies all the time.

### **2.3.2. The History of Character Education in the UK**

In the nineteenth century, the main aim of the primary schools for the poor people in Britain was to focus on producing characters that met the needs of work at that time. The formation of this kind of character among the poor was misapplied by focusing on punishment and discipline taking the shape of social control rather than enhancement of their characters.

The Victorian era focused more on the use of language of character; Victorians in this time believed that human beings have the will to do the right and avoid the wrong expecting them to know and recognise right from wrong and so it was considered a weakness in one's will to do any wrong action. Vagueness and ambiguity in conduct were the result of this kind of character formation. In an attempt at social reconstruction, Robert Owen conducted an experiment as a reflection of the utopian theory of character formation. He advocated the integration of character with society. He established a school and named it 'Institution for the Formation of Character'. This was the first time that character formation idea appeared explicitly but, unluckily, this attempt ended quickly. On the other hand, different ideas discussed character focusing on the idea that character can be formed by education; hence, the notion of character was integrated in institutions and different laws. Although it was not new that schools were places to help students build and reinforce their characters, English primary schools were known by adapting this idea among other schools (Arthur, 2005).

The people of the middle class knew that money could not make them possess the characters of the gentlemen, so they started sending their children to independent schools where they could

find more about the development of their characters. The era of 1820s experienced the recovery of the interest in character development in the public schools for the middle class young people (Rotblatt, 1976: 133-134). This era tried to connect morality with religion to produce the good noble man (Newsome, 1961). A headmaster of a public school called Thomas Arnold supported the middle class and inspired them with the idea of the noble man that can be produced by linking religion with morality. Public schools applied different methods to develop students' character such as games which teach them fairness, loyalty and cooperation with others. Moreover, they helped students build their good character by providing them with the right suitable environment that encourages them to practise good manners and know others of good morality.

The history of character formation at that time faced a lot of ills and all efforts failed in this matter. Educators had various beliefs in character formation and even the teachers' training strategies varied very much. In the twentieth century, the progressives did not agree on many educational practices such as rote learning and the applications of the traditional formal behaviour in schools. However, teaching character education continued to follow the conventional way. During the next era, a new policy for character education appeared with the notion that the main goal of education in the public elementary schooling is to build and strengthen students' characters. As *the handbook of the primary education* (1906) focused on the idea that schools should focus on teaching certain habits such as the habits of industry, self-control, duty, respect and loyalty, later in 1949, a paper was issued by the Ministry of Education (called *Growing Up: At Home, At School and After*). The paper had a whole part on character educations and methods of developing students' characters. Furthermore, *the year book* of the Ministry of Education (1949, p.11) instructed schools to develop students' characters via social activities. Although before the year 1950, there was a clear character and moral teaching as mentioned above, that year, one could rarely find any government reference to moral education.

Between 1950 and 1972 external school programmes emerged given the name of 'character training movement' by Kenneth Roberts et al, (1974, p.12). These programmes were managed by

volunteers and included various group activities such as climbing and walking which reflect group work and feeling the sense of responsibility. In the history of character education in Britain the era between 1960s and 1970s can be seen as the era of the decline in the character education; it declined at the same time as the emergence of cognitive development theories of Kohlberg and Piaget. Psychology was the main approach in character/ moral education, however, the progressive approach focused on rights and child-centred learning. On the other hand, value clarification approach spread widely; in which students have the freedom to choose any moral alternative without any interference of their teachers who in this situation- act as facilitators rather than teachers of morality or guides. Within the duration between the 1980s and 1990s, CE started growing as a way of nurturing values within the UK youth. White (1990) advocated for character education to be implemented again in schools; in 1988 the Conservative Party issued a new curriculum aimed at producing students with good characters and able to face the challenges of the real life by elevating their spiritual, moral, mental and physical development. Later, the National Forum for Values was established in 1996 to support the development of students' morality. It specified certain values to agree upon as the core values such as justice, truth and self-respect. The year 2000 witnessed a new National curriculum issued by the new Labour who strived to 'recognise a broad set of common values and purposes that underpin the school curriculum and the work of schools' (NC, 1999: 10).

In summary, the new Labour government's only aim of CE was to produce citizens who were able to contribute to the economy of their community. The best way of preparing them for this specific job was raising them up in a school environment that enhances qualities that help them become people with abilities that can support their economy (Arthur, 2005). On the other hand a recent United Nations Children's Fund study found that the situation of character education in the UK has worsened; hence there is a crucial need for character education in their schools to guarantee the return of morality and values to their youth (UNICEF, 2007).

### **2.3.3. Character/ Moral Education and its Benefits**

Character is a “body of active tendencies and interests that makes one open, ready, warm to certain aims and callous, cold, blind to others” (Dewey & Tufts, 1910, p. 256). It is a word derived from a Greek word to mean marking or engraving. Thus, it indicates that something is rooted and engraved deeply in a personality. It consists of habits that “pattern our actions in a relatively fixed way” (Niegorski& Ellrod, 1992, p. 143). Character education (CE) is the umbrella term that covers all teaching and learning that take place to promote character development from different aspects of life.

Character development is not simply about the acquisition of academic and social skills, for it is ultimately about the kind of person a student becomes and wants to become and this includes the spiritual and religious dimensions of life (Arthur, 2003, p3).

Hence, it can be postulated that character can be defined as a set of personal qualities and traits that guide people’s conduct; it includes who you are and who you become. It is a combination of having different virtues and values that construct your behaviour, such as being responsible and reliable for your actions by choosing the right choice from among several different choices. Schaeffer (1999) stated that character education is: “the long-term processes of helping young people develop good character, i.e. knowing, caring about, and acting on core ethical values such as fairness, honesty, compassion, responsibility, and respect for self and others” (p. 3). Character education is a comprehensive term that covers implicit and explicit school activities that help in fostering students’ character. However, values issues usually flourish in the content and during every day teaching; according to Hayes and Berkowitz (2007), good character should be integrated into the daily life of children at school. Thus, the role of teachers who are the key players in character education is not restricted to academic education, but it should widen to include working on moral and character education to help pupils learn ethical virtues needed in life, such as, honesty, respect, truthfulness and the ability to make decisions. According to Paige, “teachers have a significant responsibility in character building (2002, p. 712)”.

On the other hand, scholars do not agree on a certain definition for character education, as it is broad in scope and difficult to be defined specifically (Otten, 2000). As this study is interested in the role and the effect of Western teachers on developing national students' character, it tends to agree with the definition that includes all the effort that schools inject to enhance learning of morality and ethical values such as caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility, respect and other important moral values (Lickona, Schaps, & Lewis, 2007). This comprehensive definition indicates that every aspect of schooling should be utilised properly to develop children's characters whether through the content of the curriculum, school's culture, teachers, disciplines or students' relationships with each other. It also includes the school's role in enhancing relationships with parents as they have an influential effect on constructing and fostering their children's characters. Character education appears mostly through numerous programs and initiatives although it cannot be considered as an addition to lessons in a busy school curriculum. It is a smart way of teaching morality and ethics within the teaching of different subjects. If character education is applied comprehensively, it builds up and nurtures values in every aspect of a student's life (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2006). Teaching students their values and manners is considered as an important tool to build a decent human character (Howard, Berkowitz, & Schaeffer, 2004). It can be seen also that parents do not expect teachers and schools to provide their children with knowledge only, but also to teach them morality and to help them develop positive moral character. Henson (2001) concludes -from examining journal entries of pre-service teachers- that educators believed that, teachers were moral leaders, moralizing agents and people who should take responsibility for their students' developing of their belief systems.

Enhancing and promoting good character is a substantial topic in most of the societies due to its major impact on the whole community. However, it can be theorised that a person's character starts developing during childhood stage and continues to develop through all his/her life. Thus, a big responsibility lies on parents to help their children develop appropriate morals and virtues

in their character (Boyer, 1995). On the other hand, schools have the lion's share in developing children's character and morals since they spend much time at schools on a daily basis. Kohlberg and Hersh (1977, p. 53) stated that, "Whether we like it or not, schooling is a moral enterprise".

To sum up, character education (CE) is a well-known term in the education literature; it simply means to care about the wellbeing of students to enable them to be well prepared and ready to face the real life situations and challenges; character education provides students with real teaching of the core values, ethics and good examples they need, to be good citizens in their societies. According to Lickona,

The core message of character education is the idea that there are traits of good character that children ought to know and learn by example; these traits are: caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility, and respect for others and self (1991, p. 45).

There are lots of advocates for character education, on the other hand, there are some arguments against it; some scholars criticised and opposed the importance of character education and its programmes; for example, Leming (1993) argued that character education's different activities have no effect on students when it comes to real life situations as they do not always show the best behaviour or practise the way they learnt it. Black (1996) supported Leming as she expressed her doubts about school's role of developing students' morality; she added that it is not right to ask teachers who have not received any training or with little knowledge about character education to teach it in addition to teaching their own subjects. Nash (1997) stated that the character education various programmes are insufficient to promote students' ability to be positive members in their societies as they focus on certain aspects and ignore others. Kohn (1997) also believed that character education is all about teaching students and asking them to show goodness in all acts and promising them with different kinds of rewards, in order to do what others want them to do. Therefore, teaching students in this way stops them from being involved in real analytical and ethical discussions that help them think critically and reflect on them. He added that providing students with extrinsic rewards when teaching character, affects the inner motivation negatively, hence, they choose to do the right not because it is right, but

because it leads to receiving a reward. He also criticised the way of teaching character through most of the programmes and described it as a direct way of choosing to do the right moral act without knowing the real reason behind this choice, therefore, students apply what they learn in the programme without knowing or thinking whether this is right or wrong.

However, some people feel that religion can only help people develop moral characters (Kohn, 1997). Thus to avoid the conflict of whose values to apply, the light should be shed on what is known as universal values which are studied by different researchers like, (Lickona, 1996; Etzioni, 1997; Kohn, 1997; DeRoche & Williams, 1998). Universal values include a variety of values like respect, responsibility, love and courage which can lead and guide children to live a moral life; therefore, universal values play a dynamic and positive role in the development of the children's societies. To sum up, this study accepts the notion of universal values as they are effective tools to guide students toward the required values in all communities.

On the other hand, it should be noted that character education in Arabic Islamic countries is called *Tarbiyah Akhlaqiyyah* which means to nurture children's manners to become well-behaved and righteous. It is based on bringing up Muslim children upon good Islamic manners. *Tarbiyah* aims at nurturing children to reach a stage where they can fulfil their duties towards Allah and to live an Islamic way of life following Prophet Mohammed's guidance (AS). However, it is important for Muslims to be mindful of the Islamic *Akhlaq* (good manners and morals) and to recognise that they are significant components of Islam. However, the *Tarbiyah*, manners, good habits and values should be instilled in the children's character by their parents as well as their schools. *Tarbiyah Akhlaqiyyah*, includes but not limited to truthfulness, respect, kindness, honesty and other virtues that should be part of the Muslim's character. Moreover, Muslim children should learn that bad habits, such as lying and dishonesty must be completely avoided.



However, it can be hypothesised that some of the Arab educators may argue that Arabic Islamic countries including the UAE do not need character education due to the fact that the religion of Islam covers all aspects of the human being's life including morality, manners and good behaviour. This is true, for example, all UAE public schools pay attention to this fundamental issue and so, Islamic values are the foundations of everything that happens at schools including all teaching and learning which are directed towards the Islamic *Tarbiyah*. Following the Islamic *Tarbiyah* produces students who believe in one God, follow Prophet Mohammed's directions, consider him as their ideal and imitate his manners and behaviours in all aspects of life. While the situation in public schools is not of any concern, the international schools' situation is different. They guide their Muslim students' characters toward *Tarbiyah Akhlaqiyyah* only through the three subjects of the Islamic Studies, Arabic language and Social studies. The rest of the curriculum is always directed to various international issues. This situation is due to various reasons including that there is a variety of students with different nationalities and different religions coming from various places in the world, so those schools cannot teach the Islamic *Tarbiyah Akhlaqiyyah* for all students.

However, whether it is character education or *Tarbiyah Akhlaqiyyah*, the benefits of developing children's character is of great importance. In the literature, there are various studies conducted to highlight the benefits of character education. Ernest Boyer (1987) clarified that there is an urgent need for the learning of moral/ character education. He added that it would be a disaster if values are put on the fringes while they should be prioritised. Therefore, moral education is seen as a necessity for current generations of young people who should have a solid foundation of values and ethics especially in the light of globalisation and the effect of media and technologies on their character.

Furthermore, character education helps children nurture their positive moral character to be able to be better people in their societies ready to contribute to life locally and internationally.

Lickona (1993) asserts that character education is an effective remedy as it includes:

Good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good. Schools must help children understand the core values, adapt or commit to them and then act upon them in their own lives (p.9).

Therefore, character education is a means of developing and enhancing students' character to be the full rounded person in all aspects of life.

Education is about active character development, not an exclusive process about the acquisition of academic and social skills. It is ultimately about the kind of person a student becomes and wants to become and this includes the moral, spiritual and religious dimensions of life (Arthur, 2003, p.3).

Various international studies have been conducted trying to investigate the perceptions of different slices of the community towards character education and its importance. For example, in (1991), Wood and Roach conducted a study to investigate the perceptions of administrators towards character education in South Dakota. In the study, a questionnaire was administered and handed out to two hundred randomly selected administrators. Administrators were asked to comment on different topics including character education in the curriculum and the parents and teacher's support. The study showed that 99% of the participants felt that character education is very important and it should be integrated in the curriculum and taught to children to develop their moral sense. They also added that the support of the teachers and the parents is there but the situation is not working properly with only 50% of teachers who had received training to help in character education. Consequently, many recommendations were suggested for preparing some workshops for training teachers and parents and spreading awareness among teachers to develop their character educational knowledge.

Another study conducted by (Burk et al, 2001) by a group of researchers with the purpose of investigating the perceptions of students towards character education showed that most of the students agreed that they should abide by regulations that develop their characters. Nisivoccia (1998) conducted a study to find the perceptions of the parents and stakeholders towards

character education. The majority of the participants believed that the school plays an important role in teaching morality and ethics for students which affect their characters positively.

Another study conducted by Skinner (2013) explores the perceptions of first grade teachers at a north Georgia elementary school regarding a certain character education program. The results showed that there is a significant lack of research on educators' perspectives on the curriculum; four themes were identified to be considered when adopting any programme, including, a) how much they like the chosen curriculum, b) the benefits of character education programme, c) a question of who is responsible for character education, and d) a separation of personal beliefs. According to some participating teachers, they found that the character education programme they use is very challenging and not helpful in developing students' morality; while others found it very interesting and needs to be simplified and modelled by the teachers themselves to be more useful.

Character and moral education is useful in the sense that learning different values and morals such as honesty, respect, responsibility and self-discipline can be effective in enhancing students' abilities. Hence, they can focus on themselves and make the right decision as they relate what they usually learn at school with their own real life (Pearson & Nicholson, 2000). Moral education helps students act more ethically, socially and academically, as CE is a comprehensive term that includes different aspects of life, such as, emotional, intellectual and moral aspects. Children should be raised up in a way that helps them act morally in their community where they respect other people and be respected by others. According to Youniss and Yates (1999), people have to 'share a common humanity' and that respect must extend 'from particular persons to society in general' (p. 369). Moreover, CE can potentially help children avoid negative behaviours, appreciate humanity and morality, share good qualities with everybody and have more confidence and self esteem. According to Smagorinsky and Taxel (2005), character education helps children develop emotional intelligence which enable them to operate properly in different situations and to be good learners with better personalities. It helps them respect their

characters and develop better understanding for their abilities which leads to further achievements of their personal goals.

It is worth noting that although a number of studies have demonstrated that character education has a positive influence not only on students' characters, but also on their academic performance, educators often ask whether character education improves and promotes academic learning or not. However, character/ moral education is seen as an effective tool for helping students promote their academic performance. On the other hand, academic excellence does not create success on its own; it needs values and ethics to make it a big success (Child Heart Resources, 1999). Arthur, et al clarified that "character education in fact has a positive effect on academic performance (2009, p. 11)". According to Benninga, et al. (1993), schools that link their targets and aims with character education programmes usually have high levels of academic achievements.

One of the important studies that examined the relationship between character education and academic progress is a study by Roeser et al. (2000) who established a correlation between character education and good academic performance. They articulate that, less discipline problems were faced when more character education is integrated into the curriculum and better academic performance was achieved in return. Another study concluded that there is a correlation between the instruction of character education curriculum and a reduction of discipline problems as well as improvement in students' academic progress (Richardson et al, 2009). More recently, Shields (2011) expounded the values of character education:

The goal of education is not acquiring knowledge alone, but developing the dispositions to seek and use knowledge in effective and ethical ways. When we focus on the character of the learner, rather than the contents of learning, we address what's likely to be sustained through time and circumstances (p.49).

In one of Lickona's studies, he showed a certain correlation between character education and academic success; he articulated that character education influences students' attitudes positively

towards learning and leads to a higher grade attainment. Lickona demonstrated that, “Growing in character means developing both our ethical potential and our intellectual potential” (2004, p. 121). Snyder, Vuchinich et al. declared that different character education programmes at schools have a critical influence on improving both students’ attainment and behaviour (2012). Having virtues, such as responsibility, diligence and self-discipline, results in increasing students’ abilities to work and to become better members of their communities. Consequently, performance of students cannot be separated from their ethics. Schools that care for character education should care for both aspects, intellectual and academic excellence, as both of them are of great importance in character education. On the other hand, Weber and Ruch asserted that research shows that having certain character traits such as responsibility and self-reliance are very much related to academic success (2012). In the same way, it is asserted that the positive effect of character education at schools is presented through promoting students’ good attitude to learning and the feeling that it is their responsibility to learn and to put more effort into working independently. Meanwhile their tendency to work cooperatively will increase and their academic attainment will be better (Lovat, Toomey et al., 2009). A different study by Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn and Smith conducted in 681 elementary schools in California, asserted the link between academic success and applying character education at schools. This study added that the two variables that have the most important effect on promoting students’ attainment, are the importance of teachers and parents’ modelling of good characters and the importance of providing students with opportunities to contribute to school and to the community’s morality (2003). Various studies asserted that when students feel that their school provides them with safety, appreciation and respect, they can focus more on their academic performance and get better grades. Indeed, when students understand the meaning of hard work and its importance for them to be good and successful people in the community, they will do their best to reach their real potential which will of course lead them to improve themselves academically. Elliot (1998) found that schools which have implemented character education programs recorded better results in certain standardised academic tests. Furthermore, Park and Peterson clarified that students at schools with character education tend to do things the right way including their behaviour in

classrooms and their effort they put into learning which in return results in a better academic performance (2006).

A different study conducted by Robert (2005) in which he asked few questions about the importance of character education, revealed that, sometimes character education is being neglected for the sake of the academic performance of students. The study concluded that educators should strive to promote moral and intellectual character at the same time. Robert recommended appropriate character education to be embedded within academic content towards producing optimum results in all aspects of the student's life and his society.

#### **2.3.4 Universal Values**

It can be postulated that values are the heart of the character; they are the engine that drives people's behaviour. Core values can be considered as fundamental components of any culture. However, when discussing teaching values, the question of whose values to be taught is the main issue of educators. The question is "should we apply teachers' values or parents' values?" Or, "is there any other alternative appropriate in this case?" Schools, for example, thrive to educate students' morals and good values but they are always confused what kind of values should be implemented to establish good characters. However, having core values will influence students' characters positively and make them responsible, confident and sincere leaders in their societies as well as globally. They are also of utmost importance in the sense that they ground people's ethical decision-making in their life. When Williams (2000) described the important role of schools in implementing character education, he highlighted the significance of the application of universal values through "creating schools that foster ethical, responsible and caring young people by modelling and teaching good character through an emphasis on universal values that we all share" (p. 1). Lickona (1991) asserted that there are two points that should be clarified when talking about universal values:

There are objectively worthwhile, universal, agreed-upon values that schools can and should teach in pluralistic societies; and 2) schools should not only expose students to these values but also help them to understand, internalise and act upon such values (p.38).

Although the list of “common moral values” might differ among communities, there is, nonetheless, a “core” and a “large overlap in the content that emerges” (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999, p. 50). Many advocates call for the implementation of universal agreed values, Bell, 1994; Christians & Tarber, 1997, Gert, 1970; Krieger, 1991; Patterson, 1996; Russel, 1984). They called for the acceptance of global ethics for humanity to survive. Bell argued that it is crucial to have universal values otherwise “we are left with no way to condemn cannibalism, physical torture, wife beating, child abuse, slavery, murder, or genocide if they are part of the habitual practice and cultural traditions of a group” (p. 18). In literature, a list of various universal values was triggered by religious or political organisations and various writers, such as, (Hick, 1992; Kane, 1994; Maciver, 1952) clarified that, for example, the Golden Rule, which can be found in all religions and is about being good with all people and treating others the way you like them to treat you, is one of the most important values; it is the value that underpins other universal values. Wilson (1991) considered forgiveness and justice as universal values. Other writers referred to the holy books to find their core universal list, such as responsibility, truthfulness and self-discipline (Bell, 1994; Christians and Tarber, 1997; Gert, 1970; Harrelson, 1980; Hick, 1992; Kane, 1994; Kidder, 1994). According to the ancient Greeks, there are nine core virtues that should be available in good character. These virtues are wisdom, justice, fortitude, self-control, love, positive attitude, hard work, integrity and humility (Lickona, 2003). These values are seen as essential and highly required by all societies as they lead to the success of individuals and societies as well as providing them with critical underpinning for building a flourishing and successful life.

### **2.3.5. Emiratis and Religion in the UAE**

This section describes the life of the UAE people, their faith and their qualities, the way they live and the way they communicate and deal with other people.

### 2.3.5.1. Religious Faith

UAE religion is Islam; people in the UAE usually do not separate their life from their religion as it covers all aspects of their life, including spiritual, social, cultural and emotional aspects. Islam offers a comprehensive framework for morality. It depends on five pillars:

- 1- *Shahadatan*: to testify that there is no God but Allah and Mohammad (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) is his Messenger.
- 2- *Salah*: to pray five times a day. Allah *Subhanahu Wata'ala* says: “maintain with care the [obligatory] prayers and [in particular] the middle prayer and stand before Allah, *devoutly* obedient (*Surat al-Baqara* 2: 238)
- 3- *Sawm*: to fast during the month of Ramadan in which Muslims stop eating and drinking from dawn to sunset. In the Qur'an, Allah ta'ala says: “o you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may (learn) self-restraint” (*Surah Al-Baqara* 2:183).
- 4- *Zakah*: to pay the purifying dues once a year in which they help poor people by donating them some money under certain conditions. In *Surat al-Baqara*, Allah says: “you shall observe the Contact Prayers (*Salat*) and give the obligatory charity (*Zakat*), and bow down with those who bow down” (*Surah Al-Baqara* 2:43).
- 5- *Hajj*: to perform pilgrimage once in lifetime at Makka in Saudi Arabia.

“And proclaim to the people the Hajj [pilgrimage]; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every distant pass” (*Al-Hajj* 22:27).

Islam requires each Muslim to live by the five pillars of Islam as they urge them to do good acts and stop them from doing any sin. Muslims feel that God (Allah) watches them all the time that is why they need to be good and kind to others all the time

“This is the Book in which there is no doubt, a guidance for those who have Taqwa; who believe in the unseen, and who establish *Salah*, and spend out of what we have provided for them” (*Surah Baqarah* 2: 2-3)



Islam also encourages Muslims to live by the Islamic values such as, integrity, tolerance, modesty, *Ihsan* (perfection), piety (fearing Allah), compassion, honesty, brotherhood, truthfulness, kindness and all kinds of *Amal Saleh* (good deed).

“Indeed, Allah will admit those who believe and do righteous deeds to gardens beneath which rivers flow. Indeed, Allah does what He intends” (*Al Hajj* 22:14)

Al-Ghazali described the message of Islam as the message of good behaviour:

These teachings of Prophet show that Islam had come to illuminate the lives of the people with the light of virtue and good manners, to create in them brightness of character, and fill them with the pearls of good conduct (2004, p.11).

In Islam the best among Muslims are those with the best manners who will be receiving the best rewards in the hereafter. Morality can be considered as one of the main cornerstones in Islam. Islamic moral system encourages Muslim not only to avoid evil and vice, but also to contribute to morality of society as a whole. Prophet Mohammed is the Muslims’ ideal whose manners are the best; Muslims believe that emulating the Prophet’s good behaviour leads to Paradise in the other life after death, which urges them to do their best to act ethically.

### **2.3.5.2 UAE People**

People of the UAE are known as typical of the Arabs for their hospitality, resilience and generosity; they are always ready to provide food and a shelter for their guests no matter what their financial situation is. Loyalty and appreciation for the family, respect and courtesy are also important values for the Emirati people. Family is important in the UAE and all the children live by their families until they get married. Moreover, extended family in the UAE is well known in which families live together or next to each other in the same area. In addition, respect to their elders is one of their top priorities. People of the UAE are open minded, ready for new ideas and

new experiences; they are ambitious and always plan for the best for everyone in the community; the UAE vision for education “2021” is one example in which they have planned the best education for their youth without losing their culture. Although the Emirati people are open to the world’s innovations, at the same time, they make sure that the Islamic values are the basics and the foundations of all of their plans which make it impossible for globalisation to erode or change their Islamic and Arabic culture, religion and heritage. Arabic is their main language that they use for communication among families; however, part of Vision 2021 is that the UAE will be a centre for welcoming scholars and researchers who will be adding richness to Arabic language; it will also be a place for translating important scientific, literary and other resources to Arabic language ([www.uaeinteract.com](http://www.uaeinteract.com)). As the Qur’an, the Muslim’s holy book, is in Arabic, Arabic language is associated to the religion of the Emirati people. Ahmed clarifies that “unlike many other languages, is not just a language of communication, it is the basis of the religion which is pivotal to the whole way of life, the culture and the cultural identities of its members” (2011, p. 125). Although Arabic language is the official language of the country, due to the diversity of the residents of the UAE and their various languages, English is also used for communication.

Currently, the situation of the UAE youth is like the situation of other youth in other countries. The world has become a small village through social media, including, different social networking sites like ‘Facebook’ and ‘Twitter’. The present situation of the rapid evolution of technology enables the youth to have a full access to socialise with different kinds of people from different countries around the world and to be exposed to various opinions, mentalities and perspectives through different means of communication. In addition to various life styles which, in return, may affect the youth attitudes and mentalities positively and negatively

### **2.3.6 Excerpts of Policies Related to Character/Moral Education**

As a result of globalisation, the Western life style has influenced various Arab countries’ life style, (Ibrahim, et al., 2000). However, it can be postulated that the family should take the lead in taking the first steps in building and developing morality among their children. The second step

should be taken by schools in which they utilise ethics as a way of life to foster the good morals and manners among their students.

In reviewing the literature of character education, it is clear that there is no official character education programmes taught in most of the Arab countries. A few countries have adopted some programmes of character education as a result of the Western countries' influence on their educational system. Egypt, for example, is one of the few Arab countries which apply character education in a few international schools only. Educators in Egypt pointed out that in high socio-economic classes, and as a result of globalisation, adolescents have been highly affected by the Western life style through social media, (Ibrahim, et al., 2000). Consequently, some international schools have adopted some character education's programs from America and tried to adjust them to fit the context of Egypt. While those programmes of character education have been adopted in certain American schools in Egypt, it is worth noting that, the rest of the schools in Egypt have not paid any attention to character education programmes.

On the other hand, it should be noticed that, as mentioned previously, although Arabic countries are not familiar with the programmes of CE that the Western countries adopt in order to strengthen their children's character, Arabic Islamic countries have the Islam which pays attention to the importance of building Muslims' character the right Islamic way, providing parents and teachers with detailed guidance to follow in this matter.

In Saudi Arabia, the educational policy aims at making education accessible to all the members of the community to enable them to participate in constructing their future to reach their ambitions. Thus, there are important initiatives and educational projects such as, 'Education for All' which is a long term plan aiming for the best in the education sector in the Kingdom. The project's main aim is to provide all with the basic education by 2015 (Towagry, 1973). The Saudi document in education is regarded as the first reference related to education issues including the aims of education, and various educational plans and systems of the Kingdom. Regarding the development of character, it is vital to mention that, firstly, character education is not known in Saudi Arabia and secondly, the Kingdom derives all of its legislations from Islam,

thus everything should evolve around it. However, the aims of the educational policy regarding students' character development are:

- To raise their children according to the beliefs and values of Islam, in addition to preparing them to be effective members of the society, and to be able to contribute socially and economically.
- Religious studies are obligatory for all students in all classes.
- All sciences and other kinds of knowledge should be presented in a way that suits the Islamic culture, making sure that all is compatible with Islam (Development of Education, 2001)

The following is a report taken from an educational-website: Islam is both integral and the core of education. The principles of education formulated by the Higher Committee of Educational Policy include the responsibility to:

Strengthen faith in God and Islam and in Mohammed; .....instil Islamic ideals; engender faith in human dignity; incorporate religious education and maintain Islamic culture at all educational levels; integrate Islamic orientation in sciences and knowledge in the curricula and teaching; stimulate human knowledge through Islam to raise the nation's standard of living; and teach the importance of Saudi history and the preservation of the Islamic religion.

[Accessed Sep 8 2004] <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1302/Saudi-Arabia-Educational-System-overview.html#ixzz2xnajmhe9>

In Singapore, based on a report issued by the Ministry of Education, the Minister of Education has stated the fundamental keys in their educational policy which make Singapore's education system a great success. He mentioned that, related to character education, their policy strives to develop their students' characters in a holistic way, including, moral and social, academic and physical development. It also focuses on the importance of a proper implementation of the policy and the importance of cooperation among all parties to make it easy for them to achieve their targets. A report published in 2014 by the Ministry of Education clarifies the policy of character

education in Singapore describing it as a policy that pays great attention to character and citizenship education and focuses on students' relations with each other, with peers at the school and with the whole community. Moreover, through applying different kinds of teaching approaches in addition to classroom lessons as well as experiential programs, students learn how to value relationships with others and how to respect and appreciate the diverse abilities of others in their societies. Through a program called Values in Action (VIA) and Co-Curricular Activities (CCA), students are provided with opportunities to be involved and to interact with other people from different backgrounds and abilities. Thus, collectively, students are encouraged to initiate collective actions to improve the lives of others in the school and the wider community (Ministry of Education, Singapore).

In the UK, from the ancient times up to the present time, character education has been given special care. There were few decades when character education stopped to be taught in several Western democracies. Currently, it is the government that supports character education as it is considered as a means of teaching citizenship. However, it is clear that there is not any consensus at schools in the UK on which virtues should be taught. The British society is pluralistic, and so, character is connected to politics as it is considered as a means of producing good citizens (Arthur 2008). Character education is a compulsory subject in the UK; two papers were published in 2001 clarifying the UK policy toward character education, the Green Paper, *Schools: Building on Success* (February, 2001) and the White Paper, *Schools: Achieving Success* (September, 2001). These two papers focused on allowing more social values to take place in schools whereby character education in this era is similar to character education in 1949 in focusing on social values. The White Paper advocates *Excellence in Schools* and it focuses on the role of families in guiding their children towards the appreciation of the moral code on which civilized societies tend to be based (1997, p.10). The main aim of this policy is to guide students' behaviour and to help them in making decisions in a democratic environment. The politicians in the UK advocated for character education as a result of the many ills that they face in their societies, such as, the increased number of crimes and the social disorder that is taking place in the UK (Anderson, 1992). However, character education is back on the agenda in British

educational policy in the shape of programmes, but there is much uncertainty on how it should be implemented at schools and there is no specific definition of character education to them. This is not surprising since there has clearly been a long history of ill-conceived and ineffective programs of character education in the UK and other countries. Currently, the government in the UK is encouraging the teaching of virtues at schools in order to help in developing students' character. However, there is no clear consent on which virtues are to be taught and the way to teach them (Arthur, 2003). Nevertheless, the government encourages schools to teach character education to develop certain initiatives and practices for the sake of their communities such as the value of responsibility, self-reliance, honesty and citizenship. The UK government strives to encourage a collective effort for the benefit of the whole community (QCA, 1999).

Referring to the educational policy of the UAE, national identity is one of the top priorities. It is clearly pointed out by His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahayan, the President of the UAE who said that "he who has no identity, does not exist in the present and has no place in the future". Hence, one of the most important points in the UAE vision of 2021 is to have confident citizens who are socially responsible, and who have a lively culture that will remain founded on continuous and moderate Islamic values. Educational system is expected to support the UAE vision 2021 in reinforcing the national identity and citizenship of Emirati students.

The education system of the UAE is strongly influenced by Arab and Islamic values. Consequently, later and when schools were established, Islamic Studies continues to be the core subject in all public schools. Character and moral education are taught through the official curriculum of the Islamic Studies as well as cross curricula. All other subjects in these schools use Arabic language as a means of teaching and guiding students toward the Islamic values. For example, in her discussion of education in the UAE, Findlow (2008) clarifies that "throughout the remainder of the 20th century, the country's successive education policies trailed a fairly consistent path of religious observance (p.344)". The case is not the same in international private schools in which several curricula are followed, such as, American, Indian and British curricula.

Islamic Studies in international private schools is one the three core subjects (Arabic, Islamic Studies and Social Studies) taught by Arab teachers, using Arabic language for all native speakers of Arabic. The three core subjects are administered by ADEC. The document of Islamic Studies (*Alwatheeqah*) published by the Ministry of Education (2011) clearly explains the aims of the Islamic Studies curriculum which focuses on building the Muslim's character in the light of the Qur'anic teachings and the Sunnah of Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him). It also focuses on the importance of developing students' appreciation for national identity, Arabic language, culture and civilization. According to ADEC inspection notes, most international private schools give too low priority to these subjects.

Recently, Emirati parents increasingly opt for international private schools, due to their good reputation. Moreover, fluency in English language is highly appreciated as it is one of the UAE market requirements as it is mainly the language of communication in most of workplaces. In international schools, Western teachers are the majority with a small number of Arab teachers to teach the three core subjects. All the rest of the subjects are directed toward the type of curriculum that schools follow. The problem starts from the fact that the Emirati people are keen to raise up their children in an Islamic Arabic school environment which cannot be provided by most of the international schools. However, the Islamic Arabic values are only taught through the three core subjects, as mentioned previously, and the rest of other subjects are taught in English and directed toward the British curriculum.

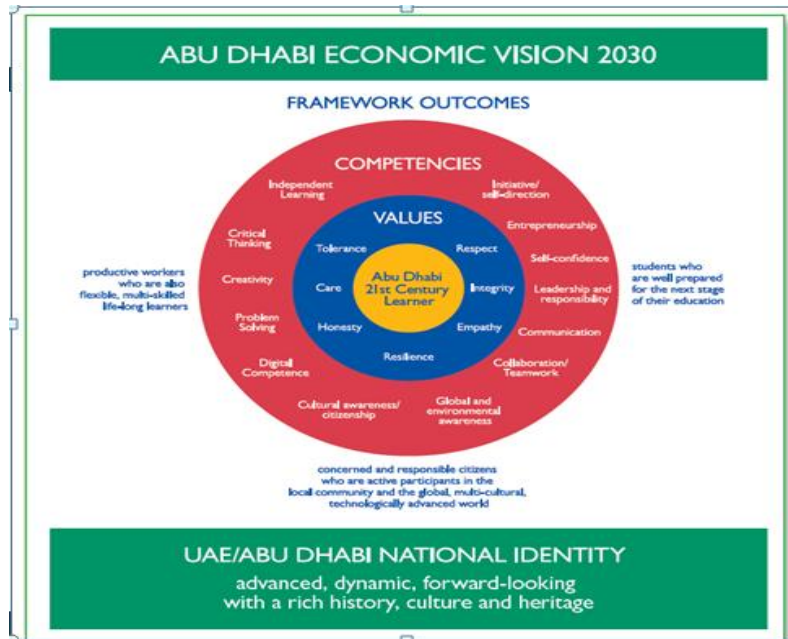
However, culture is an important element that should be taken into consideration when talking about education of the Emirati children. Culture can be defined as "the ever-changing values, traditions, social and political relationships and world view created and shared by a group of people bound together by a combination of factors that can include a common history, geographic location, language, social class and or religion" (Nicto,1996, p.138). Thus, there is a genuine Emirati culture that all the Emiratis are proud of, and so, educators need to ensure that the Emirati culture is visible and part of their every day practices. Furthermore, research proved that, "interestingly, the situation in the international schools in the UAE resulted in an encounter

between Emirati students on the one hand, and Western-trained teachers on the other hand” (Ibrahim et al, 2013, p. 2). Western teachers’ values and cultures are different, at the same time they have to ensure that they are consistent with the country’s Arabic traditions and Islamic values. Syed (2003), argued,

Although foreign teachers bring diversity into the classroom, and although some use contextually situated pedagogy, there are wide gaps in the expatriate educators’ (especially non-Arabs) knowledge of local socio-cultural communities and languages (p. 338-339).

According to Shaheen, UAE should take serious decision on having a unified educational policy in which the national religious values are highlighted to help in developing a generation that feels proud of its culture and identity (2009). Taking into account that 24% of the national students are enrolled in private schools, ADEC in 2012 has issued various regulations to all private schools; part of those regulations is about the core values that all private schools’ staff should abide by and work accordingly. These core values are: team work which focuses on the importance of cooperation among all, integrity and honesty, transparency which means dealing with others in a clear, sincere and honest manner, respect for all including respect for students, colleagues, guardians and community and accountability which means care and compassion and resolution. All private schools were encouraged to abide by the moral obligations of the regulations in which they have to function according to the morals, values and culture of the country. They also cannot have any activity that may insult the UAE religion. On the other hand, ADEC has issued an important document by Private Schools and Quality Assurance Sector (PSQA) which is part of their strategic plan (2013-2017), aiming at the best quality of education that supports Abu Dhabi Economic vision (2030) as shown in figure 2.3.





**Figure 2.3: The Student Competency Framework for Private Schools in Abu Dhabi**

The (PSQA) contains a framework for students’ competencies (SFC). This significant document indeed can be considered as a serious step towards the formation of the students’ competencies and skills; it is part of ADEC’s plans which aim at developing students’ competencies according to a well-studied plan directed to all private schools in Abu Dhabi, targeting all students, so they will be well prepared to reach high international standards of education. They will be equipped with all they need to be productive members in their communities capable of supporting their economy to be internationally recognised. The framework’s structure is based on three components: core values, themes and a group of distinct competences, as in Table 2.2.

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Learning and thinking skills</i>	<i>Personal and social skills</i>	<i>National and global citizenship skills</i>
<i>Competences developed to enable a student to become....</i>	<i>A skilled, creative, productive and tolerant member of society</i>	<i>A cohesive, productive and tolerant member of society</i>	<i>An active participant in the global, multicultural, technologically advanced world</i>
<i>Values</i>	<i>Resilience, respect, empathy, care, honesty, integrity, tolerance</i>		
<i>Core Competences</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Critical thinking</i></li> <li>- <i>Creativity and innovation</i></li> <li>- <i>Problem solving</i></li> <li>- <i>Independent learning</i></li> <li>- <i>Digital competence</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Communication</i></li> <li>- <i>Collaboration/teamwork</i></li> <li>- <i>Leadership and responsibility</i></li> <li>- <i>Self-confidence</i></li> <li>- <i>Entrepreneurship</i></li> <li>- <i>Initiative/self-direction</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Global and environment awareness</i></li> <li>- <i>Cultural awareness/citizenship</i></li> </ul>

**Table 2.2: Content and Structure of the Abu Dhabi Student Competency Frameworks**

Core values:

1. Resilience, respect, empathy, integrity, honesty, caring and, tolerance are the planned values that SCF aims at implementing in students' character. The SCF focuses on the importance of modelling the right value by teachers and all those work at the school. Furthermore, it is expected that teachers include these values in their planning and delivery of their subjects.

Themes:

2. The competencies in the framework are classified into three themes;

- Learning and thinking skills which help students promote creativity and flexibility and enable them to be effective workers.
- Personal and social skills which provide students with qualities that help them achieve their own targets such as, collaboration and communication
- National and global citizenship skills which refer to those traits that enable students to realise their important role locally and globally in a world of ongoing progress of technology.

Other distinctive competencies:

3. Other competencies are included in the framework such as leadership, global and environmental awareness and other competencies.

Paying a closer look at the Student Competency Frameworks (SCF), there are few important points that are directly related to this study; therefore, the researcher should highlight them. The first one is to make sure that values rooted in the framework's structure are adopted and activated in all private schools, including international schools while the second point is that the student competency framework should be adapted to reflect the cultural and social context of the UAE.

To sum up, in the UAE, there are clear rules that guide the development of students' character (SCF); however, they lack clear guidance on how to apply them. Nevertheless, the following questions should be asked: are Western teachers familiar with those regulations? Are they provided with sufficient and suitable training of what is called pre- service training which qualifies them to act according to the culture, heritage and religion of the country?

However, teachers' job is crucial as they teach and lead a whole generation. Therefore, they should receive professional development related to cultural awareness on a regular basis to avoid cultural conflicts. Kramsch stated that wherever cultures are different, "there always a potential source of conflict when one culture enters into contact with another" (1993, p. 1).

### **2.3.7. The Role of Parents and Teachers in Character/Moral Education**

Although a teacher's significant role in character education is vital, the parents' role is not of less importance. According to Henson (2001), "parents and teachers are united, but their roles are disjointed in the development of character" (p. 50). Since the amount of children with behavioural problems and other attitude issues continues to be on the rise, character education is becoming a necessity (Brannon, 2008, p. 59). However, the most profound effect on children's character comes firstly from their families. Most of the disruptive behaviours such as, bullying are affected or caused by the students' family background, economic circumstances and lack of parental guidance (Barton, 2004; Haycock, 2006). Berkowitz and Bier (2005), emphasised that in order to develop the personality of a child, the role of his parents should be effective. It is believed that the major influence on children's characters comes from the family and the surrounding environment including, social, behavioural, moral and even academic development (Berkowitz & Grych, 1998; Lickona, 1983). It can be seen that children develop their character through living in a loving, caring family which teaches them the core values, for example, the meaning of love through experiencing different types of love that they experience within their families. Arthur et al., stated that "Mothers are the most influential people on students' moral identity" (2006, p. 6) and Lickona (2004) clarified that people start developing their characters the moment they are born or even before that, taking into consideration the genes' impact on characters. Bull (1969) also clarified that, "the child is not born with a built-in moral conscience. But he is born with those natural, biologically purposive capacities that make him potentially a moral being" (p.15). Therefore, he will be in need of his parents' guidance and supervision to grow as a moral individual in his society. However, the connection between parents and children has a tremendous effect on the development of the children's characters. Berkowitz and Grych (1998) believe that the family is the core of culture, which means that moral values will be transmitted to the children by their parents who reinforce morality and goodness in their children. Research literature shows that what takes place in the first years of the child's life has an influential effect on the development of their character. Thus, parents are the first guides for their children, in which they guide and train them on facing various life challenges (Covey,

1997). Furthermore, Danielson believes that the role of the parents as moral models is important because they can be considered as their children's first moral teachers (1998).

In a study by Henderson and Berla (1994), they clarified that parental role in children's education can determine their success at school, therefore it is very influential. On the other hand, Colker, (nd), Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Jordan, Orozco, & Avere, 2001) stated that there are various benefits of involving parents in the education of their children including high academic achievement and good behaviour. However, some scholars argue that students refer to their teachers when their parents do not feel responsible for teaching them their values (Brannon, 2008; Cronin, 1999; Davis, 2005; Dovre, 2007; Gonzales, 1996; Suh & Traiger, 1999; Winton, 2008). The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues at the University of Birmingham conducted several studies that produced some valuable research insights about the connections between character education and parents. One of these researches has been conducted with a sample of 4,000 young people (15 year olds) in the UK, focusing on three virtues of honesty, courage and self-discipline. After making the young people face a series of moral dilemmas, it is found that those who have both parents at home understand these virtues more than students who live in single parent families. It can be seen that parents have a vital responsibility in fostering the goodness of their children's character. Their responsibility should be based on love as Lickona mentioned in some of his work; love provides children with a safe and a healthy environment in which they can easily develop positive ethical character. Yet, schools have to ensure the involvement of parents in their children's education. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) have discussed the importance of parents' involvement in their children's education, focusing on three important factors that may affect their involvement. Firstly, it is the duty of schools to make it easy for parents to understand their significant role in their children's education. Secondly, some parents do not involve themselves in their children's education, because they may feel that they are not able to support their children anymore as they get older, which means that it will become as a challenge for the parents to help their children in something they don't know. Thirdly, some parents avoid going to their children's schools because they do not feel that they are welcome as there are various restrictions on visiting these schools, although most schools appear to be

supporters for the idea of cooperation between parents and schools for the sake of the well-being of students.

According to Lickona's (1993) approach, the responsibility of teaching morality to students is the job of all, including the school, the parents and everyone in the community. However, as teaching character education is part of schools' responsibilities, thus, teachers should be aware of the important role they play. They should handle this job properly and model the best behaviour to their students. Teachers should think of enhancing student's character as an important part of their professional responsibility. On the other hand, if parental care is absent, it is still the job of the school to prepare a suitable moral environment with well-prepared teachers to help in developing morality among students. In the United States, a study conducted in the year 1993 found that 90% of the participants agreed that schools should teach core ethical values such as courage, acceptance, and honesty to its students (Singh, 2001).

According to Joseph and Efron, teachers' attitudes and behaviours are important as they have a serious influence on students' behaviours (2005). Therefore, modelling is one of the best effective strategies in guiding students' characters to the right track. Pajaras (1992) demonstrates that, teachers have a significant impact on guiding children's morality. As stated earlier, Lickona (1991) has developed a comprehensive model of character education focusing on the important role that teachers play. He has identified nine components that a teacher should provide his classroom with in order to better develop his/her students' character; these components include the following: teachers should provide students with care and help; they should be role models, representing good behaviour for their students; they should prepare a suitable environment full of care, discipline, morality, and democracy as an important component of the classroom.

Lickona focused on the idea of modelling; he articulated that teachers should model good behaviour to their students, saying: "if you want students to be respectful, you have to model

respect” (1991). “You cannot teach where you do not go” (Barbara Luther cited in Lickona, 2004, p. 111). Lickona stated that modelling morality by teachers is ‘the most important moral lesson in the character curriculum (2004, p. 118). For teachers to succeed in modelling good behaviour for their students, they should be reflective in their own work, working at a meta-cognitive level in their own teaching by explaining their actions in words in relation to why and how they teach as they do’ (Smith, 2001, p. 11). Consequently, teachers need to be aware of different ways and methods in which they can introduce and present a certain value. However, it is crucial to provide teachers with the right training to be creative while teaching core virtues and qualities (Burrett& Rusnak, 1993). Lickona has asserted that teachers should reflect on character education; they should strive to make it as part of their daily deeds as they are the role models for their students (Campbell, 1997; Lasley, 1997; Lickona, 2001; Miller, 2006; Milson, 2002; Romanowski, 2005; Ryan, 2001). Fenstermacher (1990) stated,

The morality of the teacher may have considerable impact on the morality of the student. The teacher is a model for the students, such that the particular and concrete meaning of such traits as honest, fair play, consideration of others, tolerance, and sharing are „picked up“, as it were, by observing, imitating and discussing what teachers do in classrooms (p. 133).

Lickona (1980, p.131) clarified that schools should, “cultivate ethics of the everyday morality of minor affairs that translate respect for persons into small deeds of kindness, honesty, and decency”. Furthermore, Pearson et al. (2000) suggested that school teachers can prepare a variety of activities that can enhance character positive traits. However, it can be postulated that the teachers’ role is vital as they take important decisions related to moral education, including what values to teach and how to teach them. Hence, in order to be qualified teachers to teach character education effectively, they have to receive pre-service and in-service training programs to be able to teach character education effectively, as Lickona has stated,

Character education is far more complex than teaching math or reading; it requires personal growth as well as skills and development. Yet, teachers typically receive almost no pre-service or in-service training in the moral aspects of their craft (1993, p. 11).

In (1996), two studies were conducted in two different universities, in which it is found out that programmes of teacher education were not effective and did not give pre-service teachers the required training to deliver and teach morality to their students (Ryan, 2001). Hence, character education does not work if it is implemented by people who do not understand the program or those who are not aware of what character education is (Williams 2000; Lickona, 1993, 2001).

According to Lickona (2003), a good teacher should have certain qualities that enable them to have a strong relationship with their students. In different words, to succeed in delivering character education effectively, Lickona believes that teachers should do the following:

- Help students sense love and feel that they are able to achieve their targets.
- Trigger their motivation to do their best, as they are keen to make their teachers admire their character.
- Facilitate communication between students and their teachers, therefore, they can work together to overcome the obstacles that hinder their morality.
- Let students know their teachers, and so, positive impact of their teacher's modelling of good character will take place easily and smoothly.

Teachers need to be trained to act effectively. Narvaez & Lapsley (2008) clarified that in order to prepare efficient teachers who are able to help their students have good and moral characters, they should learn different strategies pertaining character education in their pre-service training to be able to apply them in their classrooms.

In a study conducted by Ryan and Bohlin (1999), they asked the participants of the study the following question: “what would you like to see practised among members of the school? The answer by most of the participants was character education” (1999: p.153-154). Furthermore, Nielsen Jones, Ryan and Bohlin (1999) administered a survey to teachers to find out the degree



of their commitment to character education; the result was disappointing as character education to them was not of a high priority, on the other hand, academic success was their first priority. Thus, more attention should be given to the preparation of teachers, so that, character education is at the forefront of education as it has a significant influence on the whole society.

A research conducted by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues at the University of Birmingham showed a real picture of the parents' perspectives towards character education and the role of teachers and schools in flourishing students' characters. The findings revealed a strong support from the parents to the important role that schools and teachers play in their children's character education. The majority of parents (87%) believe that both the academic side and the development of students' character should be the focus of schools and 84% agree that teachers should play the role of promoting good manners in students. On the other hand, 95% of parents think that character education can be taught within all lessons and activities held by schools. Furthermore, 81% of parents feel that it is important for schools to agree on certain basic values to develop and nurture in their students' character (Arthur, J. & wright, D, 2001).

According to Arabic culture, it can be suggested that teachers are seen as not only educators, but also, as second parents for their students. Therefore they have certain extra responsibilities and duties towards their students' morality rather than being only involved in their academic life. Talking about the context of the UAE, Diallo (2014) discussed tension and identity resistance in a cross-cultural educational context in the UAE. The researcher focused on how Emirati students live by their Islamic and Arabic values, while their teachers are Western-trained teachers, influenced by secular epistemologies. Therefore, Diallo's study highlighted the tension and identity resistance that appear from this educational encounter. Diallo clarifies that Emirati students develop several strategies to (re)construct identities for themselves and others in their encounters with Western-trained teachers. For example, sometimes, they do not show any cooperation with their Western teachers and reject some topics. The researcher adds that Emirati students also keep on complaining about their Western teachers to their parents and to the school management team. The study has provided a suggestion to help reduce tension and identity

resistance as “both Emirati students and Western-trained teachers operate sometimes within different social, cultural and religious paradigms, it is also essential to find a ‘third place’ to allow both Emirati students and their Western trained teachers to substantially reconcile cultural “unity and diversity” (Lo Bianco et al., 1999, p. 5). Having students proud of their culture can have psychological and social effects on their character. Hence, Western teachers need to know the importance of showing appreciation and recognition to the Emirati culture as doing the opposite may have a devastating influence on the Emirati students who belong to a genuine culture that they admire. Recognition of the students’ culture plays an important role in their academic success; students feel proud of their culture as their teachers show respect and recognition to their values and heritage. This, in turn, motivates them and helps them work harder to achieve better social as well as academic success. However, there are several studies that focused on the importance of recognition of culture on students’ achievement like (Suleiman, 1996; Nicto, 1996; Banks, 1995).

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research approach and the methodology of this study including the role of the researcher. It also describes the participants, the site, data collection and analysis. To collect the required data, the study used a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods which is called mixed- method approach (Creswell, 2003). The epistemological and ontological assumptions underpinning this approach are corresponding to the pragmatic perspective, which concentrates on the research problem, and so, implements pluralistic methods to clarify it (Morgan, 2007). Therefore, the theoretical foundation of the methodology of this study is explained in this chapter too.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of the Western teachers' values and backgrounds on the national students' moral and character development. The study also examined the perspectives of parents, teachers and the students towards the quality of character and moral education that international schools offer to the national students. This study explores the following questions:

Do Western teachers' personal beliefs and values influence Emirati students' moral/ character development?

The sub questions are:

How do Western teachers perceive any influences that they may have on the development of their students' morality?

What are the Emirati students' perceptions of character development in the international schools?

How do Emirati parents perceive the influence of the Western teachers on their children's character/ moral development?

### **3.2 The Role of the Researcher**

This section reflects my roles and responsibilities in this study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of the Western teachers' cultures and values on Emirati students' moral and character development in three British international schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi in the UAE. I believe as a researcher it is important to mention that I have extensive experience in teaching in British international schools that is for more than 15 years. Currently, I am still working in one of the British schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Therefore, my job inspired me to work harder for this study, hoping to investigate the current situation of moral and character education of the UAE students in this kind of international school that follows the British curriculum and administered by Western teachers. However, I would like first to share with the readers a story that took place in one of the international schools where I was working as a teacher and the Head of Islamic Studies. This story happened five years ago, but can be considered as the spark of this study which resulted in a desire to gain knowledge and to help out others. I always felt that, in addition to my role as a teacher, I am also responsible for my students' wellbeing and morality. Therefore, teaching values has always been my ultimate interest, and so, I decided to delve thoroughly into this serious topic. Moreover, I have to admit that the following story was not the only story that happened, as I was traumatized by different stories that I have heard from some of my students' parents as a result of the differences in cultures, perspectives and traditions that exist in the international schools.

One day, a furious Emirati mother asked to meet with me urgently as I was one of the minorities of teachers who was bilingual- capable of speaking Arabic and English- so she could express herself freely and honestly in the Arabic language. On the other hand, add to the previous reason of language the fact that I was the teacher and the Head of the Islamic studies department which made it clear to parents that I am one of those teachers who care about the moral issues of their children at the school. When the mother arrived, I was wondering what was wrong with her as she seemed pretty upset and angry. The following is the exact translation of what that mother said”:

*Yesterday, my daughter came home and asked me if I have ever had a boyfriend before getting married to my husband, I was absolutely shocked with her question and I did not know how to react at all. I asked my daughter about how she even thought of this, as we never speak about such matters in our household because simply they merely do not exist in our culture or our religion. It seems that my daughter is very confused and scared; she said: mom, our teacher was telling us about how she met her husband and she mentioned that she used to have a boyfriend when she was single.*

Thinking about this story gives the reader a picture of the differences between the students' Arabic and Islamic culture and their teachers' Western culture. Nevertheless, I am sure that this is not the only influential case that we have, thus, more attention should be given to this vital issue.

As mentioned above, and as a result of this incident, I started as a researcher, mainly in this area, thinking about the enormous gap that should be bridged between the different cultures of the educators and their national students. I also started thinking of character/moral education as the only solution for the educators to reinforce national students' morality. However, being the Head of Islamic studies in a British school where I worked provided me with an opportunity to be close to most of the national students' parents and so, to be more understanding of their problems and concerns. It also made it easier for me to gain daily experiences on the situation of the UAE students in such kind of schools. Consequently, when I joined the PhD program, I had a clear vision of the topic that I wanted to search for, while the particulars of my study were discovered after I read a book written by Dr. Lickona (1983) discussing raising children with good character, highlighting the importance of character education and its benefits for enhancing good character. Therefore, this study tends to look at and investigate the orientation of the Western teachers' values and their influence on the national students' character and moral education.

To sum up, I can consider myself as both insider and outsider at this study; insider as I have a long experience in such type of schools, and so, I am aware of the way these Western teachers deal with their students in most cases. However, while working as a teacher in such an

environment, it provides me with a rich daily experience on observing national UAE students in this kind of international school. On the other hand, I was also an outsider as the sample of this study consists of three British schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi to avoid the possibility of showing any bias to the school I work at.

### **3.3 Theoretical Foundations of the Methodology and Research Approach**

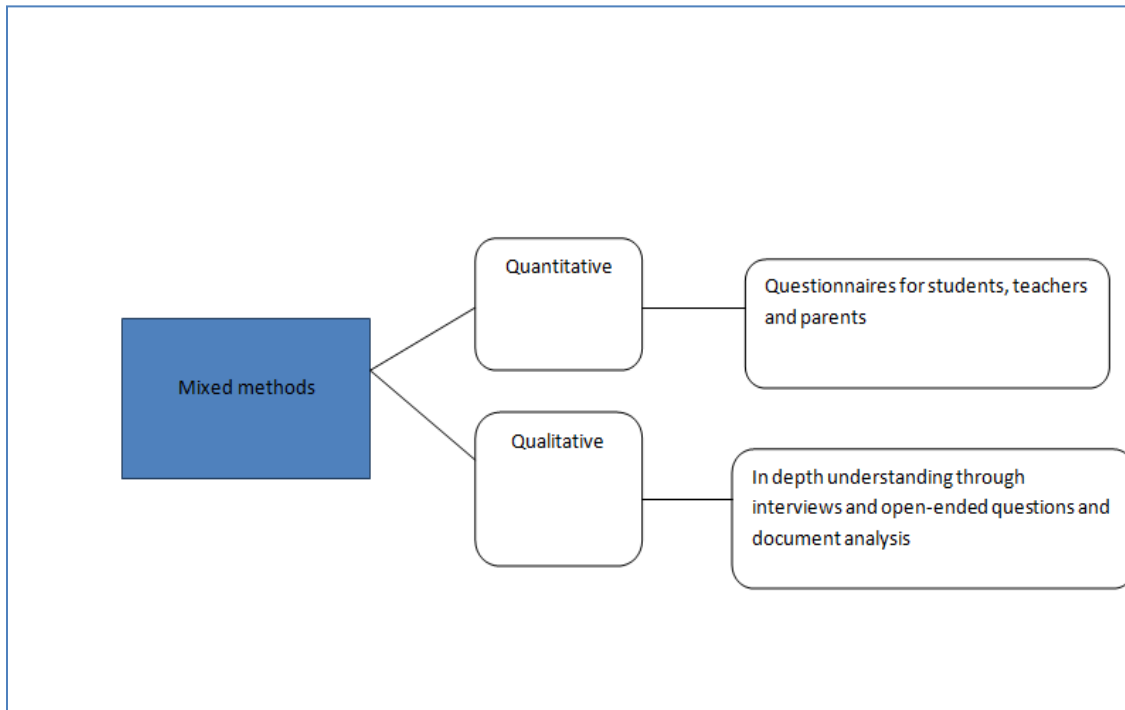
It is a crucial task for the researcher to select a research design which suits the research's assumptions. Explaining the philosophical paradigm chosen by the researcher can help in uncovering the reasons behind choosing a certain approach for the study. A paradigm can be defined as "a general organising framework for theory and research that includes basic assumptions, key issues, models of quality research, and methods for seeking answers" (Neuman, 2006, p.81). Willis (2007) has also explained that: "A paradigm is a comprehensive belief system, world view, or framework that guides research and practice in a field" (p.8). Thus, a paradigm can be identified as a group of beliefs and views that influence a researcher's selection of the method of conducting his/her research and the interpretations of the findings according to a particular discipline (Bryman, 2008).

There are four specific paradigms clearly clarified by Creswell, (2008) and Guba & Lincoln, (2005) who explained that the four paradigms are post-positivism, constructivism, emancipatory and pragmatism. Post-positivism is a scientific research paradigm which investigates and confirms law-like patterns of behaviour; it is usually adopted to examine theories. Thus, it is commonly used in natural sciences research; it usually underpins quantitative research. Constructivism is typically seen as a paradigm underpinning qualitative research. Constructivism advocates that individuals' lived experiences are important to construct subjective meanings. Emancipatory scholars are those who use either qualitative or quantitative approach with their research linked to action agendas to facilitate the change and the empowerment of social situations of certain individuals and groups.

The issue then for the emancipatory research paradigm is not how to empower people but, once people have decided to empower themselves, precisely what research can then

do to facilitate this process. This does then mean that the social relations of research production do have to be fundamentally changed; researchers have to learn how to put their knowledge and skills at the disposal of their research subjects, for them to use in whatever ways they choose (Oliver, 1992, p. 111).

On the other hand, pragmatism is considered as a different paradigm from post-positivism as “the knowledge claims arise out of actions, situations, and consequences rather than antecedent conditions” (Creswell, 2003, p.11). Pragmatism has appeared as a result of the refusal of the forced choice between naturalistic and scientific approaches (Creswell, 2003). To combine quantitative and qualitative research together has been accepted as a new paradigm in which its philosophical principles should not be violated (Morgan, 2007). Pragmatism resulted from the paradigms’ war and the emergence of the use of mixed methods. Pragmatism usually focuses on the research problem and looks for all approaches that can help understand it; it can be considered as a philosophical paradigm that supports the use of mixed method research by the use of pluralistic approach for the best understanding of the research problem (Morgan, 2007). There is a kind of agreement among researchers that pragmatism can be a philosophical foundation of the mixed methods. Greene describes pragmatism as “leading contender for the philosophical champion of mixed methods arena (2008, p.8)”. Therefore, this study has adopted a pragmatist paradigm, using a mixed method approach which focuses on the pragmatic value of each approach, as seen in Figure 3.1. Moreover, the research questions can be answered better through using a combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches.



**Figure 3.1: Research approach**

The use of qualitative and quantitative methods together provides the research with the generisability of the quantitative results and the richness of the qualitative findings (Green & Caracelli, 2003). Therefore the images, texts and narratives in the qualitative research findings can provide the numerical findings with meanings and clarifications (Hanson, Creswell, Plano-Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005)

A mixed method of quantitative and qualitative methods is adopted to conduct this study, employing a triangulation design (Creswell, 2005). The combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches is thought to best answer the study’s main questions and provide a deeper understanding of the research rather than using one method alone (Greene et al, 1989 and Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998). Mixed methods are applied in this study, because in such a case of investigating a topic of moral development, neither qualitative nor quantitative methods can



give a full picture of the issue (Johnson et al, 2007). Mixed methods can give the researcher a thorough understanding of the meaning behind the phenomenon. Furthermore, having a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods maximizes the strength of the data and gives a complete analysis afterwards. Mixed method approach joins the strings of qualitative and quantitative studies together to form a powerful research method where approaches are closely interlinked for deeper understanding. Creswell and Plano Clark described the mixed methods research as:

It is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analysing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone (2007, p.5).

A mixed method is a way of collecting, analysing, and combining both quantitative and qualitative data in one study to help understand a research problem” (Creswell, 2005). Yin (2003) suggested multiple sources of evidence to be utilised to provide a variety of experiences and additional data techniques resulting in more accurate documentation (p. 101). Several studies have recommended mixed method research as a useful method to have a better understanding of the topic of interest (Brewer & hunter, 1989; Howe, 1988; Patton, 2002). The data collection needs both numeric information such as the responses to the questionnaires in addition to text information such as interviews and document analysis (Creswell, et al, 2003). Even some of the quantitative researchers advocate the use of qualitative research beside the quantitative research to enhance validity and reliability of the study (Campbell and Fiske 1959).

In this study, the quantitative findings support the ideas of the qualitative part as they explain figures and implications that are produced quantitatively. On the other hand, this investigation works on matching the research questions with the instruments and data analysis methods appropriate for each question. The study examines, in addition to the effect of the Western

teachers' personal beliefs and values on the national students' morality and character development, the role that schools, teachers and parents play in promoting children's moral and character development. The rationale for conducting such a study is that the results can be helpful in spreading awareness at the school level and they can assist in planning, implementing and evaluating students' moral and character development at schools. In addition to understanding the challenges that teachers face in teaching character education, it will also help in overcoming them, allowing character education to take place easily and effectively.

The study takes the form of sequential mixed methods in which data is collected quantitatively firstly by distributing three kinds of questionnaires followed by qualitative data collection through the use of semi structured interviews. Moreover, available documents related to character and moral education are collected.

Through questionnaires, those who are willing to be interviewed are sorted out through one of the questions in the questionnaires which ask about the participant's willingness to be interviewed, so the researcher can collect the data qualitatively during the second stage of the study. This study works on answering the research questions using suitable instruments and data analysis methods. The research purpose guides the researcher to choose the right approach.

Though researchers might advocate and adhere to a specific research tradition, it is sensibly wise to consider 'fitness for purpose' as the 'guiding principle' because different research paradigms are suitable for different research purposes and questions (Cohen & Morrison, 2000, p.1).

To examine the development of character and moral education as they are experienced by students, their teachers and parents, three private international British schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi are chosen to be the targeted setting for this research. Document analysis is adopted to analyse any available policy related to character education in ADEC, MoE and the targeted schools.

The method of analysis used in this research is highly supported by the literature review and the theoretical framework, reviewing studies that tackle the same topic using either the same or different methods of analysis such as, a study by Chapman (2002) who tried to gain more understanding of best practice of character education in a middle school. Chapman's case study used qualitative methods, such as interviews, participant observations, field notes, and document analysis. The study found out plenty of results, such as the teachers are in need of training and they need to act as active role models for their students. The study also revealed that teachers should share the responsibility of CE with all staff in order for the character education programme to succeed. Another study by Lucas, (2009) supports the study of Chapman in using a qualitative method; Lucas examined how teachers think about character education in the middle schools in rural areas; his study is based mainly on qualitative method using semi-structured interviews to gather its data. Lucas found out that although the school is implementing a good programme of character education and the teachers have shown their appreciation of character education and recognition of its importance, they could not give a specific definition for character education. Another qualitative study by Ricketts (2008) who conducted a study in a primary school, asking five teachers about their perspectives on character education after using a specific program perspectives of five elementary school teachers regarding teaching character education. The study showed that all teachers agree on the key role that teachers play in teaching the desired values. On the other hand, they have different opinions about the curriculum that should be taught and the reason why values should be taught and how they should be taught. A different study conducted by Davin (2007) to investigate the perceptions of parents and the teachers of character education in schools located within poor communities. The research adopted a quantitative method depending on teacher and parents' questionnaires to collect their perspectives towards character education in these schools. Davin clarified that the use of quantitative method helped him find some points of consensus among teachers and parents. A different study by Jakubowski (2013) is also quantitative in which the researcher used a non-experimental method to collect the needed data developing a survey to examine the perspectives of the teachers of the secondary schools towards character education in different schools.

Another study by Griggs-Drane (2009) focused on the practices of character education in a secondary school in Virginia and used a mixed method in collecting the data during two phases of the study. The study revealed that there is a shortage in the knowledge and engagement of the principals, in addition to the inconsistency in the practices of the CE between schools.

### **3. 4 Research Methods**

Considering the purpose of this study, a sequential mixed methods approach is used to answer the research questions. This choice of the research method is consistent with the research approach adopted to ensure that the right data is generated to answer the research questions. In this study, the quantitative data was collected first, followed by qualitative data that was collected and then integrated with the quantitative findings (Creswell, 2003).

To collect quantitative data, three questionnaires are developed to provide the researcher with quantitative measures of the perceptions of the parents, teachers and pupils towards character education. These questionnaires are adapted from different resources; they include some questions adapted from research by Mathison (1998) and the SCCP-11 (School as caring community profile) developed by Lickona and M. Davidson (2003), Davidin (2007) Character Education Efficacy Beliefs Instrument (CEEBI, Mison & Mehling, 2002) and the Eleven Principles of Character Education Effectiveness (EPS, Lickona & Davidson, 2003). Three questionnaires are adjusted to suit the UAE culture and to be able to get sufficient data from teachers, parents and students “to enable comparison to be made across groups in the sample” (Oppenheim, 1992, 115). One of these questionnaires is for teachers to explore their views in character education at these schools. The other questionnaire is distributed to parents to investigate their perceptions of character education at the school and examine their satisfaction about the development of their children’s morality and good character; while the third questionnaire is given to the students to determine the virtues and the values they learn at these schools and the way they learn them. The data collected through questionnaires is analysed by using narrative analysis. On the other hand, fifteen teachers, ten parents and ten students were interviewed in semi-structured interviews to provide the researcher with deep insight.

The setting, sample of the study, data collection instruments, the ethical considerations, and the study plan are outlined in the following sections.

### **3.5 The Settings**

Since the main aim of this research is to investigate the influence of Western teachers' cultures on Emirati students' character development, three British Schools in Abu Dhabi are sampled to collect the data required for this study. The targeted schools are K-12 schools, including kindergarten to grade twelve. The schools selected are broadly homogeneous for the following reasons: firstly, in addition to the local students; 60% of students are from different nationalities such as, American, British, Asian, French, Canadian and German. Secondly, all teachers in these schools are from a Western background, except for a minority of Arabic teachers teaching Arabic language, Social Studies and Islamic Studies as seen in Table 3.1. However, these schools are the best to fit into this study as they offer the most effective opportunity to answer the research questions about the impact of the Western teachers' values and background on the national students' characters where a large number of the students in these schools are Emirati male and female students. Thirdly, all the chosen schools follow the British curriculum, in addition to Arabic language, Social Studies and Islamic Studies, which are provided and monitored by the UAE Ministry of Education (MoE) and Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC). Moreover, it is vital to mention that the British curriculum, in general, focuses on the world citizenship and universal values, while History and English Social studies focus on the world history with the emphasis on the British history. On the other hand, the Islamic Studies curriculum provided by the Ministry of Education aims at assisting students in developing their Islamic characters to be good and effective members of the Emirati society following the rules and regulations of the Quran and the Sunnah; it guides them towards the proper Islamic way of life (The National document for Islamic Studies, 2011). Arabic Social studies plays also an important role beside Islamic Studies in reinforcing the importance of the Emirati identity and citizenship as mentioned before in the literature review (The National document for Social Studies, 2001, 2003).

### 3.6 Participants

The populations of this study are the Western teachers, Emirati students and their parents in three British schools in Abu Dhabi. Table 3.1

*Table 3.1: the settings and the participants of the study*

<i>Schools</i>	<i>Number of students</i>	<i>Number of nationalities</i>	<i>Number of National students</i>	<i>National students</i>	<i>Number of Western teachers</i>	<i>Number of Arab teachers</i>	<i>Number of the teachers completed the TQ</i>	<i>Number of the Parents completed PO</i>	<i>No. of the student completed SQ</i>	<i>No. of teachers interviewed</i>	<i>No. of parents interviewed</i>	<i>No. of students interviewed</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>1000</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>205</i>	<i>20.5 %</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>1185</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>315</i>	<i>26%</i>	<i>88</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>620</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>250</i>	<i>38.5 %</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>2805</i>		<i>770</i>		<i>243</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>10</i>

#### 3.6.1 Teachers

The researcher is interested in schools that have a large number of Emirati students and teach British curriculum only, hence, almost all of the teachers are Western. Within the three British selected schools, forty nine Western teachers with the responsibility for both pastoral and academic development of the students were chosen purposefully as a sample for the quantitative

part of the study that uses questionnaires, aiming at statistical exploration of the research issue. Complete demographic information was collected from the participating teachers, such as, their nationalities, gender, academic background and years of teaching in the UAE. On the other hand, considering that the researcher adopts a mixed method, from the same sample used in the quantitative study, fifteen teachers showed their readiness to participate in the qualitative part of the study. Therefore, they were interviewed formally to gather the required qualitative data of the study regarding their perspectives on the teaching of character education for the national students and the obstacles they may face during their job. Teachers included in the interviews were teachers of different subjects; two math teachers, three teachers of history, two physical education teachers, two science teachers, four English teachers, and two music teachers. Their years of experience with the school ranged from one year to 15 years. All of the teachers were interviewed at their schools' sites, except three of them who preferred to be interviewed outside their schools to feel more comfortable, as they mentioned.

### **3.6.2. Students**

The students' sample is a purposive sampling representing local Emirati adolescent students who are thirteen years and above studying in British schools. The researcher chose these students to participate in this study due to the fact that adolescents usually face various social obstacles during the stage of adolescence, hence they need to be guided and assisted to develop the right positive moral character. Forty-nine students were chosen to complete a questionnaire that asks them different questions regarding their values and the teaching of character and morality in their schools. To represent the qualitative part of the study, ten students, from both genders were chosen to be part of the purposive, convenient sample for the interviews.

### **3.6.3. Parents**

Forty nine Emirati male and female parents who have children studying in the sample schools were chosen to complete a questionnaire, expressing their opinions on the methods that those schools use to reinforce morality and character development. Following the completion of the

questionnaire, ten keen parents were interviewed. The selection of the parents for the interviews based on the following criteria: availability, willingness to participate and not being a teacher in the school. It is worth noting that the ability of the parents to communicate in English does not matter as it is mentioned before that the researcher is bilingual and she is able to interview native speakers of Arabic effectively. Furthermore, the parents' questionnaire, in the first stage that preceded the interviews, was translated into Arabic to make sure that the parents do not misunderstand any item.

### **3.7. The research instruments**

The data of the mixed method study was collected from a variety of sources (triangulations) including, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Based on the results of the questionnaires that showed who are willing to be interviewed, the qualitative study took place. The rationale behind using both qualitative and quantitative approaches in this study is to triangulate the research data and to provide the study with thorough and deep insight. Furthermore, through this study, the researcher checked all the available documentation and what came from the experiences of the participants in an effort to contribute to the understanding of the explored phenomenon to strengthen the validity of the research (Denzin, 1970).

As mentioned in the previous section, three different questionnaires were used for this research. The first questionnaire was developed for the teachers to measure their level of understanding of character education and their role in implementing it. In addition, interviews with those teachers allowed the researcher to have deeper insights into what character education means to them. To collect the data, another questionnaire was distributed to the parents, in addition to interviews to make sure that the researcher obtained a thorough and holistic view as the use of questionnaires only is not sufficient to probe into the real factors in any theory as Kalaja (1995) asserts. The third questionnaire was developed for the students themselves, in addition to semi-structured, face to face interviews to enable them to express themselves freely and to provide the researcher with the required data.



### **3.7.1 Questionnaires**

Questionnaire is a tool that is used to collect data quantitatively. In this study, three self-completion questionnaires were designed using the Likert-scale method. These questionnaires comprise various items that were adjusted from previous instruments, in addition to newly created items to fit the purpose of the research. They were addressed to teachers, parents and students to measure their level of understanding of character /moral education. The questionnaires for the parents (CEQ-P) and the teachers (CEQ-T) begin with demographic information to be able to describe the participants' backgrounds, followed by another section about character traits in both questionnaires to make it easy to find the most important traits that both teachers and parents agree upon. The students' questionnaire (CEQ-S) consists of different items, asking them about their opinions on character education in their school and the effect of their Western teachers on their characters. The data that was collected through questionnaires was analysed by the researcher using narrative analysis.

#### **3.7.1.1 The Teacher Questionnaire (CEQ-T)**

This questionnaire (see Appendix 3) includes questions adapted from research by Mathison (1998), and the SCCP-11 (School as a Caring Community Profile) developed by T. Lickona and M. Davidson (2003), Character Education Efficacy Beliefs Instrument (CEEBI, Milson & Mehlig, 2002), and the Eleven Principles of Character Education Effectiveness (EPS, Lickona, & Davidson, 2003). Teachers signed a consent form prior answering the questionnaire (as seen in Appendix 2). CEQ-T contained 21 statements and a four point Likert Scale was used: important =1; somewhat important=2; not important=3; not sure=4. The questionnaire first included demographic information such as the teacher's gender, experience, and the highest degree obtained. However, the second part of the questionnaire subsequently investigated other major components such as:

- The teacher's perception of the parental influence on student behaviour.

- Parental support for character education teaching.
- The teacher's efficacy and perceptions about teaching character in the classroom.
- The teacher's view of the school climate including support from the administration.
- What character traits the teachers viewed as most important.
- The teacher's perception of a school-wide character education.

The last part of the CEQ-T consists of three open ended questions which require answers with more depth and lengthier responses. Thus, they help the researcher to find more about the topic.

### **3.7.1.2 The Parent Questionnaire (CEQ-P)**

To determine the perceptions of parents towards the development of their children's character, a written questionnaire was developed. This questionnaire is called the Character Education questionnaire: Parent. Questionnaire will be referred to as the CEQ-P (see Appendix 5). This questionnaire was adapted from research by Mathison (1998), the SCCP (School as a Caring Community Profile) developed by T. Likona and M. Davidson (2003) and research by Milson and Mehlig (2003). CEQ-P contained 26 statements and a four point Likert Scale was used: important =1; somewhat important=2; not important=3; not sure=4. The questionnaire first included background information such as the gender of the parent, the language they speak at home, the relationship with the child, and the highest degree obtained. The questionnaire subsequently investigated other major components such as:

- What character traits the parents viewed as most important.
- The parents' perceptions of CE in their children's school.
- Parental support for the character and moral development of their children.

- The parents' perceptions of their children's teacher's efficacy in teaching and modelling the right character.
- The parents' view of the school's climate.

A consent form was provided to the participants to sign before answering the questionnaire's questions (see Appendix 4). As mentioned previously. The questionnaire was translated to Arabic language, as seen in Appendix 6, and checked as explained in section (3.10 p. 96) to make it easy for the participant who does not understand English and to avoid any possible misunderstanding.

### **3.7.1. 3 The Student's Questionnaire (CEQ-S)**

To measure the student's perceptions of the behaviours observed in the school's environment, a questionnaire was adapted from the surveys which are based on research by Mathison (1998), and the SCCP-11 (School as a Caring Community Profile) developed by T. Lickona and M. Davidson (2003), Davin (2007) Character Education Efficacy Beliefs Instrument (CEEBI, Milson & Mehlig, 2002), and the Eleven Principles of Character Education Effectiveness (EPS, Lickona, & Davidson, 2003) (see Appendix 7). This questionnaire is called the Character Education questionnaire-Student-CEQ-S. Students are considered as vulnerable participants, thus, the questionnaire started with a consent form that must be signed by the parents or the carers.

CEQ-S contained 19 statements and a five point Likert Scale. Statements were designed to solicit participants' perception about students' behaviour. A five-point Likert scale was used: almost always =1; sometimes=2; frequently=3; almost never=4; not applicable =5. The questionnaire was structured with three subscales: Perceptions of Student Respect (Items 1, 2, 4, 10, 15); Perceptions of Student Friendship and Belonging (Items 3, 5, 6, 7, 16, 19); Perceptions of Students' in their teachers and school's behaviour policy in supporting CE (Items 8, 9, 11, 12,

13, 14, 17, 18). Students' parents and carers gave their consent for their children to participate in the study. The questionnaire was taken to determine the student's perceptions about students' behaviour and to determine if the school's environment and policy support CE.

### **3.7.2 Semi-structured interviews**

The researcher assumes that the participants of this study will discuss their perspectives towards issues pertaining to character education freely and openly enabling the researcher to investigate the impact of the Western teachers' values and teaching on Emirati students' morality and character development. As stated by Borg, Gall and Gall (1993), this method is the form of "direct interaction between the researcher and subject that can be adapted at any time in order to obtain the fullest responses from the individuals being studied" (p. 113). The semi-structured interview consists of a series of 1 questions to be asked to participants, but can be modified or expanded as the interviewing situation requires (Lichtman, 2006). Interviews are an important qualitative tool to collect data; therefore in this study, they were audio-taped, transcribed and classified into themes and sub-themes which were then used to identify alignments between the responses of the participants and the existing theories. This thesis adopts semi-structured, face to face interviews at the preferred location and time of the participants to be used as a phonological qualitative method to collect qualitative data. Prior to interview, all participants were given a consent form (see Appendix 8) and a brief of what the research is all about as well as their rights. They were also informed that anonymity and confidentiality is guaranteed for them. In-depth interviews usually help researchers to find an understanding of participants' perspectives on their different experiences by using face-to-face interviews (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). In this study, and based on Creswell (2007) criteria of the importance of selecting a suitable interviewee for the interview, fifteen teachers, ten students and ten parents were selected to enable the researcher to have deeper insights of what character education means to them and to determine the influence of the Western teachers' personal values on the Emirati students. In this study, the interviews were conducted with three kinds of participants: teachers as seen in Appendix 9, parents as in Appendix 10 and students as in Appendix 11.

To make sure that the researcher does not forget any response or any note made by the interviewees, the recording of the interviews were transcribed into writings within only a week. Furthermore, the researcher probed and asked the interviewees for further clarification and explanation where appropriate. Transcriptions were categorised into themes to be ready for analyses.

### **3.7.3 Document analysis**

Document analysis is a systematic way of reviewing the content of a document and evaluating it whether it is a printed or electronic one. It is often used as a means of triangulation with other qualitative research methods. It is important to strengthen your data by the usage of ‘the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon’ (Denzin, 1970, p. 291). On the other hand, document analysis can be a useful method in various ways, such as, in the case of Goldstein and Reiboldt (2004) who use this method of analysis believing that it may lead to certain queries or situations that need to be further explained in his study using other different methods, such as interviews.

In this thesis, documents associated with character education in the targeted schools are analysed, in addition to all policies and teachers’ plans related to CE. The rationale for the use of document analysis as a method for data collection in this study is to enhance other qualitative data as a way of triangulation. According to Corbin and Strauss, (2008), to analyse documents, the researcher should examine and interpret the data to gain more understanding and to increase the empirical knowledge about the issue. Document analysis can be useful in producing “a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility” (Eisner, 1991, p. 110).

However, in this study, upon availability, the relevant documents were reviewed and coded for analysis (Bowen, 2003). Prior to the collection of data, permission to conduct the study was obtained from Abu Dhabi Education Council to enable the researcher to have an access to the international British schools and their documents freely.

### 3.8. Data Collection Procedures

As mentioned above, the researcher received a letter form from ADEC enabling her to conduct the study. Furthermore, she obtained an approval from the three selected schools' principals, so the researcher can move freely within those three locations, distributing the questionnaires, analysing any available polices related to the topic and interviewing the participants.

Based on the fact that this study has adopted the mixed method approach to answer the research questions with a main aim of investigating the impact of the Western teachers' values and cultures on the Emirati students' character and moral development, a quantitative tool is used to collect data quantitatively via questionnaires. For the qualitative part of the study, semi structured interviews, open ended questions at the end of the questionnaires and document analysis were used as tools for gathering the data as in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2: Summary of data collection instruments**

Research Questions	Research instruments	Data analysis methods
Q1. How do teachers perceive any influences that they may have on the development of their students' moral character?	2- A questionnaire designed for teachers.  3- Semi-structured interviews conducted with the teachers.	Statistical analysis (descriptive statistics).  Interpretative analysis of the responses to interviews' questions.
Q2. What are the Emirati students' perceptions of character development in international schools?	1- A questionnaire designed for students.	Statistical analysis: factor analysis, descriptive analysis (frequencies, standard deviation, mean).
	2- Semi-structured interviews conducted with the students.	Interpretative analysis of the responses to interview questions.

Q3. How do Emirati parents perceive the influence of the Western teachers on their children's character moral development?	1- A questionnaire designed for the parents.	Statistical analysis: descriptive analysis (frequencies, standard deviation and mean)
	2- Semi-structured interviews conducted with the parents.	Interpretative analysis of the responses to interview questions

### 3.9. Data Analysis

The analysis of the collected data was derived from transcribed tape recordings of the interviews and questionnaire responses. The style of analyses in this study is congruent with the research questions. To measure the level of understanding of character education as well as the level of the influence of the Western teachers on their students, the accumulated data that is collected from all responses of the questionnaires is changed into numbers to be entered into the SPSS programme for analysis to produce charts, tabulated reports, descriptive statistics and other statistical tests.

Regarding the qualitative part, "...the investigator is the primary instrument for gathering and analysing data and, as such, can respond to the situation by maximizing opportunities for collecting and producing meaningful information" (Merriam (1998, p. 20).

Qualitative methods of collecting data usually produce large amounts of data that need few procedures to be taken to analyse the collected data efficiently. "Working with data, organising it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others" (Bogdan& Biklen 1982, p.145). Based on Creswell's (2007) recommendations, the researcher dealt with "the data through several steps of reducing the data ultimately develop[ed] a description of the experiences

about the phenomenon that all individuals have in common-the essence of the experience” (p. 94).

Interviews were analysed deeply to find central themes in which they were derived to develop deep understanding of the essence of the phenomenon. Significant statements were extracted from participants’ interviews. Corbin and Strauss stress on the importance of searching for patterns; "always grouping like with like" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 9). Thus, "incidents, events and happenings are taken as or analysed, as potential indicators of phenomena which are thereby given conceptual labels" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 7). In this study, similar data are combined together to find relationships between data groupings.

In different words, during data collection, the researcher first visited each school a few times to distribute the questionnaires then to interview the participants of the study. The data that came out from the interviews are descriptive and not in numbers, (Frankel & Wallen, 1996; Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Merriam, 1998). The narratives include quotes taken from the responses of the interviewees. Furthermore, to gain more understanding, the researcher asked for the availability of any policies related to the topic of the study in the three schools. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded for further analysis. As suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (1992), the researcher wrote her reflective notes and thoughts on every visit to the schools, including her feelings, hinders, thoughts, and notices. Reviewing the transcription for meanings and themes, and highlighting the information that looks alike and ideas that look odd and different were highlighted to make it possible for the researcher to link the findings with the research questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001).

To sum up, the analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative parts of the study are presented quantitatively and qualitatively in the next chapter. Thus, themes, subthemes and various tables are provided accordingly. Suggestions and recommendations are following the analysis of the collected data.



### **3.10 Translation**

One of the important tasks that the researcher has to hold was, firstly, the translation of the parents' questionnaire as it cannot be granted that all parents participating in the study are able to understand and communicate in English language. Thus, the researcher has to work hard to translate the real requested meaning into Arabic language as all know that translation from one language to another means to get the same meaning rather than translating word by word.

Although the researcher is bilingual, she has to be very careful in translation taking into account the difference between the two cultures of Arabic and English and the importance of semantic equivalence across the two languages. "Translators must constantly make decisions about the cultural meaning which language carries", (Temple& Edward, 2002, p. 2-3). The method that is used in the translation is the back translation to keep the right meaning (Brislin, 1980). Hence, to make sure that the translation of the parents' questionnaire is accurate, giving the same meaning as the source language and does not change the meaning, the researcher herself as a bilingual person translated the questionnaire and then asked an expert in both languages, English and Arabic, who works as the Head of English Language in a well-known educational organisation to translate the same questionnaire back to English in order to compare the two versions and to alter what is needed to be changed. Additionally, to double check, the translated version of the of the parents' interviews questions were checked again by a second expert who revised and compared the questionnaire in both languages and approved it.

On the other hand, in the qualitative part of the study, the interviews' questions for the students were not translated into Arabic language as all the participants are able to express themselves well in English language. The only concern for the researcher was the interviews of the parents which should be held in Arabic, thus the translation of those interviews was not an option. However, the researcher herself also translated the parents' interviews' responses from Arabic into English easily as the researcher has an extensive experience in the country and its culture; hence, she knows exactly how to turn the same required meaning into English language taking into account the culture of the country.

### **3.11. Validity & Reliability**

Validity and reliability are critical components of any research to be described as valid and reliable. To guarantee the reliability of the results in any study, different instruments used to produce the same results. Joppe (n.d.) identify reliability as:

The extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability. In other words, if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable (n.d., p.1).

As mentioned earlier, the study used mixed methods of quantitative firstly and then qualitative. To discuss the validity and reliability in the quantitative part while collecting, analysing and interpreting data, readers should be aware of the procedures that have been taken through the use of variables and statistics (Merriam, 2008). To insure the validity of the three questionnaires, they were reviewed by an educational expert to check their reliability and compliance with the Emirati context.

The criterion for validity of both the qualitative and quantitative approaches is different. For the qualitative part, in this study the researcher watched the “dependability” or “consistency” of the data results (Merriam, 1998, p. 206). “If the findings of a study are consistent with the data presented, the study can be considered dependable” (Merriam, 2008, p.222). Moreover, the triangulation in the qualitative approach using different methods increases the reliability.

It is believed that “A pilot study is often used to pre-test or try out (Baker, 1994, pp, 182-183). It can be considered as “small scale version or trial run in preparation for major study” (Polit, Beck, & Hugler, Zool, 2001, p. 467). Therefore, before starting collecting the data, a pilot study was conducted firstly during which the participants were asked about the clarity of all items in the questionnaires. Then, ten teachers, ten parents and twenty students volunteered to participate

in the pilot study in which, firstly, they were asked to complete the questionnaire that belongs to them, followed by answering the questions of the interviews to indicate the validity of the questionnaires as well as the interviews. No revisions were needed or made to the final versions of interviews before administering them to the participants. The results of the survey and interviews of the pilot study were shared with the pilot participants to be sure that their ideas were clearly presented and interpreted (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996).

### **3. 12. Ethical Issues**

When conducting any research, researchers should be knowledgeable of all ethical issues whether before, during or after (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this study, the research received a permission from Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) to conduct the study (see Appendix 1). Ethical approval was taken from the principals of the three schools after assuring them that the names of their schools would be anonymous during all phases of the research and after completing it as well. The participants among teachers and parents were also informed about the intention of the study and the way they receive the email requesting them to participate in the questionnaire. Moreover, they were assured that their responses are anonymous and their names will not be mentioned in front of anyone without their consent. Moreover, participants were informed that they can choose to leave or stop an interview at any time without being asked for any clarification for their action. In addition, a letter of information and a consent letter were provided to participants prior to their participation whether in questionnaire or interviews. The collected data were kept in a secure locked place, so confidentiality was guaranteed for all participants to make it easy for them to uncover their views freely. For the students participating in the research, a consent form was given to their parents or guardians to agree on their participation in the study as they are considered as vulnerable people.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Data Analysis and Findings**

#### **4.0. Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings of the research which suggests a picture of the influence of the Western teachers' values and perspectives on the Emirati students' character development and morality. The approach for the study was a mixed method approach in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected using different instruments. To answer the research questions, analysis was required for both the quantitative and qualitative data. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse the quantitative data, while the qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis. As mentioned earlier, this investigation is guided by the following main question: what is the influence of Western teachers' personal beliefs and values on Emirati students' character development?

And the sub questions:

1. How do teachers perceive any influences that they may have on the development of their students' morality?
- 2- What are the Emirati students' perceptions of character development in the international schools?
- 3-How do Emirati parents perceive the influence of the Western teachers on their children's character moral development?

## **4.1. Quantitative Analysis**

This section presents and analyses the quantitative data collected from the questionnaires. The aim of the study was to investigate the influence of Western teachers' personal values and culture on Emirati students' moral and character development. In order to investigate this issue, the researcher sought to evaluate how teachers perceive their influence on the development of their students' moral character. It also sought to evaluate how Emirati students perceive the role of international schools in their character development. Finally, the researcher also sought to understand how Emirati parents perceive the influence of Western teachers on the character development of their children. Towards this end, this study utilised three separate questionnaires on teachers, parents and students. This section analyses these findings separately and also integrates the analysis for purposes of comparison to provide compelling evidence for credible conclusions. The analysis was principally aided by SPSS, statistical analysis software by IBM. Microsoft Excel was also used to aid the process of data transcription and transfer into SPSS.

This section is organised as follows: The first sub-section provides descriptive statistics on the respondent profile. The second subsection analyses findings from the questionnaire of teachers. The third subsection analyses findings from the questionnaire of parents. The fourth subsection analyses findings from the survey of students and the fifth provides a comparative analyses of all of the above questionnaires.

### **4.1.1. Participants' Profile**

This survey was conducted in three different British schools. In terms of participants, 49 teachers, 49 parents, and 49 students participated in the questionnaire.

### **4.1.2. Teachers**

A total of 49 teachers participated in the questionnaire. A percentage of 26.5% were males while 73.5 percent were females (see table 4.2).

**Table 4.1: Gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	13	26.5
Female	36	73.5
Total	49	100.0

The majority of teachers who participated in this study were British who accounts for 67.3%, American teachers account for 8.2%, Asians accounts for 6.1%, and the remaining of other nationalities accounts for 18.4% (see Table 4.2).

**Table 4.2: Nationality**

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Asian	3	6.1%
British	33	67.3%
American	9	8.2%
Other Nationality	4	18.4%
Total	49	100.0

The study engaged students from grades 1 to 12. Most of teachers who participated in this study taught grades 6 and 9 accounting for 49% of all participants. They were closely followed by teachers of grades 9 and above accounting for 26.5%. Teachers of Grades 3-5 accounted for 18.4% of all participants (see Table 4.3).

**Table 4.3: Grade Taught**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>frequency</b>	<b>Percentage of the sample</b>
1-2	2	4.1
3-5	9	18.4
6-9	24	49.0
9+	13	26.5
Total	48	98.0

In terms of educational level of the participants, most of the teachers had Bachelors' Degree representing 55.1 per cent of all participants. A total of 18 teachers had Masters Degree accounting for 36.7 per cent of all participants. Only 2 teachers had Diploma (see Table 4.4).

**Table 4.4: Level of Education**

<b>Degree</b>	<b>frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Diploma	2	4.1
Bachelor	27	55.1
Masters	18	36.7
Others	2	4.1
Total	49	100.0

In terms of teaching experience, most of the teachers had between 6 and 10 years of experience accounting for 49.0 per cent of all participants. Teachers with more than 10 years of experience

accounted for 26.5 per cent of all teachers who participated in the questionnaire. Only two teachers had an experience of less than 2 years (see Table 4.5).

**Table 4.5: Teaching Experience in UAE**

<b>Teaching experience</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1-2	18	36.7
3-5	20	40.8
6-10	11	22.4
Total	49	100.0

In terms of UAE teaching experience, most of the teachers surveyed had between 3-5 years teaching experience. This represented 40.8 per cent of all participants. Teachers with between 1 and 2 years teaching experience accounted for 36.7%. Only 11 teachers (representing 22.4%) had more than 6 years of teaching experience in UAE as seen in Table 4.5.

Due to the limited sample size of American and Asian teachers (N=3), these participants were removed from the analysis.

The Second part of the questionnaire addressed teacher and parent involvement in the school. Items 8-14 addressed teacher involvement and 15-18 parent involvement. Reliability analysis was performed on these items. The teacher scale produced a Cronbach alpha of 0.76. The items were summed to create a scale and labelled “teacher”.



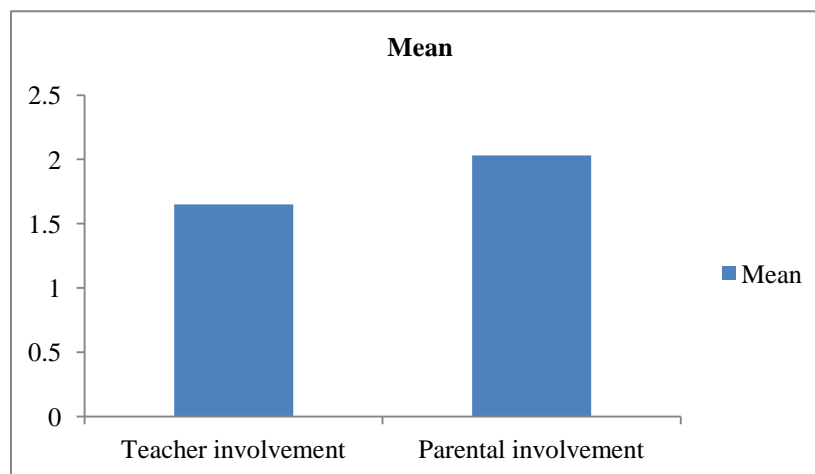
The parent scale yielded Cronbach alpha of 0.71. The four items were combined into a scale and labelled “parent”.

The means and SDs of the parent and teacher scales are shown in (Table 4.6) and (Figure 4.1)

An exploratory paired sample t-tests was performed and found a significant difference between the two scales, indicating that teachers believe that teacher involvement was higher than parental involvement ( $t=3.74$ ,  $df=47$ ,  $p< 0.01$ ).

**Table: 4.6: Means and SD of Teacher and Parental involvement**

<b>Involvement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Teacher involvement	1.65	0.46
Parental involvement	2.03	0.55



**Figure 4.1: Means of parental and the teacher involvement**

#### **4.1.2.1. Teacher's Perception of their Influence on Students' Moral Character Development**

One of the sub research questions for this study was that how do teachers perceive their influence on the character development of their students. In order to evaluate this, the researcher used Likert Scale questions to determine several aspects as concerns: the level of importance attached to certain traits, teacher engagement in the process of imparting moral education, teachers' perception on the role of traits in educational achievement, and how the student/teacher interaction process enhances character development.

#### **4.1.2.2. Teachers and Character Education**

This study sought to investigate the role of teachers and teaching in character education. Towards this end, the study investigated: the level of teacher participation in character education, teacher involvement in the design of character education lessons, and teachers' perception of the role of character education in student behaviour and performance. Table 4.7 shows the level of teacher engagement with character education across the three different schools. All of the above variables were coded as follows: 1-strongly agree, 2- Agree, 3 Disagree, 4-Strongly Disagree, and 5-Not applicable (was not included in the mean calculation); therefore, the lower the mean the higher the level of agreement with the statement. As to whether teachers participate in character education, the majority of teachers agree (with a mean of 1.69). As to whether teachers design their own character education lessons, the agreement was only moderate (with a mean of 2.04) signifying that not all of the teachers surveyed strongly feel that they design their own character education lessons. Similarly, there was only a slightly higher than average agreement with the statement, that teachers help choose character traits (with a mean of 2.06). However, majority of the teachers surveyed agree that character education improves student behaviour (1.3878). Similarly, majority of teachers agree that schools take special care in the character development of students (mean of 1.49). The analysis also shows that majority of teachers

believe that character education enhances academic achievement (with a mean of 1.37) and develops good character (1.48).

**Table 4.7: Teachers and Character Education**

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Teachers participation in character education	1.69	0.82	Strongly Agree	23
			Agree	20
			Disagree	5
			Strongly Disagree	0
			Not Applicable	1
Teacher design own character lessons	2.04	0.87	Strongly Agree	11
			Agree	29
			Disagree	7
			Strongly Disagree	0
			Not Applicable	2
Teachers help choose character traits	2.06	0.94	Strongly Agree	10
			Agree	33
			Disagree	2
			Strongly Disagree	1
			Not Applicable	3
Character education improves student behaviour	1.39	0.57	Strongly Agree	32
			Agree	15
			Disagree	2

			Strongly Disagree	0
			Not Applicable	0
School take special care in character develop	1.49	0.71	Strongly Agree	28
			Agree	20
			Disagree	0
			Strongly Disagree	0
			Not Applicable	1
Character enhance academic achievement	1.37	0.57	Strongly Agree	33
			Agree	14
			Disagree	2
			Strongly Disagree	0
			Not Applicable	0
Character education develops good character	1.48	0.50	Strongly Agree	25
			Agree	23
			Disagree	0
			Strongly Disagree	0
			Not Applicable	0
Parents volunteer in class	2.00	0.76	Strongly Agree	11
			Agree	29
			Disagree	8
			Strongly Disagree	1
			Not Applicable	0
Parents model behaviour	2.20	0.84	Strongly Agree	8
			Agree	27
			Disagree	11

			Strongly Disagree	2
			Not Applicable	1
Parents respect teachers	1.88	0.63	Strongly Agree	12
			Agree	32
			Disagree	4
			Strongly Disagree	1
			Not Applicable	0
Parents help children follow school rules	2.02	0.78	Strongly Agree	10
			Agree	31
			Disagree	6
			Strongly Disagree	1
			Not Applicable	1

As concerns teachers' perception on the role of parents in the teaching of character education, there was only mild agreement (mean of 2.00) to the statement that parents volunteer in school activities. Similarly, there was only moderate agreement as to the statement that parents are good models of behaviour (mean of 2.20). A considerable number of teachers also did not agree with the statement that parents help students follow school rules.

#### **4. 1. 3. Parents**

As concerns parents who participated in this survey, the gender was fairly balanced with female accounting for 51% and males accounting for 49% as seen in Table 4.8

**Table 4.8: Gender (parents)**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	24	49%
Female	25	51%
Total	49	100.0

A significant majority of parents who participated in this study speak Arabic at home (87.8%) with only 12.8 per cent of them speaking English (see Table 4.9).

**Table 4.9: Language Spoken at Home**

<b>Language</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Arabic	43	87.8
English	6	12.2
Total	49	100.0

Most of the parents who participated in this questionnaire were either mother or father representing 91.8 percent of all participants. Step mothers and fathers accounted for just 6.1 percent of parents who participated in the survey as in Table 4.10.

**Table 4.10: Parent Student Relationship**

<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Mother/Father	45	91.8
Stepmother/Stepfather	3	6.1
Other	1	2.0
Total	49	100.0

In terms of parent's education, majority of parents had at least a college degree. This represented 53.1 percent of all participants. Parents with only high school level of education accounted for 22.4 per cent as seen in Table 4.11.

**Table 4.11: Level of Parent's Education**

<b>Level of education</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less than High school	7	14.3
High school	11	22.4
College degree	26	53.1
Masters	3	6.1
Others	2	4.1
Total	49	100.0

One of the sub questions for this study was to evaluate Emirati parents’ perception of the influence of Western teachers. In this regard, this paper evaluated the extent to which parents considered character traits to be important to their children, their role in character education, what they consider to be the role of teachers’ in students’ character education, and the role of the larger environment in the in the education of character.

In the second part of the questionnaire, parents were asked to respond to a number of statements on a 5 point Likert scale. Items 14 and 15 were recorded to make these positive. Principal Components Factor Analysis with an oblimin rotation revealed 2 factors accounting for 56.27% of the total variance. The loadings of the items are shown in Table 4. 12.

Reliability analyses were performed on the items as shown in the above table. An initial Cronbach alpha of 0.39 was obtained on the “Me” scale. Items 17, 26, 10 and 13 were removed to obtain an alpha of 0.64. The remaining items were summed to create a scale called “Me”. An initial Cronbach alpha of 0.29 was obtained in the school scale. Items 25 and 22 were removed to obtain an alpha of 0.62. The remaining items were summed to create a scale called “School”.

<b>Table 4.12: PCA loading of items onto two factors (parents)</b>	
<b>Factor 1 “Me”</b>	<b>Factor 2 “School”</b>
6. Parents are the most important teachers for character development	11. I leave the moral education of my children to the Islamic Studies teacher.
7. I believe social skills are more important than academic skills	14. My children are having trouble getting along with other children.
<i>III</i> 8. I teach my children to respect all people.	15. My children often get into fights with other children.



9. I tell my children, "If someone hits you, you may hit them back."	22. The teachers in this school model the character traits (like respect and caring) they want the children to learn.
10. My family sits together to eat dinner and talk three or more times each week	23. When I walk into my children's school, it feels inviting and safe.
12. I think children imitate what they see on television.	24. Teachers in this school seem to like each other and help each other.
13. I am able to control my children's behaviour	25. Teachers in this school show respect for the parents.
16. I encourage my children to be tough. I think it is important.	
17. I sometimes spank my children for bad behaviour.	
18. I model the character traits I want my children to have.	
19. I believe children need character education in school.	
20. I think learning about good character (such as respect and responsibility) will improve my children's grades.	
21. Parents participated (or would likely) participate in character education training activities.	
26. I volunteer at my children's school.	

#### 4. 1. 3.1. Preference of Traits

The researcher evaluated the extent to which parents considered the importance of certain traits to their children. The following Likert scale was used to calibrate responses: 1-Important, 2-Somewhat important, 3-Not important, 4-Not Sure.

Table 4.13 below shows the extent to which parents considered the above character traits to be important. As expected, a majority of the parents considered most of the above character traits as either very important or important (with means of 1.2 or less). There were several exceptions though with character traits such as caring (with means of 1.10), integrity (with means of 1.24), hope (with means of 1.18) and justice with means of 1.12) registering as ‘not important’ and or ‘not sure’ by a small minority of parents.

**Table 4.13: The importance of traits according to parent**

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
caring	1.10	0.368
empathy	1.20	0.41
honesty	1.00	0.00
kindness	1.22	0.42
perseverance	1.08	0.28
Respect	1.00	0.00
humility	1.06	0.24
citizenship	1.04	0.20
fairness	1.00	0.00
integrity	1.24	0.66

love	1.102	0.31
Self control	1.18	0.39
obedience	1.08	0.28
courage	1.10	0.31
hope	1.18	0.63
justice	1.12	0.60
Loyalty	1.8	0.28
Responsibility	1.04	0.20
tolerance	1.08	0.28
trustworthy	1.08	0.28

#### **4.1. 3. 2. Parents and Character Education**

Table 4.14 below shows how parents perceive their role in the process of character education.

The questionnaire was coded as follows: 1-Important, 2-Somewhat Important, 3-Not Important, 4-Unsure; therefore, the lower the mean the higher the level of parental agreement to the statement and the extent to which it is considered important.

The majority of parents are of the opinion that: parents are the best teachers of character (mean of 1.55), social skills are more important than academic skills (1.73). Majority of them also teach their children respect.

As concerns other variables, there was general moderate level of agreement and attachment of importance. Family sits together was moderate at 1.94; similarly ability to control child behaviour (1.88) and teachers being able to model character generally received average agreement from parents.

The majority of parents disagreed with the idea that they taught children revenge (2.90). The same was also recorded for variables such as: children having trouble with other children (2.61) and children getting into fights (3.10). Similarly, majority of parents also disagreed with the notion that they taught their children to be tough (3.06) or even smacked their children (2.59). They also disagreed with the idea of leaving the teaching of morality only for Islamic studies (2.92) as in Table 4.14.

**Table 4.14: Parents Character education**

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Parents are most important teachers of character	1.55	0.50
Social skills more important than academic	1.73	0.91
Teach children respect	1.65	0.48

If anyone hits you hit him back	2.90	1.04
Family sits together to eat	1.94	0.77
Leave moral to Islamic studies	2.92	0.84
Children imitate television	1.79	1.15
Able to control children behaviour	1.88	1.18
Children have trouble with others	2.61	1.15
Children get into fights	3.10	1.08
Encourage children to be tough	3.06	0.97
Spank children	2.59	1.31
I model character	1.69	0.80
Children need character education	1.80	0.96
Character educ. Improves grades	1.46	0.50
Parents participate in character training	1.41	0.50
Teachers model good character	1.91	1.75

Children school feels safe and inviting	1.63	0.93
Teachers like each other	1.51	0.87
Teachers show respect for parents	1.41	0.50
I volunteer at my child's school	1.88	1.42

#### 4.1. 4. Students

A total of 49 students participated in the survey. The research did not gather demographic or data on students' grades. This is primarily because the objectives of the study did not require the collection of such data.

For the student questionnaire, items 7, 8, 19 were identified as being negative. These items were re-coded.

Principal components Factor Analysis using oblimin was used on the items. 2 scales emerged accounting for 58.34% of the variance. These are shown in Table 4:15

The two scales were constructed as shown in the above table. The items on scale 1 were related to respect. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.91. The scale was constructed and labelled "Respect". The items on scale 2 were related to students. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.78 which is acceptable. The scale was constructed and labelled "students."

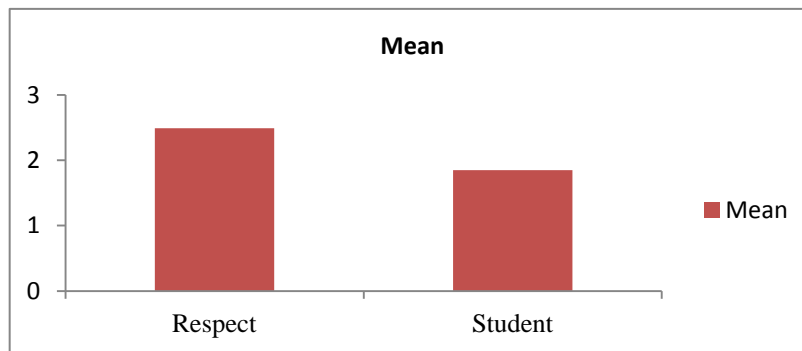
**Table 4.15: PCA Items loading onto the two scales**

<b>Factor 1 (Respect)</b>	<b>Factor 2 (Students)</b>
<p>1- Students treat classmates with respect</p> <p>2- Teachers treat students with respect.</p> <p>5-When students see another student being picked on, they try to stop it.</p> <p>6-Students help new students feel accepted.</p> <p>8-In their interactions with students, teachers act in ways that demonstrate respect and consideration the school is trying to teach.</p> <p>9- Teachers and staff support all students throughout the school academically, behaviourally and socially.</p> <p>10-Students are disrespectful toward their teachers.</p> <p>12-The school responds appropriately and efficiently to problem behaviours.</p> <p>13- I feel I can succeed to my fullest potential as my school helps me to do so.</p> <p>14-I feel my voice and thoughts are heard and valued in my school.</p> <p>16-Students can talk to their teachers about problems that are bothering them.</p> <p>17-Teachers treat students with fairness.</p>	<p>3-Students help each other, even if they are not friends.</p> <p>4-Students show respect for school property (such as desks, walls, bathrooms, busses, buildings, and grounds).</p> <p>7-Students exclude those who are different, (e.g., belong to a different race, religion, or culture).</p> <p>11- Students are aware of a clear policy for behaviour issues and act accordingly.</p> <p>15-Students listen to each other in class discussions</p> <p>18-In their interactions with students, teachers act in ways that demonstrate the character qualities the school is trying to teach.</p> <p>19-Students use hand-held devises (phones, I pads, etc.) in class without the teacher’s permission.</p>

The means and SD for these two scales are shown in table 4.16 and Figure 4. 2.

**Table 4.16: Means and Standard deviations on the respect and student scales**

	Mean	SD
Respect	2.49	0.73
Student	1.85	0.19



**Figure 4.2: means on the respect and student scales**

#### **4. 1. 4.1. Students and Character Education**

One of the research questions investigated in this study was how Emirati students perceive the influence of western teachers in international schools on their character development. In this regard, the researcher tested the extent of good behaviour amongst students in international schools. Descriptive statistics are as shown in Table 4.17 which shows analysis of student



behaviour across the three international schools; it also shows the extent to which students perceive teachers' contribution to their character development. The study was coded as follows: 1- Almost Always, 2-Sometimes Frequently, 3-Almost never, 4-Not applicable; therefore, the lower the mean, the higher the level of agreement with the particular statement.

Table 4.17 shows that: majority of students do not treat each other with respect (2.32), majority of teachers do not treat students with respect (2.90). There were also relatively moderate responses as concerns: students helping each other (2.20), teachers demonstrating respect (1.86), students being aware of policy (1.88), teachers demonstrating good qualities (1.98) and student feeling that they are able to achieve their full potential (2.16).

Table 4.17 also shows that the majority of students are obedient in that they do not use their mobile phone devices without teacher's permission. However, a significant majority of students do not talk to teachers about their problems (3.02). Similarly, 44 of students are of the opinion that their voice and thoughts are not heard and valued in their schools (2.65).

In sum, based on students' point of view, appropriate behaviour is only moderately modelled. At the same time, 42 students are not showing best behaviour (at best ideal behaviour is only moderately expressed amongst the students).

**Table 4.17: Students and Character Development**

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Students treat classmates with respect	2.32	0.83
Teachers treat classmates with respect	2.90	0.90
Students help each other	2.20	0.58
Students show respect for school property	1.76	0.52

Students stop bullying of each other	2.39	0.93
Students help new students	2.04	1.08
Students exclude different students	2.00	0.82
Teachers demonstrate respect	1.86	0.55
Teachers and staff support students	2.33	0.75
Students are disrespectful	3.08	1.06
Students are aware of policy	1.88	0.33
School responds appropriate to behaviour problem	2.14	0.82
I feel achieve full potential	2.16	0.69
Voice and thoughts are valued	2.65	1.13
Students listen to each other	2.14	0.50
Students can talk to teachers	3.02	1.49
Teachers treat students fairly	3.14	1.37
Teachers demonstrate qualities	1.98	0.60
Students use devices without permission	3.24	1.22

#### **4.1.5. The Whole Sample (Teachers and Parents)**

The means and standard deviations of the importance of all of the qualities are shown in Table 4.18.

**Table 4.18: Means of the importance of all qualities**

<b>Qualities</b>	<b>Means</b>	<b>SD</b>
Caring	1.12	0.36
Empathy	1.18	0.39
Honesty	1.05	0.22
Kindness	1.21	0.41
Perseverance	1.13	0.34
Respect	1.04	0.19
Humility	1.18	0.39
citizenship	1.29	0.52
Fairness	1.07	0.26
Integrity	1.19	0.55
Love	1.26	0.52
Self control	1.45	0.52

Obedience	1.32	0.53
Courage	1.28	0.49
Hope	1.22	0.57
Justice	1.22	0.58
Loyalty	1.19	0.42
Responsibility	1.14	0.35
Tolerance	1.09	0.29
Trustworthy	1.13	0.34

The means and standard deviations as shown in Table (4.18) illustrate that the most important qualities were considered to be honesty (1.05), respect (1.04), fairness (1.07) and tolerance (1.09).

## **4.2. Qualitative Data**

### **4. 2. 1 Introduction**

This section reports data from the interviews with teachers, students, parents and various documents including the Abu Dhabi Education Council Student Competency Framework (SCF) for Private Schools, three schools' behaviour polices and ten lesson plans of different Western teachers. The behaviour polices used in those three locations are grouped together and summarised according to the three posed research questions. A summary of the results from the data collection ends the chapter. Based on the responses of the quantitative data, fifteen teachers, ten students and ten parents showed their keenness to be interviewed to answer the main question and the sub questions of this study. Both the qualitative and the quantitative data elaborate and enhance each other; therefore, data from the interviews were analysed and grouped in themes with reference to the research questions of this study according to specific themes; "data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data" (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 112).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, three British schools were selected for this study because they outline a rich environment for collecting data related to this study as the majority of the teachers in those three schools are Western. On the other hand, there are a few Arab teachers who teach Arabic subjects. Moreover, there is a high percentage of UAE national students in those schools along with students from other different nationalities. Additionally, the curriculum taught in those schools is completely British, in addition to the three Arabic core subjects that include Arabic language, Islamic studies and social studies.

### **4. 2. 2. The participants**

Three kinds of semi structured face to face interviews were conducted; fifteen teachers, ten parents, and ten students to collect the qualitative data.

#### **4. 2. 2. 1. Teachers**

The main aim of this investigation is to explore the influence of the Western teachers' values and backgrounds on the national UAE students' characters; therefore, interviews were conducted with fifteen Western teachers to answer the first research question: how do teachers perceive any influences that they may have on the development of their students' morality? Pertaining to this research question, different interview themes were included in the teachers' interviews, such as, definition of character education, traits of good character, importance of character education, teacher's involvement in character education, teacher's background and past experience and teachers' values and beliefs (see Appendix 3).

##### **4. 2. 2. 1. 1. Teachers' definitions of character education**

Following the teachers' interviews, four themes emerged from their responses regarding the definition of character education: a) CE is a means of preparing students for adulthood, b) development of the whole person, c) modelling the right morals and manners to the students and d) unfortunately, the confusion about character education's definition, thus teachers started guessing its definition.

The following extracts are representing the four themes. The first theme (preparation of students for adulthood):

*I think it sounds quite similar to what we do in PSHE, which I taught in all the schools in England, and then also here. Simply, we prepare these adolescents for their adulthood stage of life.*

For the second theme (building of the whole person), one of the teachers said:

*Character education can be defined as that which runs alongside traditional education that works on developing a value system in pupils, the works of developing their soft skills and their emotional intelligence. Traditionally, education was about one thing, content, replicating knowledge under examination conditions. We understand that education should be holistic, and*

*within that holistic framework, character education is fundamentally important to build students' characters as a whole person.*

Another teacher supported the same definition of CE, saying:

*It is not a term that I use a lot, but from what I can understand, I think it is the non-academic education, which focuses on the character of the individual and develops different traits in their characters, such as, their resilience, endurance, tolerance, cooperation, being able to work with others, respect for others, kindness and problem solving. Things that make someone a rounded individual, the whole person I guess.*

For the third theme (modelling of good character), one of the Western teachers said:

*I think character education is something that is quite tacit, so there is kind of modelling, demonstrating and showing your own character, something that you use to educate pupils, show them the way to treat people, teach them when to have fun and when to study.*

For the fourth theme (confusion about the definition of CE): the following extracts are by three teachers from different schools,

A teacher from school 'C' said:

*Mmm, not really, I do not know what character education is, it sounds a lot to me like social skills and how you interact with other people, I think. Truly, I am not sure.*

Another teacher from school 'B' said:

*Honestly, I have no idea about this term, but whatever it is; if we have to do it then we need to be trained as I have never heard about it before although I was working in a well-known school.*

A participant teacher from school 'A' said commented:

*I do not know exactly what it means but I suppose it is about social skills, behaviour skills, things like that, you know, and basically like kind of social and personal skills, personal education how to communicate with people and things like that. I am not sure.*

In summary, it can be seen that there are diverse opinions regarding the definition of character education and there is no agreement on a certain definition. However, depending on this result, it is expected that even those teachers who have an idea about CE they may have no clear guidance to follow so they can help their students to enhance their characters.

#### **4. 2. 2. 1. 2 Traits of a good character:**

With regard to the interview question about the traits that can make good character, teachers' responses varied from one teacher to another. These responses included patience, empathy, resilience, curiosity, honesty, truthfulness and love. The following are some extracts from the teachers' responses from the three schools; A, B and C:

School 'A':

*I think patience, being able to work with other people and understand them and empathy can make a good character.*

School 'B':

*A person with a good character must demonstrate resilience and must have a sense of duty, both to themselves and to others. A person with a good character should be curious, and have an intellectual curiosity; they should also be welcoming to the opinion of others, as well as their own opinions, so tolerance is another important trait of character.*

A teacher from school 'C' said:



*Haha, sounds a bit cheesy, but love? I mean how we care for and view each other in terms of respecting each other, helping people in need, the way we treat each other and of course that can be shown in lots of things as in kindness, honesty, truthfulness and working with others even when we do not want to work with them.*

Another teacher from school 'C' said:

*I suppose honesty, and I think a person with a good character should be curious and able to know and ask questions, should be able to help others and to be kind to everybody.*

Although teachers' preferences of traits are different in terms of the qualities that make good character, all the qualities they chose are core universal values that are required and highly appreciated in all societies regardless of their cultures or religions.

#### **4. 2. 2. 1. 3 Importance of character education:**

Regarding the importance of CE to the Western teachers, the data revealed that there was an agreement among all of the participants that character education is important for different reasons, regardless of the fact that some of the teachers seem to misunderstand the meaning of the term. The following extracts reflect the responses of the Western teachers in the three schools. A teacher from school 'A' explained that, CE is vital for building students' character.

*I think it is really important. I believe it is part of what we are as teachers; it is not just about giving pupils the facts and the figures, it is about building that person in all matters of life which they need to learn.*

Another teacher from school 'B' supported the previous opinion, saying:

*It is very important for the reason that, increasingly, the employers want people who have skills and good character including resilience which might be a trait that is highly required. On the other hand, when we go to the workplace we do not always succeed in our work because our*

*personalities, sometimes, lack important traits and skills when we come to the real world. So character education is about preparing us for not just the workplace but for life. You can forget content, you can forget which king of England won which battle, but character is something that becomes implicit, becomes automatic and becomes part of shaping who you are and it becomes something that lives with you forever.*

A teacher from school 'C' said:

*I would say it is extremely important. It may be in some ways more important than academic education, although they are both related to each other but if I had to choose one over the other I would choose character education over intelligence or academic performance.*

Another teacher noted that in international schools, character education is really significant to manage multi-cultural students in the same classroom, as seen in the following extract:

*I think it is very important in the classroom, especially in such a multi-cultural classroom as we have in this school. In order to get everybody respecting each other and avoid any issues coming with cultural clash in the classroom. I think it is very important that the teachers really manage by teaching character education.*

#### **4. 2. 2. 1. 4. Teacher Involvement**

The following interview questions that are categorised under the theme of teacher's involvement in the teaching of character education are:

- a) How responsible do you feel for integrating character education in your classroom?
- b) What in your personal background or past experience has influenced the way you teach character education?
- c) How do your values and beliefs impact your approach to teaching character education?

d) What strategies do you use to teach character education? Give some examples please.

#### **4. 2. 2. 1. 5. Responsibility for teaching Character education**

In terms of the teacher's responsibility towards character education, the majority of the interviewed teachers shared the opinion that they believe that teachers should be responsible for teaching character education. On the other hand, the interviews revealed that there are differences in the way teachers understand this responsibility which reflects their confusion and misunderstanding of the meaning and the requirements of character education's implementation. Five teachers of the fifteen participants think that parents should hold the responsibility of CE rather than teachers. The following are some examples of the teachers' responses. Eight teachers feel that they are responsible for CE although they do not know what it means and what it requires. One of the teachers said:

*Oh yes, I am responsible very much. I would be influenced by school policy, of course, and I might have heard something that another teacher is doing with a particular student so I can adopt it in similar situations and teach it to my students.*

Another teacher said:

*I think it is really important and I am responsible. Character education is not just about giving pupils the facts and the figures, it is about building that person's character, but we need to learn how we can manage while we don't have time to do that.*

On the other hand, only two teachers from school "C" believe that they are responsible for teaching character education, showing deep understanding of the term:

The first teacher from school 'C' said:

*On a personal level, my responsibility is to ensure that my pupils learn good character because it is fundamentally important in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the workplace, it's more important to many employers than the educational outcomes for the students. All staff should model and*

*demonstrate good character traits in their interactions with pupils. I feel deeply responsible because ultimately my job is to turn out well educated pupils who are intellectually curious, who are tolerant who are resilient; it is part of the call of this school, so it is fundamentally important to our ethos and values.*

The other teacher from the same school said:

*Personally, I think it's a huge responsibility, because yes I am there to teach history, social studies and geography, and that is my prime role I guess, but at the same time schools are about creating adults who will go into society and they are not just some machines to remember information and learn things, so we are trying to have a positive influence on what they are going to become and who they are going to become.*

Five teachers from the three schools threw the responsibility of developing student's personality on the parents' shoulder. The following quote reflects this opinion:

*Yes, I am responsible; however, I think the parents should be the most responsible people in this matter and not the teachers.*

#### **4. 2. 2. 1. 6. Teachers' CE sources**

In relation to the teachers' character education sources, the fact that those schools do not have any CE programme applied into their educational system should be taken into consideration. The interviewed teachers were asked where they received their ideas of teaching character education from. Taking into consideration the differences between the UAE culture and the Western teachers' culture, the participants credited their knowledge of character education to their families and parents' values, religions, their schools and teachers. Consequently, the way they learnt morality and character education themselves affects the way they deliver them to their students in return. As a result of this situation, it can be realised that there is no consistency in

the way those teachers teach CE as they did not receive the same values from the same source. The following are different extracts portraying the differences in answers for this question:

One of the interviewed teachers from school 'A' said:

*I think I got my ideas of character education probably from my teachers that I have had myself and who I deemed to be good role models when I was at school. I think parenting as well and how I was brought up; the values that I was given were important to pass on to others, I think.*

A different teacher from school 'B' said:

*Yes, as I said I have taught it previously in all my other schools back in the UK, but I did not get any training in the UAE which qualifies me to teach character education to UAE students.*

While another teacher from school 'C' commented:

*Probably my religious beliefs would be most important I would think, which does not mean I get it right all the time. It is quite complex but I guess I have a sense of how we should treat each other as individuals and that comes from the belief in things like, you know the fact that we are all equal, no one is better or worse than anybody else whoever you are. So, in the classroom, it does not matter what background your parents are from, how rich or poor they are, what nationality they are, culture, colour or religion.*

#### **4. 2. 2. 1. 7. Teachers' values and beliefs**

To understand the effect of the Western teachers' values and beliefs, the interviewees were asked if their values and beliefs influence the way they deal with their students and the way they teach character education. All of the participants agreed that whatever their values or beliefs are and regardless of their sources, whether they received them during their childhood, their previous work place, their parents or their religion, they certainly affect the way they teach CE. Here are some extracts reflecting teachers' opinions on this matter: one of the teachers attributed his values to his religious beliefs.

*What influences my beliefs and the way I treat people is one thing: my religious beliefs which can be partially linked to my upbringing and what I chose to follow as an adult. This, of course, influences my teaching.*

Another teacher clarified that the church played a significant role in constructing his values and beliefs that affect his way of teaching character education:

*I believe in making the world a better place, I believe that educators should go into education to turn out individuals who will help make the world a better place, and in order to do so they have to possess a number of skills; they have to have the ability intellectually to be able to accomplish things, but they also need to have the correct mindsets and a correct value system. In England, whatever side of the fence you are on, the tradition was church schools, and the church played a very big role in education and it happened to me, so when I went to primary school, I went to a church in England and I do remember that every day that my values are being urged, as a result of that, which affects me as a teacher as well.*

Another teacher supported the same view, that her values affect the way she teaches CE:

*I believe that half of the effect on my teaching character education is due to my personal values but the other half is definitely affected by the school I work at; what the school expects me to teach is important, so I would not say it is just my opinion, it would be very much led by school policy and the kind of pupils they want to create. Therefore they need to prepare us for what is expected from us completely.*

Teachers were asked if there are certain differences between values they teach to their students and their own values. The majority of the Western teachers (13 teachers) believe that there is a big difference between the UAE values and their own values; some teachers were able to provide the researcher with some examples on these differences.

A teacher from school 'A' commented on the differences between their culture and the UAE culture, giving a clear example:

*Yes, of course, the UAE's values and the Western values are different in many aspects; it is hard to think of an example except that the UAE people have very strong family bonds perhaps not as in the UK.*

Another example on the differences between the UAE culture and the teachers' culture was given by a female teacher from school 'B':

*There is a difference in values and cultures. This happened with me in particular, I think some of the students at the very beginning when they joined the school, they did struggle with the fact they are told what to do by a female teacher; this situation can never happen in the UK, as there is no difference between a male and a female.*

A teacher from school 'C' said:

*It is a difficult question; young Islamic pupils have Islamic values. Thus, we have to be sensitive to certain aspects of that as we have different Western values. I did have a conversation with some of my national students who could not understand why I chose to be a music teacher; in this situation, I did see a difference in values, especially when they told me that I should be a lawyer, or a doctor instead, to gain more money but I wanted to teach them that money is not everything and music is my passion. So that was something different.*

Another clarification for this issue was given by another teacher from school 'C':

*There are differences in values; I think one of the biggest differences, actually, is related to economics. In addition to the incentive for education because some Emirati pupils are from, what we would consider, wealthy backgrounds, there is not any incentive to do well at school, as they know that they are going to be okay when they grow up and they will get a well-paying job, whereas in our societies it is something being fought for. I think economics is a big factor in*

*students' life. On the other hand, this situation cannot be generalised for all, but sometimes it happens.*

Teachers were also asked to compare their influence on a student's character to the impact of what happens at home. The answers of all participants were that although they influence their students' personality, the effect of their parents is more influential. Therefore, teachers strongly recommended more cooperation between teachers and parents:

*I would say what happens at home is more important than what happens at school, and in the best situations we work together and the parents understand what we are doing, so, it would be nice to have more backup from the parents.*

Some teachers expressed their desire to change some of the negative and points related to some local families, so they can pay more attention to their children's education:

*It is very common among some local families, to over depend on their, nannies, drivers and maids which you cannot find in the UK. Hence, I believe that this kind of things that we need to change at schools in cooperation with parents.*

#### **4. 2. 2. 1. 8 Teacher's training**

In order to equip the Western teachers with the right knowledge and the right strategies of teaching CE, they should be provided with enough training courses to be familiar with the culture and values of the Emirati students. In order to investigate the current situation of student's character development in these schools, the Western teachers were asked if their schools provide them with any training regarding character education. They were also asked whether they are fully prepared to teach character education and whether they have any suggestions to better prepare themselves for this type of teaching.



Responses of the teachers were very much the same for seven teachers from the three schools, who mentioned that a session of less than an hour was held in their schools by the senior leadership at the beginning of the academic year, explaining about the UAE culture. On the other hand, the other eight teachers stated that nothing has been done regarding this matter. The following extracts illustrate this point:

*I got the ideas of the CE from the UK, in which they always refer to in order to develop spiritual, social and moral aspects within their students. In the UAE, and in my current school, I received a short training session at the beginning of the year in which we discussed the differences between our national pupils and our Western pupils, and how they were interacting and how we can get them to work successfully in a group.*

One of the interviewed Western teachers clarified that she did not receive any training, but reading books and articles in the same field helps her to get some knowledge:

*I read articles and books about education and education philosophy, so through books, articles... etc, I get more ideas to help in developing my students' personalities. But no training courses for the Western teachers were provided. I believe that we are in need of few courses to fit the UAE culture.*

Another teacher admitted that she knows nothing about CE and nobody can blame her, as this is not her fault:

*I haven't heard of any training sessions held in my school. So, I am not expected to be familiar with the Emirati culture.*

In order to investigate the perceptions of the teachers readiness and to the extent they are qualified to practise CE to the Emirati students, the researcher asked if the teachers feel that they are qualified enough to teach CE; the teachers expressed their willingness to teach CE to the UAE national students, although some of them asked for more awareness about the Emirati culture:

*I would say yes, it is always something that I try to integrate anyway, and I can say that the stuff that we have done previously in other schools, I do them here, but I did not receive any specific training in the UAE.*

Another teacher supported the idea of the importance of the cultural awareness to all Western teachers, working in UAE:

*I think I was slightly aware of the context, but I probably did not know enough. Before I came here, I think that the term of social differences in the UAE is different than what we have in the UK; for example, it would have been good to have had more knowledge about the culture and the values of the UAE people.*

Other teachers want to understand the culture, so they can understand their students and know the right way of dealing with them:

*I think firstly it depends on the individual. Teachers have come from all over the world, many from Britain but also from other countries of the world. The aims and ethos of the school are clear for all teachers. I think all teachers should be aware of the kind of pupils we need to have. Some training will not harm.*

Some teachers admitted that they learn about the UAE culture from their students:

*Yeah I think most of the time I am ready to help UAE students develop their character, and I think part of that because I have been teaching for a long time and I have had so many discussions and experiences with pupils in difficult situations, so I learnt.*

Some teachers have previous experiences in different countries, so they feel that they can succeed in teaching character education to UAE students due to their experiences in different schools:

*Yes, I do think I am ready to teach character education because when I was in Ireland, I was doing my professional diploma in education, and I found it very good and useful because we had to do very different courses to help us, but still we need more awareness of the needs of the Emirati children.*

#### **4. 2. 2. 1. 9. Character Education at the Schools' Site**

Although there is not any specific CE programme implemented in any school in the UAE, it is expected that international schools take character development intellectually and socially into consideration and they handle it effectively and indirectly. In order to highlight the ways that character education is taught in these schools, the teachers were asked about the strategies they use in working on character development and the areas of character education that their schools emphasise.

#### **4. 2. 2. 1. 9. 1. Character education's teaching strategies**

When teachers were asked about strategies they use in teaching CE, their answers varied from one teacher to another, depending on their schools. Teachers were also asked about the availability of having a clear policy that tackles the development of students' character. There was a consensus that there are policies for behaviour which foster good behaviour, consisting of rewards and sanctions to ensure that students show their best behaviour. On the other hand, teachers agreed that no clear rules or regulations were provided to the teachers in terms of character development or morality. Teachers stressed the fact that what one can see in those schools regarding students' character development is a result of personal efforts provided by some teachers who are interested in this area. It is noted that even in school 'C' which presents a

decent picture of the amount of work and effort that has been put to develop good traits in their students' characters; more work is needed in this area. To clarify this picture, the following are some extracts from the three schools' participant teachers who have different approaches for developing morality and good character:

A teacher from school 'B' said that the focus in that school is on team work:

*I think we have got an emphasis on team work and working with other people that seem to be a big aim of this school, also being responsible and kind of supporting to other pupils. It is important they take ownership in what they are doing as well and respect for themselves and respect for other pupils.*

While school 'C' has different approaches in developing students' character and morality, such as through verbal communication, teaching some important values via the curriculum and preparing a whole day to focus on one significant value, as seen in the following extract:

*Verbal communication is used with students, when you see a pupil doing something good or bad, you make a note of them, following the code of conduct. We also use the pupil planner, so there would be lots of notations there to contact with parents. I think we teach character education indirectly as well, during the sessions that we teach, for instance in IT we cover plagiarism, and cyber bullying and that is quiet linked with friendship and like. We have something that we developed which we call well-being day every half term as well, which is a whole day planned to teach a certain trait for all students in that day.*

A teacher from school 'B' said:

*We actually reward pupils every single day for demonstrating character strengths as part of our code of conduct that is fixed on every classroom wall which pupils should know, so that's how communicate with pupils on a daily basis through the house system. Within the timetable every week pupils discuss a global issue and pupils discuss its impact on the people of that country,*

*and that presents an opportunity to talk about character and what needs to be done to make the world a better place. But that's not enough, from my point of view.*

While the situation is promising in school 'C', as mentioned above, it doesn't seem to be the same in the other two schools ('A' and 'B'). Teachers did not seem to be enthusiastic about the teaching of morality and character education, and they clarified that although there is a good behaviour policy which looks great; the application of the policy is not at its best. Some teachers do not abide by its regulations; therefore, there is no consistency in the implementation of this policy, which results in a large number of behavioural issues. In terms of character education, there are no clear strategies for teaching it, so teachers are confused about what is expected from them. What is happening in those schools is a result of some teachers' attempts to work on this matter. Here are some extracts taken from the three schools for more clarification. A teacher from school 'A' said:

*Talking about strategies we use to teach character, I suppose, I will always expect kids to treat others the way they would like to be treated themselves, so, I always promote this quality in the classroom itself, you would have to maintain a set of classroom rules, certain things that would influence them in their own life of what is acceptable and what is not. This is my own opinion.*

From school 'B', a teacher said:

*I suppose with the light of education, the extracurricular activities, like sports and drama can highly influence students and their character. It would be good to have a class like social help once a week, I used to teach that in Ireland where we used to have a class once a week for each year group, I found that very helpful for kids to open conversations about what is acceptable and what is not, give them open scenarios about different things and how scenarios should be resolved, something like that would be a brilliant idea, I know that here they do global citizenship but that does not focus on building character education.*

Teachers in school 'C' stated that they have a variety of policies, supporting morality:

*We do not have a policy addressing character education, but we are very clear on our expectations as tutors, teachers and also classroom practitioners. On the other hand, the behaviour policy that we all got written in our classrooms so we all know what the rewards and sanctions are, and also the school code of conduct is in every classroom as well so that is something we can refer to really quickly and easily. Pupils have it in their planners too, so that, they are very aware and happy of our expectations of them too.*

Some teachers from school 'A' and 'B' rely on what they call personal, social and health education (PSHE) which is tailored originally for the UK students. The teachers said that they try to choose what fits the UAE culture and leave what is not appropriate:

*Yes, we try to help the UAE students develop through (PSHE) that we use to teach in the UK. Through assemblies, special days and other activities just like other schools.*

Another teacher supported the same opinion:

*Through PSHE sessions and other extra-curricular activities, I guess*

With regard to the trait of respect as a universal value and the way they teach it, nine out of the fifteen teachers mentioned modelling as a successful strategy to teach this value. One of the interviewed teachers said:

*I think first, by showing them respect whenever there are instances where they are not showing respect for other people. On the other hand, modelling respect for them is one of the best ways to teach the value practically.*

Another teacher added:

*To model the best behaviour yourself in the classroom and outside it is the best strategy.*

Three teachers added that communicating with the students verbally is an ineffective way to highlight respect as an important value

*A good idea for us as teachers, is when we begin the new academic year, we spend the first lesson not teaching them about a specific subject but talking to them about respect and other important values.*

Nine teachers from school 'A' and 'C' clarified that respect can be considered as part of their behaviour policy which they always focus on as an important area of interest and attention:

*Respect is a basic element of our code of conduct; we do reward students for showing respect to people around the school, including teachers, students, security and cleaning staff. On the other hand, there are certain sanctions in case of showing disrespect to anyone.*

Two teachers of English and history stated that respect can be taught through different subjects by highlighting the areas of respect. Praise can be used to make students appreciate it as a universal value:

*You can teach respect through most subjects, through novels, through examples when respect has or has not been shown.*

To sum up, it seems that respect is a crucial value for those schools, especially in schools 'A' and 'C', as the majority of the Western teachers were very eager to talk about respect and emphasise it as an important value.

#### 4. 2. 2. 1. 9. 2. Schools' activities related to CE

The interviewees were asked to talk about activities their schools hold with the aim of developing students' morality and character; eleven teachers noted that their schools hold assemblies, PSHE sessions and other activities, such as after school activities which are tailored for the benefit of the students' wellbeing. In addition to a number of different activities that can be categorised under "community service", such as charity, visiting hospitals and other organisations, including special needs or elderly people institutions. The following are some extracts from the teachers' interviews:

A teacher from school 'C' said:

*Definitely yes, we have got loads of lunch time activities and also after school activities; many of those are teamwork based. We have activities after school which we call clubs and what I like about them is that they are for all year groups so they are not just with someone that is in their class; it is a real chance for students to mix, meet and socialise with other pupils.*

Another teacher from the same school added:

*Well, the well-being day which focuses on a certain trait for the whole day, is a good example on the schools' activities in which we focus on one trait for the whole day through different activities. I think there are some other supporting activities implicitly encourage teamwork such as musical and PE activities.*

A teacher from school 'A' commented:

*Well, we do have some activities, I suppose like, fund raising for different charities which can have a very positive impact on the students because the students get involved in it; they raise money for the children's hospitals, raise money for the down syndrome charity. I think opening the students' eyes to such situations can really teach them a lot.*

A teacher from school 'B' said:



*What I like about our school is that it encourages charity; therefore, we share the whole community in fund raising supporting different issues all around the world.*

On the other hand, seven teachers from the three selected schools stated that although schools have some sessions and activities that work on students' character; they do not believe that their schools care truly for promoting their students' character, due to the fact that their main focus is on academic success. A teacher from school 'A' said:

*I think we have some lessons of PSHE (we used to teach in the UK), assemblies, special days and other random activities only without having a specific aim in mind. Mainly, academic success is our goal.*

Another teacher from school 'B' added:

*I do not think that we have activities rather than assemblies and tutor time as we do care most of the time for the academic progress of our students.*

#### **4. 2. 2. 1. 9. 3. Teachers' perceptions on parents' role in CE**

Parents play a key role in their children's life; therefore, the perceptions of the teachers on the parents' role in character education were investigated. The following are some extracts clarifying teachers' responses. They reflect that eight teachers agreed that most of the Emirati parents are ready to cooperate with their children's teachers for the benefit of their children. On the other hand six out of those eight teachers noted that although parents are very supportive and cooperative with their children's teachers, some of them are not punctual in attending teacher-parent meetings and sometimes, they do not attend at all. One of the teachers was very optimistic about the cooperation between parents and teachers:

*Yeah I think the parents are very cooperative. In parent- teacher meetings, they really want to listen to the teachers' comments. Teachers also tell them about their concerns about their*

*children; they will take on board what the teacher is saying and they want to help with what they can.*

Another teacher has criticised the punctuality of parents in attending the parent-teacher consultation, saying:

*On the whole the parents' cooperation is very good. Because I think there is a real respect between the local parents and the educators of this school, they understand that in some cases we come from Britain and we are replicating a top class British education, and they can see that our actions spoke louder than our words. Within the cultural context, sometimes, it is difficult to get hold of parents. We have come from a culture in Britain, a number of us were if you book a meeting with a parent and they do not arrive it is a real disgrace, so that can make communication quite difficult for us.*

A different teacher asked for more cooperation from the parents' side, saying:

*Yes, a large number of our children's parents are supportive. We always keep them updated and send them monthly reports which are more than they would often receive elsewhere. Could that report focus on character? That might be something happens in the future, as at the moment it just focuses on the students' efforts. Actually, I am looking forward to having more cooperation from the parents' side as not all of the parents are helpful.*

Four teachers were neutral; they could not give the researcher a specific opinion whether they are satisfied with the amount of the cooperation between teachers and parents:

*I cannot generalise. Some parents are showing good deal of cooperation and some are not; I mean like other nationalities, for example, some Emirati students whom I always see their parents repetitively, when they are dropped off, we speak to them a lot, but I can also think of one Emirati pupil, for example, who has a lot of behavioural issues, the dad is not in the country most of the time and the mom is busy and always apologises as they are unable to help their child.*

Conversely, three teachers insisted on the opinion that parents do not help the school in developing their children's morality. They do not cooperate with the schools in any way as they are always busy. Some parents cultivate different values in their children's personalities which contradict with what the teachers teach at schools. The following extracts taken from different teachers from the three sample schools are examples on that:

A teacher from school 'A' said:

*I think that some parents do not teach their own children of how to become a good person; simply they ask them to hit back who ever hits them which is the opposite of what we teach them at school.*

Another interviewed Western teacher from school 'B' said:

*Oh yes, although I do respect all Emirati families as some of them show cooperation, at the same time, I realise that some families let their maid care and supervise their children ,and so, the result will be a lot of misbehaviour issues at school.*

A participant teacher from school 'C' commented:

*I think that Emirati families cooperate with their children's school, but the problem is that most of these families are too busy to spend enough time with their children, therefore, they give this duty to the maid who knows nothing about the right way of upbringing kids.*

#### **4. 2. 2. 1. 10. Obstacles that the Western teachers face in teaching character and morality to UAE national students**

In terms of the obstacles teachers may face in teaching CE, the fifteen Western teachers were asked about the difficulties they may face in teaching CE in those three schools; responses in answering this question varied among teachers. The main reasons mentioned were difficulty to deal with adolescent students, having a large number of students in the same classroom which

makes it difficult for teachers to pay sufficient attention to all students, the gap they have as a result of the differences between their culture and the students' cultures and finally, the limitation of time as they think it is not enough to cover the syllabus and teach character education at the same time.

Three female teachers who teach adolescents said that the age of their students is their main difficulty as they are unable to deal with them in the correct way:

*I think the only obstacle I face is due to the fact that I teach adolescents and it is so difficult to deal with them during this stage of life. Simply, I do not know exactly the right way to deal with adolescents.*

Another two teachers claimed that having a large number of students in the same classroom is their only problem while teaching CE:

*I think the only thing that I would say that may be an obstacle is that I have too many children in the classroom and it's very difficult to develop their characters. It is more effective to have 20 students in a class to teach them better and to focus on building their character within a limited time.*

Four teachers stated that the difference between their own culture and their students' culture has resulted in having possible conflicts when discussing particular values with students.

One of the interviewed Western teachers said:

*The two cultures are different, so what makes a good character for me could be different for my students. One very interesting conversation I did have with a UAE local child who couldn't understand that even though I was excellent in my studies and I did really well in my GCSE examinations, why I would want to be a music teacher. I did see a difference in values here; he tried to convince me that I should be a lawyer, or a doctor instead of music teacher to gain more*

*money, but for me, I wanted to teach music, because money is not everything. So that was something different and I was kind of challenged.*

Another participant teacher added:

*You know most values that you would teach in character education, whether it is compassion, empathy or honesty you can do that generically. In the UK, you would be more free to bring in examples that maybe you are not allowed to teach in this country from the religious or cultural point of view anything that is not Islamic then you are not really meant to discuss, of course there are lots of Islamic examples that you can give but most of us are unable to talk about these examples.*

Three teachers noted that their responsibility to cover a certain syllabus for their subjects makes it really difficult to discuss any issue related to their characters:

*Of course, all the teachers in the school are accountable for covering their subject syllabus, and so, it is difficult to have any time for developing their students' personality. On the other hand, I think this job is easier to be done in the with certain year groups, such as, primary school where teachers spend almost the whole school day in the same class with the same students; therefore, they can manage their time well and work on their students' morality and character development.*

Another participant Western teacher from a different school said:

*I do not think we, as teachers, have enough time to work on the personalities of the students in addition to working on them academically. Covering the curriculum itself is a challenge.*

### **Students' responses**

One of the research questions is “what are the Emirati students' perceptions of character development in the international schools?” In order to answer this question, ten students were

interviewed from the three sample schools 'A', 'B' and 'C' to investigate their perceptions on CE that is provided by their schools, administered by Western staff.

#### **4. 2. 2. 2. Students' behaviours**

In an attempt to explore the interviewees' perceptions about misbehaviour, students were asked to reveal their opinions about different unacceptable behaviours at school and to talk about themselves whether they practise these behaviours or not; therefore, they were asked about cheating, bullying, skipping classes, forcing other pupils to do things against their wills, and stealing. The following extracts give an idea about their responses and reveal that they do not show their best behaviour all the time.

One of the interviewed students from school 'A' said:

*In exams I do not cheat but in homework, yes.*

Another student from the same school said:

*In my life, I cheated once or twice only.*

From school 'B' a student said:

*Sometimes, when I get stuck in an exam, I cheat if I can.*

And from school 'C', the following extract clarifies the same opinion:

*Yes, I cheat if it is possible to copy.*

Another interviewee from the same school related the possibility of cheating with the type of teachers they have:

*It depends on the teacher; if he is strict, then we cannot cheat.*

When the participant students were asked whether they were bullied and how they reacted towards it, six out of ten agreed that they were bullied whether physically or psychologically to a point that they reported the bullying to their teachers. The following extracts, reflect the students' answers.

A participant student answered:

*Yes, I was bullied many times by some students, but I told the teacher as I could not do anything about it.*

Another student from a different school added:

*Yes, I was bullied many times, but I told the teachers in some times and I was also quiet about it other times.*

Students were asked if they skipped classes. The students' responses varied between yes and no. In one specific school "B", it seems that skipping classes is something possible for as four answered with yes. On the other hand, skipping classes in the other two schools is not easy and these schools take care of this issue.

A student said:

*Yes many times (with a big smile).*

Another interviewee said:

*Yes few times in exams.*

While there was only one student who said that he dislikes cheating:

*No not at all. I hate cheating.*

In order to explore the interviewees' opinions in truthfulness, they were given the scenario of finding twenty dirham in the playground and having to decide whether to keep the money or to give it to someone in charge. Almost all of the participants agreed that they will not take the money and instead they would hand it to whomever in charge.

A student said:

*Give them to the teacher or leave them.*

Another student answered:

*Give them to the main reception of the school.*

With regard to the proposed effect of the Western teachers, the interviewees were asked if their Western teachers talk to them about their personal life. Eight of the ten interviewees replied that their teachers do talk about their holidays, children and weekends only. Two students illustrated that their teachers never told them anything about their personal life.

A student from school 'C' said:

*Yes, but sometimes our teachers tell us about work and their experiences so we can learn from their lives. If we ask them about their personal life, sometimes they tell us and talk about their families and their life in their homeland. The teachers try to be careful when telling us about their life as they know that our culture is sensitive about certain issues.*

An interviewee from school 'B' said:

*Sometimes our teachers tell us about their travelling or their holidays.*

And for the minority who said that their teachers talk to them about their own personal life, a student from school B said:

*Yes, we have a Western teacher who always tells us stories about herself, especially about her university stories when she was in her home land.*

Trying to reveal students' perceptions of the efficacy of the British schools, they were asked about the best thing they receive as a result of studying in a school that follows British curriculum and conversely, what they hate about it. The results showed that most of the students favoured being a student in this kind of schools as it gives them good ability to use the English



language effectively and studying about the history and the culture of the UK. Unexpectedly, the majority of the students were unsatisfied by the way their Western teachers deal with them describing them as biased teachers; they prefer Western students to them. A student from school 'C' said:

*I learn more English in my school, but what I hate about my school is that they care about our academic achievement without paying any attention to our problems as teenagers. They also prefer the Western students to the Emirati students.*

Another participant student from the same school said:

*It is good because I get to know a lot about Britain and its culture. I don't hate anything about it except that they do care about our results in exams more than anything else and they also make us sometimes feel that we are less smart than the Western students and that is weird, because simply we speak English as a second language while it is the first language for the Western students.*

An interviewee from school 'B' said:

*I learn more English which will give me more opportunities in my future. What I hate is just the fact that Western students sometimes make us feel that they are different than us and teachers also sometimes prefer them to us.*

Another participant student from school 'A' said:

*It is good because a school with British curriculum means a school that has students from different nationalities, different traditions and different cultures, so we learn more about the world and about different people in it. I do not hate anything except the fact that most of the teachers prefer Western students.*

Based on what is mentioned above, it can be argued that UAE nationals are pleased with the fact that they are students in the British schools; they are able to speak using better English and will have more work opportunities in the future. However, they are annoyed by the fact that sometimes their teachers make them feel that the Western students are smarter or better than the UAE national students, simply because they speak better English.

To investigate what kind of values the national UAE students learnt from their Western teachers, students were asked to answer the following question: “in terms of values, which values have you learnt from your teachers?” Positive views were given in this regard as indicated in the following extracts. A student from school ‘C’ said:

*There are some values that I learnt from my teachers such as respect and being brave to say my opinions, but I cannot say that my teachers are my role models as there are things that I do not like to imitate them with. Sometimes, for example, I feel that they are completely different people than the people in my family or my neighbourhood.*

A participant student from school ‘B’ said:

*Couple of things as their attitude is really good so they help us really whenever we need help. I myself learnt to be helpful for others and perhaps respect is also a quality that I learnt from my teachers. For example, I learnt to respect myself and others and not to interrupt them when talking.*

An interviewee from school ‘C’ said:

*I think I learnt to respect each other and not to underestimate anybody no matter what and being helpful for.*

Based on what was mentioned above; it seems that respect and being helpful are two of the most important values that students learn in those schools.

To explore, in terms of values, the difference between what parents teach children at home and what teachers teach them at school. Nine students out of ten revealed their views clarifying that their teachers' culture and values are different; therefore they have to choose what is appropriate to the UAE culture and values. The following are some extracts from the students' comments reflecting their opinions regarding this question.

A participant student from school 'A' said:

*Sometimes, I realise that there are some differences, such as the idea of mixing boys and girls together and being more open-minded to many issues that are not acceptable in our culture.*

The same idea was supported by another student from school 'B':

*There are some few differences, such as the way they live and their ideas about different things. I myself know that they have different cultures and we need to take what suits our traditions only.*

School 'Cs' students were also supporters of the same opinion:

*I feel that our teachers are good but sometimes they lack knowledge about our culture and heritage; that is why they keep on asking us about different issues related to religion or culture.*

On the other hand, one student only finds that both his parents and his teachers teach him the same values; he said:

*No, I think both of my teachers and my parents teach me the same values.*

In an attempt to find out the effectiveness of the three schools behaviour polices, the students were asked about the consequences of bad behaviour; seven out of ten from school A and B said that the consequences depend on how strict the teacher is, while the rest of the students in school "C" agreed that the code of conduct in their school is applied in all situations for all cases by all

teachers. Therefore, it is noted that there are certain rules and regulations regarding students' behaviour in the three schools, but the application of these rules varies from one school to another and from one teacher to another. The following are some quotes of what the students said. The first quote is taken from a student's interview from school 'B'

*Some of the teachers are strict, others do not care. For the strict ones, they almost give us detention in the break times, if we misbehave.*

Another student from the same school said:

*Sometimes, they give us warnings in the cases of misbehaviour, other times, we do not get anything.*

Another interviewee from school 'C' said:

*Our teachers usually give a detention to the student with misbehaviour, according to the code of conduct.*

While a student from school 'A' answered:

*Some of my teachers are strict so they give us warnings, but others are kind they just talk to students who misbehave, so, it is up to the teacher.*

In terms of the activities that these schools provide their students with, the students were asked if their schools provide them with activities to help them develop a good sense of morality and good character. Students' answers varied depending on their schools. Five agreed that there are some activities but not enough to help them develop good characters; the other five said that they do not feel that there are effective activities that can develop their characters. The following are some extracts from the three schools' students.

A participant student from school 'C' said:

*Yes, for example, different activities especially sport ones in which we learn group work, unity and friendship. We also have the “Wellbeing Day”, which means a whole day without any lessons and instead, lessons will be replaced by activities to teach us a certain quality such as friendship or resilience. However, I think we still need more activities than what we have currently.*

Another student from school ‘A’ added:

*Sometimes we have after school clubs in which we play different kinds of sport. I think these kinds of games develop different values such as helping others, team work and cooperation.*

While a different student from school ‘B’ said:

*No activities, except sport activities after school which of course not enough at all.*

The other part of the interviews focused on investigating students’ backgrounds at home; they were asked about how many times in a week they have dinner with their parents. The majority of the students’ answers were between one and three times a week which indicates that they do not spend enough time with their parents to get sufficient parental guidance.

Five students said:

*At the weekends only, we eat dinner together.*

Another student said:

*Twice a week, as my parents are very busy.*

Four students replied saying:

*Three times a week. Both of my parents work and cannot have enough time to spend with us.*

The interviewees were asked also about how often they watch TV. The students noted that they watch a lot of TV. Seven students said:

*I watch TV almost daily.*

Two participant students answered saying:

*Three times a week as I like watching TV*

One student said:

*Four times a week*

And finally, with regard to the Islamic studies and social studies subjects at their schools, the researcher asked the students whether they are satisfied with what they get of these subjects; students in two schools 'A' and 'C' were satisfied with the Islamic studies and social studies lessons but felt they need more lessons. On the other hand students in school 'B' were disappointed by the way they learn Islamic studies and social studies as they were discontented with the way their teachers teach those subjects. They believe that their schools do not appreciate or care about those subjects. Here are some extracts reflecting students' views.

One of the students in school 'A' said:

*Our teachers of Islamic Studies and Social Studies are very good in explaining these subjects, but we always ask them to give us extra time to cover some extra material, for example, in Islamic Studies the stories of the Prophets, but they do not have sufficient time for that.*

The same opinion was supported by students of school 'C':

*Our Islamic Studies teachers are good but they do not have enough time to provide us with extra information.*

In school 'B', there was an agreement among all of the interviewed students that those two subjects are not getting enough attention as the other English subjects.

*In social studies and Islamic studies, we just read and the school does not really care about these subjects, so we have to summarise what we read for the sake of exams only. The school does not really care about social studies or Islamic studies.*

### **3.2.2.3. Parents' interviews**

Ten parents of students studying in the three sample schools were interviewed to investigate their perceptions on the Western teachers' impact on their children's morality. The interviews were from both genders; fathers and mothers. The results of these interviews supported the quantitative data as they showed that being the mother or the father does not make any difference in their opinions; this will be seen in the next sections. The interviewees' responses and perspectives are classified into three categories, including parents' perceptions on the school's effectiveness, their perception of the teachers' role in developing their children's character and their role as parents in enhancing their children's morality and good character.

### **4. 2. 2. 3.1 Efficacy of the British education for the national UAE students**

With regard to the effectiveness of those schools, the interviewees' responses showed that they are satisfied with the way these schools handle their children's education, at the same time, they criticised certain points. The following extracts are showing the parents' responses regarding this matter; they are for parents from the three schools.

One of the parents said:

*Yes, the school is effective and good; teachers are good in providing our children with good education, at the same time they develop their personalities to be successful men and women in the future. On the other hand, unfortunately, I feel that our children's mentality is westernised.*

Another parent added:

*Yes, the school is really good and I am happy with what my son learns from his teachers, but I do not want my son to act as if he is Western; I feel sometimes that my son is gradually turning to be Western person rather than an Arab, including the way he dresses and the way he talks to people and most importantly, is that he doesn't like to speak our language. In one sentence he became a Western boy wearing kandoorah (Male's traditional dress in the UAE), which is not right and our culture rejects such attitude.*

A different parent supported the same idea, saying:

*I am happy with my children's school as it helps them to have more self-discipline.*

Another participant parent commented on the same issue, saying:

*Well yes, the school has taught my children many good traits such as respect and other good manners. On the other hand there is lack of communication with the parents as all their letters and emails are in English language and rarely, we receive Arabic translation for what they send, ignoring that we are Arab and our first language is Arabic so we need to know everything related to our children in Arabic. Thus, I do not feel secure, and I always have fear of the idea that my daughter will turn to be a UAE national from outside while she is Western from inside.*

Data gained from the parents' replies revealed that most of the parents are content and satisfied with the British education that their children are receiving; however, they criticised it as having its defects and weaknesses regarding cultural issues.



Parents were asked about the activities held by the schools in order to help their children develop traits of good character. The findings showed that although parents are pleased with the activities their children have, they find English language as a barrier that prevents parents from understanding what is occurring in their children's school. A parent from school 'C' said:

*Sure they do have activities. Honestly, I am too busy; I do not know what they do, but I think they do a good job in the sense of developing our children's personality as I feel that my son has developed a very strong personality in this school.*

Another parent said:

*Sure, they have good activities, especially after school activities, such as swimming and other kinds of sport which help children develop different aspects in their personalities and I will not forget the activities that our children are involved in such as visiting different institutions and organisations in which they develop their knowledge and so, increase their self-confidence and their ability to face other people and to talk in public. I have to mention that I am familiar with what my daughter does at school as I am good at English language and I understand the school's messages and newsletters, but I know some other parents who know nothing about these activities due to the fact that they are unable to understand English.*

A third parent from a different school 'B' added the same comment, saying:

*Yes, they hold different activities that reinforce certain good qualities in our children's characters. Honestly, I cannot mention any of these activities as the school does not provide us with any translated documents for those activities in Arabic.*

Similarly, the interviewees seemed to admire the policies of behaviour available in those schools. The following extracts are showing the parents' views in those policies. From school 'A', a parent said:

*Yes, I think they have a good policy to control and promote students' behaviour.*

Another parent from school 'B' said:

*Although it is a good policy but there is not any consistency among all year groups in implementing this policy.*

A different parent from school 'C' said:

*I like the way they apply their code of conduct for all students equally.*

In terms of qualities and values that make a good character, the responses of the parents varied from one to another. However, all of the qualities can be considered as part of the core universal values that all communities like their people to have. A parent from school 'A' said:

*Well, I think that self-confidence, having strong personality, and ability to socialise with people, are the main traits for a good character.*

Another parent from school 'B' supported the same opinion:

*Honesty is the most important trait for a good character.*

And finally, another extract is taken from a parent's interview from school 'C':

*Honesty and truthfulness are the most important traits that make a good character.*

The qualities that the parents mentioned in their responses were almost the same with what the quantitative findings revealed through parents' questionnaires; hence both the quantitative and qualitative results reinforce each other.

With regard to Islamic studies and social studies which can be considered the only two subjects learnt in Arabic, in addition to Arabic language, of course; there was a consensus among all parents that although these two subjects are taught well in those schools, they still receive less care and supervision than other subjects that are parts of the British curriculum. Adding more weekly lessons for both subjects was one of the recommendations that parents suggested. All the

interviewees expressed the same opinion in different words. The following extracts are real reflections of their views.

*What our children get in Islamic studies and social studies is not enough. We need more lessons of those two important subjects.*

The same idea was supported by the parents of school 'B' and 'C'. The following is an extract said by a parent of a child in school 'B'

*Not enough at all. I think the children need more lessons of Islamic studies and social studies. Those subjects are very important subjects as they connect our children with their religion, Arabic culture, values, traditions and Emirati heritage. As a parent I do not feel that the school cares about those subjects the same as they do to other subjects.*

#### **4. 2. 2. 3.2. Parents' perceptions on teachers' role in CE**

The findings of the parents' interviews indicated that not all parents believe that Western teachers are good role models for their children to follow; however, they all agreed that there are few issues that should be taken into consideration as these teachers play an influential role in their children's life. Parents noted that teachers sometimes behave in ways that are not acceptable in UAE culture. The following extracts reflect their perspectives. The first extract is taken from an interview conducted with a parent from school 'B':

*They are good people but I do not think that they know our values well, that's why sometimes they talk about issues that are not part of our culture which may affect our children negatively.*

Another parent from school 'C' said:

*We cannot generalise. Some of them are really good people, but they live their life according to their own culture which we do not mind, but in front of our kids they have to stick to our cultural*

*rules. I will give you an example; one of the teachers has a weird hair style, so my son insists on having the same unacceptable hair style (according to our culture).*

From school 'B', another parent commented:

*I think they are good role models in showing good qualities, such as, commitment, self-discipline and responsibility. On the other hand, some of the Western teachers cannot be good role models as they reflect their own culture ignoring the culture of the country they live and work at.*

Another participant parent from school 'A' added:

*I do not think that they can always be role models to our children as they sometimes, act in a different way than we do. I do not want them to interfere in anything related to our religion, traditions and culture. The other important issue is that how can my children copy those teachers while they sometimes do not abide to the simplest rules of our culture such as dress code that should be clear to them the moment they were hired.*

The interviewees were asked about their opinions on the influence of the backgrounds and the values of the Western teachers on their children's morality and character development; all the participant parents agreed that the teachers' influence is major. Here are some extracts of the parents' responses from different schools:

A parent from school 'A' said:

*Yes, the influence is huge and massive. The way they wear clothes, the way they talk about things and their perceptions affect our children who copy them as much as they can. I realise that some of the teachers do not abide by the rules of the school, such as in their clothes and even their hair styles and even hair colours which sometimes are not acceptable in our culture and society. For adolescents, everything that their teachers do is the best so they end up copying their teacher's values and attitudes rather than sticking to our own values and culture.*

A different parent from school 'B' supported the same idea:

*I should admit that these teachers do teach our children good values and ethics and prepare them for the real life situation. On the other side, I should say they may mislead our children in certain issues as they believe completely in their teachers regardless anything. I noticed that my children try to avoid using Arabic language even with the family members. Furthermore, as a result of the Western culture's influence, my children keep on criticising some of our traditions that I do not want to talk about in this context.*

#### **4. 2. 2. 3. 3. Parents' role in CE**

There is almost a consensus among the interviewed parents on the vital role that they play in enhancing their children's morality and character development. Six of the interviewed parents believe that their role is more important than the teachers' role; on the other hand, four parents believe that the school's role in promoting students' morality and developing their character traits is more important than the parents' role as seen in the following extracts:

A parent from school 'C' said:

*The parents' role is crucial, as children's home is the first environment that provides them with what they need to become either successful or unsuccessful members of the community depending on the way their parents raise them up.*

Another participant parent from school 'B' supported the previous opinion of the parent:

*It is an important role for parents, as they guide their children's conduct from the beginning of their childhood. Schools should continue what the parents have started with their children at home.*

A participant parent from school 'A' commented:

*The parents' role is more important than the school's role, as they establish in their children the base of a good behaviour. Parents' role can be summarised in two words; guidance and supervision.*

On the other hand, some parents believe that their role is more important than the teacher' role, as seen in the example below, taken from a parent's interview from school 'C':

*I think that although the parents' role is very important, the school has more important role as the student spends most of his day in his school. I think that schools should care about manners and behaviour more than just teaching students few subjects. Schools are the second home for our children.*

Another example on the same view, commented by a parent from school 'B':

*Definitely the school's role is more important than the parents' role as the child is influenced by the school more than what he gets in his own family.*

Parents views on the way their children should react if any one assaults them physically were, surprisingly, the same; they supported the idea of hitting back the one who hits their child and then to report the incident to the teacher. This issue can be related to the way that parents have been raised up and their culture which, in return, will affect their children's behaviour. The following, are three extracts taken from three parents from the three schools.

From school 'A', a parent said:

*I encourage my son to defend himself and hit back the one who hits him.*

From school 'B', a participant parent said:

*Yes, my son should hit back whoever hits him to defend himself and then, he should report the incident to the teacher.*

And from school 'C', a parent commented:

*I think, I will not ask my son to hit who hits him in return, but I will not blame him if he hits him back; moreover, I will contact the school if this incident happens to my child.*

Cooperation between the parents and the school is an important pillar that enhances students' character's development. When the parents at home were asked about the cooperation between the parents and their children's schools, the responses of the interviewees varied according to the school they go to, which indicates that we cannot generalise the result in this matter; therefore, some parents are satisfied with the cooperation they receive from their children's schools, others are not, due to the same reason mentioned earlier; the availability of translation from English to Arabic is a real need for the parents. A parent from school 'A' said:

*Yes, a lot of parent-teacher meetings and coffee mornings are always arranged for the sake of the students. We are pleased of what the school does for our children. I just hope that the school pays more attention to the fact that we are not English people and we do not understand English language, so it is essential for us to receive translated copies of what the school issues to parents in our language.*

Another parent from school 'B' commented:

*Well, yes, in case of any misbehaviour, both the school and the parents meet and discuss the child' situation to solve his/her problem. Moreover, if the child gets low grades, the school also calls the parents of this child for a meeting to discuss different strategies that may help in the child's progress. As a mother, I would like to say that this cooperation between the school and the parents is highly appreciated.*

The following extract is from a parent's interview from school 'C':

*Not enough cooperation. Sometimes I feel isolated and ignored by my own children's school. They should involve us in all activities, so the school and the parents cooperate together for the goodness of the children. I would like also to mention that English language is a big obstacle that decreases the amount of cooperation between the parents and the school; therefore, we need more translation to clarify what is required from us as parents.*

#### **4. 2. 3. Open ended questions**

The teacher's questionnaire includes three open ended questions (see Appendix 2) asking teachers about CE they teach in their schools. The teachers were also asked if they face any difficulty while teaching CE and their suggestions of how character education can be taught in a better way. Only 35 teachers responded to this question and 14 responses were missing as seen in Appendix: 13.

For the first question, most of the teachers clarified that they do not have specific guidelines in teaching character education as seen in the following extracts:

Extract 1:

*I have taken a course which was not part of the school's policy; I took it on my own to be able to develop character in the classroom. In this school, we don't have any clear guidelines to develop students' characters.*

Extract 2:

*Teaching character depends on the knowledge of the teacher.*

Extract 3:

*Nothing specific, teachers lead by sample. When pupils misbehave, teachers discuss the outcomes with them and show them how their behaviour affects others negatively.*



Some of the teachers explained that in teaching character, they depend on what is called PSHE which they know from schools they worked at in their countries. Others, added that they teach character through the house system and the code of conduct that they have.

Extract 4:

*I teach character through the following:*

- PSHE lessons
- *House system*
- *Code of conduct*

Extract 5:

*For teaching character, we use the code of conduct and PSHE curriculum that we have in our school.*

And for the second question whether they face any problems in teaching character, most of them attribute their problems to the fact that they do not have enough time or specific guidelines, the parents do not help children follow the schools' rules and the lack of teachers' understanding of the Emirati culture.

Extract 6:

*I do not face any difficulty. This is based on the teachers' effort and knowledge in this area because we do not have to follow a certain plan to develop students' character*

Extract 7:

*Not enough time. Ideally we should have a student counsellor to spend 30 minutes each month with our pupils.*

Extract 8:

*Sometimes parents teach their children ideas that conflict with the school's teaching, e.g. if someone hits you, hit him back.*

Extract 9:

*Having time to implement character development can be difficult. It needs to be integrated into the subject content and made explicit by highlighting character keywords. All teachers of different subjects need to be familiar with the strategies of how to integrate the teaching of good values within the curriculum itself.*

Extract 10

*Yes the children in the classroom are struggling to uphold certain characters such as empathy and self-control because they are being enforced at school. As teachers we are not sure of the value that we should teach to the students.*

Extract 11

*Yes, I have a problem in meeting cultural needs of every pupil.*

The third open-ended question was:

How can character education be taught in a better way? What do you believe is missing?

The following are some extracts of the teachers' answers:

Extract 12

*Clear discipline and high expectation*

Extract 13

*Global citizen programme that includes a cross countries seminars for students.*

Extract 14

*If we have a lesson a week dedicated to life skills away from academics, then the focus can be given to character education with no pressure.*

Extract 15

*Two things are missing: communication with parents and cultural awareness among the Western teachers.*

Extract 16

*If both parents and teachers enforce the same rules both at home and in school because this reduces confusion for the children. More cooperation is needed between the parents and the school for the sake of the students' character development.*

Extract 16

- *Clear plan with clear instructions*
- *Need a counsellor*
- *Train teachers as counsellors*
- *Train pupils as student counsellors*
- *More rewards, prizes and certificates cross curriculum*
- *Integration of character education within the whole curriculum will be beneficial for character development.*

Categories emerging after analysing and comparing the written responses include various suggestions related to teachers, parents and the character education itself. Those suggestions can be clearly seen in Table 4. 19.

**Table 4.19: Categories emerging from the responses of the teachers to the open ended questions on the teachers' questionnaires**

Categories	Effective CE at schools
CE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Teaching students the core values should be imbedded into the curriculum across the range of subjects (implicit).</li> <li>-Character key words should be highlighted explicitly through regular assemblies, dedicated days and other extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>- A consistent approach used by all and everywhere (code of conduct, house tutor time and sharing core values). Displays related to character education should be everywhere around the school as a point of reference and reinforcement.</li> <li>-Character development and morality should be considered as important as academic success to schools.</li> </ul>
Parents	<p>Parents should support teachers by enforcing the same ethics and values, so both the school and the house will be teaching and enhancing the same values; therefore, this situation reduces the confusions of the children.</p>
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Western teachers have different values; therefore they need regular training to have sufficient confidence to teach morality and character education.</li> <li>-Modelling the good behaviour all the time.</li> </ul>

#### 4. 2. 4. Document analysis

The researcher visited the Ministry of Education in an attempt to find any document that helps schools develop students' personalities. A very important document was located that tackles the heart of the core values. This document is called "Abu Dhabi Education Council Student Competency Framework (SCF) for Private Schools". This framework is structured into three parts: a group of core values, a group of themes for competences, and a distinct group of competences. Core values define ethics and morals which are important to the successful development of the competences in students. The core values proposed by (SCF) are resilience,

respect, empathy, integrity, honesty, care and tolerance; these values enhance good behaviours in students; they are exemplified, not formally assessed. This exemplification has most impact when the teachers and adults in a school exhibit those characteristics and model them for their students. It is expected from all teachers to refer to and to integrate those core values in their planning, teaching and in their behaviours as they are the role models for their students.

There are three proposed themes: Learning and thinking skills, personal and social skills and national and global citizenship skills. These themes include all the core competences that are relevant for the framework: Learning and thinking skills which provide students with abilities to be skilled, creative, flexible life-long learner and effective worker. Moreover, personal and social skills help students to be tolerant, organised and able to achieve their goals. While national and global citizenship skills help students have sufficient awareness of the world they inhabit.

Core competences include: communication, collaboration, teamwork, problem solving, digital competence, critical thinking, cultural awareness/citizenship, creativity and innovation, independent learning, leadership and responsibility. In the light of the student framework competencies, private schools have to do the following:

- Nurture student's competences regardless the curriculum they study.
- Integrate the framework of competences in their scheme of work and their teaching.
- Offer different chances for all students to develop their competencies.
- Keep a record for students' development of the framework competency.

<https://www.adec.ac.ae/en/Education/PrivateSchools/Pages/default.aspx>

It can be seen that the students' competencies framework is extremely helpful, but the problem is that teachers who play the key role in character education have no idea about the existence of

this framework. Moreover, although it provides the schools with clear guidelines on what is expected to construct in our children's character; at the same time it lacks clear specific strategies and methods that can guide the teachers to achieve the required results.

Based on the (SCF) document, lesson plans in any school should be good examples that reflect teachers' abilities in enhancing and nurturing students' personalities. Therefore, ten lesson plans prepared by Western teachers were collected from the three schools and checked for having any item that supports CE; the criterion for analysing those plans depends on the framework competencies of students (SCF), therefore, those plans were scrutinised using the following questions:

Does the lesson plan include any of the core values, any of the themes of competences or any distinct group of competences?
Does the lesson plan highlight any character aspects?
Does the lesson plan focus on aspects of curriculum that foster character development?
Does the lesson plan integrate any aspect of CE into curriculum?

The results of analysing those lesson plans were surprising; unfortunately, none of them displayed any evidence of including any aspect of character education. Moreover, there was no reference to CE or even any aspect of character development in all of them; all of the ten lesson plans were just delivering regular curriculum for different subjects. It can be hypothesised that teachers are unaware of their crucial role in developing students' personalities in a way that suits the present and the future era.

The other document that was found in the three schools was the behaviour policy or as it is called the code of conduct in some schools; it regulates and ensures a high standard of good behaviour

and discipline. The three policies in the three schools have much in common; however, one of them explains the responsibilities of the students and what is expected from them, the teachers' responsibilities in the case of any student's misbehaviour. The parents' role is also clear in the case of their children's misbehaviour. The other two behaviour policies show the sanctions and the consequences of any misbehaviour only.

Moreover, the three policies encourage student's positive behaviour through a reward system. Respect is highly mentioned in the three policies and can be seen in most aspects of the policies. This reflects the amount of attention given to this value in the three chosen schools. It should be noted that although the three policies seem to be very efficient, it is realised that practically they are not implemented as they should be in all of the three schools.

#### **4.2. 5. Summary of the Findings**

This study applied a mixed method using both qualitative and the quantitative research instruments; consequently, having a huge amount of data is a normal result. The next section is summarising the major findings according to the research questions.

Quantitatively, the first research question was addressed to the Western teachers to investigate their perception on their influence they may have on their UAE national students. The findings of different questions in the teacher questionnaire showed that 44 teachers believe that character education enhances academic achievement (with a mean of 1.37), develops good character (with a mean of 1.48). Most of the teachers also agreed (with a mean of 1.69) that teachers participate in providing character education to their students.

Qualitatively, the interviews also supported the quantitative results and revealed that teachers play an essential role in character education but they have different views on its definition, therefore, some of them think that they need training sessions to be familiar with the culture and the values of the country so, they can help its youth the proper way. Teachers supported the idea that CE is an important area that education should provide the students with. There was a

consensus among the teachers on the importance of some core values that students should learn, although they vary in importance from one teacher to another, but still they agree on their importance for human beings in general. Teachers in the interviews clarified their roles as well as the parents' role in nurturing the students' character. Moreover, teachers illustrated that they face some difficulties while teaching students CE, such as, the number of students they teach, dealing with adolescent students and the difference between the teachers' culture and the students' culture.

For the second research question, which aimed at investigating the UAE national students' perceptions on character education, the findings revealed that they are satisfied with what they learn in the British schools. The findings also showed that not all students are showing the best behaviour at all times. Moreover, 43 of students do not treat each other with respect (mean of 2.32) and the majority of teachers do not treat them with respect (mean of 2.90) which indicates that what is in their behaviour policies does not reflect the real situation in those schools.

The third research question aimed at the parents' perceptions on the influence of the Western teachers on their children's morality and character development. A number of 40 parents agreed that they have the biggest role in developing their children's character; this opinion supports the quantitative result which showed that most of them support the opinion that parents are the best teachers of character (mean of 1.55). Parents also agreed that teachers' values and background have a major influence on students' morality and character development. Furthermore, they have expressed their discontent of the fact that their children are gradually westernised as a result of the teachers' impact; therefore, for the parents, some of the Western teachers cannot be considered as good role models.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Discussion, Implications, Conclusion and Recommendations**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

As emphasized earlier, character education is important for a healthy character development. While children spend most of their day time at schools learning and studying different subjects, such as math, science and English, it is expected that their characters develop day by day through interacting with peers, and teachers at schools, their parents at home and through others in their wider community. Therefore, children reflect on what they learn through their behaviours and dealings with others. Pearson and Nicholson (2000) believed that there are three interrelated fields that stand for good character: oneself, other people, and the whole community.

It can be postulated that working on building and developing positive character in children is a vital issue for educators. Character education has an influential role in attempting to positively improve children's academic and social achievement; it nurtures students' abilities to display good behaviour while interacting with others, such as having respect, honesty, trustworthiness, readiness to volunteer for the sake of the whole community and showing responsibility toward others by being kind and helpful. Consequently, it seems significant for educators in educational organizations to understand and appreciate the importance and the positive effect of teaching morality and character on students' characters.

This chapter discusses the effect of the Western teacher's backgrounds and cultures on the Emirati student's morality and character development through discussing the findings related to the following research questions:

1. How do teachers perceive any influences that they may have on the development of their Emirati students' morality?

2- What are the Emirati students' perceptions of character development in the international schools?

3- How do Emirati parents perceive the influence of the Western teachers on their children's character/ moral development?

To answer the research questions, the following was undertaken:

- A triangulation of a mixed methods approach was applied to help the researcher get in-depth insights of the issue using questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Three questionnaires were administered to forty-nine teachers, forty-nine students and forty-nine parents in three schools that follow British curriculum in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. In addition to fifteen Western teachers, ten Emirati students and ten parents were also interviewed.
- The findings were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively in the previous chapter. The collected quantitative data were analysed statistically using SPSS applying various kinds of descriptive analysis, while the qualitative data was analysed thematically for a clearer conception of the topic.
- The comprehensive approach of character education by Lickona (1993) was used in this context to investigate the situation of character/moral education in the sample schools. The sample population of this study came from three British schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. However, each school has its own distinctive system; so the initiatives of morality/character education at those three schools were investigated separately in order to understand the positives and negatives of the moral/character education in those schools in general. Moreover, it investigated the situation of students' morality and character development in those three sample schools.

Chapter 5 discusses the research questions through discussing the perspectives of the Western teachers as well as the Emirati students' perspectives on the impact of British teaching and the effect of the Western teachers' different cultures and values on the personality and morality of the Emirati students. Furthermore, there is a section dedicated to the findings of the perspectives of the Emirati parents toward the influence of the Western teachers' backgrounds and values on their children's morality and character.

To sum up, in the next sections, the major findings are discussed thematically in relation to the reviewed literature and organised according to the research questions. The final section of this chapter discusses the implications for practice, recommendations, and limitations of the study, suggestions for future studies and summary of the chapter and the final conclusion of the study.

## **5.2 A Thematic Discussion of the Major Findings**

A thematic discussion of the research findings is conducted, covering different categories, which reflect the research questions that are exploring the perspectives of the Western teachers and their effect on Emirati students' morality and character development from three types of perspectives: Western teachers, Emirati students and their parents.

### **5.2.1. Teachers' perceptions of their influences on student's development**

How do teachers perceive any influences that they may have on the development of their students' morality?

In response to the first research question about the influence that Western teachers may have on Emirati students' morality and character development, a discussion of the findings of the study was conducted. The discussion addressed sub-themes which include the Western teachers' understanding of the definition of character education, Western teachers as role models, Western teachers' values and beliefs that affect Emirati students, teachers' training, obstacles that Western teachers face while teaching morality and character education to Emirati students and finally, core values present in those schools.

### **5. 2. 1. 1. Understanding the Meaning and the Importance of Character Education**

The evidence from both the qualitative and quantitative analyses showed that the majority of the Western teachers believe that they participate in character education, with a mean of (1.69). They also agreed that character education is an important requirement for all students to develop a rounded character and to be effective members in their society. This finding is supported by a study conducted by Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn, and Smith (2006), which proved that teaching character education in schools helps in developing and nurturing students' character, not only in the way they deal with their peers at school, but also as members of their wider community. Therefore, schools need a concept of character and a commitment to develop their students' character (Lickona, 1991, p. 49). This finding is supported by the studies of Brannon (2008) and Burton (2008) which focus on the importance of teaching character education to students.

On the other hand, through answering the teachers' questionnaires, thirteen out of fifteen agreed on the positive influence of character education on different aspects, such as improving students' behaviour with a mean of (1.39) while a large number of them believe that character education (CE) develops students' good character with a mean of (1.48). Results of quantitative data also showed that teachers agreed on the constructive effect of character education on the students' academic achievement with a mean of (1.37). Those findings are consistent with those of other researchers in this area, (e.g., Mathison, 1998; Leming, 1993; Hawkins, J. D., Catalano, R. F., Kosterman, R., Abbott, R., & Hill, K. G., 1999; Battistich, V., Schaps, E., Watson, M., & Solomon, D., 1996), which point to the importance and the positive influence of CE on students.

However, some of the interviewed teachers seemed to be reluctant and unfamiliar with the definition of character education which reflects the lack of knowledge about this important term among Western teachers. Lickona (1992) stated that the lack of understanding of character education can make teachers avoid it. According to Ryan and Bohlin (1999), one of the difficulties that CE faces is that not all teachers are prepared and qualified to teach and model the good character. Furthermore, the majority of the teachers do not understand or know the ways that facilitate students' character enhancement.

One of the stumbling blocks preventing schools from embracing character education is that few teachers have been prepared for this work. Although there are stirrings within the teacher education community to give character education greater prominence, the great majority of teachers are very unsure of what they can and should do as character educators (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999, p.152-153).

Moreover, interestingly, the findings of this study revealed that even the teachers who are familiar with the term of character education do not agree on one definition of CE; different teachers have different definitions. Some teachers defined it as a way to prepare students for adulthood or help them develop a rounded personality. This finding is consistent with the findings of the study conducted by Stopplesworth (2001). Other teachers believe that character education is a group of virtues, traits and skills that should be taught to students to have good character traits. On the other hand, a big number of teachers defined the teaching of CE as modelling the right morals and manners to the students. This finding was a good indication that some of the Western teachers understand their vital role as role models for their students.

However, there seems to be a lack of consistency in teaching character, as it is important to have an operational definition for character education known and shared by all. Therefore, teachers will be aware of what is expected from them as educators and role models, and so, they will work on spreading the same character culture around the school. In other words, the difference in understanding the definition of character education was evident in the participants' responses. This situation leads to various implications; however, there should be a common language among teachers in order to communicate the same understanding (Nielsen, 2003) and to have consistent applications of character education activities that aim at the same targets.

One of the implications of the lack of the understanding of the meaning of CE is that some of the teachers believe that they do not have enough time to care for their students' morality or the development of their characters. They believe that teaching character is an addition to the curriculum they teach, and it cannot be part of it. This finding is congruent with the findings of the study of Corrigan et al., (2007) who claimed that character education, for some teachers,

could be considered as a challenge that needs time and effort to be taught in addition to the curriculum. It is also noted that the lack of understanding of the meaning of character education has led to different ways and strategies of teaching it, depending on individual points of views.

On the other hand, the meaning of the character education is muddled among some teachers in the schools that are part of this study, and so, they derail its teaching. This situation resulted in an undesirable impact on the morality of students in those three schools as they did not receive a sufficient amount of moral supervision. Additionally, the focus in those schools is almost exclusively on the academic success, rather than morality or character development, as clarified by many teachers.

As mentioned earlier, for the purpose of this study, the definition of character education by Lickona (1991) was applied. It identifies character education as everything that takes place at school and has an effect on the students' character; therefore, when educators, including, teachers, think about the type of character they would like to see in their students, they should think about everything that takes place at the school all the time; they should understand that CE includes all deliberate efforts to teach values and morality. According to (CEP, 2007), CE should teach students to understand, care about, and act upon core ethical values all the time. This was not evident in any of the three schools. Most of the teachers separate the activities held for the sake of promoting students' character from other educational tasks. They do not know that every activity that takes place at school should support good character in one way or another. On the other hand, teachers do not understand that teaching character can be integrated into every aspect of their daily school life (curriculum and extracurricular activities). The findings of the interviews revealed that some teachers believe that they do not have enough time to teach character education; they are not aware of the fact that character education can be included in everything that takes place inside the classroom or outside it. According to character education literature, integration is considered by several researchers as an influential strategy of teaching character (Bulach, 2002; Sanchez, 2005).

Lickona (1991) believe that teaching character education should be comprehensive, covering all aspects of students' life and implemented by everyone around the school. In such a case, all teachers should consider CE and teach it, no matter what their subject areas are. Applying a comprehensive approach to character education can be useful in creating a moral school culture in which the core values are taught in classrooms, enhanced and nurtured in all students' character by all those who work at school, including teachers, counsellors, administrators, school bus driver and cleaners. All should understand that they ought to share the same values and ethics within the school culture in order to build the best character in their students. One teacher of English from school 'C' and another teacher of history from school 'A' shared that sometimes they integrate morality and good character traits indirectly through their subjects. Therefore, in general, the three schools lack the character education school's culture in which everything and everybody at the school are directed toward promoting students' positive character; especially in school 'B' where it was apparent that a little has been done in this area. Teachers and students in school 'B' clarified through their interviews that their school generally does not draw any attention to character education matters. This situation resulted in having significant behaviour and discipline problems in that school.

With regard to Lickona's comprehensive approach, the following question should be asked: can moral and character education be understood comprehensively and implemented properly while there is a lack of understanding of the term (character education) among teachers? And even for those who are familiar with the term, is there any consistency in defining the term and in its application, among them? It seems that it is vital for those schools to have an agreement among them on both the definition and the strategies to apply in the teaching of CE. Therefore, they can succeed in fostering their students' character, including social, emotional and moral development along with their academic progress. Teachers also should be aware of the various techniques of teaching character. According to Berkowitz, Battistich, & Bier (2008), character education has different methods that teachers should learn to use to be able to teach character effectively.

The difference in the application of teaching character as an important component in schools was also clearly evident in the three schools. Each school has different traits and values to implement; for example, school 'A' focuses on respect, kindness and community service while school 'B' stresses on community service only. On the other hand, school 'C' focuses on different virtues such as respect, kindness, self-control, resilience and others; in addition to community service; therefore, school 'C' proved to be taking real, serious steps and initiatives towards true character education teaching.

Surprisingly, the findings also showed that some of the interviewed Western teachers in those schools are not familiar with the content of their school's policies regarding students' behaviour and conduct. For example, some of the teachers in school 'B' were not aware of their school's code of conduct at all. This situation was also evident clearly, not only through the teachers' interviews, but also through the students' interviews in which some of them described the application of their schools' policies as "loose" and not present.

To sum up, in the present study, although some teachers showed interest in being part of character education teaching, there is no evidence that all of them are aware of the important role they play in character education and morality of the national students in the UAE. Based on the CEP (2007), schools should always conduct surveys for both students and teachers to evaluate the efficacy of CE and its effect on students. The findings of this study uncovered that there were several surveys conducted in different areas of the educational system in those schools for both students and teachers but none of them was to assess issues related to their morality or character development. Therefore, those schools do not have a system in place to assess character education initiatives or progress.

#### **5.2.1. 2 Teachers' Perspectives' of Influence on Students' Character**

The findings gained from data analysis revealed that thirteen of the interviewed teachers believe that their teaching of character education is highly influenced by their own values and beliefs which they received from different sources. In the literature, a variety of studies have shown that



people's beliefs do influence their behaviour (Abelson, 1979; Bandura, 1986; Brown & Cooney, 1982; Clark & Peterson, 1986). Teachers acknowledged their values and beliefs to their schools, parents, places of worship and to their countries' cultures in general; hence, whatever values they brought with them would affect their teaching, which in return influence their students.

It is worth noting that although honesty, respect, fairness and tolerance were the most preferred traits among all the interviewees, most teachers felt almost similarly about all the virtues and values listed in the study whether in the questionnaire or in the interviews; they believe that all those qualities are important. This is a good indication that those traits are universal values and nobody has any doubt about their importance. According to Boyd (2004), to avoid the confusion among teachers, there must be an agreement on a list of universal values in schools to teach their students.

Concerning teachers' preferences of traits, evidence from the teachers' survey showed that nationality and teaching experience of the Western teachers in the UAE do not affect their preferences of traits. On the other hand, teachers' preferences of traits varied from one teacher to another. This indicates that teachers are humans and they have their own views about trait preferences, so they are expected to focus on certain values and ignore others, depending on their preferences.

The second important finding related to the Western teachers' beliefs and values is that they believe that there is an enormous gap between the UAE values and their own Western values; therefore, how can one expect those teachers to teach the national UAE students their own UAE culture and values, while they are themselves unfamiliar with those beliefs and values? Based on Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory (1978), students are affected by the daily interactions that take place with the people around them, including their teachers at school; hence, the influence on the UAE students by their Western teachers happens anyway and the Western teachers themselves have highlighted it through teachers' interviews.

### **5. 2.1. 3. Teachers as Role Models**

Interestingly, in the present study, all the interviewed teachers believe that they are good role models for their students. They do their best to show ethical manners through their interactions with their students. Based on Lickona's comprehensive CE model, teachers should be role models and mentors for their students who should show respect, love and fairness to all students in a democratic atmosphere. Teachers, in other words, should set good examples to be followed and emulated by their students. With the daily interaction, teachers are expected to know their students; therefore, they should use their subjects as vehicles for fostering students' core ethics; they should teach them problem solving and critical thinking, so they can resolve their own real life situations' problems. According to Berkowitz and Bier (2005), one of the most successful ways of being an effective role model is adopting inclusion, in which teachers integrate their modelling of good traits into their teaching. Role modelling of morality is an important duty that teachers should undertake, so students can learn how to lead ethical lives. Lapsley (1996) stated that the "literature leaves little question that observing pro social models can have powerful effects on children" (p. 193). There have been several studies that emphasised role modelling as an influential way of building and promoting student's character in skilful contexts (e.g., Javidan et al., 1995; Ibarra, 1999; Gibson, 2003).

In terms of the preparation of the Western teachers to be qualified teachers and ready to model good character for their students, the findings of this study uncovered that teachers haven't received any training that qualifies them to be aware of the UAE's culture and heritage, so whatever they say or do may contradict with its values and culture. Therefore, they should be well prepared in advance in order to do an efficient job. Internationally, through various studies related to the teacher preparation, it is revealed that training provided for teaching character is minimum and not adequate (Milson & Mehlig, 2002). Furthermore, Jones, Ryan, and Bohlin (1998) maintained that "despite widespread support for character education....it is not currently a high priority in the curriculum of teacher education" (p. 17). According to Romanowski (2005), for any character education to be effective, teachers should be trained before being involved in

teaching. On the other hand, based on the responses of the teachers, some of them mentioned that their schools internally held internal hour long sessions of introducing the life in the UAE, but at the same time, those teachers said that the training they received was not sufficient at all.

Therefore, the lack of training of the Western teachers means that teachers have little experience that qualifies them to be teaching and modelling good character that suits the UAE society. The literature of CE shows that what teachers usually receive by their organizations of how to present a lesson cannot be considered as training to teach morality and character (Howard, 2005; O'Sullivan, 2005). On the other hand, to qualify a teacher to be an effective role model, Schwartz stated that teachers of good character should have seven qualities in order to be a role model that can be emulated by his/her students:

Teachers must show obvious moral concern and care for others; display actions that indicate a commitment to the intellectual or emotional development of others (students); have congruence between the individual's moral statements, understanding and actions; demonstrate self-reflection and reasoning skill; regulate their own behaviour and emotions in accordance with the social good of others; and demonstrate empathy and perspective-taking (2005, p. 64).

As a matter of urgency, it seems that there is a real need for teachers training; one cannot be sure that all Western teachers can be good role models for their students, as teachers in this area are human beings who can be either good or bad. "Teachers might as well, be weak, spiteful, vain and greedy thereby qualifying as bad teachers" (Carr, 1991, p. 258). This shows that teachers should be aware of what should be modelled exactly, rather than reflecting their individual personal values, which can be acceptable or unacceptable. According to Steutel and Carr, "in order to demonstrate certain traits, they should be identified as morally desirable" (1999, p. 5). Teachers should have continuous professional development to ensure that they teach and model good values and traits based on the culture and traditions of the UAE. Nucci et al. (2005) clarified that teaching positive traits needs the teachers to have certain abilities and skills that help them succeed in presenting the desirable traits.

As it was revealed clearly through the responses of the teachers, it seems that there is a lack in the preparation of Western teachers to help them act as influential role models to the Emirati students at the British schools. Therefore, despite the shortage of evidence that supports teacher training, few teachers adhere to the core values of the UAE, depending on their experience and knowledge, which can be right or wrong. All the interviewed teachers agreed that the way of teaching of morality and character is influenced by their upbringing, religion, and their schools in their home- countries. This finding is supported by Glanzer and Talbert's study (2005) in which they found it unrealistic for teachers not to be influenced by their beliefs and values. Moreover, they added that teachers' values, religion and beliefs affect their ways of teaching in return. Another study by Suma-Belanger (2006) revealed that the main core of teachers' teaching is their beliefs and faith. This study is also congruent with Arthur's study (2008) which stated that the construction of character depends highly on one's religion, values and beliefs.

Abu Dhabi Education Council cannot expect that all Western teachers who are hired to teach in the UAE's schools have received CE training in their countries. Prestwich (2004) claimed that teachers' training to be qualified to teach character education whether it is pre-service or in-service training in most colleges and universities is not enough. On the other hand, in the literature on the training of teachers, it is found that training student teachers for moral education is usually unintended, so they cannot be expected to be well prepared for their job (Willemse et al., 2008; Willemse et al., 2005). Furthermore, Berkowitz (1998) claimed that "teacher training in character education requires teacher educators who are familiar with this knowledge and are committed to furthering effective character education" (p. 4). With regards to this study, how can schools be sure that even those teachers who have received training in their original countries have received training that suits the UAE culture and traditions?

Concerning the responsibility toward the moral and character education, evidence from the interviews and the questionnaires showed that some of the Western teachers believe that character education is the responsibility of parents. Therefore, they are not aware of the fact that their role is influential in helping children develop their character and enhance their morality.

This finding is congruent with some studies that studied the effect of the parents' involvement in their children's schools (Abdul-Adil & Farmer, 2006; Flessa, 2008).

One of the important CEP's eleven principals (2007) is the importance of whole-staff's involvement in CE, so everybody at school has a certain responsibility toward it. On the other hand, according to Lickona's (1996) comprehensive theory, character education is based on shared objectives and significant ethical values; therefore, it is a shared responsibility of parents, teachers and members of the whole community, which cannot be seen clearly in all aspects of those schools, for three reasons:

Firstly, as mentioned above, some teachers think that caring for children's morality and character is the duty of the parents only.

Secondly, some of the teachers think that there is not enough cooperation between teachers and parents for the sake of the children's morality and character development. Parents rarely get to be involved in any activity held by the school, and schools do not really care about their involvement. This finding can be related to Collins and Henjum's (1999) study in which they found that there was a lack of presence of certain groups of parents in the school and most importantly, their exclusion from participating in any decision making that takes place at school. According to Lazar and Slostad (1999), teachers' beliefs about the importance of parental involvement are highly affected by the culture, and the school practices. Therefore, schools should understand the importance of the parents' involvement in order to improve the cooperation between the school and the parents to help promote children's character.

Thirdly, some of the participants consider the fact that they teach a big number of the students as a problem, because they cannot have enough time to care for students' character in addition to teaching their subjects. Those teachers forgot the fact that they are expected to care for their students, academically, socially and emotionally all the time and they cannot separate teaching any subject from developing the students' character.

Fourthly, most of the parents are too busy to contact their children's teachers due to the present life style as they are always busy.

Finally, some teachers think that some parents teach their children certain values that should not be learnt, such as, hitting the person back who hit them and the overdependence of the children on nannies. Although such values should not be taught to the children, for cultural reasons, some children do learn them.

Evidence from the students' interviews revealed that most of the Western teachers are not fair with the Emirati students as the majority of the national students believe that their teachers prefer the Western students to them, giving them the impression that Western students are better and smarter than the Emirati students. Consequently, this situation contradicts with how a democratic class looks, in which all students should feel that they are equal and are getting the same love and care. Based on Lickona's comprehensive model (1991), teachers play a key role in teaching values and conflict resolution in the classroom; they should act as role models who reflect good manners; they represent care and moral discipline and help students internalise core values by modelling them practically through their daily interactions with students. Furthermore, teachers should help students enjoy a democratic environment in classrooms.

To sum up, interestingly, analyses of data revealed that almost all Western teachers believe that they are good role models for their students. However, the question is, what are the Western teachers modelling? Their preferences of traits are different, as per the teacher's survey and they don't have the same values or perspectives. They received their own values and perspectives from different sources; therefore, how can one be sure that they model values that do not contradict with the religion and traditions of the UAE? Finally, no one can blame those teachers for something that they were not trained for. It is the responsibility of those who hired them to equip them with all the requirements needed to be effective teachers in the UAE context.

#### **5.2. 1. 4. Obstacles that Hinder Teaching of CE**

In response to the first research question, the findings gained from the questionnaires and interviews indicated that teachers face different kinds of obstacles and difficulties when teaching character to their students, such as difficulty of teaching CE, itself, dealing with adolescent students and insufficient time to teach character education along with the curriculum.

##### **5.2. 1. 4. 1. Difficulty of Teaching CE**

One of the most important findings of this study is that a considerable percentage of Western teachers believe that parents sometimes make it difficult for teachers to teach CE. They also think that teachers are more involved in teaching character in the school than parents are at home. Moreover, some of the Western teachers did not agree with the statement that parents help students follow the school's rules; the examples of parents asking their children to hit back whoever hits them and the over dependence of the children on their maids and nannies are possibly good examples on this issue as they are the opposite of what schools teach them.

Perhaps this situation can be linked to another obstacle mentioned by several Western teachers, which is the difference between the Western teachers' cultures and the national UAE students' culture. With this regard, two steps should be taken; firstly, as aforementioned, cultural awareness should be spread around all Western teachers; secondly, depending on the first step, teachers should model the right behaviour, teach ethical traits to guide students' behaviours and set good examples to them. It is worth noting that parents are the first and the primary educators of their children; therefore, it is vital for them to do what is expected from them at home and continue to be fully engaged in their children's education to enhance their children's morality. Character construction starts with loving and caring parents at home and continues with caring teachers at school (Greenspan & Shanker, 2004). Thus, it is necessary for both teachers and parents to cooperate together to achieve the best character education and to foster goodness in the children's character. "Parental involvement at school and in the lives of children is greatly improved as a result of character education communication with the home (Bulach, as cited in

Brown, 2007, p.143).” On the other hand, the lack of parental involvement has a negative effect on children. According to Banks (1997), lack of parental involvement and modelling for their children at home can cause many behaviour problems at school, including bullying problems.

#### **5.2.1.4.2. Dealing with Adolescent Students**

Adolescence is defined as “the period of life between childhood and adulthood; this transitional period varies by society and culture” (Kaplan, 2004, p. 1). This definition of adolescence indicates that each society has its own perspectives toward adolescence and toward the way of dealing with them. It was evident in the teachers’ interviews that some teachers believe that it is so difficult to deal with students at the adolescence stage, especially when teachers do not have the required knowledge of how to deal with adolescents.

Based on the CEP (2007), students should be surrounded by a caring and loving atmosphere in class rooms and everywhere else around the school; they should be provided with security, love and positivity. Students in the adolescent stage need more love and care than anybody else, as they go through physical and emotional changes. They need all adults around them, including their teachers to understand their needs and to provide them with love, care and supervision. Hence, it is part of teachers’ role to “recognise and respond to adolescents’ need for ongoing support in their development and their need for connectedness to others” (Gomez & Ang, 2007, p. 98). In the past, UAE children used to live by their parents’ guidance and religion, but with the development of societies and modernisation, the role of teachers at schools has become fundamental, as nowadays some parents are too busy to spend enough time with their children to provide them with the required care and guidance. Therefore, a teacher’s role of modelling positive character is important for those students to strengthen the ethical clout in their characters. Teachers should also provide their students with chances to get to know themselves and respect and value others for what they are and, most importantly, teachers should provide them with some ethical scenarios to think about and to be challenged with in order to learn. Vygotsky (1978) noted that people learn the best when they are faced with difficult level of activities that are beyond their present level of abilities, which is called zone of proximal



development. However, the only way to facilitate the role of teachers is by providing them with professional development that may focus on the right way to deal with adolescents' needs and the best way to foster their good character.

#### **5.2.1.4.3. Time Constraints**

Findings of the analyses revealed that some teachers think that they do not have sufficient time to cover the material of the subject they teach, in addition to the teaching of morality and character education; therefore, they cannot pay sufficient attention to all students equally and work on their ethical sensibility, especially when they have a large number of students to teach. The literature supports the idea of teaching character education in addition to the curriculum without considering it as an extra job that they do along with their duties as teachers. The finding of this study supports Southey & Stafford's study (2007), in which teachers believe that they do not have enough time to teach CE through the curriculum. Teachers should be aware of their role in character education and they should understand that effective character education "promotes core ethical values and supportive performance values as the foundation of good character (Lickona, Schaps, & Lewis, 2007, p.2). Teachers should recognise that character education is fundamentally entangled in education, and it should not be considered as a separate entity as it can be taught through the curriculum. Teachers should not think that teaching morality and ethical sensitivity is just an add-on; it can be implicit and integrated in all aspects of the school's day. Teachers should model good behaviour and teach it to their students all the time and in all situations. An effective teacher should be a moral model, a care giver and a mentor for his or her students (Lickona, 1991). Teachers cannot stop representing morality and good character just because the number of students in one class is big; they have to do their best in order to transmit morality and positive attitudes among children in addition to academic success through everything they do. On the other hand, schools' administrators and decision makers should solve the problem of having large numbers of students in the same classroom, in order to have more effective teaching and learning.

Furthermore, as previously stated, teachers should learn various methods and techniques of how to integrate character education into the curriculum and how to be part of their lesson planning, so they do not need extra time to teach it. And most importantly, teachers should not feel that promoting students' character is a heavy burden that they hold and they are forced to do. It should be a fundamental part of their duties which they like and enjoy doing. The literature supports the integration of character education within the curriculum (Berkowitz & Bier, 2007; Gilness, 2003; Lewis et al., 2011).

### **5. 2. 1. 5 Core Values**

To encourage students to do the right act even if no one is watching; the CEP (2007) defined it as one of its principles "doing the right thing when no one is looking" (p. 3). This indicates that inspiring students to become better people is important (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999). This study has revealed that there are several initiatives to motivate students to act morally as it is found clearly in school 'A' and 'C'. In school 'C', a whole school day which is called "The Well- Being Day" is prepared every half term, in which a certain core value such as curiosity, friendship, respect... etc is presented and becomes the focus of the whole day. For students, the Well Being Day is a day of fun and a day of learning morality in an exciting context and through different stimulating activities. It is recommended that students should experience and observe the attitudes and manners related to the value (Milson, 2000). Based on the responses of the students in school C, they agreed that one day is not enough to foster the core virtues in their character. Students need to have, as mentioned earlier, 'values in action' in which all interactions that take place inside or outside classrooms should be a real reflection of core virtues (Lickona, 1991); students should understand the value, feel it and reflect upon it. Thus, the Well- Being Day in school "C" is one of the influential initiatives that have been created in which students are provided with ample opportunities to practise moral and ethical manners; though it is not enough.

Referring to the CEP (2007), extra-curricular activities provide students with valuable chances to enhance various core qualities in a fun and enjoyable way. Findings of the study revealed positive points that can be considered to those schools; students in the three schools are provided

with different extracurricular activities such as, extra-curricular clubs, different kinds of sports which reinforce team work, collaboration and cooperation. The findings of the interviews revealed that the three schools use physical education (PE) as one of the most important subjects to transmit good traits and develop good character. A variety of core values can be learnt via PE lessons and PE extra-curricular activities, such as team work, cooperation and integrity. PE teachers should be aware of the fact that they have to be good role models to follow. Solomon (1997) pointed out that, "It is clear that recent research on character development in physical education demonstrated that the organized physical activity context is ripe for positive moral growth" (p. 41). Moreover, the influence of peers on students is vital; students can learn much from each other while playing as their ZPDs (Vygotsky, 1978) are extended by leaning ethical values from their peers.

Community service is one of the most important activities that have critical influence on students' character. Referring to the interviews with the teachers and students, there were a lot of references to different kinds of community service that students are encouraged to continuously participate in, such as fund raising in cooperation with Red Crescent in the UAE, in which students support members of the community who are in need of help locally, in addition to the support and help they give to the international issues around the world. On the other hand, students also help in establishing different campaigns to collect money and other items needed for countries with crisis issues. These acts of community service are indeed helpful in developing students' character; "promoting service as a lifelong commitment is enhanced when youth participate at many ages, through multiple avenues, and when opportunity is given to reflect on the act of service" (America's Promise, 1997, p. 7). Moreover, involving students in community service helps them not only have positive traits, but also reinforces their feelings of humanity and altruism (Lickona, Schaps, & Lewis, 2007).

Based on the collected data, having a code of conduct or behaviour policy in those schools can be considered as a positive sign that moral discipline exists in those schools. However, although behaviour policies are available to control students' behaviour and maintain order in those

schools, there is no consistency in the usage of those policies as was revealed clearly through the students' interviews, especially in school 'B'. In addition to behaviour policies, other documents such as the mission and the vision statements also support the development of students' character.

It can be clearly seen that the role of teachers is important in helping students understand that doing right does not mean avoiding punishment, but it is a way of doing the right thing because it is right. Although it cannot be generalised, based on some interviews with teachers as well as students, it is revealed that in schools 'A' and 'B' behaviour policies exist but the implementation of their regulation varies from one teacher to another. This inconsistency in the use of those behaviour policies can create a kind of ignorance in both teachers and students and of course, as a result of such a situation, students' misbehaviours cannot be controlled. This finding can be linked to the finding that was conveyed through students' interviews which showed that students do not respect each other and even their teachers do not respect them. Referring to Lickona's approach (1991), it is very important for students to feel that they are valued by their peers and their teachers; they should feel that their schools are places of care and respect. Therefore, this issue should be taken into consideration.

It can be postulated that respect is not given the right amount of attention in those schools, although responses of the interviewees revealed that the amount of respect shown from teachers to students and from students to students was different depending on the school itself. School 'A' and 'C' consider respect for example, as a core value that they focus on in their daily school life, while school 'B' does not pay any attention to this value at all. On the other hand, no one can forget the role of Islamic Studies and Arabic Social Studies in enhancing Islamic virtues and the UAE national identity. However, almost all students were happy with those two subjects, except the students in school "B" where they were unsatisfied with the way those two subjects were handled. However, all students asked for more lessons of these important subjects. Parents and students believe that the Western administration and the senior educational leaders at those schools do not give those subjects the attention they need. Moreover, all subjects, whether they

are in Arabic or in English, should work side by side to strengthen morality and good character. Referring to both documents, *Al-Watheeqa* of Islamic Studies (2011) and *Al- Watheeqa* of Social Studies (2003), they aim to basically enhance Islamic values as well as strengthen the sense of national identity, heritage, and citizenship. Based on the interviews and the questionnaires in this study, the researcher could not find any evidence that any other subject other than Arabic subjects are used as means and vehicles to teach morality. This can be considered as a weak point in those schools. The analysis of ten lesson plans, prepared by ten Western teachers of different subjects, revealed that none of those plans was focused on morality.

On the other hand, bullying is one of the issues that appeared clearly in the findings of the questionnaires and the interviews. The majority of the students admitted when they were interviewed that at a certain point they were bullied; they also added that they reported incidents of bullying to their teachers, while few of them preferred silence. Lickona (1991) asserted that schools should provide students with a positive environment in which they learn core traits that enable them to care for, help and respect each other. Therefore, the existence of such cases of bullying in those schools is an indication of a low level of morality among students. Research in the area of bullying suggests that a school with cases of bullying means that the culture of that school should be changed into a culture that supports kindness and respect in order to avoid bullying acts, and so, kindness will replace bullying. Schools should send indirect messages to be learnt that bullying is a very bad act and cannot be accepted by anyone at school or within the community as a whole (Davidson, Lickona & Khmelkov, 2007; Noddings, 2005; Van Oers & Hännikäinen, 2001). On the other hand, an awareness of the meaning of bullying in all its guises, whether social, physical or psychological abuse should be spread around all students, so they can recognise it and reject it if it happens to them. Furthermore, clear strict sanctions should be enforced for cases of bullying and, most importantly, the implications of those sanctions in the cases of bullying should be applied justly and fairly by all teachers.

In other words, it is the job of teachers and all of those working at schools to transfer those schools into a culture of character that supports good acts and refuses any negative act against any student. Teachers should also be trained well to be able to face such situations properly and to be able to spread the adequate awareness required among students. Hence, they can help them develop the core virtues to be part of their character.

### **5. 2. 2. Emirati students' perceptions of character development in their schools**

Research question two asked: what are the Emirati students' perceptions of character development in the international schools? The findings gained from the data analyses uncovered that students in this study reported different issues relating to character and moral education in their schools. Each issue is considered respectively in the next sections.

#### **5.2.2.1. Students' morality**

Findings of the interviews showed that the majority of the students (seven out of ten) tend to cheat in exams whenever possible; they are also either exposed to different acts of bullying or bully others. They skip lessons whenever they can. Conversely, honesty was clearly seen in all responses of students in the three schools. The quantitative data analyses also proved that the behaviour of students in those schools is not at its best.

Findings of the student's survey also supported the qualitative data. It was revealed that students do not show enough respect to each other with a mean of (2.32); this indicates that morality among students is not at its best in those schools; in other words, and based on students' points of views, appropriate behaviour is only moderately modelled. Referring to Lickona's theory, students with positive character should make the right choice in all situations, as right should be part of their character, yet it cannot be seen clearly among students in the three schools. It is worth noting that Lickona (1991) asserted that students should feel that their schools and classrooms are places that help and reinforce their physical, psychological, emotional and social development; a school should

be a value-based environment that encourages students to develop their level of morality accordingly.

Researchers have looked for the reasons of students' misbehaviour; Brooks and Goble (1997) clarified that the main reason behind immoral behaviours is the shortage in instruction or teachers' modelling. Therefore, teachers must be trained properly on providing their students with the right instruction and the right teaching of morality, so they can enhance their positive behaviour According to Vincent (2003):

Our lack of consistency and proper instruction and modelling has created a climate where standards have not been taught and reinforced. Children are born with certain dispositions that can be developed into moral behaviour. However, if they are left without a guide—without a moral compass—they may choose a more harmful and potentially destructive path. Children, for the most part, act based upon what is expected of them. They learn by observation and by instruction. (p. x-xi).

With regard to students' perceptions toward their teachers, the findings revealed that all students are satisfied and happy with their Western teachers' teaching as they are provided with high level of proficiency in English language which may open for them more and better future work opportunities. While it is a vital issue for students to find their teachers listening to them whenever they have any problem, six of the interviewed students were not happy with that point because of two reasons: Firstly, they couldn't speak to their teachers about any concern if it was not related to education; secondly, they felt inferior as their teachers did not seem to provide them with the same care and love given to their peers of the Western students. On the other hand, the quantitative findings supported the findings of the interviews, and showed the same result which is a significant number of students do not talk to their teachers, believing that there is not enough communication between them and their teachers, with a mean of (3.02). While it is vital to care about students' character, findings of this study revealed that the Western teachers' significant concern is academic success, ignoring the fact that creating a holistic school character culture help students to increase positive behaviour and academic achievement. Students tend to progress and flourish academically and ethically when the school environment is

comprehensively caring and directed towards character and moral development (Adams, 2013; Lickona & Davidson, 2005; Noguera, 2010). According to Adams (2013),

Before you get to academics, college- going, and rigorous courses, you have to build a school culture... Children start with learning to dream (discipline, responsibility, enthusiasm, accountability, and maturity). By high school, it becomes dream big, with bravery, integrity, and grit added (p. 3).

Additionally, Emirati students were not happy and satisfied as they believed that their Western teachers were unjust to them. The participants stated that their teachers are unfair and partial to them as they prefer the Western students, which in turn makes the national students feel inferior. Lickona (1991) asserted that teachers, as role models to their students, should model core values so students can learn the importance of each value. Therefore, when students in those schools believe that their teachers are unfair and they prefer other Western students to them, the result is going to be the opposite of what is expected to be learnt. In other words, national students often cannot feel the value of fairness that their teachers are supposed to model, and so, they cannot be expected to act fairly in their life.

Being an unfair teacher contradicts with one of the fundamental pillars of character formation and development, which is modelling the right value by the teacher, so students find it easy to emulate them and show good manners. This finding is supported by a research conducted by Wentzel (2002) who studied the effect of the teachers' teaching and the way they deal with their students in a middle school. The study revealed that when having unjust and unkind teachers, students prove to act irresponsibly and do not show respect to any of the class instruction or to their academic success. While on the other hand, the opposite happens with the teachers who are fair and kind to their students who manage to achieve excellent results academically as well as personally. In addition, the results of this study revealed that national students do realise the difference between their own culture and their Western teachers' cultures. This is basically shown in different occasions, as four students highlighted this idea while being interviewed. Yüksel (2005) believed that students are affected informally by various values at school, whether



they are from their teachers or their peers. These values are considered as part of their hidden curriculum which can be sometimes more effective than the explicit written curriculum. Students attributed having some good values, such as responsibility, respect and the ability to face different challenges in life to their Western teachers' teaching.

#### **5.2.2.2. Students and Character Education Activities**

In terms of students' satisfaction with the activities held at the schools to enhance their character, students were not content with the activities that they were provided with and they felt that those activities were not enough to form a rounded character. According to Lickona, Schaps, and Lewis (2000), introducing certain terms to students such as helping others and sharing is vital in developing positive character as well as urging altruistic manner. According to the participants, their schools often arrange some activities that help strengthen good traits in children, such as the Well-Being Day, after school clubs and physical education; different activities that foster team work and cooperation among students. Moreover, assemblies are sometimes held at certain occasions supporting certain virtues. In addition to this, community service and charity campaigns are held to help people with crisis around the world through the Red Crescent organisation. The findings were in line with Howard' study (1993), who clarified that, service learning helps students enhance good community values and help their good character grow and develop. On the other hand, it was noted that all students agreed on the fact that those activities are not enough to promote their good character.

#### **5.2.2.3. Students' Backgrounds**

Findings of the study revealed that the majority of the students (six out of ten) watch a lot of TV eat two to three times a week with their parents and do not have enough time to receive the

required supervision of their parents. This is a serious issue that parents should pay attention to. Although most of the parents nowadays are busy in their work, and their life style has been changed, they should not forget that their children should be the main priority in their life. Moreover, parents should not over estimate the role of the school in promoting their children's character, as their role is influential since they are the first and the primary teachers of their children. There is clear lack of parental guidance. On the other hand, parents should pay attention to the negative effect of the overdependence on nannies and maids in helping their children in different aspects of life. No one can replace the parents' supervision. Findings from this study are congruent with those from other studies in the same area, such as the studies of Brannon (2008) and Ponzetti (2008), which demonstrated the importance of the role of parents in fostering morality and good character of their children as well as enhancing academic success. Another study by Henderson and Berla (1994), has found similar findings. They stated that, "the most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not income or social status but the extent to which that student's family is able to: 1) create a home environment that encourages learning 2) express high (but not unrealistic) expectations for their children's achievement and future careers 3) become involved in their children's education at school and in the community" (p. 160).

### **5.2.3. Emirati Parents Perceptions of the Influence of the Western Teachers on Children's Character**

In response to research question three (How do Emirati parents perceive the influence of the Western teachers on their children's character/ moral development?), the discussion of the findings pertinent to parents' perspectives was addressed from two aspects: the first one is the positive effect resulted from the positive influence of the Western teachers' values on their children and the second is the negative influence.

#### **5.2.3. 1. Western Teachers' Effect from the Parents' Perspectives**

Through answering the parents' questionnaires, the question that stated that, "teachers are able to model character" generally received an average agreement from parents. On the other hand, findings of the analyses of the interviews showed that three parents expressed their satisfaction toward the Western teachers' positive effect on their children. They believed that their children have gained good values and morals as a result of their teachers' influence, such as respect, responsibility, and self-discipline, which are highly required in any society. Therefore, they became better people with better qualities. According to McBrien and Brandt (1997), teaching morality and character are important for gaining good traits; they stated that "the goal is to raise children to become morally responsible, self-disciplined citizens" (p. 17).

On the other hand, seven participants were unhappy with the Western teachers being their children's role models because they have different values and different cultures to what they have in the UAE. They shared that the Western teachers could not simply understand that the local Emirati culture is different from their cultures. This finding is supported by Ladson-Billings' (1994) study in which he found that teachers who do not have cultural awareness usually deal with all students as if they are all the same, ignoring their cultural differences, so they do not consider cultural sensitivity as an important component of their job as teachers.

Parents also criticised some of the teachers' behaviours and even the way they dress and the way they deal with their students in certain situations. They expressed their concerns about the Western teachers' values and their influence on their children. A study conducted by Bonny, Britto, Kolstermann, Hornung & Slap (2000) stated that teachers who have good abilities to model good traits and other social and emotional skills can easily influence their students' personality, especially when there are cultural differences between both of them. The question that should be asked in this context once again: can all Western teachers act as positive role models for their students? Moreover, an important point that should be highlighted is that parents rejected the fact that teachers sometimes interfered in their children's personal life; they asked the researcher to make ADEC aware of their urgent demand of ensuring that Western teachers, regardless of their nationalities, are given sufficient training and knowledge of the UAE society,

including its culture, heritage, traditions and what is acceptable and what is not acceptable before they start practising their duties as teachers for their children. Western teachers should understand before practising teaching, that in a country like the UAE, the moral dimension of education is a top priority for everyone. Furthermore, teachers should not mix their personal lives with their work as teachers, because their students usually emulate their attitudes and behaviours as they are their role models.

### **5.2.3. 2. Parents' Role in Students' Moral /Character-Building**

In terms of the parents' role in helping their children build and develop good character, the results of the study revealed that the way of living is changing gradually; therefore, most of the parents do not spend enough time with their children. Due to the fact that parents are busy in their work, they do not eat with their children as a family more than two to three times a week. This situation indicates that the time that parents provide their children with guidance and supervision is limited and not enough.

In education, the importance of the role of the parents' participation in their children's learning is highly acknowledged, but is poorly applied (Shores, 1998). Various studies proved that parents' involvement in their children's education has positive academic and social effect on their children, starting from early childhood up to adolescence stage and even beyond (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Eccles & Harold, 1993). However, schools that have strong relationship with parents usually have students with better characters, than schools with limited parental involvement.

In this study, findings gained from the analysed data revealed that children spend a lot of time watching TV instead of spending that time with their parents. Therefore, the situation of the children in their families is not at its best. Parents should pay more attention to this important matter and they should not forget that they are the first educators and the first role models of their children; hence, they have to spend sufficient time with their children to guide and

supervise them. The findings of the parents' questionnaires revealed that 41 parents believe that they are the best teachers of character, with a mean of (1.55), as they believe that social skills are more important than academic skills (1.73). Similarly, it was also revealed that the parents' ability to control their children's behaviour is moderate at (1.87). On the other hand, there seems to be a contradiction between what the teachers said and what the parents said; teachers claimed that for cultural reasons, parents teach their children to hit if they are struck, while 44 of parents disagreed with the idea that they teach children revenge, at (2.90). Additionally, parents also disagreed with the notion that they taught their children to be tough at (3.06).

Findings of the study also revealed that the parents were unhappy with the fact that they sometimes feel completely ignored from their children's schools; therefore, they cannot be involved in their children's school's activities. In literature, there are various research studies that investigated about the parents' interest in taking part of their children's schools' activities (e.g., Comer, 1988; Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988). In the present study, the interviewed parents expressed their concerns about the lack of opportunities provided to them to be involved in their children's education. They believe that this is due to their preference of the Arabic language to be the primary language of communication between them and the school. However, some schools do not value the parents and their involvement (Eccles & Harold, 1993; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Ramirez, 1999). Unfortunately, based on the analyses of the parents' interviews, those schools sometimes choose to ignore that a large number of the local parents cannot understand the English language and so, they send all the schools' letters, newsletters and emails to parents in English, expecting them to understand their content. Taking into consideration the importance of having a solid relationship between teachers and parents, schools should discuss issues related to children's development with the parents. Schools and parents should draw a shared vision of working on certain ethical values collectively, to help students reinforce positive character. In fact, there is an agreement among all of them that these schools do not provide them with adequate opportunities to be involved in school's activities that help in fostering positive character among their children; they believe that the problem of the lack of communication between the school and the parents can be solved if schools pay enough attention to translating

the school's letters and news into Arabic. Stone (1997) explicated that sending newsletters to parents builds bridges of communication between the parents and the school. It makes them feel appreciated and respected.

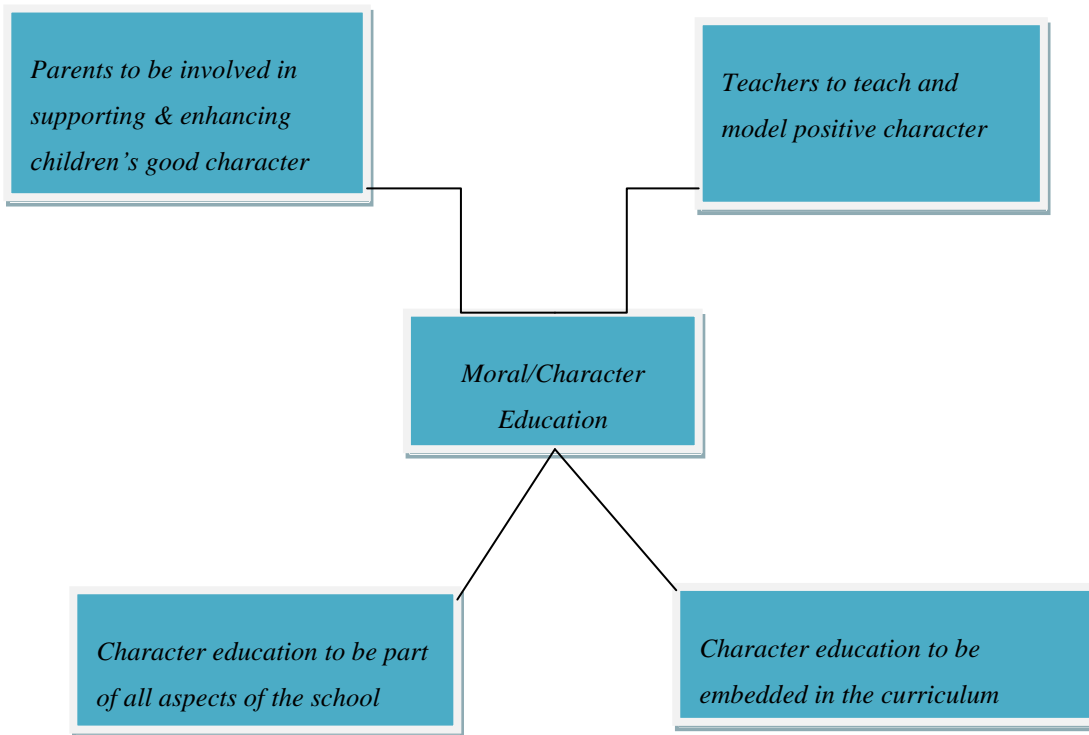
To summarise, character education is not the responsibility of teachers alone; parents should be also given the opportunity to contribute to their children's character development, in addition to all members of the community. Stone (1997) encouraged all to work together for the sake of children's morality; he said: "Let us orchestrate opportunities which help our students become better human beings" (p.22). Moreover, Pearson et al. (2000) maintained that "character education often falls into the school's hands. The school, along with parents or guardians must help children identify core values, adapt and commit to those values, and then put them into practice within their own lives (p. 243).

Teachers and parents should communicate effectively and work collectively, modelling positive behaviour, in addition to the usage of the curriculum as a means for transmitting ethical values to foster children's morality. Furthermore, schools should create a culture of good character; the caring culture of the school promotes a healthy students' character development, not only academically, but also socially and emotionally (Schaps, Battistich, & Solomon, 1997). It should be noted that character development needs the effort of all teachers, parents and all members of the society to succeed, which cannot be found in the three schools. Lickona stated that,

Character education efforts must be truly comprehensive in order to be commensurate with the seriousness of the moral problems that confront us. In the long run, this means that all groups that touch the values and character of the young must come together in common cause to elevate the character of our children and, ultimately, of society as a whole (1997, p. 61).

Research has proven that implementing a comprehensive character education has produced clear academic, behavioural and cultural progress (Marshall, et al., 2011). In this study, findings revealed that those schools are in need of forming committees of parents as support groups, in addition to the whole community support, so they can develop an ethical agreement to support

students' moral character according to the proposed components of character education, as shown in figure 5.1



**Figure 5.1: The proposed components of character education**

### **5.3 Implications for Practice**

Based on the findings of this study, the following implications are discussed:

- As morality and character education seem to be fundamental, there is a crucial need for teachers be trained and prepared to play their roles effectively and to be conscious of their students' culture and values. Pre-service training on character education is a vital

requirement for teachers to be aware of what is expected from them as teachers. The findings of this study revealed that Western teachers are in need of training courses or workshops to be well qualified culturally and socially to teach the Emirati students and help them academically and morally.

As character education is essential, awareness should be increased among all educators, as well as parents, about the positive effects of teaching character. Moreover, schools should create a whole school culture that helps in promoting students' character, as fostering their character seems to be more important than their academics. In other words, having a school culture helps the children have rounded characters that enable them to face various challenges of life. Adams (2013) stated that,

Before you get to academics, college- going, and rigorous courses, you have to build a school culture... Children start with learning to dream (discipline, responsibility, enthusiasm, accountability, and maturity). By high school, it becomes dream big, with bravery, integrity, and grit added (p. 3).

In the context of the UAE, Western teachers come to the UAE to start their work directly in different schools without being prepared or given sufficient guidance or supervision. For them, the UAE is a different country with a different culture and traditions, hence, actionable steps should be taken by ADEC (Abu Dhabi Education Council) and the MoE (Ministry of Education) to provide those teachers with training courses that enable them to have an awareness of the culture and traditions of the UAE. The proposed training courses should cover the UAE people's social life and what is acceptable and what is not acceptable in their society; therefore, the Western newcomer does not feel isolated or doubtful about their acts. The second type of required training is character education that meets the needs of the UAE students and prepares them to be positive and effective members of their society. There are some Western teachers who were prepared in their countries on teaching character and morality before coming to the UAE; however, the



issues that they were trained to deal with are not the same issues that the UAE students may face. Based on the differences among cultures, the training on CE should depend on the culture and heritage of the country. Consequently, a special training should be tailored following a framework created especially to suit the Emirati students' needs.

- As document analysis revealed that lesson plans are not employed toward morality and CE. Teachers should utilise lesson plans of all subjects to improve the effectiveness of the British curriculum's role in developing character education. Lesson plans should be used as a vehicle to teach positive traits by integrating them into the teaching of different subjects.
- As the findings of the current study portrayed, extra-curricular and after school activities have a large share in the British schools. It is worth noting that the effectiveness of those activities should be evaluated in order to work according to a knitted plan, created for the development of the UAE youth and specifically for adolescents.
- The role of parents in their children's CE is fundamental; therefore, schools should start creating bridges of communication with the parents. Schools also have to provide parents with opportunities to be engaged with different activities that schools organise for their children, including volunteering chances and other various activities. Parents should also have some training that schools arrange in order to make sure that both the parents and teachers are on the same track. Another point which can be considered extremely important is that all types of communication between the school and the parents should be translated into Arabic language, so parents will be aware of all activities that take place around the school. However, spreading awareness regarding school's activities among parents will make it easier for both teachers and parents to cooperate and support in building students' character.

- Concerning the UAE national students, several actionable steps should be taken seriously to help them enhance their character :
  1. Schools should care more about cooperative learning which will help students improve their pro-social behaviours within the larger community. Cooperative learning helps students be part of a group in which they care for the group learning rather than one's own learning (Leming, 1993b).
  2. Engaging the parents in the CE planning and giving them the chance to model positive behaviour for their children as much as they can. Schools should help parents promote their children's good character as children tend to act as their parents (Kohn, 1990). Developing children's character needs the cooperation of both parents and teachers (Sewell & Hall, 2003).
  3. Students should be provided with opportunities to feel responsibility toward others at the school; they act as role models, helping and guiding others; for example, older students can help younger children academically, so they feel that they are important members at school, doing a valuable job for others and at the same time the younger children feel the care and kindness from the older students.
  4. Schools should involve students in decision making in issues related to their school life, so they feel valued and respected by their teachers and principals.
  5. Schools should encourage students to discuss moral issues and attitudes to increase their knowledge about those issues. They should also help them work on creative projects that encourage critical thinking that support morality and good behaviour.
  6. Teachers should help students relate what they learn to their real life situations, providing them with opportunities to share their experiences with others.

7. Finally, to raise students' community awareness, schools should create activities that adopt analysing local newspapers or local radio stations, so students will always be in contact with their community news.

#### **5.4. Limitations of the Study**

As any other educational study, this research was bounded by several limitations. The first one is the narrow scope of the targeted sample, as it consists of three British schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. It is one of convenience, so it limits the ability to generalise the results of the research.

The second limitation is that the results of this study are based on schools that teach British curriculum, thus, other private schools that teach different curricula might produce different results. On the other hand, if the study included different international schools, then, it would enable comparison of different kinds of international schools together, which would likely widen and broaden the results of the study.

The third limitation is the restriction of the sample schools' schedules. It was very challenging for the researcher to arrange enough time for in-depth interviews with the teachers as well as with the students. Some schools even refused to let the researcher meet the teachers, claiming that they were too busy and the interviews might add pressure on them. Although the researcher has ADEC's approval, which permits her to conduct her study in any private school and obtain all schools to facilitate, help and support her in this study. Some schools refused even to be included in the sample schools of the study as they considered the researcher as a person who tended to interfere in their own business.

Another limitation stemmed from the lack of information on the topic which affected the eagerness of the participants, especially in the case of some Western teachers who refused to be

interviewed as they were reluctant to participate in the study because they were unsure of their knowledge about character/moral education. Moreover, the researcher herself works in a full-time job which was another obstacle, as it was difficult for her to have sufficient time to conduct the huge amount of work in the sample schools.

### **5.5. Suggestions for Future Studies**

- The findings of this study indicate several issues for further exploration. As this study investigated the influence of the Western teachers' backgrounds and cultures on the Emirati students' morality and character development in the international schools that follow British curriculum only, it would be useful to replicate it in different kinds of international schools that follow different curricula, such as the American schools.
- Furthermore, and based on the fact that pupils are influenced by the people around them, and since the international schools have a large number of students from different nationalities, backgrounds and cultures, it would be interesting to investigate also the impact of the students from other nationalities on the national Emirati students' morality and character development.
- On the other hand, putting the international schools in the UAE under the microscope, it might be urgent for future research to create a framework of CE based on the universal values which suite the context of the UAE and at the same time suite those students who are from different countries with different nationalities and different religions studying side by side with the national UAE students in the same schools.
- With regard to some of the comments that address the obstacles that the Western teachers face while teaching character and morality, the teachers find it difficult to deal with adolescents as they need different strategies at this critical stage of life; therefore, this important issue can be seen as an issue for future research in the context of the UAE.

- It would be worthwhile to explore the impact of the use of technology in the national UAE students' morality and character development and to investigate whether or not there is a correlation between the wide use of technology and social media and morality of adolescents at schools. It seems clear that through the use of social media, the youth are exposed to different types of people, different types of cultures and different kinds of mentalities; thus, perhaps future research can answer this inquiry, especially with the current wide usage of social media among the youth.
- As this study investigated the impact of the Western teachers' values and cultures on the Emirati students using interviews and questionnaires in order to explore the situation of CE in the international schools, so, it is recommended that further studies should employ and incorporate additional data collection tools such as observations of the students and their teachers in classrooms in addition to other observations for behaviours and attitudes of both students and their Western teachers around the school, such as in playgrounds, cafeterias and other school facilities to get deeper insights of the situation of CE in these schools.

## **5.6. Summary**

In conclusion, promoting students' morality and character requires all members of the community to work together to enhance good morals and foster good character of children. Decision makers, educators, including teachers, administrators and all those who work in schools, in addition to parents and other people in the community, should have a shared responsibility towards morality and character education for all children. This study explored the effect of the Western teachers' different cultures and backgrounds in the British schools, on the Emirati students' morality and character development in three British schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Based on the findings of this study, (a) schools need to have a well- planned framework with clear guidelines that help them promote their students' morality and character,

(b) make sure that all teachers understand the meaning of character education and its importance for students (c) ensure that morality and character education are embedded in the curriculum itself and that the teachers are accountable of teaching and modelling good traits (d) ensure that teachers receive regular professional development regarding CE and cultural awareness training (e) ensure that teachers, administrators, parents, stakeholders and all members of the community cooperate and feel accountable for helping the UAE youth to foster their good character to suit the needs and face the challenges of the present life.

Reflecting on the findings, the Western cultural effect has been identified as the main issue that the UAE parents are concerned about and asked the researcher to focus on as they appreciate all of the positives that their children are receiving from their Western teachers such as, learning good values, like, self-reliance and confidence; however, the UAE parents do not like the fact that their children's mentality may be Westernised. Consequently, deliberate constructive steps should be taken into consideration to promote good qualities in the students' character, strengthening all the positives and avoiding all the negatives of the Western teachers' influence.

## **5.7. Conclusion**

As his highness, Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, stated, "The greatest use that can be made of wealth is to invest it in creating generations of educated and trained people." Therefore, it is a significant responsibility to facilitate preparing well educated generations who are not only equipped with skills for economic growth but, more importantly, equipped with morals and ethical manners. Parents, schools and the whole community should share this responsibility to promote positive ethical life for their children.

The purpose of this research is to critically examine the influence of the Western teachers' cultures and values on the UAE national students' morality and character development in three international schools that follow the British curriculum in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. If one thinks about the old UAE generations in the past when there was no technology, no internet and no social media, people were close to each other, learning and understanding their values and the

required life skills from the experiences of others. So, parents used to be the first and the only teachers of their children, teaching them different kinds of knowledge required in their lives. Relatives and neighbours also had their share in influencing children's behaviours and attitudes. The community was so closed, but with the rapid evolution of technology and the wide spread of social networking, the UAE's current generations are exposed to this fast change of life style, just like others in different parts of the world. The result of this modernisation is that everyone can have their own world of interest, using their computers as a big window to the whole world choosing their favourite topic, chatting with their favourite football player or following certain bloggers without any limitations. This kind of life may influence children's character in different ways. In addition to the fact that a large number of the UAE national students go to international schools that follow different curricula; they mix with other Western students and Western teachers from different nationalities and different cultures who carry different perspectives and values. Furthermore, this situation makes it vital for educators and decision makers to think about those students under all of those influences as they begin moving away from their culture and getting attached to the Western cultures, as was evident in the findings of this study. Consequently, this research has critically engaged in examining the influence of the Western teachers' different cultures and perspectives on the UAE national students' morality and character development. The rationale for selecting this specific topic is that some of the UAE national students join the international schools in which they spend much time on a daily basis and they are taught by Western teachers who come from various Western countries and hold various values and perspectives. Therefore, this study tended to investigate whether the Emirati students in the international schools are getting the right morality. Additionally, the study is exploring the influence of the Western teachers on the Emirati students' morality and character development, taking into consideration the differences in values and cultures.

In the literature of character education, internationally, many studies were conducted to investigate the situation of moral education and character development from different perspectives. On the other hand, locally, although there are many of studies conducted in different areas of education, the researcher found a lack of studies that investigate students'

development in the UAE. Additionally, she could not find any study that explores the situation of character education or the effect of the Western teachers on character education and morality of the UAE national students; therefore, the gap in this area needs to be filled. The theoretical framework of the thesis is a socio-cultural approach by Vygotsky (1978), which focuses on the importance of social interaction on the development of one's moral character. It also adapts a moral psychological model by Lickona (1993) that follows a comprehensive approach in which everything that takes place at school should be guided toward character/moral development. Additionally, other theories pertaining character education were discussed to give the reader a larger picture on the literature of character education.

The research questions in this study focused on investigating the impact of the Western teachers' cultures and values on the UAE national student' morality and character development, considering the perspectives of the Western teachers' toward their effect on their students' morality; in addition to exploring the perspectives of both UAE national parents and students on the effect of the Western teachers on character education in schools that follow the British curriculum. To answer the research questions, a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative approaches were used. Choosing a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative methods made it possible to explore the research questions thoroughly and to complement each other. To collect the data, different data collection instruments were used, including questionnaires to forty nine parents, forty nine students and forty nine teachers. Semi-structured interviews for fifteen teachers, ten students and ten parents were conducted. And finally, document analysis was used to analyse the available documents related to character development in the sample schools, in addition to ten plans prepared by different Western teachers.

To analyse the collected data, statistical analysis was undertaken, using SPSS program to analyse the quantitative data quantitatively. On the other hand, a thematic interpretive approach was employed to analyse the qualitative data.



## Recommendations

The study resulted in many findings and recommendations, including the following key ones:

- Western teachers' values and cultures affect the UAE students in various ways. According to the parents' points of views, their children become fond of the Western lifestyle, they prefer using English language to Arabic language, which in return, affects their ability to communicate in Arabic language and puts them in a situation of "losing their ability to think and produce knowledge in Arabic" (Badry, 2007, p. 1). Moreover, students start accepting different Western ideologies and practices that are normally frowned upon by the Emirati society.
- Although character education should be part of the curriculum and it should be embedded in all subjects (Rusnak, 1998), findings revealed that character education is not part of the international British schools' curriculum in the UAE; however, as the findings of this study revealed, some of the British schools have some sessions of PSHE, but they are not taken seriously in all British schools. It was also revealed that character education was not integrated in any lesson plan in any way, which indicates that the focus in those schools is on academic success rather than character development.
- Students are happy and satisfied by being part of those kinds of schools that follow the British curriculum as they believe that this kind of education prepares them properly for their future. Furthermore, their fluency in English language can open more opportunities for them in life, especially in the UAE.
- The British schools do their best to help in the morality and character development of their students. There are some examples of different initiatives, such as, the Well-being Day, community service campaigns and the extracurricular activities; however, these

initiatives are not enough and these schools should put more effort into teaching character and morality within their curriculum and through all aspects of school daily life.

- Western teachers believe that, based on the difference among cultures, there is a lack of understanding of the UAE culture and values. Consequently, they believe that pre-service training and regular professional development are vital for all Western teachers who intend to work in the UAE schools.
- Parents believe that not all Western teachers can act as good role models for their children. Therefore, they have suggested that teachers should receive induction on the Emirati culture, so their acts do not contradict with the UAE values.
- There is a lack of parental involvement in their children's school life. Thus, parents' should be more engaged in activities arranged for their children. They should cooperate with the teachers to enhance children's character. Furthermore, it is part of the parents' role to teach their children to be proud of themselves and of their traditions, culture and heritage, using their mother's tongue language as a main language for communication rather than using English in their daily communication.
- A school inspection should take place regularly to check two aspects; the first one is to what extent these British schools are following the rules and regulations of ADEC regarding character development and morality; the second aspect is to check students' improvement in Arabic subjects, as is always the case during ADEC inspections.
- Based on the findings of this study, students in those schools are moderate in showing good behaviour, so behaviour polices should be utilised properly by all teachers who should apply them appropriately to guarantee the best behaviour of all students.

In summary, this research answered the main question:

Do Western teachers' personal beliefs and values influence Emirati students' moral and character development?

And the sub questions:

How do Western teachers perceive any influences that they may have on the development of their students' morality?

What are the Emirati students' perceptions of character development in the international schools?

How do Emirati parents perceive the influence of the Western teachers on their children's character/ moral development?

As this study investigated the UAE national students' morality and character development for those who study in the international schools, the major findings indicate that they are influenced positively as well as negatively by their Western teachers' different values and backgrounds. Therefore it is essential for the Western teachers to understand UAE culture, values and heritage, so their modelling, guidance and teaching does not contradict with the UAE culture and values. On the other hand, it must be noted that working on morality and character education can succeed only if all of the efforts of parents, teachers and all members of the wider community unite together to help students become effective members of their society.

In addition, the interviews' findings suggest that currently, what is taking place as part of character education in the international schools is not sufficient to reinforce morality and positive character in students. Thus, serious steps should be taken inside classrooms, around the school and even beyond the school campus to help promote the goodness in children's character. On the other hand, more research is required in this area to investigate the effect of the Western teachers in all kinds of private schools with bigger samples to be able to generalise the findings of the research. Finally, the researcher is looking forward to seeing character education as a fundamental part of education in all schools in the UAE, due to its benefits on students and on communities.

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الوثيقة الوطنية المطورة لمنهج مادة التربية الإسلامية (2011)- وزارة التربية والتعليم بدولة الإمارات العربية

الوثيقة الوطنية لمنهج التربية الوطنية (2001) و الوثيقة الوطنية لمنهج الدراسات الاجتماعية المطور (2003)- وزارة التربية  
(والتعليم بدولة الإمارات العربي

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1:

### ADEC's Approval

Subject: Letter of Permission

الموضوع: تسهيل مهمة باحثين

Dear Principals,

تحية طيبة وبعد،،،

The Abu Dhabi Education Council would like to express its gratitude for your generous efforts & sincere cooperation in serving our dear students.

يطيبُ لمجلس أبوظبي للتعليم أن يتوجه لكم بخالص الشكر والتقدير لجهودكم الكريمة والتعاون الصادق لخدمة أبنائنا الطلبة.

You are kindly requested to allow the researcher/ Salam Omer Ali Omer to complete her research on:

ونود إعلامكم بموافقة مجلس أبو ظبي للتعليم على موضوع الدراسة التي ستجريها الباحثة/ **سلام عمر علي عمر**،  
بعنوان:

*Character Education of Emirate Students in the international Schools*

*Character Education of Emirate Students in the international Schools*

Please indicate your approval of this permission by facilitating her meetings with the sample groups at your respected schools.

لذا، يرجى التكرم بتسهيل مهمة الباحثة ومساعدتها على إجراء الدراسة المشار إليها.

For further information: please contact Mr Helmy Seada on 02/6150140

للاستفسار: يرجى الاتصال بالسيد/ **حلمي سعدة** على الهاتف 02/6150140

Thank you for your cooperation.

شاكرين لكم حسن تعاونكم.

Sincerely yours,

وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الاحترام والتقدير،،،

المهندس حماد علي الظاهري  
المدير التنفيذي، قطاع المدارس الخاصة وضمان الجودة  
Eng. Hamad Ali Al Dhaheri

Executive Director, Private Schools and Quality Assurance Sector

## Appendix 2:

## Teacher's Consent Form

Dear Teachers,

As part of my PhD thesis research, I am investigating the impact of the Western teachers' values on the National students' moral and characters in International schools from the perspective of parents, students and teachers. I am interested in finding out how parents, students and teachers feel towards character education in the school. Questionnaires have been developed for that purpose. I believe questionnaires include some thought-provoking questions. All information received from the completed questionnaires will be kept anonymous and the data collected will not be linked to any individual or school. There is room at the end of the questionnaire for you to include ideas or thoughts that you feel are relevant; I have received ADEC permission, the administration permission of your school, and my supervising professors at the British University in Dubai to present this survey to you. Completing the survey is voluntary but I would greatly appreciate it if you would take a few minutes to answer all the questions. I believe that teachers have an important voice that needs to be heard concerning the topic of character education in schools. If you have any questions or would like to speak to someone regarding the rights of human subjects in research, you may contact Dr. Clifton Chadwick at 04-3671954

Clifton.chadwick@buid.ac.ae

I thank you in advance for taking the time to help me investigate this important topic.

Sincerely,

Salam Omar Ali

120021@student.buid.ac.ae

I understand that completing this questionnaire is voluntary and I am willing to participate.

Signature:

Date



## Appendix 3:

## Teacher's Questionnaire

1. Please tick A or B.

I am a:

1

2

Male

Female

2. My nationality. (Check all that apply):

1

American

2

Asian

3

British

4

Other nationality, explain below

3. What grade do you teach?

1

G 1-3

2

G 4-6

3

G 7-9

4

G 9 and above

4. How many years have you been teaching?

1

1-2 years

2

3-5 years

3

6-10 years

4

More than 20 years

5. What is the highest degree you earned?

1

Diploma

2

Bachelor degree

3

Master degree

4

Others

6. How many years of experience do you have in the UAE?

1

1- 2 years

2

3- 5 years

3

6- 10 years

4

More than 20 years

## 11. Character traits

7. For each of the following statements about character qualities, tick one box to the right, with the statement that best shows to what extent you agree or disagree.

(Please do not leave any blank.) Use the following rating scale:

	Important	Somewhat important	Not important	Not sure
Caring				
Empathy				
Honesty				
Kindness				
Perseverance				
Respect				
Humility				
Citizenship				
Fairness				
Integrity				
Love				
Self-Control				
Obedience				
Courage				
Hope				
Justice				
Loyalty				
Responsibility				

Tolerance				
Trustworthy				

### III.CHARACTER EDUCATION AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS

For each of the following statements, please tick ONE box to the right of the statement to show to what extent you agree or disagree with the statement. (Please do not leave any blank.) Use the following rating scale:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable
8. All teachers in this school participate in teaching character education.					
9. Each teacher designs their own lessons to teach character education.					
10. Teachers helped choose the character traits we teach.					
11. Character education improves student behavior.					
12. School takes a special care for developing students' characters.					
13. Character education will help raise the academic achievement in this school.					
14. Character education seeks to develop good character through every phase of school life.					
<b>Parental involvement</b>					
15. Parents in this school volunteer in the classrooms, on committees, help on field trips, etc.					
16. Parents model the behaviors we are trying to teach.					
17. Parents respect the teachers in this school.					

18. Parents help their children follow the school rules, such as, dress code, doing homework) in this school.					
---	--	--	--	--	--

**19. What kind of character education do you have in your school?**

.....

.....

.....

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.....

**20. Do you face any trouble in working on character development? If yes, please specify.**

.....

.....

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.....

.....

.....

.....

**21. How can character education be taught in a better way? What do you believe is missing?**

.....

.....

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.....

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Note: This survey includes questions adapted from research by Mathison (1993), and the SCCP-11 (School as a Caring Community Profile) developed by T. Lickona and M. Davidson (2000), Davis (2007) Character Education Efficacy Beliefs Instrument (CEEBI, Wilson & Michig, 2002), and the Eleven Principles of Character Education Effectiveness (EPS, Lickona, & Davidson, 2003).

## Appendix: 4

## Consent Form for Parent' questionnaire

Dear Parents,

As part of my PhD thesis research, I am working on a research paper in your child/children's school. The purpose of my research is to learn about the impact of the Western teachers' values and perspectives on moral and character development of the children in international school. I am working as the head of Islamic Studies in a secondary international school. I'm very interested in what parents think about this topic. In this time, my focus is on parents' beliefs on character and moral education and the ways they are involved or would be involved in character education at school.

I'm asking parents to fill out a survey. There is no need to include your name. Please, be sure that the questionnaire is anonymous; hence, no way will this information influence your child's teacher or harm you or your child. If you would like to add any further information, there is space for additional ideas. I have received a permission to present this survey to you from ADEC as well as the school head master and my university. There will be no negative consequences if you do not complete the questionnaire as no one can oblige you to complete the questionnaire.

I would be grateful if you would take 10-15minutes to answer all the questions. If you have any question regarding the rights of the subjects of research, you may contact Dr. Clifton Chadwick at **04-3671954**

[Clifton.chadwick@buid.ac.ae](mailto:Clifton.chadwick@buid.ac.ae)

Thank you for your time and your help in providing me with your opinions to further investigate this important topic.

**Salam Omar Ali**

[120021@student.buid.ac.ae](mailto:120021@student.buid.ac.ae)

I understand that this questionnaire is voluntary and I am willing to participate.

Date: .....

Name: .....

Signature: .....

## Appendix: 5

## Parents' questionnaire in English

### PERSPECTIVES ON CHARACTER EDUCATION:

For each of the following statements there is no right or wrong answer.

Please answer all the questions carefully before you answer.

#### I. Demographic information

For each of the following questions or items, please answer as carefully and thoughtfully as you can, according to the instructions provided.

#### 1. Please tick the right answer:

I am a:

1

2

Male

Female

**1. What language do you speak at home?**

1

Arabic

2

English

3

Others

**2. For your child (ren) at this school, you are their:**

1

Mother

2

Step-mother

3

Grandmother

1

Father

2

Step-father

3

Grandfather

**3. What is the highest grade you have completed?**

1

Less than High school

2

High School

3

College degree

4

Master's degree

5

Others

## 5. Personal traits

- 1. For each of the following statements about character education, tick the appropriate choice, to the statement that best shows to what extent you agree or disagree. (Please do not leave any blank.) Use the following rating scale:**

	Important	Somewhat important	Not important	Not sure
Caring				
Empathy				
Honesty				
Kindness				
Perseverance				
Respect				
Humility				
Citizenship				
Fairness				



<i>Integrity</i>				
<i>Love</i>				
<i>Self-Control</i>				
<i>Obedience</i>				
<i>Courage</i>				
<i>Hope</i>				
<i>Justice</i>				
<i>Loyalty</i>				
<i>Responsibility</i>				
<i>Tolerance</i>				
<i>Trustworthy</i>				

**CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND PARENTAL PERCEPTIONS**

**For each of the following statements, please circle the appropriate answer next to the statement to show to what extent you agree or disagree. (Please do not leave any blank.)**

**Use the following scale:**

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>
6. Parents are the most important teachers for character development.					
7. I believe social skills are more important than academic skills.					
8. I teach my children to respect all people.					
9. I tell my children, "If someone hits you, you may hit them back."					
10. My family sits together to eat dinner and talk three or more times each week.					
11. I leave the moral education of my children to the Islamic Studies teacher.					

12. I think children imitate what they see on television.					
13. I am able to control my children's behaviour					
14. My children are having trouble getting along with other children.					
15. My children often get into fights with other children.					
16. I encourage my children to be tough. I think it is important.					
17. I sometimes spank my children for bad behaviour.					
18. I model the character traits I want my children to have.					
19. I believe children need character education in school.					
20. I think learning about good character (such as respect and responsibility) will improve my children's grades.					

21. Parents participated (or would likely) participate in character education training activities.					
22. The teachers in this school model the character traits (like respect and caring) they want the children to learn.					
23. When I walk into my children's school, it feels inviting and safe.					
24. Teachers in this school seem to like each other and help each other.					
25. Teachers in this school show respect for the parents.					

Thank you very much for taking time to complete this questionnaire. I would like to hearing more about your views and ideas. Please let me know if you are willing to participate in a confidential interview, either by phone or in person. For those willing to participate, please leave your phone number.

Note. This survey includes some questions adapted from research by Mathison (1998), and the SCCP-11 (School as a Caring Community Profile) developed by T. Lickona and M. Davidson (2003), Davin (2007) Character Education Efficacy Beliefs Instrument (CEEBI, Milson & Mehlig, 2002), and the Eleven Principles of Character Education Effectiveness (EPS, Lickona, & Davidson, 2003).

## APPENDIX: 6

## Parents' questionnaire in Arabic

استبيان ولي الامر

ليس هناك اجابة صحيحة أو خاطئة  
الرجاء الإجابة على جميع الأسئلة بعناية.

### 1. المعلومات الديموغرافية

1. الرجاء الإجابة بعناية وبشكل مدروس قدر ما تستطيع، وفقا للتعليمات.

1. أنا

نكر

نفي

2. ما هي اللغة التي تتكلمون بها في المنزل

لغات اخرى

اللغة الإنجليزية

اللغة العربية

3. أنت بالنسبة لأطفالك/ لطفلك

الجدة

زوجة الاب

الام

الجد

زوج الام

الاب

4. ما هي اعلى درجة علمية وصلت اليها؟

 5 4 3 2 1

غير ذلك

الماجستير

شهادة جامعية

شهادة الدراسة الثانوية

أقل من الشهادة الثانوية

### 11. الصفات الشخصية

أست متفكفا	ليس هاما	هام الى حد ما	هام	
				الرحمانية
				التعاطف
				الامانة
				اللطف
				المثابرة
				الاحترام
				التواضع
				الانتماء للوطن
				العدل
				التزاهة
				الحب
				ضبط النفس
				الطاعة
				التجاعة
				الامل
				العدالة
				الانتماء
				التحور بالمسؤولية
				التحمل
				الثقة

					21- المعلمون في هذه المدرسة هم نموذج يحتذى من قبل الطاقب حيث انهم يظهرون اخلاق عالية ليتمكروا من تعليمها للطاقب
					22- عندما اذهب الى مدرسة اطفالي، احس بالراحة وبالترحيب
					23- يبدو المعلمين في هذه المدرسة يحون بعضهم البعض ويتعاونون فيما بينهم
					24- يظهر المعلمون الاحترام لاولياء الامور
					25- الطوع في تقديم المساعدة في مدرسة ابنتي

شكرا جزيلا لأخذ الوقت الكافي لاستكمال هذا الاستبيان . وأود سماع المزيد من اولئكم واقتراحكم . واسمحوا لي أن أعرف إذا كنتم طي استعداد للمشاركة في مقابلة (سرية بحيث أن يعرف احد اسمكم ولكن ستكونون حونا كبيرا لي لانعام هذا البحث)، إما عن طريق الهاتف أو شخصيا. التراسين في المشاركة، يرجى ترك رقم الهاتف المخلص بكم

•

PARENT/GUARDIAN PERMISSION FORM

Yes, my son/daughter has my permission to participate in the survey of "Moral/Character Education" as part of a research project for Mrs. Salam Omar Ali in partial fulfillment of the PhD degree in Education. I understand that the survey will pertain to relevant questions on the issue of character education and that no harm is expected to result from my child's participation.

Parent: -----

Student: -----

Students Survey

This survey is designed to assess your impression of how you interact and treat each other. Your honest and accurate responses to the following questions will be highly appreciated. Thank you for participating.

Please circle the appropriate answer that describes how frequently you observe the following behaviors in your school.

1- Students treat classmates with respect.

1     2     3     4     5

Almost never    sometimes    frequently    almost always    not applicable

2- Teachers treat students with respect.

Almost never    sometimes    frequently    almost always    not applicable

3- Students help each other, even if they are not friends.

Almost never    sometimes    frequently    almost always    not applicable



4- Students show respect for school property (such as desks, walls, bathrooms, busses, buildings, and grounds).

1       2       3       4       5  
Almost always      sometimes      frequently      almost never      not applicable

5- When students see another student being picked on, they try to stop it.

1       2       3       4       5  
Almost always      sometimes      frequently      almost never      not applicable

6- Students help new students feel accepted.

1       2       3       4       5  
Almost always      sometimes      frequently      almost never      not applicable

7- Students exclude those who are different, (e.g., belong to a different race, religion, or culture).

1       2       3       4       5  
Almost always      sometimes      frequently      almost never      not applicable

8- In their interactions with students, teachers act in ways that demonstrate respect and consideration the school is trying to teach.

1       2       3       4       5  
Almost always      sometimes      frequently      almost never      not applicable

9- Teachers and staff support all students throughout the school academically, behaviorally and socially.

1       2       3       4       5  
Almost always      sometimes      frequently      almost never      not applicable

10- Students are disrespectful toward their teachers.

1       2       3       4       5  
Almost always      sometimes      frequently      almost never      not applicable

**11- Students are aware of a clear policy for behavior issues and act accordingly.**

1       2       3       4       5  
Almost always      sometimes      frequently      almost never      not applicable

**12- The school responds appropriately and efficiently to problem behaviors.**

1       2       3       4       5  
Almost always      sometimes      frequently      almost never      not applicable

**13- I feel I can succeed to my fullest potential as my school helps me to do so.**

1       2       3       4       5  
Almost always      sometimes      frequently      almost never      not applicable

**14- I feel my voice and thoughts are heard and valued in my school.**

1       2       3       4       5  
Almost always      sometimes      frequently      almost never      not applicable

**15- Students listen to each other in class discussions.**

1       2       3       4       5  
Almost always      sometimes      frequently      almost never      not applicable

**16- Students can talk to their teachers about problems that are bothering them.**

1       2       3       4       5  
Almost always      sometimes      frequently      almost never      not applicable

**17- Teachers treat students with fairness.**

1       2       3       4       5  
Almost always      sometimes      frequently      almost never      not applicable

**18- In their interactions with students, teachers act in ways that demonstrate the character qualities the school is trying to teach.**

<sup>1</sup>       <sup>2</sup>       <sup>3</sup>       <sup>4</sup>       <sup>5</sup>  
Almost always      sometimes      frequently      almost never      not applicable

**19- Students use hand-held devices (phones, Ipads, etc.) in class without the teacher's permission.**

<sup>1</sup>       <sup>2</sup>       <sup>3</sup>       <sup>4</sup>       <sup>5</sup>  
Almost always      sometimes      frequently      almost never      not applicable

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*Note. This survey includes questions adapted from the above surveys which are based on research by Mathison (1998), and the SCCP-11 (School as a Caring Community Profile) developed by T. Lickona and M. Davidson (2003), Devin (2007) Character Education Efficacy Beliefs Instrument (CEEBI, Milson & Mehlig, 2002), and the Eleven Principles of Character Education Effectiveness (EPS, Lickona, & Davidson, 2003) with permission granted.*

## **APPENDIX: 8**

### **CONSENT FORM FOR THE INTERVIEWS**

The British University in Dubai and those conducting this project subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of subjects. This form and the information it contains are given to you for your own protection and full understanding of the procedures. Your signature on this form will signify that you have received a document which describes the procedures, possible risks, and benefits of this research project, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the document, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the project.

Any information that is obtained during this study will be kept confidential to the full extent permitted by law. Knowledge of your identity is not required. You will not be required to write your name or any other identifying information on the research materials. Materials will be held in a secure location and will be destroyed after the completion of the study.

Having been asked by **Salam Omar Ali**, a PhD student at the British University in Dubai to participate in:

An investigation on the Impact of the Western Teachers' Values and Cultures on Emirati Students' Moral and Character Development

#### **Purpose:**

The proposed paper for the PhD thesis is to investigate the influence of the Western teachers' values on the Emirati students' morality and character education in the international schools in Abu Dhabi in the UAE.

#### **Interview questions**

There will be interviews, each one – thirty minutes long and held in a place chosen by the participants. I will be using a voice recorder upon the agreement of the participants and in case



SIGNATURE: .....

DATE: .....

ONCE SIGNED, A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO THE SUBJECT.

## **Appendix: 9**

### **Interview's questions for the teachers**

1. How would you define character education?
2. What are the most important traits for a person of good character?
3. In your opinion, how important is character education?
4. By what actions does this school indicate the importance of character education?
5. How responsible do you feel for integrating character education in your classroom?
6. What in your personal background or past experience has influenced the way you teach character education?
7. How do your values and beliefs impact your approach to teaching character education?
8. What strategies do you use to teach character education? Give some examples please.
9. How does your school teach character education and which areas of character education does it emphasize?
10. Where did you get your ideas of teaching character education from?
11. What obstacles do you face when integrating character education in your teaching?
12. In your opinion, which things may help you facilitate the teaching of character education?
13. Do you think that there are some differences between values you teach your students and their own values? If yes, elaborate please.
14. Does your current school emphasize character education and if so how and to what degree?
15. Do you feel you were enough prepared to teach character education in your classrooms? If yes, how? If not, what do you suggest to better prepare yourself for that?
16. Respect is a universal value that is required everywhere, what strategies do you use to teach it to your students?
17. Compare your influence on a student's character to the impact of what happens at home?

18. Do you think that you have enough time to teach character to your students?
19. Do you think that Islamic Studies and Social Studies that are taught in Arabic as part of the National curriculum are enough to develop students' character socially and morally?
20. How do you see yourself in your role as a teacher to help children develop good character? In your school day, what do you do and how do you help children developing good character habits?
21. Does the school hold some activities that help students develop good character? Explain
22. Does the school provide you with any training regarding character education?
23. 23 Is there anything else you would like to add we have not discussed?



## Appendix: 10

### Interview's questions for the parents

- Who are you for the child?
- How many children do you have in this school?
- Are you satisfied with the development of your child's character?
- In your perspective, what are the main traits that make a good character?
- Does the school hold some activities that help students develop good character?
- Are you satisfied with the school's policy regarding behaviour of the children?
- What do you think of the role of the parents in developing children's character?
- Which role is more crucial in developing children's character, the role of parents or the role of the school? Why?
- How do you control your children's behaviour?
- If any child is bullying your child, do you usually encourage him/her to treat them back with the same manner?
- Do you think your child's teachers are good models for him/her? Why?
- In your opinion, who should be responsible for developing students' moral and social character?
- Do you think education character influence your children's achievement?
- Do you think Islamic Studies and Social Studies are enough to develop your child's character to be prepared for the real life? What are your suggestions?
- Do you think that there is any impact of the British teachers' background and culture on your child's character? Explain
- Do you think that there is enough cooperation between the school and the parents for the sake of your child's character development? Elaborate.
- Any comment you would like to add?

## **Appendix: 11**

### **Interview's questions for the students**

1. Have you ever cheated on a test or homework?
2. Have you ever been bullied? What did you do about it?
3. Have you ever forced another student to do something against his will?
4. Have you ever skipped classes?
5. Have you gone to the class without doing the required reading?
6. How do your teachers deal with any kind of misbehaviour?
7. If you find 20 dirham in the school playground, what do you?
8. Have you ever taken anything from other students without asking their permission?
- 9- Do your teachers talk to you about their personal lives?
- 10- How many times in a week do you have dinner with your parents?
11. How many times do you watch TV with your parents in a week?
- 12- What do you like about being in a school with a British curriculum?
- 13- What are the best things that your teachers provide you with?
- 14- Is there anything that you hate about your school or your teachers? Explain.
15. Do you think that with the current number of Islamic Studies and Social Studies weekly lessons are they enough to teach you how to become a good and successful person in all aspects of life?
- 15a. How good are your Islamic Studies teachers? Do they discuss issues with you or just lecture and make you read?

15b. How good are your Social Studies teachers? Do they discuss issues with you or just lecture and make you read?

16- In terms of values, which values have you learnt from your teachers?

17. Does the school hold some activities that help students to develop good character?

18-Is there any difference between what your parents teach you at home and what your teachers teach you at school?

19. Is there anything else you would like to add we have not discussed?

**9.3.2 FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL****Research Ethics Form (Low Risk Research)**

To be completed by the researcher and submitted to the Dean's nominated faculty representative on the Research Ethics Sub-Committee

**i. Applicants/Researcher's information:**

Name of Researcher /student	Salam Omar Ali
Contact telephone No.	0505939171
Email address	120021@student.buid.ac.ae
Date	12/11/2014

**ii. Summary of Proposed Research:**

<p><b>BRIEF OUTLINE OF PROJECT</b> (100-250 words; this may be attached separately. You may prefer to use the abstract from the original bid):</p>	<p>In international schools in the UAE, most of the teachers are Western teachers hired from different countries with different cultural backgrounds to teach young people, including Emirati students. Their main job is to work on developing their students both academically and morally. Studies show that teachers have crucial influence on their students' character development. The role of teachers who are the key players in character education is not restricted to academic education, but it should widen to include working on moral education to help pupils to learn certain virtues needed in life such as honesty, respect, truthfulness and the ability to make decisions. Therefore, a negative or a positive effect is expected to influence students in these schools.</p> <p>The proposed thesis will primarily aims at investigating the influence of Western teachers on Emirati students' characters moral development, answering the main question: What is the influence of Western teachers on Emirati students' character development?</p> <p>The sub questions are:</p>
--	--

	<p>1. How do teachers perceive any influences that they may have on the development of their students' moral character?</p> <p>2- What are the Emirati students' perceptions of character development in international schools?</p> <p>3- How do Emirati parents perceive the influence of the Western teachers on their children's character moral development?</p> <p>The theoretical framework chosen for this proposed study is to present an overview of certain theories related to character education. First, the moral psychological model presented by Lickona. The second theory is Kohlberg's cognitive theory and finally, a socio-cultural model by Vygotsky.</p>
<p><b>MAIN ETHICAL CONSIDERATION(S) OF THE PROJECT</b> (e.g. working with vulnerable adults; children with disabilities; photographs of participants; material that could give offence etc...):</p>	<p>The researcher will be working with pupils of secondary school, teachers and parents. Two ways will be used to collect data through questionnaires and interviews. The participants in this study will be assured that their responses will be anonymous and their names will not be mentioned in front of anyone without their consent. The researcher will inform the participants that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. In addition, a letter of information and a consent letter will be provided to them prior to their participation whether in questionnaire or interviews or both of them and that the collected data will be kept in a secure locked place. However, confidentiality will be guaranteed for all participants to make it easy for them to uncover their views freely.</p>
<p><b>DURATION OF PROPOSED PROJECT</b> (please provide dates as month/year):</p>	<p>November/2014</p>

Date you wish to start Data Collection:	November/2014
Date for issue of consent forms:	15/11/2014

**iii. Declaration by the Researcher:**

I have read the University's policies for Research and the information contained herein, to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate.

I am satisfied that I have attempted to identify all risks related to the research that may arise in conducting this research and acknowledge my obligations as researcher and the rights of participants. I am satisfied that members of staff (including myself) working on the project have the appropriate qualifications, experience and facilities to conduct the research set out in the attached document and that I, as researcher take full responsibility for the ethical conduct of the research in accordance with subject-specific and University Research Policy (9.3 Policies and Procedures Manual), as well as any other condition laid down by the BUId Ethics Committee. I am fully aware of the timelines and content for participant's information and consent.

Print name: Salam Omar Ali

1. Signature: 

Date: 12/11/2014

*If the research is confirmed as not medium or high risk, it is endorsed HERE by the Faculty's Research Ethics Subcommittee member (following discussion and clarification of any issues or concerns)\*and forwarded to the Research Office to be recorded.*

I confirm that this project fits within the University's Research Policy (9.3 Policies and Procedures Manual) and I approve the proposal on behalf of BUId's Ethics Sub-Committee.

Name and signature of nominated Faculty Representative: ASHLY H. PINNINGTON

Signature: 

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> December 2014

## Appendix 13

### Teacher's questionnaire's open ended questions

#### **Question: 1**

**What kind of character/moral education do you have in your school?**

#### Response 1

We use PSHE and Global citizenship to teach character/ moral development.

#### Response 2

I have taken a course which was not part of the school's policy; I took it on my own to be able to develop character in the classroom. In this school, we don't have any clear guidelines to develop students' characters.

#### Response 3

- Looking at improving and fostering the holistic child
- Following children's interests to personalise their curriculum
- Cater to their needs

#### Response 4

We do not have any.

#### Response 5

PSHCE and Islamic Studies

#### Response 6

We teach our students to:

- Show respect for individuals, teachers, other children and school property.
- Share common tools and resources.
- Be honest.

### Response 7

In general, there is a common set of shared values within the school, based on simple ideas of manners, courtesy and polite conduct. However those who do not follow this are not always dealt with.

### Response 8

- PSHCE lessons
- Code of conduct
- House system

### Response 9

- A code of conduct based on successful character traits which pupils are expected to follow.
- A reward system by which positive character traits are recorded and celebrated
- Twice-term non- timetable days are devoted to in depth exploration and personal search of certain character building attributes e.g. tolerance, duty, a vertical house system in which younger pupils can learn from their older housemates, who should be modelling positive character traits.

### Response 10:

PSHE



### Response 11

Nothing specific, teachers lead by example. When pupils misbehave, teachers discuss the outcomes with them and show them how their behaviour affects others.

### Response 12

The code of conduct and PSHE curriculum that we have in our school

### Response 13

I believe modelling, setting an example and having a good behaviour policy

### Response 14

We do our best to develop students into good individuals and to prepare them for adulthood.

### Response 15

We use PSHE and global citizenship to teach about character development.

### Response 16

Character building is largely delivered successfully in lesson time and during extra-curricular programmes.

### Response 17

PSHE lessons and a number of books based on topics such as: good to be me and new beginnings.

### Response 18

We do not have something in specific. Teachers try their best to help enhance students' character

### Response 19

- Through Well-Being Days
- House –Tutors System
- Code of conduct

### Response 20

I think that the activities after the school day

### Response 21

- PSHE lessons
- House system
- Code of conduct

### Response 22

We have Well-Being days, which follow a theme, such as tolerance in which we organise different activities to help students think about how they can show these character traits and why they are important.

### Re sponse 23

We have a code of conduct which encourages students to :

- Be kind
- Be polite
- Try your best
- Take care of others

### Response 24

Through PSHE

### Response 25

We do not have a specific way of teaching CE. It depends on each teacher knowledge of CE

**Response 26**

Through pastoral programme. Students are encouraged to be tolerant, kind and respectful. All lessons are built on the code of conduct.

**Response 27**

I think the Well-Being Day and Tutor time, but I believe that this is not enough to highlight character traits.

**Response 28**

Nothing specific. Teachers lead by example and the code of conduct.

**Response 29**

Well-Being days which one can say that not all of them are useful. Some of these days are just waste of time.

**Response 30**

Teaching character depends on the knowledge of the teacher.

**Response 31**

Introducing different character traits emotions and feeling.

**Response 32**

We do not have any specific education, but we do have pastoral care and a code of conduct.

**Response 33**

Islamic Studies

**Response 34**

I do not know

**Response 35**

None

**Question: 2**

**Do you face any trouble in working on character development? If yes, please specify.**

**Response 1**

Yes but only with some of the students who do not seem willing or socially mature enough to recognise and follow guidance given to develop their characters.

**Response 2**

Not enough time. Ideally we should have a student counsellor to spend 30 minutes each month with our pupils.

**Response 2**

Sometimes parents teach their children ideas that conflict with school teaching, e.g. if someone hits you, hit him back.

**Response 3**

Sometimes, due to cultural sensitivity which can be misunderstood, we feel that we cannot, sometimes, be convincing to the students

#### Response 4

Students' behaviour needs to be consistently addressed to ensure that character development happens.

#### Response 5

Not major. The main issue is with the parents. They teach their children the opposite of what we teach them.

#### Response 6

Having time to implement character development can be difficult. It needs to be integrated into the subject content and made explicit by highlighting character keywords. All teachers of different subjects need to be familiar with the strategies of how to integrate the teaching of the good values within the curriculum itself.

#### Response 7

Yes, the children in the classroom are struggling to uphold certain characters such as empathy and self-control because they are being enforced at school. As teachers we are not sure of the value that we should teach to the students.

#### Response 8

Yes, in meeting cultural needs of every pupil.

#### Response 9

There are some restrictions in this culture, which prevent the same delivery of (PSHE), as I've experienced in the UK. Certain issues are not discussed due to culturally sensitive guidelines.

#### Response 10

The focus in the school is academic excellence. I believe that character is more significant but honestly, exams are our primary interest.

#### Response 11

Sometimes, parents teach their children ideas that conflict with the school teaching, for example, if someone hits you, hit him back.

#### Response 12

Yes, sometimes, due to cultural sensitivity which can be misunderstood

#### Response 13

Yes, mainly with the parents when they cannot understand and accept a character weakness that we need to improve.

#### Response 14

Student's behaviour needs to be consistently addressed to ensure that character development happens.

#### Response 15

Not really, but I think that teachers should be mindful of cultural context.

#### Response 16

No, besides teaching it during lesson time, I also reinforce it during the day and often refer to the code of conduct.

#### Response 17

- Cultural differences between teachers and the Emirati students, so teachers need cultural awareness of the Emirati values and heritage.
- Children struggle to remember messages they learn all the time

#### Response 18

The differences of cultures between teachers and students is the main difficulty.

#### Response 19

The fact that I am not aware of the UAE culture is my problem. I am not confident of what I am doing or saying in front of the Emirati students.

#### Response 20

Not having clear guidelines of how to develop students' character and what is expected from us as teachers.

#### Response 21

I feel that my students' parents do not help me in encouraging what their children learn at school.

#### Response 22

I need a training course that enable me to teach character as the UAE is a different country with different culture for me.

#### Response 23

Some challenges in developing international values

#### Response 24

Pupils who do not accept us as teachers. Sometimes they give me the feeling that I know nothing about their culture.

#### Response 25

No. I just feel that i need more knowledge about the Emirati people.

#### Response 26

We do not really have time dedicated to character development and there is a lot else to get through in lessons. It is also difficult to change ideas and expectations of students with different culture, values, norms and expectations.

#### Response 27

Yes, sometimes it is very hard to develop students' character due to the fact that the Emirati culture is different. They get something completely different at home which makes our job difficult.

#### Response 28

No, I do not face any difficulty, rather than the UAE culture which, sometimes, I cannot understand.

#### Response 29

Not enough time to develop students' character

#### Response 30

The difference in values and cultures.

#### Response 31



All characters from different countries have different expectations and different values.

### Response 32

The differences in the values of teachers and values of students.

### Response 33

The different guidance students are given at home.

### Response 34

Time constraints

### Response 35

- Lack of consistency of approach
- It is hard to instill rules when parents are not doing the same at home. They allow their children to do what they want and expect that this would be okay at school as well.

### **Question: 3**

**How can character education be taught in a better way? What do you believe is missing?**

### Response 1

In general this school does a good job in striving to develop its students' character education. On the other hand we do not encourage recycling and we waste too much and nobody really cares. There is no consistency across the whole school in the way that the teachers perceive character education.

### Response 2

If both parents and teachers enforce the same rules both at home and at school, the confusion of the children will be reduced. More cooperation is needed between the parents and the school for the sake of the students' character development.

### Response 3

Character education is important, but the reinforcement at home is also critical. I also believe that there must be more focus on the "little things", such as: please, thank you, waiting turn, not interrupting conversations etc. A clear school plan is needed to guarantee that all teachers work on it

### Response 4

- Clear plan with clear instructions
- Need a counsellor
- Train teachers as counsellors
- Train pupils as student counsellors
- More rewards, prizes and certificates cross curriculum
- Integration of character education within the whole curriculum will be beneficial for character development.

### Response 5

- To have parental input
- Not enough time is given for teaching/ informing of anti bullying although we do not have much of bullying issues here.
- Teaching more character education and having more Well-Being days based on "what makes a good person"

### Response 6

More cultural awareness among these kinds of schools in general and among the Western teachers in specific is highly needed.

Educating the parents so they understand the importance of character development and how it can help in their children's future.

### Response 7

It should be embedded within the curriculum so it could be taught implicitly, possibly through a regular pastoral period. Pupils could become more involved in their target setting and opportunities to model successful character traits.

### Response 8

Character education should be more explicit and to be integrated within lesson planning through all subject areas. Perhaps an audit through all subjects would highlight where different forms of character are explored.

### Response 9

There must be more cooperation between parents and teachers to get better results.

### Response 10

Schools need to involve parents a bit more and to sometimes allow children to experience failure rather than focussing exclusively on success, so that children develop resilience and ability to respond positively to failure

### Response 11

Looking at characteristics from a variety of perspectives which are not judgmental

### Response 12

Educating the parents, so they understand the importance of character development for their children and how it can enlighten their children's future.

### Response 13

More lessons on how to behave at school.

### Response 14

Character building might be extended to cover domestic areas of life. I mean more cooperation between schools and parents in helping students depend on themselves in doing their duties rather than depending on maids or nannies.

### Response 15

Cannot be taught in seclusion. It must be part of the school day, whether working or playing. Teachers should encourage good values such as being helpful, kindness and self independence.

### Response 16

Schools should encourage good values and parents should foster them at home.

### Response 17

I have no idea.

### Response 18

A good and consistent approach to teaching character education.

### Response 19

Training courses to be familiar with the Emirati culture.

### Response 20

Increase parental input.

### Response 21

More cooperation with parents is highly required.

### Response 22

Educating parents to educate their children.

### Response 23

Clear discipline and high expectation are needed.

### Response 24

Global citizen programme that includes a cross countries seminars for students will be useful.

### Response 25

If we have a lesson a week dedicated to life skills, away from academics, then the focus can be given to character education with no pressure.

### Response 26

Two things are missing: communication with parents and cultural awareness among the Western teachers.

### Response 27

To be further embedded within curriculum to give learners a holistic approach across all subjects.

### Response 28

To be more explicit and to be integrated into lesson planning. Perhaps, teachers can highlight CE through all subjects areas where different areas of character are explored.

#### Response 29

- Need a counsellor
- Train teachers as counsellors
- More rewards for good behaviour

#### Response 30

Proper and meaningful punishment are needed for certain situations.

#### Response 31

Not enough time to teach good traits. Not adequate awareness about the bullying issues that are almost in all schools.

#### Response 32

- Cross-curricular
- Included in all lessons
- Some lessons should be just for character education

#### Response 33

It could be embedded within the curriculum, so it could be also taught implicitly during pastoral time. Teachers can also teach by example.

#### Response 34

- A consistent approach
- All practitioners being committed in CE

#### Response 35

We need the following:

- A special programme for highlighting social issues in real life situations
- Pre-service training for Western teachers who tend to work in the UAE, so they are given adequate information about the country: its values, culture and heritage.