

**Understanding the influence of psychosocial factors on  
Emirati female college students' leadership identity  
development: Hermeneutic multiple case studies from Ras  
Al Khaimah**

دراسة العوامل النفسية و الاجتماعية التي تؤثر على بناء الهوية الاماراتية  
القيادية لطالبات كلية التقنية العليا في امارة راس الخيمة

by

**Aisha Al Naqbi, M.Ed.**

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION**

at

**The British University in Dubai**

**February 2015**

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## **ABSTRACT IN ENGLISH**

Reviewing literature on women's leadership, I realized that not enough studies have been done on the psychosocial factors that can shape women's leadership identity, particularly in relation to the cultural context. The paper offers an understanding of how Emirati women develop as leaders, how they form an understanding of leadership while focusing particularly on exploring the psychosocial and cultural factors that contribute to their leadership identity formation. Since identity formation is a very complex issue, the paper will explore it from different dimensions and will use a complex framework that addresses sociocultural, psychosocial factors and women leadership formation theories. These factors can be social or cultural influences that contribute to building the participants' leadership identity; like the role of the family, social factors, culture and the image of leadership role models and how it affects their aspirations to pursue leadership roles. I will also be looking at the influence of role models and their role to inspire young Emiratis to pursue leadership. The paper intended to shorten the gap in Arab women's leadership generally and Emirati women leadership in particular while providing an insight to educators to help them plan and design successful leadership programs that are gender and socially sensitive to the needs of students in the Arab regions.

A qualitative hermeneutical research approach will be carried out to explore the relational leadership of multiple case studies in one of the UAE colleges. The paper will introduce a new leadership identity development model that is gender and culturally sensitive, and can be used to study leadership identity among college students cross-culturally. The new model looks at developmental influences, group influences, boarding views of leadership, the development of the oneself and others. It also investigates other influences like religion, gender, culture, belief system, family, authority and power, and transnational influences.

## ABSTRACT IN ARABIC

من خلال استعراض للدراسات القائمة على القيادة النسائية ، وجدت أنه لا توجد دراسات كافية توضح العوامل النفسية و الاجتماعية التي تساهم في تشكيل الشخصية القيادية النسائية. معظم الدراسات و الابحاث المتوفرة حاليا لا تفهم أو توضح كيف تطورت شخصية المرأة الإماراتية وأصبحت قائدة ، و كيف تشكل مفهوم القيادة عند المرأة في الامارات لتصبح كما هي عليه اليوم شخصية متفردة ذات هوية قيادية ناجحة.

بما أن دراسة تكون الهوية و العوامل المؤثرة عليها قضية معقدة ، سيناقش البحث عدة أبعاد لبناء الهوية و سوف تستخدم الكاتبة أطر عمل بعناوين متعددة مثل : السياق النفسي و السياق الاجتماعي و السياق الثقافي ، و نظريات و معلومات في القيادة النسائية . هذه العوامل الاجتماعية و الثقافية أثرت و ساهمت في بناء تعريف القيادة النسائية ، مثل قوانين الأسرة ، العوامل الاجتماعية ، الثقافية و تأثير القدوة الحسنة التي أثرت بتطلعاتها لتحقيق قوانين القيادة .

يتطلع البحث الى فهم العوامل المساعدة ليتمكن ذوي الخبرة و التربيون من تقديم الدعم المناسب و تخطيط المناهج المناسبة التي ستدعم بدورها الكثير من الشابات الاماراتيات ليلتحقن بركب القيادة. كما ساهم البحث في اختصار الفجوة في المصادر و المعلومات التي تتناقش موضوع القيادات النسائية العربية عامة و القيادات الإماراتية خاصة و التي توجه ببصيرة نافذة لمساعدتهم في وضع الخطة و تشكيل النجاح لبرنامج القيادة للعنصر النسائي في اطار يناسب ثقافة و هوية الامارات المتفردة.

كما يطرح البحث نموذجا جديدا يفهم الشخصية الاماراتية و يناقش طريقة بناء الهوية الاماراتية و العوامل المساهمة في تطورها في المرحلة الجامعية.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this study to my parents, Hamdoon and Kareema, for their foresight, for their unwavering optimism in their children's potential to become productive and contributing members of society, and for their compassion for others. To my siblings Halima, Mohamed, Amira, Shamma, Hajer, Deema, Rouya, Aaya and Al Montaser Bellah, thank you for being there on the sideline as my cheerleaders. To my friends those who have come before me and those still finding their way, I celebrate that journey with all of you.

Eternal thanks to my late mother, Kareema. Her emphasis on the importance of education was instilled in me at an early age, and through each milestone her support and words of encouragement have stayed with me. The last words of advice she gave me in 2010 were to get my doctorate degree. This dissertation is dedicated to her with love, sincere gratitude, and appreciation.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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My late mother, father, and siblings, I am grateful and proud to share this life with you. We have come a long way, and I appreciate the closeness that we have to each other and how supportive you are of my journey. I could not have asked for anything else. To my two lovely nephews: always remember your great potential, help others, and never give up on yourselves.

Last but not least, this dissertation would not have been possible without the participation of the five incredible ladies who agreed to sacrifice their own time to help me achieve my goal. I am so grateful for the time you provided me and for your willingness to openly discuss your experiences.



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# Chapter One

## Introduction

Women's leadership has been a central issue in the educational management and leadership field, and the general administration and leadership field for some time. Many researchers started publishing on this topic in the 1980s, authors like Loden (1985), Jamieson (1985), Edson (1988), Hearn and Parkin (1987), Morgan (1988), Morrison (1987), Connell (1987) and Shakeshaft (1989). This has been built upon by a number of key authors subsequently through the 1990s and early 2000s (Yeatman, 1990; Eagley & Johnson, 1990; Helgesen, 1990; Bayes, 1991; Collins, 1992; Blackmore, 1993; Fagenson, 1993; Heitlinger, 1993; Kelber, 1994; Dunlap & Schmuck, 1995; Reynolds & Young, 1995; Klenke, 1996; Simmons, 1996; Turner, 2001; Wilkinson, 2005). Although there are many studies on women's educational leadership internationally, there has been limited investigation on Arab women's leadership in the education sector until recent years. There is also a large gap in exploring leadership identity development in the Arab world especially in the UAE. With the exception of recent years there are few sources and books that explore Arab women's leadership in field of education and business from the mid-1990s through to recently (Abdulla, 1996; El-Ghannam, 2002; Metle, 2002; Mostafa 2003, Mostafa, 2005; Gallant and Pounder, 2008; Dubai Women Establishment, 2009; Al-Ahmedi, 2011; El-Gamal, 2012).

Emirati ladies have achieved more than women in many other Arab countries due to the continued empowerment of the role of women supported by the late President His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan and his son H.H. Sheikh Khalifa who succeeded him (Adam, 2010; Belhachmi, 2007; Friedl, 1997; Harik & Marston, 1996; Heard-Bey, 2004; Hourani, 2011; Sabbagh, 1998; Sobehart, 2008; Sonbol, 2012; Herb, 1999; Wacquant, 2004). Today, ladies hold senior positions in all areas of life including many that are still considered

a man's domain in the West such as law enforcement, the military, and aviation (Al Dabbagh & Nusseibeh, 2009). Emirati ladies are actively involved in leading the development and modernization process of the United Arab Emirates through their active participation in making decisions, drafting and passing legislation, and fulfilling the strategic plans of the UAE. By 2008, Emirati ladies were able to gain large number of seats in the Federal National Council (UAE Year Book, 2010). It is clear that the UAE government aspires to empower Emirati ladies by providing them with opportunities and facilities to encourage their creativity, initiative and decision-making, Notable amongst these initiatives is the federal support for higher education via extensive scholarship programs and Emiritization policies with a special focus on Emirati women.

According to Wilkinson and Blackmore (2008), who conducted a detailed review on women's educational leadership, researchers focused on the process of individual women's identity, mostly looking at what psychological factors influence their identity formation, and sometimes fail to deal with the psychosocial influences that contribute to shaping the leadership identity formation for those women. As argued by Boatwright and Egidio (2003), psychological factors are associated with the social environment in which women exist, so it is impossible to separate the unique influences of social and psychological factors on one's identity that contribute to leadership aspirations and achievements. By investigating these factors, research can add to scholarly research and increase women's future representation in leadership roles in the UAE.

A recent study by Madsen (2009, p.211) indicates "that most young Emirati women are typically not exposed to opportunities and experiences early in life that would help them develop the foundational leadership skills that more women in Western countries seem to develop". Finding patterns in early experiences of successful female Emirati leaders is

critically important to providing recommendations for those who influence girls and young women today such as parents, extended family members, teachers, educational counselors, employers, and government officials. Madsen (2010, p.32) adds further to this by using a phenomenological methodology to explore issues related to family, childhood and social developmental influences, “found that a wide variety of influences, for example, parents, siblings, influential individuals, schooling activities and experiences, and struggles/difficulties, during the early phases of their lives provides unique experiences that enhance their leadership skills and abilities”.

There is also a big gap in research in the area of Arab women leadership development; in general leadership literature has for some time recognized that childhood and youth experiences are significantly essential for individuals' growth and development. In a groundbreaking study, Henning and Jardim (1977) interviewed twenty-five female Chief Executive Officers about their early experiences and discovered commonalities that contributed to their leadership success later in life. Studies subsequent to Henning and Jardim have focused on women's formative years. Lorenzen (1996) purports that when woman understands her past, and the affect of different influences on her identity she will be able to progress more effectively in her professional development path. Galambos and Hughes (2000) used symbolic interactionism as a theoretical foundation to examine social influences on the personal development of female college students. They studied the importance of understanding the concept of power and how it affects leadership identity development. Galambos and Hughes (2000) emphasize the importance of individuals' upbringing on leadership identity development, which will most likely continue to influence them throughout their lives.

The literature on leadership skills generally argues that the higher education institutes should share the responsibility of encouraging the development of students' leadership skills (Cooper et al., 1994; Cox and Miranda, 2003; Cress et al., 2001; Graham & Cockriel, 1997; Romero-Aldaz, 2001; Skeat, 2000; Strifolino & Saunders, 1988; Turrentine, 2001). Unfortunately, there is a significant lack of research in leadership areas especially that examines the effect of college years on students' future and aspirations toward leadership; therefore, it is very important to study the Emirati female leadership development during this period. Astin (2000) argues that "college years" are a significant stage that affects students' personal and career development. There is a further gap in the leadership studies especially areas dealing with influences that have an effect on the identity of female Emirati college students' leadership formation and development. Investigating such influences can offer background information to guide educators and curriculum designers as they create leadership programs.

### **Purpose and Objectives**

Reviewing literature on women's leadership, I realized additional research is necessary to obtain a greater awareness of the psychosocial factors that shape women's leadership identity development and understanding, particularly in relation to the cultural context. My thesis aims to offer an understanding of how Emirati ladies evolve as leaders and how they develop as leaders while focusing particularly on exploring the psychosocial and cultural factors that contribute to their leadership identity formation. These factors can be social or cultural influences that contribute to building the participants' leadership identity, like the role of the family, social factors, culture and the image of leadership role model and how it affects their aspirations to pursue leadership roles (Culp, Deppe, Castillo, & Wells, 1998; Hartman, 1999;

Stephens, 2003;). Recently leadership researchers like Henriques et al. (1989), Hollway and Jefferson (2000) and Ford (2010) have argued that it is crucial to study the psychosocial factors that influence the leadership style of leaders and how they can eventually affect organizational behavior.

The thesis project is intended to fill the void in Arab women's leadership research generally and Emirati women's leadership in particular. Moreover, it aims to provide insight and assistance to educators with planning and designing successful leadership programs that are gender and socially sensitive to the needs of students in Arab regions. According to Willemyns et al., (2011) it is crucial to study leadership development in the context of the UAE. Such researchers can help educators and administrators in designing leadership programs that are culturally and socially sensitive and acknowledge the uniqueness of UAE as country.

The main question that will direct this study is: 'What are the psychosocial factors that influence the identity formation and development of Emirati female college students?' The thesis objectives are:

1. To examine literature available on college students' leadership identity development internationally and in Arab countries and examine them to determine if these models are suitable in the UAE context.
2. To explore Emirati female college students' understanding of leadership.
3. To explore the psychosocial factors that influences the development of their leadership identity.
4. To explore the role of culture in influencing the formation and development of leadership identity.



5. To design a cultural and gender sensitive model that examines the psychosocial influences on leadership identity development among Emirati female college students.

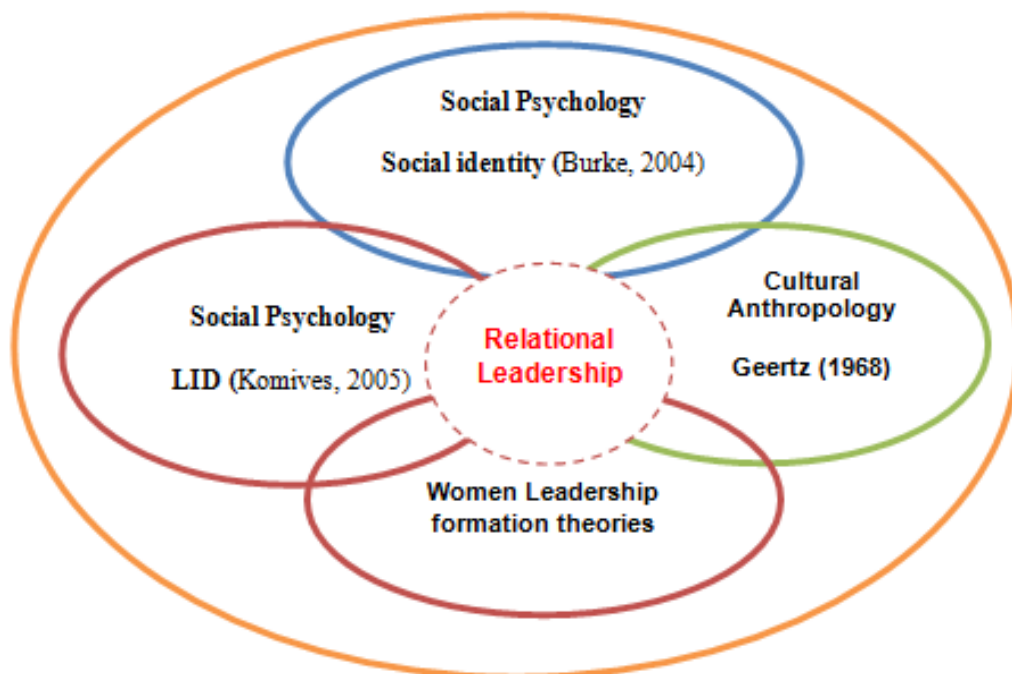
One of the core objectives of higher education in the UAE is to prepare a generation of successful leaders through providing Emirati students with suitable leadership education and activities. To help policy makers and educators design suitable programs, they first need to understand how students develop their leadership identity. Although there is a considerable amount of literature on the development of leadership identity in other countries, examined in the literature review below, very little is written on exploring the development of leadership identity in Arab countries, and not enough attention was given to studying psychosocial factors that effect their leadership identity development.

I will be using a hermeneutical research approach to plan and carry out multiple qualitative case studies. Van Manen (1990) explains that a hermeneutic approach intends to capture a deeper understanding of the meaning of lived experiences. Similar studies have been conducted using hermeneutics as a research approach (Lynch, 2003; Onorato, 2010). He argues that using this approach to study individuals' experiences can offer a better understanding of human development than other methods. This approach was regarded as the most suitable way to understand the process of identity development among college students since it allows participants to use their own voices to describe the meaning behind their thoughts, perceptions, and experiences (Chapman, 2012; Domenici, 2007; Egan, 2004; Fagerberg and Kihlgren, 2001).

## Theoretical Framework

To answer my research questions and capture the complexity of leadership identity development I have designed a complex framework that addresses all the relevant areas of identity development, suiting the culture and context of the United Arab Emirates and the age group of college students. The theoretical framework selected for this study (see Figure1) is constructed from the social psychology theory of Burke's (2004) Social Identity theory, Komives's (2007) Leadership Identity Development theory complemented by Clifford Geertz's (1968) Cultural Anthropology.

**Figure1: Theoretical Framework**



Finally this thesis adopts cultural anthropology drawn from Geertz's (1968) work. According to Phinney (1990), Banks (1992), Marcia (1980), Gilligan (1990) and Gay (1978), identity is a complex concept because of the uniqueness that differentiates each group and society. Thus identity cannot be fully understood without studying other influences that contribute to

forming and shaping it like culture and social practices, gender and ethnicity. These three social psychology theories have been chosen as a core of the theoretical framework since they accommodate social context, culture, race and gender in shaping the leadership identity of individuals and they acknowledge the roles of psychosocial influence on students' aspiration for leadership role in the future. I chose it because it is consistent with the hermeneutic approach I am planning to use to conduct my thesis. I will be also looking at leadership models that will be examined in the literature review and studies that use these approaches and will help me understand the development of leadership identity among young Emirati ladies studying in a higher education organization in the UAE. The literature review will cover the theoretical framework elements in more detail along with the identification of literature related to women leadership identity development.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study will contribute to an understanding of how Emirati women develop as leaders, and what cultural and social influences affect their leadership formation. This report will also provide an analytical account of the factors that contribute to forming the students' leadership identity from a purely local perspective that is distinctive from the stereotype of Western writings, and therefore more authentic. It is intended to fill the gap in literature about Emirati women in leadership positions in general and Emirati female college students more specifically.

### **Organization of the Study**

The thesis is organized into six chapters and an appendix section. Chapter two will offer a comprehensive review of the literature related to women leadership development followed by the theoretical framework of the study. This is followed by a methodology chapter that covers

the research approach, case selection, forms of data collection, data analysis techniques, and validation strategies use to increase the validity and reliability of the study. Chapter four will offer a presentation of the participants' stories and emerging themes. Chapter five will cover the analysis and data interpretations, leading to chapter six which will discuss the research conclusion and recommendations for future research. The appendices include copies of the BUID university review board approval, the informed participant consent forms, interview protocols, interview questions, focus group questions, the observation protocol, and other relevant documents.

### **Definition of Terminology**

*Leadership identity development:* “the process the participants go through in developing an understanding of leadership and self as a leader” (Onorato, 2010, p33).

*Identity development:* According to Onorato (2010, p34), identity is defined “as the sense of a continuous self. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, identity development is defined as the process of discovering self”.

*Minority:* Emiratis who have non-Emirati mothers and thus are treated differently. They are considered Emirati by law but there are treated as half Emirati by society.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

The purpose of this literature review is to give background information about the literature related to leadership theories and identity development that are used in this project. When exploring leadership, I will be investigating relevant literature on leadership and gender, leadership and college students, and leadership and identity formation theories. Within the topic of identity development I will discuss literature on identity and gender, social identity, and identity and leadership. As this study mainly explores the area of leadership identity development of female college students, therefore I have chosen not to explore literature related to ethnicity outside of the scope of college students. The literature review consists of three main sections. The first section will provide a comprehensive investigation of the theoretical framework used for this study and explain why it was chosen as the backbone for this research. Section two will explore international literature on women's leadership identity development, followed by literature on Arab women leadership, and finally it will examine the literature on Emirati women's leadership identity development.

#### **Theoretical framework**

To answer my research questions and capture the complexity of leadership identity development I had to come up with a complex framework that address all the relative areas of identity development and suit the culture and context of the United Arab Emirates and the age group of college students. At the very beginning of my research I decided to choose social psychology to guide my study because of the nature of the topic. It was challenging to find one theory or framework that investigated the systems of social hierarchy such as race,

class, gender, culture, social life and still explore the process of identity development for students in higher education. My main challenge was to develop new theoretical frameworks that address the following concepts: self, self with others, self and society, self and culture, gender and race. In developing this framework my aim was to ensure that the framework would still be applicable for higher education and the context in the UAE

It proved impossible to find just one theory that addressed all those factors, and as a result I selected three main theories from social psychology and cultural anthropology to complement each other and still be applicable for studying students' leadership development in higher education. The two major theoretical traditions from the field of sociological social psychology which are: Burke's (2004) social identity theory and Komives (2005) Leadership Identity Development theory LID. These are complemented by Geertz's cultural anthropology (1968), which argues that culture is a major category when analyzing leadership development in all society. Komives' Leadership Identity Development Theory (2005) looks at the conditions that influence leadership development among college students. Moreover it addresses how meaning is created and communicated, and how individuals' identity is developed. However limited attention is given to the influence of society and how it affects the students' leadership development. To bridge this gap I am using combination of LID theory by Komives (2005), social identity theory by Burke (2004), and cultural anthropology by Geertz (1968).

There are many psychological schools of thoughts that have contributed to exploring self and identity, including psychoanalytic, sociology, and social psychology. A sociological approach to self and identity begins with Stryker (1980) in which it is argued that there is a common relationship between self and society. Burke's (2004) social identity theory has been used

heavily in leadership identity development studies at college level because of its particular focus on students at the college level (e.g., Barnett, 2007; Carrell, Fullerton & West, 2008; Chrispeels, Cook, 2000; Burke & Johnson, 2008; Dugan, Komives & Segar, 2008; Jogulu & Wood, 2006; Komives, Lucas & McMahon, 2009; Northouse, 2012). Burke uses the terms ‘self’ and ‘identity’ to “refer to the social location of the person in society”; it also describes the reflective “activity we engage in when we attempt to make sense of ourselves” and explore our relationship within the context around us. Burke refers to this reflexive activity as the self-concept, and it includes concepts like self-esteem and self-efficacy. Self-conception affects individual behavior and reaction in social and organizational settings (Burke, 2004. p33). Social psychology looks to identity from a broader perspective in terms of its connection to ethnicity, collective behavior, social movement, intergroup relation, and aspects of international relations. In addition to this it looks at the individuals’ interpersonal relations within communities and organizations (Cook, 2000). Burke (2004) also proposed that there are three kinds of identity that can be applied to college students: 1) role identity (role as a student); 2) social identity (ethnic identity); 3) personal identity (interpersonal identity). This theory is very suitable with respect to studying college students because it focuses on the social and psychological well being of the students during their life at the college. It also considers two dimensions of the college students’ identity: 1) student academic identity (the importance of learning and studying); 2) student social identity (informal social activities and involvement in sorority and students associations).

Howard (1995) and Ridgeway (2001) argue that individual identity can change over time due to many factors like individual location in the social structure and cultural historical shifts in the meaning and value of these social locations. Social psychology also deals directly with the effect of macro-social structures on individuals under the disciplinary tradition of social

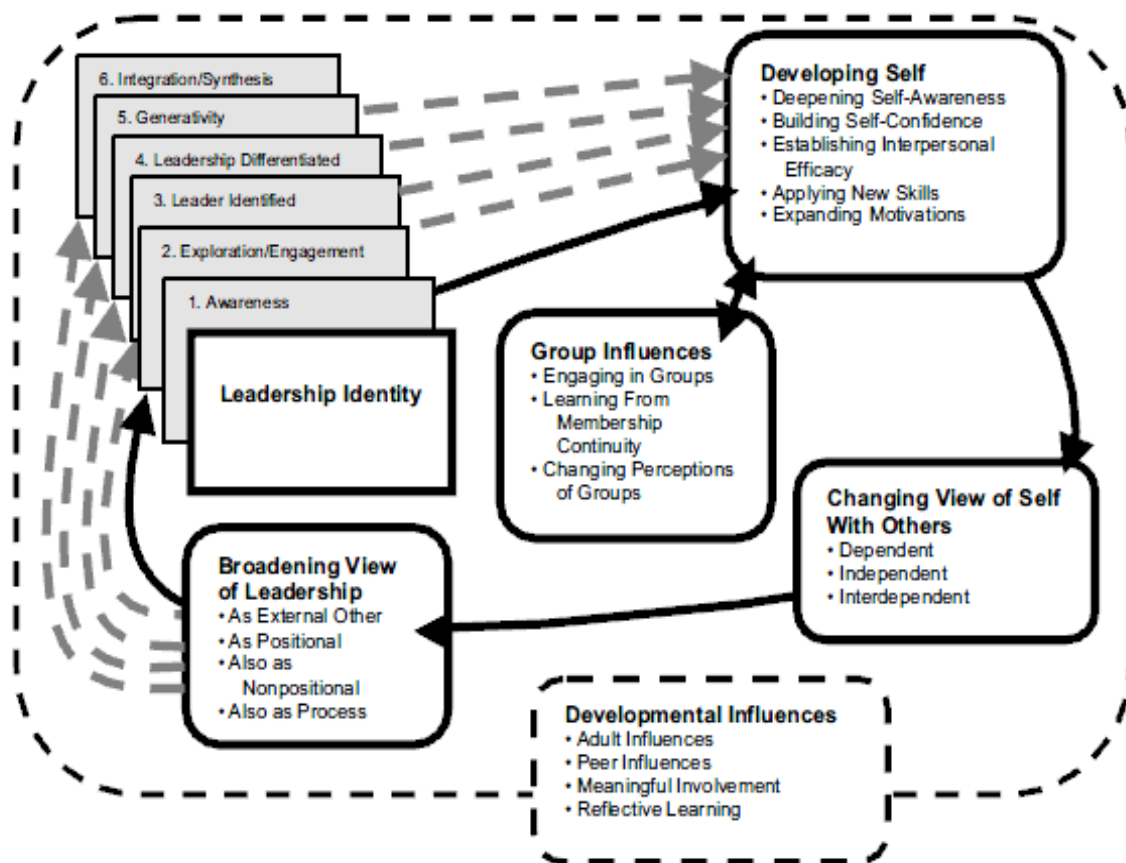
structure and personality (House, 1995). House, (1995) emphasizes the role of individuals as active agents in shaping their own behavior and even larger social structures, and this is often guided by cultural values and beliefs. This tradition also focuses on the major areas of social life that influence individual behavior and shape personality like family, work, school, and other organizational settings. The UAE has a different social identity from other countries and exploring those differences will generate a greater understanding of the factors that shape leadership identity for female Emirati students. Burke's social theory (2004) has been used to study women's leadership identity development in Arab countries and the UAE because it pays attention to the unique character of social life in the UAE and recognizes the identity development that female colleges students go through in the Arab culture (Carrell, Fullerton & West, 2008; Kauser & Tlaiss, 2011; Kemp, 2013; Kemp, Madsen & El-Saidi, 2013; Vinnicombe, Burke, Blake-Beard & Moore, 2013).

A number of studies have examined the development of college students' leadership (AACU, 2007; Astin, 1993; Boatwright & Egidio, 2003; Bordas, 2007; Boyer, 1987; Dugan, 2006a; 2006b; HERI, 1996; Komives, Dugan, Owen, Slack & Wagner, 2006; Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005; Morse, 2004; Posner, 2004). Other studies explored the influence of psychological factors on female students' perusing leadership roles. A study by Cress et al. (2001) aimed to examine whether participation in formal leadership programs enhances students' leadership knowledge and skills and relationships between leadership development and other educational outcomes. Kezar and Moriarty (2000) explored factors influencing college students' leadership development with an emphasis on gender and its impact on leadership aspirations. Others like Komives and Dugan (2010) measured socially responsible leadership capacity and leadership efficacy consistent with Bandura's model. Renn (2007) and Renn and Bilodeau (2005) designed studies to measure relational leadership



and its role in the development of student leadership identity. They were looking for variations that exist among gender and sexual orientation along with the leadership identities of student leaders.

However, for this study I am applying Komives et al. (2005) Leadership Identity Development Theory (LID). This model was created to address how leadership is learned and developed over time among college students. LID theory was regularly utilized as a theoretical framework during research on leadership in the college/university context college level because it explores how students' leadership identity interconnects with their social relations (Amiriazadeh, 2012; Dugan, Komives, 2012; Komives & Johnson, 2009; Komives, Longerbeam, Owen, 2006; Komives & Longerbeam, 2009; Komives & Dugan, 2010; Smith, Renn & Bilodeau, 2005). This model was partly developed from grounded theory and it suggests that there are six phases of leadership identity development stemming from the development of leaders' self-awareness and the people around them (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2: Komives Leadership Identity Development**

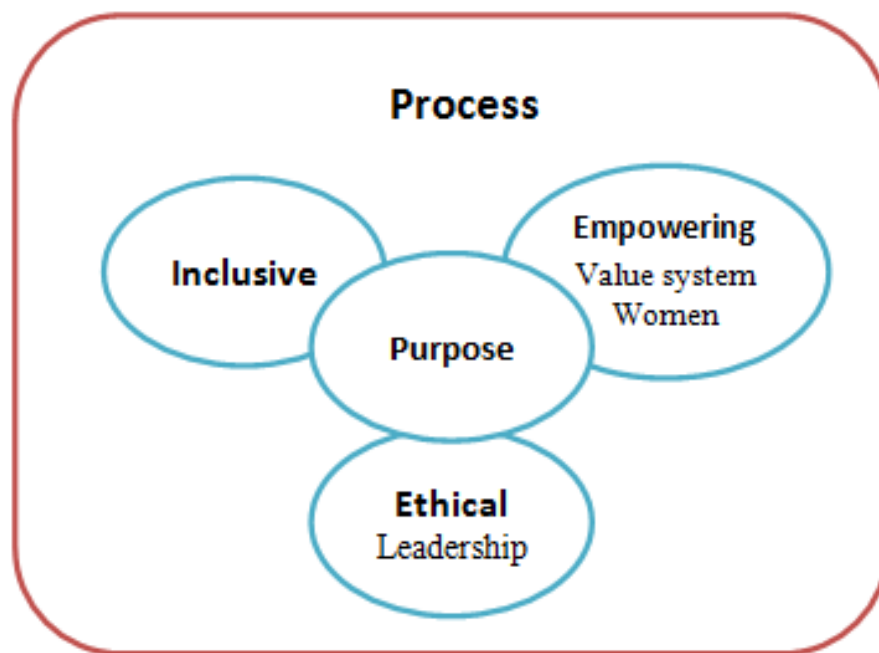
Komives LID theory (2005) integrates four families of college students' development theories which are 1) psychosocial; 2) cognitive; 3) developmental synthesis theories; 4) Social identity theory. The first family of theory is the psychosocial theories that explore the process of psychological and social development the college students go through while establishing their personal identity. The LID theory rely on the work of Chickering (1969) and Chickering and Reisser (1993) who argue that identity is formed when individuals develop a strong, and secure sense of self that affect their self-esteem when approaching leadership tasks and dealing with others (Komives, 2007). LID theory is also drawing from cognitive theories that explore values and intellectual development of students at college level; they suggest that college students learn better when they are more involved in transformational activities (NASPA/ACPA, 2004). The third family of theories is the

developmental synthesis theories, which focus on exploring individuals' cognitive and psychosocial development (McEwen, 2003). Developmental theory suggests that individuals' identity develop and evolve after overcoming crisis and challenges where their self-awareness and understanding evolve as they grew and overcome obstacles (Kegan, 1994). An example of challenges the students go through is developing a leadership style that encourage collaboration without appearing to look as an unassertive leader by their colleagues (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Kegan, 1994). Social identity theory is which is acknowledged as the fourth theory on Komives LID, it highlights factors that other theories failed to address like, race, culture, sexual orientation, gender, disability, religion, and social class. I believe a combination of those four families of theories will give a better understanding when exploring the leadership identity but I think more emphasis should be given to social identity theories when exploring the college students' identity formation and development. I suggested adding Burke (2004) social identity theory to my theoretical framework, especially since it is addresses the impact of society, religion, culture and race on the development of students' identity (Arminio, et al., 2000; Balón, 2003, 2005; Harper & Quayle, 2007; Hoppe, 1998; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Liang, Lee, & Ting, 2002; Richardson & Loubier, 2008; Ruderman & Ernst, 2004).

Komives et al.'s (2005) Relational Leadership Theory argues that leadership is shaped and altered by our relationships and interactions. The model argues that we cannot separate context from relationships because our contexts are formed by our interactions with others and our beliefs. The Relational Leadership model recognizes relations with others around us as the core of the leadership development (Komives et al., 2007). This framework proposes a leadership which has the following attributes: process oriented, builds loyalty from group members toward a common goal, connects people who have different points of view to

achieve one's goal, empowers them, and practices leadership that is built on ethics. Komives' leadership model (2005) has the following main formational factors: purpose, inclusiveness, empowerment, and ethical and process oriented (see Figure 3). This model has some limitations since it was designed to reflect the process of leadership for those who are already established, and it does not look at the development model. Another limitation noted by Dugan and Komives (2011) is that it explored relational leadership in small groups, but does not look at other factors that contribute to building the leadership identity.

**Figure 3: Relational leadership model**



In leadership Identity Development Theory LID (2005), Komives focuses more on understanding how students' leadership identity was affected by their relationships with peers and adults inside the educational institute, and it neglected to explore the important role of society and culture in shaping students' leadership identity. Using LID theory alone will not help me understand the psychosocial factors that influence the leadership identity development of Emirati females at the college level.

The anthropological perspective in higher education and student identity research is sometimes conflated with the mainstream notions of culture and identity (Kimball, 1974; Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Strathern, 2000; Tierney, 1992; Tierney, 1988). Geertz (1968, p53) defines cultural anthropology as “the study of the ways people make sense of the world around them, while social anthropology is the study of the relationships among people and groups”. While cognitive anthropology explores how individuals’ implicit knowledge can have an impact on their perceptions about other people and how they understand the world. For this research I chose to follow Geertz’s (1968) cultural anthropology because it works well with my theoretical framework and will assist with addressing my research questions.

Clifford Geertz (1968) argues that culture is a major category when analyzing leadership development in all societies. I will be using Geertz's definition of culture, especially his concept of local knowledge; description of culture as text when studying the context of the UAE. Geertz (1926, p.332) views culture in terms of “meanings embodied in symbols”; this concept can be used to study the influence of culture in the development of individuals’ leadership. I chose to use Geertz’s interpretive approach because it goes well with my hermeneutical research approach, and it seeks to discover the meaning that culture plays in influencing individuals’ social lives, which will eventually have an influence on their leadership development (Agar, 1980; Donald, 2004; Eriksen, 2003; Koning, 2011; Spiro, 1986).

Geertz's approach to culture would be a very suitable framework in term of studying the effect of culture in shaping the leadership identity of Emirati women for many reasons. First, his cultural anthropology goes well with the social psychology framework I am using. Geertz's approach in exploring culture is heavily applied in education and leadership literature because it acknowledges culture as a factor that has shaped individuals’ social and

psychological understanding (Jones, 2005; Kuper, 2009; Lewis, 2009; Marcus & Fischer, 1999; Schein, 2010; Smircich, 1983; Stolp, 1994; Wood & Eagly, 2002). Geertz argues that on a psychological level, individuals' understanding and awareness of the meaning of culture explains how culture can influence their lives and eventually their identity formation. Secondly, according to Geertz's definition of culture, meanings, values, attitudes, and beliefs guide individuals in terms of the way they think, feel, and furthermore, it has an impact on society. Thirdly, his aspect of looking at culture is very suitable to the UAE context since it tackles the issue of transforming from a traditional to a modern society. Fourth, Geertz's approach acknowledges the role of Islam as a religion as an important influence on the culture and on the life history of Muslim women. Additionally, there are a number of studies that have referred to Geertz in their study of the lives of Muslim women including Fagenson (1983), Geertz (1968), Hertz-Lazarowitz and Shapira (2005), Milner (1995), Milner (1995), Ryan and Tyrrell (1974) and Yengoyan (2009).

### **Leadership Theories**

This section reviews literature on leadership and gender; leadership and college students; leadership; gender and college students, leadership, ethnicity and college students, major leadership formation theories in the field of social psychology, and it concludes by identifying theories that focus on women's leadership formation suitable to the context of the UAE.

Although the need for preparation of future leaders has been the mission of higher educational institutions for quite some time, only recently scholars began to address the gap and the need to develop students' leadership capacities (Astin and Astin, 2000; Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999). There are many British, American and Australian scholars who

have studied leadership in the field of education like Fenwick English, Peter Ribbins, Helen Gunter, Richard Bates and John Smyth. However, since the main focus of this research is to study the leadership identity development of female students in a higher education context, I will be referring to academics who have made significant contributions to leadership identity formation and development of students at college level like: Astin, Komives, Mainella, Longerbeam, Osteen, and Owen.

To address this gap many studies have attempted to determine the suitable type of leadership that is needed in a society while aligning it directly with theoretical perspectives emphasizing social responsibility (Astin & Astin, 2000). To achieve that, there was a need to design a theoretical approach that draws from multiple disciplines like psychology (Bennis, 2007), educational pedagogy (Day et al., 2009) and group and organizational development (Komives & Dugan, 2010). As a body of literature, leadership theory is complex, socially constructed, and always evolving. Therefore, using only one theory will not offer a complete picture when studying leadership development of the students in this study, particularly as this study has adopted a hermeneutical approach whereby people create meaning that includes their self and leadership identity meaning constructions. Because of its complex nature as a phenomenon, it has many elements to it.

Although almost 65% of the leadership literature depends on studying samples of college students for the past 100 years, only in the 1990s did authors begin to direct their attention to the development of leadership competencies during college by trying to understand the factors that shape their leadership formation (Komives et al., 2007). This resulted in creating new models for developing leadership, specifically for college students. These include the relational model (Komives et al., 2007), and the leadership identity development model

(Komives et al., 2005). Recent studies identified more theories that can be applied when studying the development of leadership among college students (Abdulla & Alhomoud, 2001; Al-Dabbagh, 2009; Buckingham & Clifton, 2001; Covey, 1991; McCaulley, 1990; Uhl-bein, 2006). They argue that there are many dimensions to leadership experience which is why there are so many theories that can be used to study the development of leadership. This explains why there is no one model to rely on to when studying the leadership identity development for college students.

### *Leadership and Gender*

The study of women's leadership and their career development is a topic that gained considerable attention and focus of researchers. However, most of these studies are based on Western contexts and little has been conducted to investigate the Middle East context (Tlairs and Kauser, 2011a). The attention of a number of recent studies has been directed to understand the factors that influence women's leadership development at higher education levels. Examples of these factors are: challenges and barriers, support, and role models (Brown et al, 2000; Lent et al, 2003; Schmidt et al, 2003; Quimby and O'Brien, 2004). In the UAE, similar to some Arab countries and GCC countries in particular, women live in societies that are still traditional in many respects; they are family based and Islamic, whereby gender is a highlighted issue. Even though most families in the UAE support their daughter's education, most families still see education and working as obstacles to the chief task of creating a family and full-time domestic duties. Accordingly, the main challenges facing women in the UAE is trying to find the balance between family and work life (Aryee et al, 1999; Gallant and Pounder, 2008; Mostafa, 2005; Rugh, 1985; Sha'aban, 1996).



A discussion of gender and higher education leadership is important to my thesis because “higher education is a major site of cultural practice, identity formation and symbolic control” (Odhiambo, 2011, p.64). Blackmore and Kenway (1993) argue that using Western feminist identity formation models to study women from other cultures is impractical. Literature suggests that there are many fundamental historical, cultural, and ideological differences in the lived experience of women in other societies (Abudabbeh & Nydell, 1993; Dwairy, 2006; Al-Bostani, 1988; Al-Haj, 1987; Al-Issa, 1990; Al-Sadawi, 1977; El-Islam, 1983; Tumush, 1989).

According to many authors like Chickering (1978) and Chickering and Reisser (1993), psychosocial theories focus on studying the individual’s stages of development including qualitative changes in thinking, feeling, behaving, valuing and how individuals relate to others. Literature exploring the psychosocial development of women follows two schools of thought. The first school explores more traditional ways of investigating psychosocial development of women (e.g., moral, psychological) but, the second school explores literature that focuses on studying psychosocial development for women in a more modern way while paying attention to gender, race, culture and ethnicity (Giesbrecht, 1998; Archer, 1989; Bourne 1978; Erikson, 1975; Gilligan, 1979; Hoffman, 1984; Mueller & Parcell, 1981; Selman, 1980).

According to Sales (1978), Simpson (1977) and Labe (1982), women go through the same psychosocial development as men. Those psychosocial factors affect the identity of both men and women; although, women tend to take more time to form their identity. Academics like Notman (1978), Rossi (1980) and Targ (1979) argue that the traditional model is valuable when studying women’s psychosocial development, but it neglects other important

influences, such as family upbringing, personal expectations, marriage, divorce and widowhood. Chodorow (1987), Gilligan (1979) and Peck (1986) argue that the psychosocial development patterns of women are more unique than those of men. Peck (1986, p.23) views women's psychosocial development "as a spiraling funnel" that is influenced by context (e.g., social historical time), and shaped by relationships (e.g., family, friends, work) in which they are involved. Hancock (1981) believes that age, role, family, value system, and power are all considered as important factors when studying the psychosocial factors that shape women's identities, and in doing so this would help explain how those factors shape their identities. Gordon, Miller and Rollock (1990), Harman (1989), Lerman (1987) and Ross-Gordon (1991) argue that the psychosocial development forces that shape women's identities should not be generalized because those influences are grounded in women's experiences. There are many studies that argue that women of differing ethnic heritage, different socioeconomic classes, age and religions go through different psychological development processes that can shape their identity development (Barnes & Doyle, 1989; Belenky, Clinche, Goldberger, & Trule, 1986; Bollen, 1989; Bollen, 1989; Davis, 1983; Breyspraak, 1984; Davis, 1983).

*Leadership and College Students:* Research on college students' leadership development is fairly recent. Two models developed to accurately address the development of leadership competencies amongst college students which were widely adapted to study college students' leadership development were Greenleaf's (1977) servant leadership and Kouzes and Posner's (2007) leadership challenge. Other new models were specially designed to involve the social aspect of leadership including the social change model of leadership development (HERI, 1996), the relational model (Komives et al., 2007), and the leadership identity development model LID (Komives et al, 2005). All of these are in agreement with the value and the post-industrial leadership paradigm. Recent research has identified more theories that

can be applied to research on college including the work of Covey (1989), the Mayers-Briggs Type Indicator (McCaulley, 1990 and Myers, 1980), and the Strengths Quest (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001).

Most of the new theories regarding college students' leadership development are driven from post-industrial leadership theories. Dugan and Komives (2011) argue that the application of those theories is seen by designing programs that build individual capacity while also addressing group development and engaging the students in critical self-reflection cycles. Bass (1985) and Bass and Avolio (1990) simplified it by taking out a number of critical factors for which they have been criticized. Burns' work on transformational leadership highlights the importance of motivating and empowering the followers to achieve common goals. Many empirical studies were conducted to investigate the issue of college students' leadership, and some of those studies focused on the lived experience of the students (e.g., Abdulla & Alhomoud, 2001; Al-Dabbagh, 2009; Buckingham & Clifton, 2001; Covey, 1991; McCaulley, 1990; Uhl-bein, 2006) while other studies analyzed how, when, and where leadership development took place in their lives (e.g., Kouzes & Posner, 2006; Kuh, 1995; Shamir & Eilam, 2005). One main theory or combinations of theories were used to explore leadership development. Some theories failed to capture the depth of experience, while others tended to ignore some important factors like the role of culture and value system, so there was a need to use a combination of theories to address the missing factors. According to Komives and Dugan (2011), knowing about the theories' limitations is very important when applying leadership to different contexts, and the scholar needs to be careful when choosing the selection of theory or theories that are most appropriate to the context and the students' learning needs. Many authors began to recognize the importance of culture in leadership development since it has implications on the way in which the term "leader" and "leadership"

are understood in different communities (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1970; Child, 1981; Dorfman, 1996; Hofstede, 1980; House, Wright & Aditya, 1997; Miller & Droge, 1986; Schein, 1992; Smith et al., 1989). With respect to leadership development studies, currently there is not enough literature that recognizes women's leadership while paying attention to ethnicity and culture. According to Komives and Dugan (2010), when studying the leadership development of students, literature should acknowledge and address the socio-historic implications of leadership and the context.

*Leadership, gender and college students:* leadership literature has acknowledged the influence that gender plays on the involvement of college students in leadership activities and career aspirations; it also addressed the differences in leadership approaches and style between gender and its effect on the students' involvement (Astin, 1993; Bryant, 2003; Dugan & Komives, 2010; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000c; Pascarella, Terenzini & Feldman, 2005; Posner & Brodsky, 1994). There has been some research which focusses on exploring the impact of psychological factors on the ambition of female college students' toward acquiring leadership positions in future (e.g., Egidio & Boatwright, 2003; O'Brien, 1996; Rainey & Borders, 1997; Nauta, Epperson & Kahn, 1998). These studies provide an understanding on how societal expectations and messages they receive from family and peers can have an impact on their leadership involvement. Since these kinds of influences vary from country to country due to cultural and societal factors, researchers always highlight sample selection as one of the limitations of the study and as an area for further exploration (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Boatwright and Egidio, 2003; Kolb, 1999; Komives, 1994; Romano, 1996; Onorato, 2010).

*Leadership, ethnicity and college students:* only limited researches have explored the effect of race and/or ethnicity on the students' involvement in activities at the college level (Arminio et al., 2000; Bridges, Cambridge, Fleming, 1984; Castellanos & Cole, 2002; Guifrida, 2003; Jones, Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Kinzie et al., 2007; Kuh & Leegwater, 2005; Lavant & Terrell, 1994; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Whitt, 1994). These studies point out that students' involvement in leadership activities depended a lot on the students' ethnic background. They argue that students from “minority” and ethnic groups on campus join identity based groups because they feel more comfortable with peers who share their background and values. Findings demonstrate that students join ethnic organizations because they want to give back to their communities and empower their ethnic group. Arminio et al. (2000), Kezar and Moriarty (2000) examined the common and different process that students go through and how their leadership develops when it comes to their gender and ethnic background, and how their ethnicity affects their leadership and career aspiration. According to Onorato (2010, p.65) “the leadership development process differs among various groups of students and that different strategies should be used in the leadership development of diverse groups of students, especially in relation to gender, minority and ethnic backgrounds”. That’s why we need more researches to explore the differences in leadership identity process in the Arab region and highlight how gender and ethnicity could play a role in those differences.

*Leadership and Identity Formation Theories:* There have been a number of leadership formation theories that are frequently used in leadership identity research. The Relational Leadership Model was developed by Komives et al. (2007) especially for college students and was built on a post-industrial model with an emphasis on shared relationships. This theory defines leadership as “a relational and ethical process of people together attempting to accomplish positive change” (p. 74).

The Social Change Model of Leadership Development by Kezar et al.'s (2006) was intended to examine college students' leadership development, and it is considered by them to be the most applicable leadership theory in the context of collegiate leadership development programs (Kezar et al., 2006). The model represents leadership as a "purposeful, collaborative, value-based process that result [sic] in positive social change" (Wagner et al., 2009, p. xii) and emphasizes two main principles. First, leadership depends upon self-knowledge and is connected to social responsibility resulting in creating common good (HERI, 1996). Second, the model helps raise the individual's level of self-awareness and collaborative work with others (HERI, 1996). This model advocates supporting the new leaders' development and commitment to the leadership role. Furthermore, it can be used in the planning phase of leadership programmes since it addresses the development of leadership values and enables educators to plan interventions based on leaders' needs. However, the social change model comes with many limitations. Firstly, the model fails to examine context and its significance on influencing how leadership is manifested and experienced. Secondly, since the model is based on social responsibility it does not include social values associated with cultural competences (Dugan & Komives, 2007; Mumford et al., 2000; Russell & Stone, 2002). The values differ from one culture to another. I chose not to use this model for my thesis because it fails to address the most important factors which are context and culture.

### **Identity theories**

Identity development theories have been used a lot recently especially at college level to understand the students' leadership development process and how can practitioners develop suitable leadership programs that acknowledge students' diversity (Onorato, 2010).

According to Erikson's (1968, p93) definition, identity refers to "self and how it is developed within the context of societal constructs related to ethnicity, gender, culture, social class, sexual orientation, and differing abilities". As students develop these multiple identities, they struggle with the expectations society and culture has for them (Cross, 1995; Helms, 1990; Josselson, 1987; Kinzie et al., 2007; Phinney, 1993). Erik Erikson (1956) has been credited as being the first theorist to develop a popular and scientific meaning of identity. From his original work theorists have developed different understandings and many research traditions have followed from these differing understandings of identity. Recently, there has been a growing body of literature that has examined identity from a historical point of view. Research by Baumeister (1986, 1987), Cushman (1990), and Neubauer (1994) looked at identity from a historical perspective and focused on how the changing historical conditions can effect an individual's identity, and the relationship between the individual and society. The historical focus on identity has led researchers to the fact that identity is very much a social construct, and offered some insights on the impact of social change on identity development within the social group (Kroger, 2007). Using this approach to study identity was insufficient because it failed to acknowledge the differences in one's approach to self-definition.

Social identity theory in social psychology was introduced in the early 1970's by Henri Tajfel (1969). In his theory, cognitive consequences of categorization, Tajfel (1969) argues that researchers can use psychology to explain human action and the effect of social structures on the leaders' belief systems. It also goes on to explain that psychology has an impact on identity formation and development of leaders. Later, Tajfel (1978) realized that studying social structure was insufficient, and he started to investigate the power of inter group relationships on the leadership identity formation. He argues that the power of group membership can define who we are, how we feel and how we see and treat others as 'other'.

His critical starting point was to break with the traditional assumption that the self should only be understood as that which defines the individual in relation to other individuals, and to acknowledge that, in some circumstances, leaders define themselves through the groups to which they belong. In this way group behaviour is reinforced by social identity (Tajfel, 1978). In the tradition of social interactionism, Lewin (1951) Asch (1952) and Turner and Giles (1981), provide an explanation on how groups can act in harmony and coherent ways, when they have common values and norms even if they have different personalities and preferences. Yet when studying identity, we cannot overlook the importance of psychological dynamics related to social classification and status, how individuals identify themselves within a group, how they develop as leaders, and how their understanding about self and others evolve and develop during this journey. Burke's (2004) Social Identity Theory is a very suitable framework from my research because it stresses the important relationship between individuals and the social context, and it explains how socio-cultural realities can regulate the behaviours of individuals.

Hoping to deal with this insufficiency, some theorists like Loevinger (1996) and Kegan (1982) approached the identity from a psychological perspective. They introduced a structural stage model that focused on the stages of meaning construction which individuals use to filter and make sense of their life experiences. The structural model also looked at the historical aspect of the individual life and how the identity is developed through course of time. According to Noam (1992) and Kegan & Lahey (2001) although this approach gives insights about the internal structures and how individuals interpret their life experiences, it neglects the role of other influences that shape the individual's identity like religion, beliefs, culture, language and social pressure. There is also a large body of literature approaching identity from a sociocultural perspective. Drawing from the work of Mead's (1934) early



interactionist approach to identity, academics like Cote (1996; Cote & Levine, 2002). Gergen (1991), Shotter and Gergen (1989) “continued to view identity as a result of cultural possibilities limitations available to the individual within a given context” (Kroger, 2007).

Finally, a psychosocial model was developed to connect the structural and sociocultural approaches. According to (Kroger, 2007) this approach had been conceptualized as a progression of Erikson (1963, 1968) and Levinson (1978, 1996), and it looked at identity “in terms of the interactions between internal structural characteristics and social tasks demanded by a particular society reference group” (p.13). As discussed above, this approach views identity as a result of cultural possibilities and limitations available to individuals in certain contexts. According to Mead (1934), individuals define themselves by how they perceive others responding to them. It also argued that people are not only aware of the impact they have on others, but they use this awareness to decide on how to deal with different people in different situations. Shotter and Gergen (1991) examined how identity is formed, constrained and defined by the contexts we live in. They argued that contexts involve our relationships with others, where language and actions plays a great role in forming the personal identity. According to Gergen (1991) identity is a result of social interactions, and individuals nowadays could suffer from identity dilemmas or crises because they are exposed to a multiplicity of relationships due to the use of communication technologies.

Under the umbrella of sociocultural tradition, Yoder (2000) uses the concept of “barriers” to describe how certain factors can limit identity development. She defined some of these barriers to be sociocultural biases like stereotypical and negative attitudes toward gender or ethnic groups. Sociocultural approaches provide an understanding of how identity is shaped by the social context and how the demands and feedback offered by others in society can shape one’s identity development. Theorists from this approach argue that as one changes context or receives different messages from new people at the same setting, one’s identity is

likely to undergo change. However, many researchers like Marcia et al., (1993) and Kegan (1994) argue that identity must be viewed as more than a product of social messages alone in order to explain individual variation within a given context.

### *Identity and Gender / Ethnicity*

Recently there have been a large number of studies that examine the gender roles and experiences of female leaders in educational leadership settings (e.g., Baxter Magolda, 1992; Belenky et al., 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1987). Literature demonstrates that context, culture and social expectations can contribute positively or negatively on women's leadership identity development (Belenky et al., 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Jones, 1997; Josselson, 1987). Researches show that women develop and gain a sense of identity by communicating with others and connection with their society and social groups (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Recently leadership studies have been focusing on students' ethnic identity development (Alvarez, Bliss, & Vigil, 2001; Cross, 1995; Helms, 1990; Jones, 1997; Phinney, 1993; Torres, 2003; Torres & Baxter Magolda, 2004). Literature suggests that identity development is effected by systems of privilege and inequality (Onorato, 2010). Students who have a different background in the groups might experience prejudices that make them understand that identity is a socially constructed issue. These students tend to build their social knowledge of what it means to be "different to others" which affects their personal experience and leadership identity development (Helms, 1990; Jones & McEwen, 2000).

Jones (1997), Jones & McEwen (2000), Torres (2003) and Onorato (2010) acknowledge influences such as family background, peer groups, experiences with prejudice and the importance of connecting with one's history and heritage as important issues to be identified when studying women's ethnic identity development. Literature suggests that individuals

who were not exposed to systems of privilege and inequality find it difficult to understand how people with ethnicity feels and the process they go through as they develop their leadership identity. This indicates a need for developing an awareness of this gap by the privileged in our leadership programs (Afshar, 2005; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Koenig, Eagly & Mitchell, 2011; Kuh et al., 1991; Marmenout, 2009; Moghadam, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tessler, 2002).

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

To understand the influence of psychosocial factors on female Emirati college students' leadership identity development, I needed to gain a full understanding of the phenomenon by using several data collection methods. The first section of this chapter will explore the research approach used for this study followed by the site and sample selection. Section three will describe the design of the data collection methods, instruments and the reasons behind using them. Section four will present the researcher's bracketing process and discuss trustworthiness, credibility, transferability and dependability of the study and finally the limitations of this study.

### **Research Approach**

According to Morrow and Smith (2000), qualitative research is used to understand the meaning of experiences for individuals and groups. Creswell (1998) stated:

Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. (p. 15).

Laverty (2003) notes that before the 1980s in the field of social psychology, most academic studies combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches to collect empirical data. However, recently there has been more attention paid to interpreting, describing and understanding meaning rather than explaining how things happen especially in social

psychology. For example, how social interaction and culture can influence individuals' identity formation. This encouraged researchers to adapt qualitative approaches to these topics and rely on more interpretive instruments (Gergen, 1985; Valle et al., 1989).

According to some researchers, like Butt (1998a, 1998b), Epting and Leitner (1992), Holland (1970), Raskin and Epting (1995), and Holliday (2002), the qualitative approach is suitable for studying issues in anthropology and sociology. Additionally, it is used to understand human interaction, where it is not enough to rely only on a quantitative approach to study human behavior and social issues. This is especially true when trying to understand the sociocultural factors that have an impact on the identity development of college students' leadership. Jones and McEwen (2000) and Torres (2003) argues that the study of identity and self-perception is influenced by many factors like culture, gender and ethnicity, social status and social interaction. Using a qualitative inquiry provided me with rich information about the life of the participants and their social interactions. Merriam (2002, p.3) argues that when studying the meaning of certain phenomena, qualitative research proves to be a helpful approach since it offers a framework to "learn how individuals experience and interact with their social world and the meaning it has for them". Creswell (1998) also supports the use of qualitative methodology when the study needs an in-depth exploration and the researcher is seeking a detailed insight into the topic, where a quantitative approach fails to explore the meaning of lived experiences. To gain this detailed view, Miles and Huberman (1994) encourage researchers to establish direct contact with the participants in real-life situations. Another significant reason for using a qualitative approach is the fact that it allows the researchers to use an inductive design, allowing "the important analysis dimensions to emerge from patterns found in the cases under study without presupposing in advance what the important dimensions will be" (Patton, 1990, p. 44).

According to Prasad (2005), hermeneutics is a valuable approach when studying issues in the management and leadership fields. It urges the researcher to pay special attention to many factors like context, culture, and the history of an organization. An interpretative hermeneutical approach as described by Gadamer (1976) and Van Manen (1997) will be used to gather and analyze the data for my study. This method will be utilized because it will allow me to interpret and understand the meaning and depth of the students' experience. Holloway and Wheeler (2002), Howell and Prevenier (2000), Speziale and Carpenter (2003) also claim that this interpretative approach addresses historical and cultural factors when understanding the experience of the participants especially in an educational context. According to Gadamer (1976), the past can influence our understanding in two main ways. Our prejudices become shaped chiefly through acculturation and language learning, and this shapes our understanding in a certain way. Secondly, tradition and culture have a great influence over our interpretation of experiences and the meaning of language. In his approach, Gadamer believes that culture and history play an active role in shaping our understanding and interpretation of meanings in a conscious and unconscious way. He claims that the intention behind interpretive understanding is to find out the truth about the subject from the participants' eyes; it is the participants' truth. Using Gadamer's approach, I will explore the truth in terms of what it means to the participants and attempt to gain an understanding of their experiences from their own perspectives. I will not be able to grasp this truth without exploring their history and culture because those factors shape their prejudices and thought processes. Gadamer's hermeneutical approach was used regularly to study art and sociology, since it acknowledges the importance of history and tradition as factors that shape the researchers' understanding about different incidents. The concept of "Bildung" in the Gadamer interpretative hermeneutic provides valuable depth to understanding the

psychosocial influences on my participants' leadership identity development. As viewed by Abhik and Starosta (2010, p.11), Bildung,

Reflects a process of historical preservation of tradition in which one both learns about facts and events but, more importantly, learns how these are to be appropriately integrated into one's life and self-understanding... Since meaning is born in a socio-cultural-historic context and transmits through time, actions and expressions of individuals can only be properly understood by reference to their cultural context.

The Hermeneutical approach will enable me to understand how culture, religion and social life influence the participants' value systems. Yukl (2006) and House et al (2004) argue that there are some factors that contribute into constructing the society and organization values and common beliefs like, embedded leadership style and common agreement by society and culture on who can be considered as an effective leader. House et al. also argues that the embedded leadership style within a society is influenced by the culture and context of the organization. The culture provides certain predictions and assumptions on accepted beliefs, values, norms, and standards that affect the leadership style in each organization. Fisher (1988) argues that those assumptions provide individuals with psycho-cultural lens where they can judge their behaviours and others behaviours and decide whether it is accepted by the group or not. My qualitative research design will incorporate aspects of Creswell's (1994) work along with a hermeneutic approach (Van Manen, 1990). This will enable me to address the main goal of this research which is to encourage the participants to share the meaning of their lived experiences along with their leadership development process with special attention to the effects of social, cultural and physiological factors. To achieve that end, I am using Gadamer's hermeneutic (1976) approach which has been applied often in recent years in leadership education studies because it will allow me to focus on understanding the meaning of the participants' lived experiences. The hermeneutic approach relies on in-depth interviews to evoke the lived experience from the participants. It has been used frequently to study

leadership issues in education (e.g., Al-Hatlani, 1993; Bulish, 2006; Byrd, 2005; Haller, 2005; Mathew, 2009; Ofner, 2009; Reyes, 2002; Rosenberg, 2006).

According to Van Manen (1990), hermeneutic interviews have two significant purposes: first to explore and gather information, which helps the researcher gain a deeper and richer understanding of the studied phenomena; and secondly to establish a relationship with the participant to understand the meaning of this experience. According to Van Manen (1997) and Moustakas (1994), hermeneutics is the most effective approach to study human science since it allows researchers to have a balanced combination of description, interpretation, self-reflection, and critical analysis, which fits the needs of my study perfectly - to understand the influences that affect the leadership formation of Emirati ladies at the college level. To understand their experiences, description and interpretation are insufficient. In other words, there is a level of self-reflection required to capture the depth of experiences and what it means to each one of them.

Rudestam and Newton (1992) report that hermeneutic research is often used in the fields of philosophy and psychology because it allows an understanding of the true essence of participants' lived experiences. It enables the researcher to go beyond the experience to the structures that underlie consciousness, like the effect of religion on the female aspiration to leadership. Van Manen (1990) argues that a hermeneutic approach is "descriptive" because it gives an idea of how things appear to the participants and allows them to keep their own voices. Second, it is "interpretive" because it suggests that "there are no such things as uninterpreted phenomena" (p. 180). Moustakas (1994, p.21) identifies seven main qualities when conducting hermeneutical approach: a) the value of using qualitative methods in studying human life experiences; b) highlighting the wholeness of the experience as the participant feels and reflects on it; c) looking for meanings from the participants not only



focusing on explanation; d) using first person accounts of the interviews which allow the researcher to understand what is most important for the participants; e) highlighting the importance of understanding human behavior through reflecting on why individuals make certain decisions; f) the uniqueness of looking at the experience and behavior as intimate relationships that cannot be separated; g) although this kind of research focuses on the participant's experience, it also addresses issues of concern to the researcher. This view is also adopted by Morse (1994) who acknowledges that the first step towards a hermeneutical approach is reflecting on the researcher's own experience. Van Manen (1990) stresses the importance of the researcher's self-reflection in this type of research - the researcher should live and become the question in order to be able to discover the essence of the experience.

Hermeneutics has also been used in sociology. I am using the hermeneutical approach to explore how my participants interpret and perceive their relationship to their followers and peer groups, which falls under the social psychology paradigm. Theories of Social Psychology focus on studying the relationship between individuals' social settings, understanding of themselves with others, relationship between leaders and followers (Grunlan & Mayers, 1979). Thus, through a hermeneutic approach I will understand how the participants obtain the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and social judgments that enable them to become functioning members of their societies (Grunlan & Mayers, 1979). Hermeneutics is also used in anthropology, which studies people's experience at different levels within their various cultural and social contexts (Grunlan & Mayers, 1979, 1988; Kraft, 1996). Scholars like Kraft (1996), Hofstede (1980) and Hall (1977) confirmed that individuals' actions and behaviours are reflections of their cultural expectations. They argue that culture can have great influence on the mindsets of individuals and provide scope to understand how they perceive reality and the world around them. House et al. (1997) also

take this view: “Culture is defined as shared motives, values, beliefs, identities, and interpretations and meanings of significant events...” (p. 15).

In psychology, hermeneutics is used to understand how the participants interpret and perceive leadership according to their psychological disposition including their personality. Segal (1997) explored the influences that may have an impact on shaping individuals’ thoughts and behaviours and eventually contribute to their identity development, a) the inner being beyond conscious awareness; (b) the inner being within conscious awareness e.g. thoughts and feelings; c) the outside environment. He argued that to understand the question why leaders and followers act in certain way, researchers needs to explore the internal and external experiences they came a cross during different developmental stages of their personal lives. Segal adapted Katz & Marshak’s (1995) Covert Processes Model which outlines five factors that shape the identity of an individual: a) childhood lessons learned; b) beliefs, assumptions, and values; c) formal theories and systems of thoughts; d) paradigms; e) organizational and societal culture. According to Onrato (2010, p.32) “These factors are developed through informal and formal experiences such as messages from parents, peers, significant others, formal education systems, and exposure to religious, philosophical, or professional ideas and concepts”.

The study will use a hermeneutical multiple case study design which will help me understand the depth of the participants’ experiences and answer my research questions. Case studies are “an exploration of a ‘bounded system’ of a case or multiple cases over time through detail, in depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context” (Creswell, 1998, p. 61). Stake (1995) describes the importance of using case studies when the researchers are looking to investigate the uniqueness and commonality on any phenomena.

The multiple case study design or collective case study investigates several cases to gain insight into a central phenomenon (Creswell, 2002; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2003).

### **Site and subject selection**

I chose Ras Al Khaimah Women's College (RKWC) as the site of my research because I wanted to explore how students in Ras Al Khaimah at college level develop their leadership identity. As an Emirati, I know that there are some similarities and differences between the Emirates, so I wanted to focus on Ras Al Khaimah since this may open doors for more studies in other Emirates in the future. Jamali et al. (2005, p. 592) argued that "living in an environment of cherished religious and cultural values and customs has a significant impact on societal attitudes and behaviours". Obviously, these cultural norms are inherently different from those of other cultures. Although there are some common patterns of behaviour and value systems across the Arab world, many scholars like Sidani (2005) argue that countries must be studied individually to gain insights into the uniqueness that exists within a particular society. Even though Ras Al Khaimah is one of the Emirates and we share the same religion and culture there are still some different characteristics that make each Emirate unique (Sidani & Gardner, 2000).

For this study I used purposeful sampling to identify participants who show high relational leadership qualities and are involved in leadership activities, guided by Patton's (1990) argument that "information-rich cases that manifest the phenomenon of interest intensely, but not extremely" (p.171). I used four criteria for choosing three participants:

1. They are enrolled at Ras Al Khaimah women's college.

2. They are on the students' council committee and show high leadership qualities (self confidence, positive communication, problem solving and take part in decision making).
3. Students who are highly involved in relational leadership activities inside or outside the college (planning and leading events, representing the students' council at system meetings, etc.)
4. They want to share their experiences and are willing to participate in the study.

After meeting with the supervisor of the students' council and going through the criteria and the scope of the research, she was able to nominate three council members who were showing high relational leadership and are highly involved in leadership activities (See Appendix A). I asked her to nominate two more former council members who already graduated from HCT and are no longer part of the council but still fit my research criteria. I chose the council members who had graduated to pilot my research questions since I needed students who fit the profile of active leader but were from outside the council. The research results were not altered by any close relationships between current and past council members. I ended up having five participants who contributed to this study and who were selected through purposeful sampling.

### **Data collection**

I followed Van Manen's (1990) model of hermeneutic phenomenological research. He bases his model on six main activities:

1. Choose a phenomenon of interest to the researcher that has a social meaning
2. Investigate the experience as the participant lived it not as we conceptualize it
3. Highlight themes that explain the phenomena

4. Use the art of writing and re-writing to describe the phenomena
5. Sustain a strong pedagogical relation when looking at the phenomena
6. Find a balance between the whole and the part when investigating the phenomena

To achieve these I used multiple sources of data to help me understand the complex issue of leadership identity development: in-depth interviews, focus groups, document analysis, hermeneutic observations, and analysis of the physical environment. My main source of data was collected from the in-depth interviews, while the other sources acted as background data that assisted my understanding of the leadership development phenomena and provided triangulation.

I made a choice to start my data collection by piloting the interview questions with two former council members who have graduated and still hold leadership positions within the alumni group. After finishing the interview with them and modifying the questions, I collected data from my three participants who are current students at the college holding different roles at the council and showing high relational leadership qualities. The interviews lasted about six months due to the students' busy timetables, exams and council activities. During those six months I conducted many hermeneutical observations to observe how the participants acted with their peers at the council and how they achieved tasks. After finishing the interviews I scheduled a focus group meeting to discuss the themes that emerged from the personal interviews.

### *1. In-depth unstructured interviews*

Following the principles of Gadamerian hermeneutics, the interview text was my main data source and the one that helped me interpret and understand the relationship between the participants' self-interpretation of their context and the sociocultural meaning and values that

could have an effect on their leadership perspectives (Scholes, 1985). I used an unstructured interview guide. According to Walker (2011), the unstructured interview technique is a valuable tool that helps researchers uncover important areas of individuals' lived experiences. He argues that this technique provides a flexible atmosphere while giving the participants the chance to talk about things that are important to them, but still achieves the goal of the interview.

Van Manen (2001) argues that in hermeneutic interviews the researcher should choose the right type of questions that encourage the participants to talk about their experiences in their own words, and keep the interviewees focused on the investigated topic. The interview guide was designed to look at relevant experiential topics like: participants' personal information, understanding about leadership, leadership experiences, influences of family and culture, influence of early role models, and leadership opportunities offered by their families or the college. The in-depth interview questions paying attention to former leadership experience, their values, concepts of leadership, affect of society, culture and gender. The interview protocol was modified by the researcher from the protocol used in Komives et al.'s (2007) to suit the nature of the study, and the cultural and social life of Emirati students, like removing the questions asking about boyfriends support and about working to support themselves. The questions of the in-depth interviews were developed to suit the nature of the study and were planned to investigate the Relational Leadership theory and the LID as they apply to the college students' level. The researcher did not share any expectations regarding the findings of this research nor enforce my own judgment on the participants' stories or experiences. There was no intention to influence them to answer in any way that strayed from their personal perspectives.

Each participant was asked to participate in three individual in-depth unstructured interviews taking about 90 minutes each. The first interview aimed to collect demographic data about

the family, parents' education, mother's nationality, number of siblings, relationship between the siblings, family relationship to their extended family, the way the participants were raised, and their lives at school. The second interview gathered information about life at college, social or educational activities, experiences at the council, role and responsibilities, teamwork, peer and study choice. The final interview focused more on leadership concepts like values of leaders, what makes a good leader, role models, and their experiences as leaders. The researcher asked for examples and situations to help the participants open up and encourage them to share more information about their experiences. The questions aimed to provoke the participants to think critically about the council and why they deem it as an important part of their lives.

For the structure of the interview guides I followed Rossman and Rallis's (2003) recommendation that I engage the participants in general questions to prompt them to talk about their experience with the phenomena. Then I followed each question with provoking questions to prompt them to give examples or related stories that support their answers. I was careful to ask stimulating and open ended questions that allowed them the freedom to express their experiences and use their voice to describe it. For example, when one of the participants talked about being bullied as a child because her mother was a Filipino, she seemed very emotional about it so I asked her "how did that make you feel?", "describe your reaction to their words?", "why did it affect you that much?"

The interview sessions were taped and then transcribed after being translated to English. A copy of the transcription was given back to the participants as a way of validating the data (Glesne, 2006). The participants were encouraged to read the transcriptions, add anything that was missing or remove anything that they felt was not reflective of their intent. Sometimes they added more context and changed the way I described things, which enriched my data and helped me find common themes between the participants. For example, when Hana read

the transcript about how her brother Ahmed supports her, she added how much she appreciates having supportive brothers.

### *Piloting the Interview Guides*

According to many researchers, pilot studies are a powerful method that provides researchers the chance to arrange “mock” meetings for training purposes (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003; Ary et al., 2002; Borg & Gall, 1989; Lietz & Keeves, 1997; Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Seidman, 1998; Slavin, 1992). Prior to the study, I piloted an early version of the interview guide to assist me in building up interview questions, sharpen my interviewing ability, and explore themes that might be related to Emirati women students’ leadership identity development. The pilot was conducted at Ras Al Khaimah Women’s College in the last semester of the academic year 2012-2013, before the formal data collection stage began in the summer of 2013. The participants were chosen after making sure that they were members of the students’ council and were going to graduate from the college during the summer of 2012 allowing for the development of the interview questions without my actual sample.

I conducted two in-depth interviews to pilot my questions with two college graduates who were former members of the council. As expected, a number of issues that come up during the pilot study that I found useful and were integrated into the revised interview guide. For example, in addition to helping me with building the interview questions, to my surprise I realized that those participants did not view themselves as leaders, the role of their families in offering leadership opportunities, having a non-Emirati mother and its effect on their leadership development identity, and their beliefs that older generations still view gender as a challenge when it comes to leadership. To prompt more discussion I asked questions like, do those words have an effect on their leadership formation? How did that impact them?



The pilot study allowed me a chance to improve the quality of my questions and injected a measure of self-confidence with respect to my interviewing skills. Moreover, I became more conversational with my participants, and this allowed me to explore and analyze their leadership experiences in greater depth. I was able to investigate areas of interest such as the importance of adding a section on parents' education and mother's nationality. Therefore, this allowed me to pay more attention to certain issues and add more questions to encourage the participants to talk openly about their experiences. Each participant was thoroughly questioned in an effort to gain as much data as possible. Two sessions of one and a half hours each were planned for the interviews. The researcher chose to record all the interviews to ensure accuracy and enabled me to reference them during the analysis phase as recommended by a number of researchers (e.g., Freebody, 2003; Lewis & Ritchie, 2003; Silverman, 2003; Slavin, 1992).

Section one of the pilot interview guide was designed to ask for personal information where it encouraged the participant to talk about herself and her family.

- *Tell me about yourself and your family?*

I realized that this was a very broad question. During my first interview I found out that my participant has a non-Emirati mother and that had an effect on her upbringing. Another issue that emerged is the age of both parents and the number of wives the father has. So I added a "Demographic data" section to the second pilot interviews where I ask about the mother's nationality, parents' education level, and whether the mother is employed or not, providing for information that allows for follow up questions, for example:

- *Do you think the nationality of your mother affected the way you grew up? How?*
- *Describe your relationship with your parents. Do you think their age affected your relationship with them?*

During the interview with both participants I realized that pressure from the immediate family impacted some decisions along with the way the family functioned, so I added a question to explore this issue in detail and the level of their involvement in the family decisions and whether it affected them while growing up:

- *Describe the role of immediate family in your life while you were growing up.*

Another issue that emerged was the expected relative roles of boys and girls in the family and the relationship of the participant with her brothers and sisters. Consequently I included additional questions to explore this issue and the level of support they received from their siblings while growing up.

- *Describe your relationship with your brothers.*
- *Describe your relationship with your sisters.*
- *What is the role of boys in your family?*
- *What is the role of girls in your family?*

For the benefit of the readers, the government education system in UAE is based on gender segregation, which means girls and women study in a female learning environment and do not deal with boys or men. All the teachers and school management are women until the student finishes high school. As discussed above, the sample of my study are members of the student council at the college, therefore sometimes they are asked to work or co-operate with male council members from other colleges. I added a specific question about their experience working with male members and implications of those experiences on their leadership development.

- *Did you have the chance to work closely with male council members? Describe this experience.*

Both participants talked about the influence friends and peers had on their decision making and choices growing up so I added a section in the second interview called “Peer Influence” and explored the influence their friends have on their choices and how it affected their personality development.

- *How do you usually make your decision?*
- *Who has the power to change your decision (significant others)? Give me some examples.*
- *Why do you refer to those significant others to help you with decisions?*
- *In what ways have your relationships with peers contributed to your leadership achievements?*

Part of my study is to explore the participants’ understanding of leadership and how they define successful leaders. I was also looking at how they deal with their colleagues and peers during student council activities because that would give me an idea about their leadership style and attributes. So I added a section called “influences of the students’ council.” I noticed that my first pilot participant was asked to join the student council by the students’ council supervisor because she showed some high leadership qualities so I added a question to ask my participants about the reasons behind their decision to join.

- *Why did you join? How did you hear about the students’ council?*

Working at the same educational institute gave me a chance to know all the student council members. So I asked my pilot participants to critique their own leadership style, why they think they are good leaders and how they can change to be better. These types of questions aimed to uncover their understanding about leadership and show their reflective skills when it comes to understanding leadership concepts.

- *In your opinion, what makes a good leader?*

- *Do you think that the council president (vice president) is a good leader? Why? Give me an example.*
- *How can they improve their leadership? What would you do differently?*

One of my participants admitted that she was very shy before joining the college and rarely participated in school activities, but she explained that being a student at the college changed her personality which prompted me to explore the role of the college as an environmental influence on their development. I added a section called “Leadership opportunities”:

- *In what ways has the college environment contributed to your leadership achievements?*
- *In what ways have your relationships with faculty, staff, and/or administration contributed to your leadership achievements?*
- *Are there particularly significant persons who have encouraged and supported your leadership achievements? (Please explain)*

Piloting the interview questions helped me build my self-esteem as a researcher, and being the students’ counselor in the college made my job easier. I had already established a strong rapport with the participants, so they were confident and comfortable in responding freely to my questions. The final interview guide was designed and developed at the end of the pilot interview process and that is what I used with the three participants (See Appendix B).

### *Interview Process and Protocol*

Prior to starting the initial interview I met with each participant in order to share the objectives of my study, address the matter of confidentiality, and indicate the time commitment for being involved in this research. I also responded to any questions the participants had about the study. Following a protocol that included a signed consent form,

and consent for interviews to be recorded, the students agreed to participate in the study. Thereafter we began putting together a schedule for administering the three interviews (See Appendix C). The participants were promised to receive a copy of their transcriptions for review. This process of member checking provided them with the opportunity to read over what was said in the interviews and focus group discussions to assist with accuracy. In addition, I asked each participant to inform me if there was anything in the transcription that she did not want published in the findings or that was inaccurate. Finally, the participants were encouraged to choose a pseudonym in an attempt to ensure the confidentiality of their identity. Following recommendations by Merriam and Associates (2002), these in-depth interviews were open-ended and unstructured, where the students were asked to answer some broad questions and give examples about relevant past experiences that are related to their leadership identity development. The result of both the in-depth interviews and focus group helped the researcher build a picture of the implications of family, society and culture on an Emirati woman's leadership development at the college level.

## *2. Focus group*

According to Glesne (2006), focus groups are regularly used and deemed a valid method when examining social science issues. For that reason, after I completed my three in-depth interviews with all the participants I asked them to participate in a 90 minute focus group session. Together with the interview participants I discussed the emerging themes from the interviews, and then asked them to reflect on whether any of these themes were relevant to their experiences. The focus group interview allowed the participants to interact and share experiences with one another. According to Hatch (2002) focus groups can offer a sense of security to the participants, as it allows them a chance to give directions to the interview.

However, others like Montell (1999) argue that the focus group is a valuable tool that addresses gender and ethnicity, since it encourages group dynamics and is more egalitarian when sharing common experiences. Hatch (2002) suggests that forming a group that shares similar characteristics like age, group, gender, class and sociocultural traits can provide the researcher with meaningful data about them.

The focus group covered the themes and topics that arose from the students' interviews (See Appendix D). The participants were highly familiar with each other since they are all members of the council and the two graduates used to be former members of the council. The focus group lasted one hour and a half, it was taped, and the researcher took notes and asked questions for examples when needed.

The researcher also tried to encourage them to share their ideas and thoughts and comment on every question. I asked them to talk more about the themes that emerged from the interviews the positive and negative effect of family, effect of the culture, religion, social expectations, parents' education, mother's nationality as an influence, characteristics of a good leader, and involvement in leadership opportunities.

### *3. Document analysis*

As background information, I reviewed and analyzed documents related to college policies, leadership courses taught to the students, leadership in general and co-curricular and extra curricula activities introduced at the college.

#### *College policies*

The policies and documents related to student leadership and empowerment that might have contributed to their leadership development. I was looking whether the same opportunities are given to all colleges across the Emirates or if it is subject to each college to develop their

own plans when it comes to students' leadership development. I reviewed the following documents: student support services policy, co-curricular & extra-curricular activities policy and student association's policy. Students kept referring to having Emirati teachers and staff at the college and how that affected their leadership development through having Emirati role models that they can look up to and ask for guidance, I thought it would be better to investigate the Emiratization policy at HCT and see if it encourages more Emirati staff and faculty to join the college and academic life. (See Appendix E)

*The student council mission and vision:* I planned to explore whether those documents support the HCT rules, and consider the culture of the UAE.

#### *4. Hermeneutic Observations*

Hermeneutic observations were made to triangulate the information provided in interviews, and to capture a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences. According to Patton (1990), triangulation of data increases the accuracy and credibility of the findings in qualitative research. Van Manen (1990) notes that combining descriptive and interpretive data helps the researcher understand more about the subject studied. Naden (2010) advises that when doing hermeneutical observations, the researcher should apply the concept of Gadamer's "attachment". Attachment requires the researcher to act as a participant observer in the setting, to allow for a better understanding of the setting which will eventually have an impact on the data interpretation during the analysis phase. Since I am working at RKWC, it was easy for me to gain access and have opportunities as a participant observer, which enabled me as a researcher to better understand the phenomena and understand the culture and the social interaction among the student council members (Glesne, 2006).

#### *5. Researcher's Journal*

The researcher journal was designed to allow the researcher to keep observation notes, thoughts and insights. According to Lofland and Lofland, (1999), keeping such a journal is crucial in qualitative research as it encourages the researcher to keep notes of how things were done prior to, during and after the interviews or observation sessions. They highlighted the importance of writing on site or no later than one day after the incident. Since the data collection phase took a long time, I needed the journal to remind me of events and incidents that happened during the data collection phase. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) argue that a researcher's journal can help as a method to speculate on data and provide concurrent data that helps the researcher in the analysis phase, like the reaction of participants to certain questions and emotions. Bailey's (1996) model of field notes was chosen, it encourages researchers to record what they see and hear. Furthermore, they can cite experiences and thoughts during data collection, and reflect on the entire process as a whole. The model focuses on four areas: (1) observation which describe what happened during the interview that seemed significant; (2) theoretical notes which are an attempt to draw meaning of experiences in relation to the literature; (3) methodological notes on the participants' attempt to draw meaning or reflect on their experiences and record their "ahaa" moments; (4) analytical notes, which are overall notes about interviews and the focus group session. Keeping journals allows the researcher to express emotions, thoughts, assumptions and biases about different aspects of the research, and assist in the data analysis phase (Morrow and Smith, 2000). The researcher's journal included thoughts and reflections about all the interviews, like the participants' willingness to share their experiences, body language, openness or reluctance to answer certain questions, themes that they were happy to talk about and events that they were emotional about or reluctant to share.



### **My personal bracketing**

As defined by Husserl (1970) bracketing means acknowledging and setting aside of the researcher's prior experiential knowledge in order to obtain the real meaning of the experience. Bracketing involves two approaches of engagement for the researcher: with the data and with analyzing the findings (Van Manen (1997).

My understanding of the world is based upon my belief that people make sense of their world through social relationships; it is simply about "the facts", and this belief can lead to assumptions and affect the findings of the research. My reality has been shaped and influenced by my experiences and my perceptions of the social context that I live in. There are many factors that influence my understanding of the world like my background, family, religion, education, culture, and gender. That is why I chose to explore this issue hermeneutically from the students' perspective - I am strongly influenced by my social life, and I want to understand and research how young women understand the world around them. I also aim to achieve a greater understanding of the factors that influence their identity especially when it comes to leadership theories. Paying attention to this relational and experiential reality will help me with any bias related issues that may affect this study. Before I started collecting my data, I needed to separate my beliefs, thoughts, and understanding about the topic before and after the data collection. So I started documenting factors from my previous experiences and also from any new understanding that I gleaned from the literature review. This step made clearly proved that my pre-understanding about the topic was developed long before completing the literature review, since I relied on my personal experience as an Emirati lady and I was referring to the factors that contributed to building my identity.

I started this research with a strong belief that both family and culture have a great influence on our identity formation. Both factors can encourage or hinder an individual's leadership identity development. I was raised in a very supportive family that encouraged me to participate in important decision making and to be a productive member in any group I join. My father had a career in the military and he appreciates discipline and believes that a woman is as good as a man if she was raised with this understanding. My father traveled regularly due to the nature of his work, and because I have strong personality my father would expect me to take care of my big family. Although I was young at that time I was still expected to take care of the house budget and household. My understanding of leadership development expanded after reviewing the literature, and consequently I became aware of other factors that affect leadership formation for women. These factors, although not entirely applicable to Emirati culture, include historical events, economic crisis, cultural elements, and family crisis. When analyzing the data I noticed that some elements were in existence prior to my data collection, and I kept challenging them by asking more in-depth questions to glean greater details on their personal experiences. The research literature has strengthened my confidence that overcoming challenges is a very important factor that has an effect on shaping leaders' identities (e.g., Bennis & Thomas, 2002a, 2000b, 2004; Brokaw, 1998; Burns, 1956, 1960, 1970). I was very careful to put my personal feelings aside when I designed the research questions. I also decided go through piloting the research questions with two Emirati HCT college graduates who used to be active members in the students' council (president, vice president). I was trying to make sure that my questions were not leading them to particular ideas or beliefs, a practice recommended by Welman and Kruger (1999).

I used to work as a student counselor at Ras Al Khaimah Women's College when I was collecting the data from the participants, so I knew some of the students prior to conducting

the research. This then was a problem for bracketing – how do I set aside my prior knowledge that could potentially distort the research process? That is why I decided on criteria to help with my choice of participants because I wanted to make sure that my relationship to the students would not affect the way I chose the sample for this study. My first step was to get the approval from the research committee in higher colleges of technology (See Appendix F ... Guideline to ethic). Once these criteria were prepared, it was sent to the supervisor and advisor of students' council, and I asked them to nominate a number of students who demonstrated relational leadership as described by Komives (2005). As a counselor, I met with students who had personal or academic issues, but I was not involved with the participants of this research earlier in the process.

Reflecting on my own experience I expected that all the participants were involved in leadership activities of some kind while growing up, but I found out that three of them had no experience with even domestic leadership activities like shopping or vacation planning. For many of my participants, the only leadership activities they were involved in were as a group work leader while in secondary school. When I first piloted the research questions with my first participant Amani, she raised the issue of having a non-Emirati mother and how that affected her personality and her upbringing. I could empathize with her because I also have a non-Emirati mother and I went through similar experiences. I did understand the harassment and abuse she went through at the hands of her extended family, friends and neighbors. When I started collecting the data I did not expect to find the mother's nationality to be among the factors that affect the students' personality and identity formation, but after my interview with Amani I added it as a question. To my surprise four out of the five students have non-Emirati mothers. I did not anticipate such a high number since I was focusing on other criteria, but this turned out to be a significant finding. I was very interested to see how this particular factor contributed to building the students' identities, so I investigated further by

inquiring about their experiences, emotions and how they affected their upbringing and their choices.

### **Trustworthiness**

According to many scholars, establishing the trustworthiness of data is very important in qualitative research, as it is subject to the remnants of researcher's interpretation (e.g., Greene, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Langenbach et al., 1994; Olesen, 2000; Seidman, 1998; Wolf-Wendel, 2000). I enhanced the trustworthiness of the data by: seeking colleagues' help in reviewing the materials, using self review and personal bracketing, and by referring to relevant personal experience. I paid extra attention to the trustworthiness of the in-depth interviews because this data plays the largest role in the design of the study. The following sections will provide more information about the trustworthiness of my study.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility is measured by how the research findings match reality. The reality in my research refers to the participants' social, cultural and organizational world reality and how they constructed it in their minds and how relevant it is to them. To ensure credibility within data I employed a number of strategies during the time I was involved with the participants. First as a participant observer I already work at the same institute that the participants go to for study, which allows me to engage in long-term research, and being around the participants while they prepare for activities. Secondly, I employ triangulation through using document analysis, observation, and focus group along with the interviews.

Transferability is a quality of the findings that allows them to be applied or generalized to other situations (Allison, 1996), however, this characteristic is not relevant to this kind of qualitative research. Because of its focus on the individual, and the cultural and social

differences of this Emirate, and the UAE in general, it would be difficult to achieve transferability, except for some very general factors like culture and religion. Generalizability is a goal of quantitative, positivistic type research, and in my case the transferability doesn't apply to this kind of research. Patton (1980) explains that naturalistic inquiry should "provide perspective rather than truth, empirical assessment of local decision makers' theories of action rather than generation and verification of universal theories, and context-bound information rather than generalizations" (p.283).

## **Chapter Four**

### **Data Analysis and Stories Presentation**

Chapter four will present individual stories of students who participated in the research. I decided to first present their stories to help the readers understand and acquire a deeper feeling of each participant, and how family, culture and involvement in leadership activities contributed to shaping their lives, decisions and eventually their leadership formation. This chapter will also explore the pilot and revision of research instruments; which include contacting the participants, arranging for a location and construction of the stories. At the end of this chapter, I will look at common themes that emerged from all the stories.

I was fortunate to spend some quality time with the participants - about six hours each over a six month period - and witness how our interviews helped them reflect more on their development and how they became more critical of themselves and their decisions. After the first interview they would show up for the next interview eager to share more personal information about themselves, and would tell me that our last session made them think more about their circumstances. Aisha stated “Miss, when I talked to you about my childhood that was the first time I acknowledged that I was ashamed of my mother’s origin while growing up and how much it affected me and affected how I lived my life during school.” The case stories emerged from each student’s interviews. They chose to tell their stories in a way that highlighted the most important factors and events that affected them the most. This chapter will provide their stories as they were told; the narratives will be presented using fictitious names to protect the participant’s identity, and corrections were made to their texts only for the purpose of clarity, which includes grammatical errors, repetition, etc.

## **Interview Procedures**

Initially an email was sent to the two former council members, Amani and Noora, asking if they were interested in participating in the research. They agreed to participate and were quite enthusiastic to be a part of it. I used email communication with them to arrange for interviews and agree on the place for the interview. Both preferred it to be at the college. Initially, I scheduled three interviews with each participant lasting one hour each where I asked them to talk about their experiences and follow the research questions. The more they talked, the more I realized amendments to my research questions were necessary in order to capture a deeper understanding of their experience. For example, I believed it was necessary to inquire more deeply about childhood experiences, mothers' influences, and more about their role at the council. I also decided that three hours was not enough to obtain their whole stories, so I scheduled one hour and half hour interviews with each of them which afforded me about four and half hours a person. Since the study is hermeneutic, I was trying to fade into the background to allow the participants to talk freely about their experiences and thus I chose how to tell their stories.

Each participant's interviews were interpreted for meaning and their emotional reactions were observed and recorded. To make sure that the participants' voices were heard, I listened to the recordings at least twice before writing the final transcription. The case stories were compiled from the interview transcripts ensuring that all important material from each interview was included in the final version (Freebody; 2003; Gray, 2003; Keeves & Sowden, 1997; Tesch, 1990) without burdening each story with unnecessary detail and wordiness that inhibit some interviews (Keeves & Sowden, 1997; Lewis & Ritchie, 2003). I made a choice not to use verbatim transcription because the participants were more comfortable using Arabic to share their stories and emotions. Furthermore, it would have affected the value of the data if had I translated from Arabic to English without paying attention to the true

meaning of the participants' experiences. Ezzy (2002) and Tesch (1990) argue that it is almost impossible for the researcher to re-tell the whole interview, but I included as much as possible to capture the real meaning of their experiences. I corrected the transcripts for grammar, and removed repetitions for easier reading. Additional details were added only when the participants felt further relevant details to their stories were required. The stories went through an analysis processes to identify all important information and to display them in a way that gives the reader a sense of their experience while enabling me to cross-case examine all the stories (Langenbach et al., 1994; Miles & Huberman, 1984).

The focus group data was treated similar to the data coming from the interview, and each student's input was added to each case after being transcribed and given to the participant to check and give her approval. The data coming from the observation and researcher's journal was treated differently, since they focused more on the students' emotions, reactions and behaviors to certain situations during the data collection period. In the focus group session I used open-ended questions where the participants chose how to frame their responses. Some offered extended answers with examples whereas others' were brief and decided to only support their friends' answers. As a facilitator for this focus group, I made sure that all the students participated in sharing their thoughts, even if they agreed with the views of others I would ask them to elaborate more about it.

I asked the participants to share their understanding of leadership, what leadership means to them as individuals, and examples to support their points of view. They started by reflecting on leadership tasks they were involved in, and how their leadership understanding evolved after going through different tasks and activities. The focus group meeting supported the data coming from personal interviews. First I asked them to share their definition of leadership and what makes a successful leader. Then I shared the common themes that came out of the interviews after which I asked them to share their comments and experiences. I encouraged



them to talk about the role of the family, culture, and social factors that contributed to building their leadership identity.

Theme #1: Personal attribute: all the participants reflected on personal attributes that helped them during their journey at the college, like how past experiences at the school and college levels contributed in building their self-esteem. They gave examples of how their understanding about leadership concepts evolved since they joined the college. They also shared examples of challenges they dealt with as part of the council and how it affected their personality and understanding of leadership.

Theme #2: Family Factors: All the participants agreed on the huge role of the family in the formation and development of their leadership identity. They commented on the supportive atmosphere they had at home and the high expectations from their parents and siblings. When the topic of non-Emirati mother emerged, the students were a bit reluctant to comment out loud. They respect their mothers and they don't want to admit vocally how much it affected their personality. Once Noora had the courage to reflect about her experience, others started to share theirs. Evan Amani who has an Emirati mother commented on the topic and she related to what they were talking about. The participants also shared their thoughts about the role of having supportive brothers and the challenges they had sometimes with their brothers to get permission and pursue certain opportunities. In the end, they all confirmed that family has a strong influence on their leadership development.

Theme #3: Cultural influences: I noticed that it was hard for the participants to separate between cultural and social factors. But they all agreed that religion does not pose as a hindering factor to their leadership development. In fact they think that religion supports the development of women and empowers them to strive towards better education and success. The students never talked about gender as an issue during their interviews, which provoked

me to ask them at the focus group if they think that it is a valid factor that may affect their leadership development. All of them considered being a woman as a positive factor, especially with all the support they get from their community and UAE government.

Theme #4: Social Influences: the focus group confirmed the in-depth interview findings especially the citizenship point. All the participants kept referring to the importance of giving back to their country and the need to be successful to show to the world that Emirati ladies are unique and successful and can represent their family and country on different occasions. They also praised the efforts by the UAE government to empower women and talked about role models who helped inspire them to be good leaders.

Theme #5: Involvement in Leadership Activities: In general, students were extremely positive when talking about the college. They used various words to describe their experiences at college as being the starting point and place that empowered them to seek new experiences. All the participants talked about the countless opportunities they have at college and the encouragement and support they had from their peers at the council, college staff and mentors. The students frequently used the following phrases in their discussions that indicated how reflecting about their experience help them develop and understand others perspectives about leadership (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Kegan, 1994). "... after talking to the researcher I was able to think about..." and "I did not know that this factor affected me that much, until I talked about it out loud with the researcher".

Part of analyzing the focus group data was through grouping the answers and looking for more clarification about certain issues like the effect of the family and having non-Emirati mothers. The focus group acted as an additional tool to help me look for patterns among the participants (Creswell, 1998; Crotty, 1998; Jowett and O'Toole, 2006; Madriz, 2000). It also

acted as a second source to ensure that the information provided during the interview was more valid.

### Case Studies Stories

A story based on self-reported and observational data was created after the interview process, and each participant and their story was organized as a profile and arranged in alphabetical order. After presenting the demographic data of the participant, the following three themes were discussed: childhood, life at college, and their understanding of leadership concepts. After presenting all the stories, a comparative summary was provided to highlight similarities between the cases.

Presenting the demographic data of the participants will enable the reader to understand the family attributes and important factors that affect findings like mother’s nationality, parents’ education, and the number of siblings (See Figure 4). Exploring their childhood will provide an idea of how social and cultural factors affected their personalities and leadership formation while growing up. Life at college will describe the leadership opportunities they were involved with and how they perceived themselves with others. Finally investigating their understanding of leadership will provide an idea about the values, actions and relationships that they think are important in their leadership development.

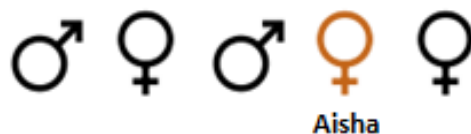
**Figure 4: Participants’ Data**

Pseudonym	Age	Mother’s Nationality	Educated Parents	Major	Leadership Status
<b>Aisha</b>	19	Indian	Both	Engineering	Emerging leader
<b>Hana</b>	20	Egyptian	Both	IT	Developing leader
<b>Shjoon</b>	22	Bahrain	Both	IT	Developing leader
<b>Amani</b>	24	Emirati	Mother	Business	Experienced leader
<b>Noora</b>	23	Philippino	Both	Education	Experienced leader

## 1. Aisha's Story

Aisha comes from an average family of two boys and three girls, and she is the second youngest in her family. Aisha's father passed away when she was 3 years old so she does not have many memories about him. Aisha has a very strong relationship with her family, especially with her mother.

My mother is my life and my role model. She is like an older sister and I am very close to her. I have a very good relationship with my family. When I was in fifth grade, my older brother traveled to London to study, and because of him being away and being the older brother I am always extra careful when I deal with him. I respect him a lot and he is a father figure to me. The age gap between us is big - about 9 years - and I was always worried about the way he would think of me, and I would always seek his approval. However I am closer to my second brother and we share some resemblance and character traits.



My older brother Ahmed is 9 years older than me and he is very open-minded and kind. He is now finishing his masters' degree in aeronautical engineering in the UK. He is very smart and was sponsored by the military to continue his studies. They noticed how talented and intelligent he is and they pushed him to continue his masters so he could come back and hold a better position in Abu Dhabi. Since he is always away studying, and because of the age gap, we rarely have much time to talk, but when he is around I enjoy listening to him and he is very supportive of my studies. He was the person who encouraged me to study engineering. He wanted me to move to the UK with him so we could study there together, and he said that

he would take care of me. I enjoy talking to him about my studies because he understands the pressure that comes with some subjects and although I am at the early stage of my studies, I used to help him with some of his projects when he was doing his bachelor's degree. Ahmed is unlike my other brother Nasser; he is very open minded maybe because he studied away for more than 6 years and maybe because he is expected to perform the role of my late father.

My second brother Nasser has a different personality than Ahmed; he is a typical Emirati man. He lives with his wife and three children near us so he is always available to take care of us. Although I love my two brothers I am amazed by how different they are in terms of personalities and ways of thinking, and how they would act completely different in some situations. Ahmed is more quiet and easy-going, whereas Nasser is stubborn and tends to act more spontaneously. I always thought that being abroad had an effect on Ahmed's personality. He is more mature and wise, and sometimes I attribute this to the fact that he was obligated to take care of us when my father passed away. I think Nasser acts like any average Emirati man - when my friends talk about their brother I can see Nasser in them.

When my mother is away or outside of the county visiting her family in India, I would assume the mother's role by taking care of the family, cooking, and helping them with their issues and studies. They would never even eat until I am around to prepare the food. Sometimes they would wait until I finish my classes from the college at 3pm and come home to have their lunch. Although I am not the oldest sister, everybody views me as a motherly figure when mother is not around. Maybe because I am warm like her and I used to be her shadow while growing up. My older sister Noora is three years older than me and she usually assumes the role of disciplinarian when mother is not around. We would refer to her for important family decisions since she is the old figurehead at home. I am attached to my sister, I feel that I had to grow up fast like her; I am closer to her than my youngest sister who is also three years younger than me. My younger sister is very dreamy and artistic. She has

shown a great artistic talent; she started drawing when she was in primary school. My eldest brother is very supportive of her talent; he bought her an iPad and told her that if she continues drawing this well he will arrange a show where she can present her work. On the other hand Nasser thinks she needs to focus on her studies and stop wasting her time with art.

#### *Aisha's Childhood:*

Many important themes emerged from interviewing the participants and asking about their childhood. Exploring the participants' childhood gave me a glimpse about their personalities, school, activities and influential people in their lives.

My father passed away when I was three years old and my mother took on the dual role of father and mother. I grew up differently than most children - my mother is the second wife. My father was studying in Egypt when he fell in love with an Egyptian lady, then they got married and she moved to live with him in Al Ain. My father finished his Bachelor's degree in Egypt and it was very difficult to find an Emirati who is very keen on his studies. When he finished his studies he was appointed as a supervisor in a big cement factory in Al Ain. He and his wife lived happily, but a serious issue came about which destroyed their marriage and resulted in a divorce. His wife bore him 6 girls and he wanted a boy very badly. My father was an only boy to many sisters, so it was up to him to carry the name of his family. The pressure from his sisters (my aunts) to get married again and have a boy was very strong and the marriage could not overcome this issue. My mum was only 12 when she married my father; she is Indian but was born and raised in the UAE. My father told my mother when they got married that if she delivers a healthy boy he would divorce his first wife, which mum did after one year of their marriage. Although my aunts chose my mother, they never got over the fact that she is an Indian. They wanted a boy at any price, and initially they were ready to accept her even though she was non-Emirati. However, shortly after she gave birth to the boy the family was long awaiting for; they isolated her and avoided having any relationship with

her. It was not easy finding a suitable match for dad back then, especially since he was old and married with many children. My aunts thought that since my mother is of Indian origin she would be eager to marry an Emirati man and have Emirati children. Moreover, my mother was very young and they thought she could be influenced very easily.

My mother had no actual relationship with my aunts; she kept to herself and focused on raising us. Since the beginning of the marriage my mother could see their influence on my father's decisions, they even asked my father to divorce my mother after she delivered the boy and find a suitable Emirati wife, a request which my father said "No" to. My mother chose the easiest way to deal with them, which was to keep away and restrict herself and us from dealing with them. To them she would always be an Indian lady, and we will always be the children of that Indian lady. Although it was common to get married to Indian women back then, they never made us feel like family. Things got worse after my father's death, as they made sure we received nothing from my father's inheritance. In order to avoid further trouble with the family, my mother gave up her rights and ours from my father's inheritance. My mother managed my father's retirement allowance very well, and therefore we were always provided with all of life's necessities. I was always amazed by how good she was at managing money and the house. When I sit and I reflect, I see what a wonderful and capable woman she is.

Since I opened my eyes my mother was everything to me; she is like my older sister; everybody would say that she looks like my older sister. We get along very well and I tell her everything about me. We talk about everything and she always helps me make my decisions. My father died when I was only 3 so I don't have a lot of memories about him, but my mother always says that he was a great and loving man. My older brothers can remember him very well. Sometimes they would talk about him, so I wish I had gotten to know him. Since my father passed away, my mother was everything to us, she acted like a father and mother

and even a sister. After my father's death, the family isolated my mother even more; there were lots of issues regarding the inheritance.

I grew up like any other Emirati girl but with more freedom, and was not nervous about us (girls) playing with boys when we were children. Because she grew up in this fashion, she believes that a lady needs to deal with the other gender in a polite respectful way in order to get respect in return. I was allowed to go and play in my neighbor's house and study with their daughters, but I would always hear some comments from their mothers about me being the Indian daughter and how come I did better in school than their daughters. At first it did not bother me very much, but as I grew up and entered school this issue began to magnify. I was always treated as the Indian lady's daughter.

Because I used to study in a neighborhood school where everybody knows everyone, I was always treated as the Indian lady's daughter. Other girls would have better treatment and had better opportunities than me because their mothers were teachers or in the school management, but I was excluded from activities because I was different. I remember being very ashamed of being half Indian, and I would frequently go home and cry to my mother. She was very wise about it and she told me many times that we make our own success and successful people are defined by their accomplishments not their mother's or father's name. She emphasized the importance of education and pushed us really hard to focus on our studies. We had an unwritten rule in our home that our education comes first.

I am very close to my mother, more than any girl at home, and she used to tell me that I remind her of herself when she was my age. My mother would rely on me to go with her everywhere to finish shopping and take care of the house requirements. I grew up seeing mother dealing with men on many occasions. She did it in a way that everybody respects her, and she has a great deal of self-confidence. She would always take my older brother and me



when she went out to run errands. She would never go out without taking my brother because the society does not think highly of women going alone without a male companion. Of course being an Indian widow doesn't make things any easier.

I was very shy in school and I rarely participated in any activities, mainly because I was not chosen for any roles. I always felt that it wasn't fair to be treated differently because of my mother's origin; I was ashamed of this fact. I was very angry at my teachers because they should be better than this. My mother, however, was open-minded and she never let that affect her personality. She would always come to school to ask about our performance and development. Although I appreciated her following up with my studies, I was embarrassed about her coming regularly to school because this would only highlight the fact that I am half Indian so I would make any excuse not to be in the same room with my mother at school.

When I was old enough to be in high school I had to move to another school where the teachers did not know me. I met with some students from outside my neighborhood, and I met my friend Shamma in particular. Shamma came from a Bedouin family and; we clicked. She encouraged me to be more active. Shamma came from a strong tribal family, and she was well respected and loved by the teachers and the school management. She used to tell me that she hated being different and being treated as different all the time. Maybe that's why we clicked together. We were different and similar in our own ways. Shamma had a very good relationship with school management. Shamma had no choice but to participate in all the activities because she came from a strong family and people would expect her to represent the school in the community and in important competitions. Being with Shamma made me feel different and she used to insist that we say hi to the school management and ask if they needed assistance with anything. Although I joined the science section and I was very busy with my studies, I would enjoy helping with some small tasks, like preparing some PowerPoint presentations, help decorating with the theater club, supervising younger students

on field trips and even participating in the morning broadcast. I was still nervous about telling anybody about my mother's origin. I used to feel that I had no identity and I would always be referred to as the Indian daughter. Since I proved myself with the school management, they started to rely on me and trust me with many tasks. Even now after I graduated from high school they still call me and ask me to help on some occasions.

### *Life at the college (Aisha)*

When the time came to apply for college or university, I chose Al Ain University as my first choice because Shamma decided to go there. She originally wanted to join the engineering section but she could not because of her family, so she decided to join the education section. Because Shamma is coming from a Bedouin family, they frown upon working in a mixed environment. They believe that engineering is not a good option for a young lady. I wanted to join Al Ain University because of her, but my mother wanted me around since I was very close to her and she would feel more comfortable that way. After I thought about it, I decided to join the Higher Colleges of Technology in Ras Al Khaimah.

My personality changed since I joined the Ras Al Khaimah College. Nobody knows me and I was surrounded by lots of girls from all over Ras Al Khaimah (RAK). I was shocked to know that they are many girls like me who have Indian mothers, but they were very proud of it and not ashamed to show it. They even had their own circle because they are multilingual, fluent in an Indian language as well. I don't know how to speak Indian because my mother was born and raised in the UAE, and she was careful to speak to us in the Emirati dialect so we would not be different from other children.

For the first time in my life I felt that I could fit in somewhere. Although my best friend was not with me, I was confident and amazed by the number of clubs and activities that are available for students. I was very interested in trying everything, so I joined many clubs and I

spent most of my day at the college. I would stay to participate in different clubs even when I did not have classes. I joined the media club, the photography club and the Korean club. I enjoyed being active and I got a lot of support from my friends. During the second semester of my first year, the student council advisor, Miss “Hana”, recognized me and asked me to join the students’ council as a member. I heard about the council when I first joined the college, but I did not consider joining because I thought only certain girls were allowed to join. I thought it is like the council back in high school where only popular girls or girls with prominent family names could join. I felt privileged that Miss Hana asked me to join, so I kept telling myself that she must have seen something special in me that no one else has seen. I attended the council meeting as a trial and I felt comfortable with the group atmosphere and the way they supported each other. In that meeting I had a glimpse of what is happening at the council, how they work as a team to prepare for different activities and occasions. I asked about how to become a member and it was not complicated. The only other requirement was to regularly attend the council meetings and participate in the activities. It goes without saying that being a good student and keeping good scores is also an important criteria in being a member of the council. The council advisor would keep track of our academic progress and our commitment to the council meetings. If a member missed three meetings without a valid reason, she would be given a warning then asked to leave the council if her attitude did not change.

When the college administration approached us to make a decision about our major, I talked to my family and my best friend who know me very well. We have been together for 6 years; we have so much in common. Although my friend could not study what she wanted, she encouraged me a lot to study engineering (Mega Electronic It was the first time to run this program at RAK Women’s College, and we will be the first female graduates which would give us better job opportunities. I also prayed and everything seemed to be in favor of

studying engineering. When I want to make any decisions I think about its implication to my future; if it will give me better opportunities and open new doors. I had a very good childhood, but I always wanted to be better and offer my future family better conditions. I always think about giving my children a role model that they can follow and learn from. I want them to be proud of me and think of me as an inspiration.

In my opinion family, friends and society are the strongest factors that affect girls' decisions, especially at this time of their lives. However I don't think it's the case for men in my society. For example, my eldest brother finished his high school then moved abroad to do his Bachelors in Aeronautical engineering in UK. My other brother chose to finish high school then work, although my mother encouraged them both to complete their studies and then get a job. My second brother's choice to forego university, get a job and then get married was not what my mother wanted. However, since he was a man there was not much that she could do, and he was very stubborn. Nasser worked for 2 years, got married, had 3 children and now he is doing his bachelor's degree. Even if my family is so supportive, society still has some influence. You cannot fight everybody, and sometimes you need to go with the flow.

#### *Leadership Perspective (Aisha)*

Aisha's personality started to change since she joined the college; she became more vocal, and was able to speak up and voice her opinion. Having to start fresh in a new place where no one knows her and where there were no unrealistic expectations, gave her confidence to be a new person.

I felt privileged to be asked by Miss Hana to join the council committee, and my first year was very exciting for me. Meeting new members from the council and being guided by the older members was a great experience. I was very impressed by the council president; she was very supportive and had great relationships with all the

council members. Additionally, she was very inspiring and led by example; everybody was excited to work under her leadership. Although I was still new and I did not have many accomplishments with the council, she would take the time to ask about my studies and would ask me to refer to her if I had any concerns or questions. In the first year, every new member was paired with a senior member to provide the guidance and the support during and after each activity. My mentor was amazing; she was very supportive and took good care of me. I always felt comfortable seeking her guidance, and she would call to ask about my progress even outside of the council. The former council president was very supportive and led by example. I was very impressed by her personality and I decided that I wanted to be like her someday.

I never thought of myself as a leader, but some students look at me as one. This has inspired me to become a good leader. This is my second year at the council, and I was nominated by the group to be the media representative. I am leading the media team to represent the council in all kinds of media related activities like social network, taking photos and preparing articles. I enjoy this position a lot because media is my favorite hobby and I got to practice and enjoy it at the same time. Council members look and think highly of me. They see me as an honest, fair and kind person. I have a great relationship with all the council members even the new ones. I learned a lot from the former council president and I started following her steps. I have been able to support and guide new members while maintaining a good relationship with senior members. I earned my place in the council and I have a voice now. In each meeting, members expect me to contribute ideas and offer an opinion. They would look my way to get my approval and that felt good every time.

## *2. Amani's Story (Former council member)*

Amani is an HCT graduate from the Education Department who is working currently as a first year teacher at the Ministry of Education. Amani is an only child to a very dedicated mother. Her parents divorced when she was at a very young age, and since then she has been raised by her mother.

I grew up with my mother at my grandmother's house, and I rarely saw my father while growing up. Although I am an only child I was raised among my cousins who felt like brothers and sisters. My mother is working as an English teacher in the Ministry of Education and I was inspired to join the education field by her. My mother taught me to be independent and take care of myself, where all the mothers will fight to have their daughter go to the same school they teach in. My mother thought that I should have my own identity and fight my own battles in order to find my own way. She did not want me to be treated differently by others being the teacher's daughter, and I am very thankful for her decision.

My mother had to go through many challenges in life being divorced, raising a child while still working and shining as a teacher. She is well loved by her students and her colleagues. When my parents divorced, I was very young so I cannot remember much about this period in my life. My mother had a degree in teaching but my father did not allow her to work, which was one of the reasons that led to the divorce. After the divorce, my mother felt that she needed to be strong for both of us, so she became a teacher and was financially responsible. My mother's family was very supportive as well, but she really wanted to be a role model for me. I never felt different from any other girl because I had the full support of my mother and her family.

Amani is very close to her grandmother who was considered the leader of the house.

My grandmother is the anchor for the whole family; she has a very strong personality and we would all call upon her wisdom in different situations. We all live at my grandmother's big house with her two sons and their family, my mother and me . My grandfather passed away when I was sixteen and he was a very supportive and kind man.

### *Amani's Childhood*

Amani grew up in a very supportive family who believes that a woman is very capable and a valuable member of society.

Being raised by a divorced mother has its good and challenging sides. Since I was an only child, I had my mother's full attention and support, and I feel that I have had many father figures growing up. My late grandfather and my uncles raised me as their own, and that's why I felt very lucky and special growing up. It was not so easy for my mother as the culture in the UAE is not very supportive of divorced mothers. They blame the women for the failure of the marriage, so my mother had to work harder to prove to herself and others that she is as good as any man in the family. My mother insisted that I go to study in private schools and she paid for everything just so I would not feel less than others or disadvantaged in any way. Going to private schools had a great affect on shaping my personality because they focus on involving the students in many activities, and it also helped to develop my English language skills. I was the only girl in the family who went to private school until K12, while my uncles all decided to take out their daughters from private schools when they reached K6. Because private schools are mixed gender, it was uncommon for girls to go to mixed schools. My mother felt that private school would provide me with better

opportunities and more exposure to friends from other nationalities. I was very active in school and I joined many activities, like sports, debate clubs, camps and students' association. I was always chosen as a leader by my friends and group members; sometimes I feel that leadership is very natural to me. I would always volunteer to do extra work for the community and be part of activities inside and outside the school. Because I have a strong personality and self-confidence, I would always be asked by my teachers to lead different events and facilitate group work for my friends. I wanted to make my mother proud; she was putting so much hope in me. Moreover, I wanted to prove to my father whom I rarely saw, that he missed having me as a daughter, and that he missed the opportunity of spending time with a successful young lady. I saw my mother go through many challenges and she sacrificed many opportunities in life in order to dedicate her life for me. She even turned down many marriage proposals just so I would not have another man who might not be so kind to me or deprive me from opportunities to be different.

I was empowered by all the women in my family to reach my potential and fulfill my dreams. I always knew that I would end up being a teacher like my mother, and when the time came to decide upon higher education I chose RAK College. Perhaps I made this decision because it offers an education major, and I wanted to be near my family. I enjoy the safety and support I feel from family, and the program at HCT offers ongoing learning when future teachers are going to schools regularly each semester, not like other universities when they only go the year before graduation.

### *Life at the College (Amani)*

Amani was very excited about going to college and she was among the direct entry students who skipped their foundation years and went directly to the Education program.



Life at college was nothing new to me because I am used to being taught by teachers from different nationalities, and I am used to assignments and projects. So when other students were struggling to fit into the new transition phase, I knew exactly what I wanted to do. I wanted to be part of the students' council association. When I was still a high school student, I was involved in many activities with the college, like participating in health week, theater club and some of the workshops done during the summer. Thus, I was familiar with many of the employees at the students' services area, so I was not intimidated to go and ask and explore what kind of activities they offer to their students. I remember walking directly to the supervisor asking her what to do to be a member at the student council, and I could see that she was surprised by my confidence she then asked me to come again and tell her why I want to join the council. I went home very excited and I remember preparing a plan for the whole year of different activities we can do at the college and outside the college. I know I am a very capable person, and I have the experience and the work ethic to succeed. I was there first thing in the morning waiting for Miss Aamna to show her my plan. She was very impressed by my commitment and she told me that I have to go fill an application and do an interview before I can join.

My first year at the college was very exciting; I was doing well in my study and being considered as a very active member at the council. By my second year my grandmother started to get very ill and that affected all of our family. Since my mother is the only daughter, she had to take leave from work and travel to the US with my grandmother for treatment. That was the first time that I had to be away from both of them. By the end of that year my grandmother passed away and that almost destroyed my mother. I was not used to seeing my mother weak as to me she was the strongest woman on earth, and to see her like that affected me profoundly. I felt that it

is my time to pay her back and take care of her until she processes her grief and moves forward. Because I was very busy with family issues, I considered quitting the council and focusing only on my studies. Yet, because of the encouragement I had from my mentor at the council, I was able to continue.

Amani was a very active member at the council and she talked a lot about the projects and activities she was involved in as part of the council or volunteering.

I could see my value to the council; soon after I joined I was encouraged by my colleagues to take a leadership position, so in my second year I was already the marketing and community relations officer who is responsible for all the communication inside and outside the council. This helped me a lot to build my self-esteem and enhance my communication ability. I was also invited to join some faculty and management meetings as a representative from the council. Students from the college started to approach me with ideas and questions about the council.

#### *Leadership Perspective (Amani)*

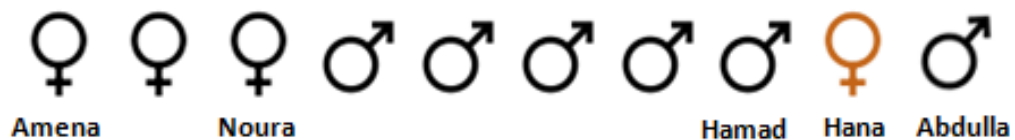
Before graduating from HCT Amani was presenting high level of relational leadership as described by Komives (2005), as a college student she knows how to apply theoretical leadership knowledge, understand and acknowledge others differences, and understands sense of self within her social context. Amani talked about her leadership journey, developing from emerging leader to experienced leader.

Studying in private schools that support students' participation in extracurricular activities enriched my experience. I view myself as a very lucky Emirati girl that had strong positive support from her family and her school. Participating in activities helped to build my personality; I am used to dealing with people from different

backgrounds who have different ideas than mine. I enjoy working with groups because I get to meet new people and listen to their ideas and develop myself. I started with an idea that as a leader you need to please everyone and make sure they are happy, and now I know that leadership is not about making people happy. It is more about utilizing their skills to achieve goals and empower people to reach their potential.

### 3. Hana's Story

Hana is a 20 year old lady who was born in a large family of nine brothers and sisters; she has three sisters and six brothers, and she is the youngest girl in the family surrounded by many brothers.



Hana speaks very fluent English and when I asked her about her English she commented proudly that I love English, and reading in English had a great impact on her English language development along with watching English TV programs. Hana chose to do her interview mostly in English, and she did not have any challenges expressing herself in a second language.

There is a big age difference between me and my older sisters. We are very connected together as a family; I am very close to my two brothers Hamad who is one year older than me and Abdulla who is one year younger. They understand the nature of my study and that my generation is different than my older sisters' generation. For example, when I ask my family for permission to go to Dubai Men's College as part

of my duties as a student council member my older brother argued against it and refused to let me go saying that “we never allowed your older sisters to go before, why should we say yes now?”. However, when I approached Hamad or Abdulla, and told them how much I want to go, and that this trip could contribute a lot to my dreams and future they were very supportive because they are younger and understand how things are different now. So after I got their approval, they helped me convince my other family members. So my strategy was to get them to my side then they could apply pressure to my other brothers until I got what I needed.

About my sisters I feel closer to my sister Noura because she is open minded, although the age gap is over 10 years. Amena and Aisha used to be straight A students. My sister Amena graduated first in her class from Al Ain University, and she graduated with distinction Moreover, she was the youngest employee in her office. She did many TV interviews because she was an exceptional student and worker. She was even offered a full scholarship to an American university to complete her higher education, but my family did not approve of it. They were not as flexible back then as they are now, and Amena did not have the voice and the strength to fight for what she wanted. She knew that they would say no and she simply accepted it. When I look to her, sometimes I feel sorry because she was really a gifted student and she deserved a chance to go there and discover her abilities. Her friends used to refer to her as “Egyptian or keener” because she was very focused on her studies and her grades.

When I look back to my childhood I can say that I can remember my sisters with books always in their hands. I think having them as role models had a great effect on my life. I grew up different than other kids, and I used to watch TV shows like Dr. Phil and Opra Whinfry when other kids my age were watching cartoons. Kids would

waste their time playing, but I would prefer to sit quietly reading a book. My friends used to make comments about me acting like an adult most of the time; I could not help it since I hated wasting my time on playing stupid games or watching cartoons. I was not popular when I was at school, maybe because I chose to isolate myself and focus on other hobbies like reading and more reading.

### *Hana's Childhood*

Hana grew up in a very challenging environment; her mother was diagnosed with cancer when she was only 3 years old. She had been in and out of the hospital for most of Hana's childhood.

I am lucky to have many older sisters who took really good care of me, but all I really wanted while growing up was to have my mother around. My mother is Egyptian and she doesn't have family here in UAE and my father is always busy at work, so we had to take care of ourselves since my father is not close to his family. All of my father's family live in other emirates and we don't communicate with them. My father prefers to stay alone, and he raised us not to communicate with them. I know we have a family, but I did not even meet them before. I grew up to be very independent, and even as a kid I used to dress myself and prepare my own food for school. When I was in grade one, I would go to class messy because my other sisters were not much older than me and they had to take care of themselves as well. My teacher in grade one thought that I had been abused and neglected as a kid and she wrote a report to the school social worker who in turn called home to ask my parents to come to school. My mother was in hospital back then and again my father could not attend because he had a very demanding job. Because there was no communication with the school from my family, they started to think that I was not safe, so I was called for many interviews asking about how I was being treated at home. Finally, when they

understood the whole story from my older sisters, the nagging stopped and the school was beginning to have a better understanding of my family situation. When my mother was out of the hospital, everything would go very smoothly and I would feel like a child again- very precious and valuable. She would always tell me how proud she was of me, and how she felt that I was a very capable young woman. However, her health would relapse and she would go to the hospital again. Because of my mother's health, I grew up to be very independent. I took care of myself, I didn't ask for help with my studies, and I even saved money in order to buy the things I needed. When other kids took things for granted, I paid for most of my stuff (my first mobile, my first laptop, my first car).

Because I had a lot of time alone, since my sisters were busy with their studies and taking care of house chores and my other sister as I said I have a big family, I would sit at my room quietly and learn English. When I realized that I had good English skills, I started learning Korean. I bought all the CDs and DVDs from my own pocket and from the allowance I received for getting A grades. Where my sisters would spend their allowance on accessories or makeup, I would spend mine on books or learning materials. By the time I graduated from high school, both my English and my Korean language were quite strong. I can't remember having many friends during school as I was always busy reading or thinking of bigger issues. Participating in activities was not a priority to me; I had a bigger dream, which was to travel to Korea to study there. I was always aware of challenges, but my mother believed in me. After graduating from high school I decided to go to RAK College, and I did not want to leave my mother and go to Al Ain University; I knew exactly what I wanted to do, and this was to study in HCT and chose IT as a major.

### *Life at the college (Hana)*

When Hana joined the college, she was not interested in joining any activities. She had a clear goal in mind which was to get higher grades to make her mother and family proud and to join the IT section. Hana was always at the library, reading or doing her assignments quietly when one day she received an email from the student services department that caught her attention. The college was advertising for the Korean language club.

When I received the email, I went directly to ask about the club, when and how I could join. That was the first college activity, but it certainly was not the last. Since then, I was nominated to be the president of the Korean club, and I joined the student council as a member. I also participated in many social activities at the college. I was then nominated by the college to join the Youth Ambassador program and represented my country in Korea. I am very grateful for the college management who supported me and believed in me because I would not have had the courage to apply on my own. I know my family would never even consider the idea, but when I passed all the interviews and I was highly recommended by the program, the student services supervisor talked to my family and asked them to consider this opportunity.

I believe that my parents have different ways of treating the boys and girls in our family. They are more tolerant and lenient with the boys. They can do whatever they want whenever they want to without the need to ask for permission. However, the girls are limited in the things they can do. For example, my older brother had all the support from my family to travel abroad to UK to finish his studies, while my older sister was denied this opportunity. Another example is my youngest brother Abdulla was offered a Fulbright scholarship to study in America at NASA, and my family were very supportive, they even urged him to go to explore it, but when I discussed

the opportunity to study in Korea it was very difficult and I had to fight a lot before I got them to even consider the idea. Perhaps the problem had to do with the fact that I was the first female in my family to do this. There was another factor which contributed a lot to my family decision which is “what would the people and community think of a young lady who is traveling alone?”. The youth program was very supportive and they offered accommodation and airfare to one family member to accompany me during this month, but even with this proposal I had a very hard time convincing my father that I am a very responsible person and that this opportunity will open new doors and possibilities for me in the future.

I grew up having a very kind and supportive mother. I can approach her and talk to her about anything, and she would just listen and support me with different decisions. However my father is very strict and he doesn't say “yes” to things very easily. When my friends at school would want something they would approach their mothers and they would help convince their fathers to agree to certain things, but in my family not even my mother could talk to my father about anything as she didn't have much say in family decision making. Things run differently in our house, for example, when you wanted to buy something for yourself, you had to speak to dad directly about it. When I needed permission to do something, my father would ask for my presence and I would have to talk to him directly to explain my situation and why I wanted to do it. Of course I had to go through a long list of questions and give many reasons, and then if I was lucky and persuasive enough I would receive approval. After years of doing this I know now how to approach him and how to get his support. I believe that my family perspective about the capability of women changed a lot with modernization of the UAE.



It was only when my brother Hamad decided to travel with me to Korea, my father agreed to let me go. Hamad had to take leave of absence from his work to travel with me. He encouraged me to go, and he told me how proud he was of me to be chosen as the youth ambassador for the UAE. Sometimes my father can be very protective and he would object on certain issues not because he doesn't trust me. On the contrary, he thinks that I am very capable, but he is worried about what others will think of a young lady who will travel alone for 3 months. I can always count on Hamad for support, and I am lucky to have him as a brother. My family is more flexible now when it comes to participating in activities and traveling abroad. I mean that I am still not allowed to travel without a male companion, but I can at least pursue opportunities and dream. When my father realized that I learned a lot from the last trip, he allowed me to go an additional three times to Korea, and one of them was alone for three weeks. Now the Youth Association is negotiating a sponsorship program for me to do my Masters degree in Korea, and they will take care of everything including the internship at Samsung main headquarters.

#### *Leadership Perspective (Hana)*

Hana is a task oriented person who is very organized and passionate about her learning. She believes that leadership is about empowering others to do better, and that it challenges them to break their shell and explore other possibilities:

Before joining the college, I was a very shy person who never participated in any activities. I was very overwhelmed by the number of activities and possibilities that were offered at the college level. Emirati women are very lucky to have this enormous support from their government and college management. The college clubs and internship opportunities are countless, it just needs more promotion. I mean students

are not even reading their emails, so they end up missing countless chances to develop themselves.

When I joined the Korean club, I learned a lot about Korean culture and since I have strong language skills as a self-taught learner, other students saw me as inspiration and a leader. I never thought of myself as a leader or inspiration before. That gave me the confidence to work harder and participate more, and I was very motivated by my achievements. Then second step was to be the president of the club and communicate with Korean families as guest speakers to come and share their culture and experiences with the club members. I was asked to join the student council as well and I feel that I contributed a lot in empowering other members through leading by example and guiding the new members.

Since I was strong in both English and Korean, I started translating some documents for the embassy, and this provided me with my own pocket money. Being independent at this age is very unusual to Emirati ladies since the vast majority of us grow up depending on our families until we get married, and then our husbands will continue supporting us. For me going through this experience changed me a lot. I appreciate work and I know how to handle money. I enjoy spending my own money and taking care of myself. Even when my family offers to help, I would refuse their assistance. Recently I was able to save enough to buy a used car. I enjoy the amazement on other faces when I share my story. I am proud to talk about my experience and the challenges I went through in life. In effect I'm letting my friends know friends know that they are very lucky to grow up in this county and that hardship can make us stronger. When you grow up needing your mother and she is not there, and when you look for your father and he is always busy, you learn how to become dependent on yourself. When you have to save your own money just so you

would never ask others for help, even your parents, you learn how to appreciate opportunities. When I think that my government is paying for my education, I feel ashamed for not doing my best to excel so I can give back and make a positive difference to my country and community.

When I was nominated to represent my college and country as the youth ambassador in Korea, I felt the pressure to step up to this opportunity. I was expected to be the first student at RAK colleges to join this program and I had to go through series of interviews, training sessions, and long trips to Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Yet, I was committed to pass and be the first RAK college student to achieve this. Meeting with other students from other emirates and international students changed the way I think about things and made me understand that leadership is not always about making others happy, it's about utilizing your potential to reach a common goal. I would always be nominated to be the leader in every team I joined, and I would enjoy organizing and delegating tasks. However, after I returned from Korea I started to step down and allow others to take on responsibilities. I want them to try new experiences, and I realize now that by giving them time to try they might find themselves like I was able to. I believe that as Emiratis we need to help each other through sharing success stories and empowering young ladies to strive toward success.

I am very proud to be the youth ambassador of UAE on Korea as I was able to represent my country and change the negative image they have about Arab women. I was honored to project a positive image of an Emirati woman who is successful, educated and able to represent her family, country and culture. People used to stop me and ask me where I am from, and I would tell them proudly that I am from the UAE. They would ask questions like, am I allowed to study in my country? Am I allowed to drive? Do I have to wear Sheila and Neqab all the time? Am I allowed to travel

without a male companion? I did not expect such questions, but again people have some stereotypes about women in Arab countries, and they needed to verify whether the UAE is one of those countries. To be honest I felt pride and self-satisfaction when I saw the surprise in their eyes when they heard how privileged we are in the UAE, and the huge support we have from our government. When I see the number of women who joined the parliament field in UAE, I say to myself why not! I could be among those ladies one day. His Highness Sheikh Mohamed Bin Rashid always talks about being number one, and I believe I already took my first leap to be the first Emirati lady from southern region to represent the UAE in Korea. In addition to this, I am planning to be the first from this region to finish my Masters degree and come back as a successful educated Emirati who travelled abroad but kept the identity of her country and made her family and country proud.

#### *4. Shjoon's Story*

Shjoon is a 22 year old college student who is studying information technology as a major at Ras Al Khaimah Women's College. Shjoon is the lone girl surrounded by two boys who love her and support her, especially her youngest brother who sees her like a role model for him.



Both of Shjoon's parents are educated and finished their Bachelor degree from Al Ain University. Shjoon's Mother is from Bahrain, and she came to finish her Bachelor in Al Ain University. She met Shjoon's father in the UAE and got married after graduating:

Having educated parents had a great effect on the way I grew up. They were very supportive and always pushed me to work harder on my studies. My mother finished her Bachelor in Social Services and is working as social worker in the Ministry of Education. I am very close to my mother, and we are best friends. I am lucky to born into two different cultures; my mothers' family is very open-minded, and they believe that as women I can do anything I put my mind to. On the other hand, my fathers' family is more strict, and they think that a woman's place is in the home taking care of her children. None of my cousins from my fathers' side continued their education; they don't believe in the value of education. I am very close to my mothers' family, but I don't like to spend time with my fathers'. I feel like I am always under judgment when I am there. Typically they would start commenting on the way I dress, talk and even about wasting my time going to college. They would always remark on how being half Bahraini corrupted the way I think and act. I am sick of hearing the same thing over and over again: We don't need a degree and we don't need to work. For me, the degree is the only thing that is mine and no one can take it away from me. I want to graduate and have a decent job where I can be an active member in my family and my society. Sometimes, my fathers' family applies some pressure on him about our choices and decisions in life. I am very thankful that we have my mother to fight back and support us.

### *Shjoon's Childhood*

My mother graduated as a social worker from UAE University. She is like a sister to me perhaps because I am the only daughter in my family. Therefore, I have a very special relationship with my mother. I used to be student at the same school that my mother works in, and the expectations were always high. I was expected to participate in all the events and national celebrations to represent my class mate in the student

council at school. She taught me how to find a balance between my studies and activities. My friends used to tease me about spending a lot of time with my mother at school and home. They felt sorry for me since she was always around, and they felt that I didn't have the freedom to do things or even misbehave. For me it was a blessing having her as the social worker at the same school. She is like my closest sister as we would talk about a lot of things and we had lots in common to reflect on. My mum would never pass up an opportunity to reflect on things that happened at school, especially on common teenage issues. Maybe since I was her only daughter she wanted to make sure that I was safe and well prepared for life.

My younger brother thinks highly of me, and he views me as a role model. It's uncommon for an Emirati male to speak about their sisters, daughters or even mothers. The woman is a very sacred being in the UAE that needs to be protected and valued. My father and brothers are different; they feel proud when sharing my achievements and accomplishments. In fact, on many occasions my father would talk about my role as the president of Ras Al Kamiah Women's College students' council and remark on how proud he is of me to be active at this age.

I was brought up to be very active at school and at home, and my parents would rely on me and my brothers to decide and plan everything for our summer vacations from a young age. Going through these experiences helped me a lot and enhanced my decision making skills as well as my problem solving techniques. I think of myself as a very lucky girl. My role model is His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah. He is a passionate fair leader who believes in investing in the skills and talents of his people and empowering them to do better. Since I was a student at the same school that employed

my mother, I had to participate in most of the activities at school because I had huge expectations from my mother and her colleagues.

I was raised to think that there are no limitations to how powerful I can be, and that the fear of trying can be my biggest enemy. I believe that as Muslims we have to try harder to give a better image about Islam, especially since it's an empowering factor that helps women. I stopped going to my uncle's house once I grew up because they interpreted Islam incorrectly in that they think that to be a good Muslim is to be a good wife. I would always debate that to be a good Muslim is to be an educated mother who can understand the right meaning of Islam and help to bring forth a generation that respects education and honest work. Although I was brought up in a very open minded family, I still care about my image as a Muslim and as an Emirati; I highly respect my culture and my national identity.

### *Life at the college (Shjoon)*

I was very impressed by the former president of the council; she has a special charisma about her. Her leadership style caught my attention from the first time I saw her welcoming us on my first day of college. I told my friend that one day I will be in her place welcoming the new comers to the college. She was very confident when she addressed the whole audience and introduced herself as the president of Ras Al Khaimah Women's College. I noticed how other members approached her and asked for advice, at that moment I knew that I wanted to be in her place someday. Thankfully, I am the current president of the students' council and I hope to inspire some girls to be part of the council and be their model.

I am very motivated by Emirati mentors; I enjoy spending time with Emirati staff and faculty, and I frequently ask them about their experiences and how they became very successful. Miss Maryam keeps telling us that we owe it to our country to be better and work harder. Sometimes I would ignore my studies because I have many responsibilities at the council and it's very challenging to juggle between the two roles. When Miss Maryam notices that I am not doing well in my studies she tells me that one day I will be considered as a role model for the new students and that I have a big task of proving that Emirati women can excel in everything they do. On one occasion Miss Maryam asked me a question that was enough to make me speechless and think twice about how I present myself as a member of the council. She said "If Sheik Zayed was among us now, would he be proud of you?". That was enough to get me thinking and reflecting on my behavior and commitment to my studies and my community.

#### *Leadership Perspective (Shjoon)*

I am persuasive and have great communication skills. Everybody at the council could notice how well I can communicate ideas and encourage others. At the end of my first year at the council I was nominated by my colleagues to take the role of public relations officer for the council. This means that I was responsible for all the communication done inside and outside the council.

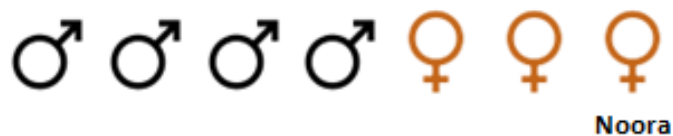
The council shaped my life; I spent more time with these girls more than I did at home. I learned how to understand them through their own perspectives. I am aware of my effect on the other members. Newcomers looked up to me and expected me to



guide and advise them. Last year I ran for president of the council, but I lost to another good leader I had the choice to be negative and leave the council, but I chose to continue and learn. It was not my time yet anyway, and I believed that being upset would break the harmony of the group which was something I hated to see. I learned that pushing back and internal fights would not get us far, so I had to learn how to work with others even if I didn't always agree with them. This year is my last year at the college before I graduate; now I realize that it's my role as the president to prepare the next leader. It's my role to strengthen the commitment of the group and encourage others to participate more at the council. I am lucky to live in a country like the UAE where women are supported by the government, family and society. I am proud to be Emirati. I don't think of myself as a leader because it is my responsibility to my family, my country and myself to prove that Emirati women can be successful and capable of making a difference.

### 5. Noora's Story

Noora is a 23 years Bachelor of Business graduate who is also a member of the alumni group at Ras Al Khaimah Colleges. Noora used to be a very active member in the student council and was a former president of the council before graduating in 2011. Noora comes from an average-size family of 2 sisters and 4 brothers who are very close to each other. Noora has a Filipino mother who was born in the Philippines but was raised in the UAE since she was a child.



### *Noora's Childhood*

I think my mother's passion for education affected me a lot. My mother finished her high school, but she had to stop college because she got married at a very young age. Even though she did not continue her studies after getting married, she would always read and encourage us to read. She would read the newspaper every day and would discuss events and politics with us. She said that to be a successful leader you need to understand what is happening in the world and know how to help your country by acquiring both knowledge and skills to be better. My mother raised me to be independent, and she told me that I can be better than her; I can finish my higher education, secure a good position and raise my family to be different. She told me that she wished she had parents who allowed her to continue her education. She told me that when she was young it was okay for a woman not to have higher education and marry very young. She used to tell me that education is my only weapon that will allow me to progress in society and will open doors and opportunities for me. I really respect my mother, although I was teased a lot when I was young and called the maid's daughter. Growing up looking like my mother was very hard especially when I was a kid; I was teased a lot about my mother's nationality, and I remember going back home crying. My father used to laugh about it and assured me that I was being silly for listening to such comments yet, he did not understand. My mother, however, used to hug me and tell me that I am very special and sensitive person, but they don't know that. She taught me to be compassionate with others and accept people for their differences. She made me realize that being different is nothing to be ashamed of. She told me that being pure Emirati is not about both Emirati parents; it's about giving back to this country and helping its people. I learned to embrace my differences, and I know that I have a unique personality, which I take pride in. I have been exposed to

two different cultures, and I was able to travel a lot and learned many lessons from my trips. When I see how I am lucky to be an Emirati I feel proud, and I want to contribute to make things even better for my country. I want to be like Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi, the Minister for Foreign Trade and be a successful role model to many ladies who aspire to be different.

When I needed permission to participate in certain activities, particularly those that were outside of RAK, I would go to my brother who would help me to explain the benefits of these opportunities to my father. All of my brothers are married and have their own children, but I still refer to them for support and advice. They used to be very strict about certain issues like going to college and participating in volunteer activities. However, they became very open minded, especially when they got married and had children of their own. They do understand that they need to empower their daughters and encourage them to succeed; my older sisters chose not to continue their studies. Although I am the youngest in the family, I was the first woman to graduate with a bachelor degree and hold a certificate in my family. Being the first was not easy; I had to fight my own battles. This meant that I had to seek my father's approval, and then get my older brother's agreement as well in order to participate in field trips that involved going outside of RAK. Looking back on my journey five years ago, I had to miss many opportunities because they were very protective and they thought that I shouldn't be any different than my older sisters. I realize that since my brothers had their own children their mentality started to change and they became more supportive of me. They were against me working in a mixed environment, but now they understand that family could make or break the personality. As a result of their support I now work in a multinational company where I deal with many

nationalities, and I have their full support and encouragement. I think the UAE is changing a lot especially because of globalization, and I am lucky to have a family that listens and adapts.

### *Life at the college (Noora)*

When my teacher at the foundation level noticed my leadership potential she asked me to join the council. Of course I was very excited to join, and with time my friends at the council started to refer to me for help even though I was one of the youngest members. Another person who really contributed to building my personality was the college's career advisor. She was my inspiration to seek new opportunities and participate in activities around the college. Unfortunately we did not have advisors at school as I would have appreciated this opportunity when I was younger.

Noora's acceptance of the college career advisor as a mentor was based on her positive experience with the career advising sessions she went through during her early years at the college and how the advisor had a strong influence on her development. She reflected on how the career advisor helped her understand that every decision counts and her choices may empower or disadvantage her in the future.

I first met Miss Shaikha when I was looking for someone to help me choose my program. She was very supportive; she listened to me and discussed the options that I had. She helped me to realize that I can take many pathways in life and that I am allowed to make some mistakes in the beginning, but I have to learn from them. I would always seek Miss Shaikha's advice when I needed an adult's opinion. I was so fascinated by Miss Shaikha's personality that I wanted to be like her in the future. She

is a successful Emirati leader who cares a lot about students and tries her best to help them. She would recommend me to join some training programs that she thought would help me develop when I faced some self-esteem issues.

*Leadership Perspective (Noora)*

When I first joined the council I was very concerned about making everyone happy in the group. Sometimes to avoid confrontation I would complete others' tasks when they failed to fulfill their responsibilities. However, as I developed during my time in the student council, and through holding positions like vice president then president, I came to understand something very important. It's not about making everyone happy, it's about making sure that every member does her task so we can achieve our goal. I am a good listener, and I have known that about myself since I was young when my friends would come to seek my advice and help about their personal issues. When we have some misunderstandings at the council, some members will come seek my advice on how to handle certain situations. I know that I am a valuable member at the council and I know that I have not reached my full potential yet, but the council will help me achieve that.

One incident that I remember particularly well took place when I had to work with a member of the council on preparations for UAE National Day. She was not taking her responsibilities seriously, and she would submit her work very late. Moreover, sometimes she would not even attend important meetings which affected my work. She would always give excuses about having exams and assignments which in part I do understand as I had my own assignments as well. That time I ended up doing most of the work alone because I did not wish to make a big deal out of it. Yet I made sure to never work with her in a team again.

As I grew at the council I became more experienced with how to deal with conflict and solve problems. In fact my fellow members used to seek my help and advice on how to deal with certain situations. I think my ability to provide solid advice to my peers came through the experiences I gained over the years, and I needed to go through those experiences and challenges in my life to learn and develop. I am lucky that I was part of the council and I am luckier to continue supporting my college as a member of the alumni.

Noora's description of Miss Maryam is characteristic of the participants' view of a successful Emirati role model.

I would always refer to Miss Maryam who used to be the president of the student council before she graduated from Millburn University and come back to teach as an English teacher. Miss Maryam is very supportive and she always makes me believe that I can solve any issue related to the council. She would ask me to put myself in others' place and think of reasons that made them act the way they do. With Miss Maryam there is no wrong answer and there is no easy answer as well; she could give me the answer straight away, but she keeps telling me that I need to grow at my own pace and figure out my own way on leadership. Miss Maryam is my role model; she proved that Emirati woman can be very successful. She travelled abroad to continue her study, and she was the first Emirati lady to join HCT. She would always refer to her students' council experience and how it affected her personality. It was she who inspired me to join the council.

## Summary of the cases

Deciding on the way to analyze the data was not easy, due to the nature of my in-depth hermeneutical approach and findings from the focus group, I had to deal with more than eight hours of detailed information from each participant. To achieve the purpose of cross-case analysis, I followed Miles and Huberman's (1984) techniques. The first step was reading through the interviews' transcripts, my own journals, the focus group notes as well as the observation notes for each case and noting the emerging themes and patterns. Throughout my second reading, I highlighted significant words and phrases that had meaning to the participants. A matrix was developed to note the emerging themes, patterns and categories within each case using color coding. Poland (2003) argues that when using coding technique the researcher should be very careful with transcriptions' accuracy by using special codes to avoid any mistakes that can happen and affect the result of the findings. I chose to "colour code" the life story of each participant based on the relevance of what was said and its relationship to the research questions (See Figure 5). I repeated the same process of data analysis with each participant's interviews, focus group, journals and the observation notes. Second, those emerging themes were compared across all the five cases. Then I developed a Cross Case Interpretation Report where I recorded all the common themes across all cases (See Appendix G).

My color-coded key categories are:

- Values, Attitudes, Behaviours, and Personal Attributes; (Blue)
- Family influences; (Green)
- Cultural influences; (Brown)
- Societal influences; (Purple)
- Peer relationships; (Red)
- Faculty/Staff/Administration Relationships/College environment; (Gray)
- Involvement; (Orange)

Examples of how I identified each case:

**Figure 5: Color code**

<b>Narrative</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Color</b>
When a student refers to herself as shy	Personal attribute	Blue
When the student talks about the support she got from her friends and encouragement to lead	Peer relationship	Red
When the student mentions the support she had from her teachers or the council supervisor	Faculty/Staff Relationships	Gray
When the student identified her mother as being a role model	Family influences	Green
When the student talks about her relationship inside the council and working on activities	Involvement	Orange
When the student mentions how it's not acceptable to deal with male student,	Cultural influences	Brown
When a student mentioned how others treated her in the school because her mother is non-Emirati	Societal influences	Purple

I compiled another list where I reported the top three influences in each category naming it Final Themes Interpretation Report (see Appendix H) The number at the right side indicates the times and stories that students share about different influences and does not represent the number of participants. The cross case analysis provided a comparison between similarities and differences across all cases. I was not searching for exact similarities; instead, I looked for relationships that connect events and statements to context and factors that could have an impact on their leadership formation.

Data analysis began shortly after my first interview, continuing until I finished collecting and analyzing all the data. Starting simultaneously with the data collection gave me the chance to make a few changes in terms of redirecting the data collection process, and refining the topic and themes (Merriam & Associates, 2002). For example, when I noticed that participants talked about their supportive brothers, I started to ask other participants about their relationships with their brothers and how it affected their leadership development. Common themes were highlighted and identified across participants' transcripts. When I thought that I reached data saturation and new categories were no longer emerging from the analysis, I



realized that the number of participants I interviewed was sufficient to collect the data necessary for the study. This meant that I had fulfilled the purpose of the study which was to understand how their life experiences affected their leadership identity development.

### **Emerging Topics and Themes**

The participants' reflections along with the observation notes reveal dynamic processes of leadership identity development. The participants were diverse in the way they view themselves as leaders, but they all agreed that being part of the students' council allowed them a better understanding of leadership and empowered them to develop their leadership identity. They also highlighted common factors that contributed to building their leadership identity and understanding about leadership like the role of family, social and cultural influences and being involved in college activities.

#### *Leadership Experience*

As the five students shared their leadership stories, I noticed a pattern in the ways they described their experiences, their drive, and what leadership meant to them. They did not view themselves as leaders; however, they understood that they were in the process of becoming one. When they talked about leadership development they referred to the group dynamic at the students' council or being a part of a group in their classrooms. Three leadership categories emerged in their stories: emerging, developing and experienced. The emerging leaders talked more about why they would like to be leaders and their motivations and role models. Experienced leaders talked more about their own understanding of leadership and how they were trying to create their own leadership philosophy. Figure 6 below summarizes the characteristics of each category.

**Figure 6: Summary of the leadership characteristic**

Category	Leadership view	Common influences	Common skills	Participants
<b>Before joining the college</b>	An adult who is always in charge of decision making	Support from parents, teachers or close friends. Join to make friendships	Start to build confidence, how to be part of a team	All the participants at early stages of their lives
<b>Emerging Leader</b>	The leader should have certain characteristics and always be in charge	Look for role models like, older peers, advisors, people from community	Start building leadership skills by involvement in activities and joining training and workshops	Aisha
<b>Developing Leader</b>	Evolving view of leadership from positional to leadership as a process	Peers and mentors. Leader as a facilitator, sharing responsibilities, members' involvement	Involved in leadership activities, encourage members to work together to achieve goals. Learning and practicing some leadership concepts.	Hana & Shjoon
<b>Experienced Leader</b>	Leadership is part of who I am. Leadership is a process in which we all achieve goals and grow	Paying back to the country, making the world a better place. Empowering others, desire to leave a legacy	Help mentor other members, more confident about leadership abilities. more comfortable working with other diverse people across contexts	Noora & Amani

### *Family*

The participants spoke a lot about their parents, relationships with brothers and sisters, the way they were raised and how those factors contributed in the formation and development of their leadership identity. They all spoke of being raised in a very supportive home where their parents worked hard to offer stability and better opportunities for their families. Even Aisha and Noora, who were raised by their mothers, shared the same comments about being valued and cared for while growing up. All felt the attention and support of their brothers which gave them self-confidence to deal with male council members and more strongly pursue different opportunities in life. These results are consistent with Madsen (2008a, 2008b, 2010), who argue that Emirati brothers have great influence in helping emerging women leaders deal

with male companions through offering advice and help on how to deal with them in a professional way.

The Emirati fathers' attitudes are unique when compared to the norms of most families within the culture (Madsen, 2008a, 2008b, 2010). It is interesting that most of the participants attributed their developmental opportunities during childhood and youth to their parents' openness and vision for them. It seems that the fathers' occupations and experiences in traveling and seeing other cultures may have influenced their decision to allow their daughters opportunities that most other Arab women did not have. The women also described their fathers as educated, smart, supportive, and caring. Another common theme that was shared by four of the participants was having non-Emirati mothers and how that affected their leadership development and understanding of leadership. Four of the participants studied at public schools and they commented on lack of leadership activities in their schools. Meanwhile Amani, who studied in private school, was more privileged to participate in many leadership activities and events which had a positive impact on her self-esteem and confidence.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Chapter five will provide an analysis and interpretation of the data and themes that emerged from across the case analyses and other data collection sources. The chapter will be providing a description of contextual information to readers not familiar with the United Arab Emirates and the Higher Colleges of Technology. The first section will describe the higher education system in the UAE and the Ras Al Khaimah Women's College which was chosen as the site of this study. This setting is particularly crucial to my research due to the role Emirati women play in the HCT system and HCT's active role in the Federal government's Emiratization process. Section four will investigate a number of factors that have an influence on the participants' leadership identity development: 1) personal attributes; 2) family influences; 3) cultural influences; 4) social influences; 5) involvement in leadership activities.

#### **Higher Education in United Arab Emirates**

Higher education in the UAE consists of public, semi-public, and private organisations that offer various certificates and degrees starting from a diploma to the doctoral level. At the bachelors' level, student education is supported by the UAE government, which is why all public universities are open only to Emirati students at the undergraduate level. There are three public higher educational institutes: Al Ain University, Zayed University and the Higher Colleges of Technology. There are also 55 private higher education institutions with four year programs leading to associates and bachelor's degrees (Embassy of the UAE in Washington DC, 2009; Hijazi et al, 2008).

The Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT) was founded in 1988 in Al Ain aiming to provide technical training and vocational education to UAE nationals. The HCT consists of many colleges spread across 17 campuses throughout the country, with the central services main office located in Abu Dhabi. In keeping with the cultural norms of the UAE, the HCT system started with a vision to provide separate male and female campuses. However, in recent years the HCT has implemented male and female shared classrooms and laboratories on some campuses, and in doing so maximizing its resources and offering higher quality and equal learning opportunities. (Lipsett, 2006). His Excellency Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research; was Chancellor of the Higher Colleges of Technology since its establishment in 1988 until 2011. Under Sheikh Nahayan's direct and continued supervision and guidance, the Colleges have continued to show success and growth (Al Rawi Magazine, 2004). The HCT offers a wide range of study programs including information technology, business, health science, education, engineering and graphic arts at the diploma, bachelors and masters levels (HCT, 2008; Kamali, 2007; Raven 2011). To give an idea of the size of HCT, in 2012 it was estimated that there were more than 67,887 graduates on the job market (Shihab, 2001; Sowa, 2008; UAE Yearbook, 2013).

The official language of instruction is English, and to help prepare the students for studying, the system provides intensive foundation programs before they can choose a major for their studies. Since many of the students speak poor English upon entry, they have to go through a CEPA English test that will indicate what level of foundation the students would enter into (Clarke 2006; Findlow 2000; Syed, 2003).

### **Role of women in HCT system**

The HCT as an institution plays an active role in raising the Emiratization rate in higher education by recruiting young nationals in almost every area whether that is in administrative and operations roles or in the classroom as an educator. It supports staff by encouraging them toward continuing their studies and career development. The HCT supports the role of Emiratization of faculty and staff by: 1) increasing the Emiratization of staff and faculty; 2) developing programmes that support their academic and skills growth; 3) establishing financial support mechanisms that enable Emirati staff and faculty to improve their academic qualifications; 4) creating career pathways that allow Emirati staff and faculty to reach their full potential; 5) encouraging recruitment of Emirati adjunct faculty (HCT strategic plan 2012-2017). The HCT recently appointed five Emiratis as colleges' directors, two of whom are Emirati women who already have their PhD or are working on it. It continues to support women by promoting qualified Emiratis to senior positions in both operations and instruction, and in doing so inspires other women to work harder and stay committed to their career development. Female college students are studying in an environment that supports women's leadership and they are exposed to many role models they see functioning professionally on a daily basis.

Ras Al Khaimah's campuses have the best record for hiring Emiratis. According to the *National* (2011) and the HCT website (2011), twenty four per cent of its staff are Emirati, including six per cent of its teachers and half of its administrative staff. Following the higher education strategic plan of the UAE, each college director is given additional funds to hire four Emiratis each year, covering their salaries for the first year, after which time the colleges include them in the general budget. Most of these Emiratis are women because they are highly educated and they do not have the flexibility to find a job outside of Ras Al Khaimah.

However, men have more options to pursue employment in other Emirates, especially in Abu Dhabi.

### **The Context of Ras Al Khaimah Women's College**

Ras Al Khaimah Campus, in the northernmost emirate of Ras Al Khaimah (RAK), was founded in 1993 and is considered to be the first federally funded higher education institute in RAK. This federal institute was established to attract and retain national students and graduate them with the skills they need for the labour market (Kamali, 2007). Over the last 20 years, the Ras Al Khaimah Colleges have graduated thousands of students who are currently performing professional roles in a multitude of organizations within the public and private sectors in the UAE.

Ras Al Khaimah is limited in terms of higher education options for students. It has only one public or federal institute, which is the HCT, and only two private organisations where students pay tuition. The HCT has two campuses in RAK, one for women (RKWC) and the other for men (RKMC) with equal facilities. In some cases, one campus may offer a program not on offer by the other, and in this case mixed classes are offered on occasion, as well as classes for students living in the remote areas near Fujairah, the neighboring emirate. However, the HCT is limited in terms of majors and program choices due to the relatively small population and job market needs compared to Dubai and Abu Dhabi. RAK colleges offer the following majors:

**RKWC:** Business, Education, Media, Information technology and they recently began offering an engineering program for female students.

**RKMC:** Business, Engineering, Media and Information technology. (HCT website)

## **Discussion of Emergent Themes**

Seven themes were identified from the data as the main influences that had an influence on the students' leadership identity development: 1) personal attributes; 2) family influences; 3) cultural influences; 4) social influences; 5) peer relationship; 6) mentor, faculty, staff and administration relationships and the college environment; 7) involvement in leadership activities. All of these themes are closely related to what the participants understood to be the Emirati women's definition of leadership which consists of: democracy, being passionate and successful at work, having a vision, having a sense of role and responsibility, and the ability to give back to the UAE. These themes are considered most common in the literature on leadership and Emirati women (Adam, 2003; Darwish, 1998; Randeree & Chaudhry, 2012; Randeree & Ninan, 2011).

### *1. Personal Attributes*

Since I am studying leadership from a social and psychological perspective, it is important to explore how participants understand themselves and leadership identity in relation to their social location in society. Each participant had a unique conception of leadership; however, there were common personal attributes that were shared between them in relation to their leadership identity development like: a) concept of leadership; b) self-awareness; c) self-esteem; d) mental construction of experiences; e) self with others.

I noticed that they are at a different level of leadership development and they have some similar characteristics and some differences regarding their leadership understanding and growth, so I rated them as following: emerging, intermediate, and high (see figure 7).



**Figure 7: Personal attribute**

<b>Personal attribute</b>	<b>Aisha</b>	<b>Hana</b>	<b>Shjoon</b>	<b>Amani</b>	<b>Noora</b>
Self Awareness	Emerging	Intermediate	High	Very high	Very high
Self-Esteem	Emerging	High	High	High	High
Mental constructions of experience	Emerging	Intermediate	High	Very high	Very high
Self with others	Emerging	Intermediate	High	Very high	Very high
Engaging in reflective thinking	Emerging	Intermediate	High	Very high	Very high

*Concept of Leadership*

Not all five view themselves as leaders, however, they all reported they would like to be leaders in the future and that they have many leadership skills to acquire to be influential in their community (e.g., decision making, problem solving, and conflict management). They all viewed leadership not as positional, but as a process among group members. For example, when asked about their definition of leadership, all the participants reported that leadership means being successful in what you do and to be able to inspire others to believe in your vision. Hana tended to have the same conception of leadership: “to be successful and work in a team to perform a task”. Shjoon viewed it as: “the ability to leave a print in this world and be remembered as a role model by others”.

The results of my findings support Komives’s (2007) LID model of relational leadership for college students. That is why it is very important to those students to join groups that support their leadership aspirations. When asked about the characteristics of a true leader, there were three behaviours identified by all the participants, which are: 1) supporting others and building relationships; 2) creating a positive environment for the members to grow; 3) avoiding conflicts, delegating tasks. Even though their view of characteristics fell into the

same categories, each understood them in a different way – evident in the classification below (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Leadership attributes**

<b>Leadership attribute</b>	<b>Aisha</b>	<b>Hana</b>	<b>Shjoon</b>	<b>Amani</b>	<b>Noora</b>
Supporting others and building relationships	High	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Creating a positive environment to grow	High	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Avoiding conflicts	High	High			
Delegating tasks			High	High	High
Empowering other members			High	High	High

The first category that reflects their most frequent and emphasized characteristic is providing support to council members, building relationships, and bringing people together. The level of this support varied from one participant to another; experienced leaders expressed more devotion to empowering other council members than the emerging and developing leaders who care more about the relationship and creating positive environment for new members. As leaders move from emerging leaders to experienced leaders they care more about tasks and empowering other members to develop and acquire more leadership skills. Experienced leaders define the support as a form of providing emotional support and offering advice when needed. Komives’ (2005) form of relational leadership among peers applies here since they are in the same age group and share the same settings, and they are dealing with similar challenges in their studies and duties on the council. Komives (2007) argues that students view groups as a “sense of place”, and they tend to search for a group that helps them develop their self image. The same principle applies here - the council members enjoy being in a group who share their ideas, a place where they can be useful and make a difference in their settings and to other members.

Shjoon, president of the Students' Council said: "my main goal as a leader of the council is to bring the members together and make them feel like a family. I make sure to listen to their input and involve them in decision making, especially the new members."

Aisha the vice-president stated: "We suggested a way to involve the new council members by using the buddy system; it's when we pair the new member with an old member from the council. I think this is a very good way to help them grow and feel the support from the old members".

Hana commented: "At the end of each academic year we plan a gathering for the council to celebrate our achievements, and it's a good time to sit and chat. We also invite parents, management and students to highlight our best moments and seek ideas from everybody".

For the second category, creating a Positive Environment for the Members to Grow, all participants emphasized the great support and the positive atmosphere they have at the council. Being involved at the council and exposed to many leadership courses helped developing the participants' leadership competencies; they developed an awareness of the importance of developing their abilities. Experienced leaders showed more maturity in the way they think about leadership concepts; they also could see themselves as mentors for new students at the council. They also shared their vision of phasing out their leadership roles before graduating to ensure that the new leaders are capable of handling new roles in the future. As illustrated in Amani's comments: "During my final year acting as a president of the council, my aim was to inspire other members to take more active role at the council and prepare them so one of them would be able to fill my place when I graduate".

The third category, *Avoiding Conflict*, is another common theme when the participants talked about the leadership development process. When asked about how to deal with conflicts within the council group, I noticed that the participants tended to avoid conflicts and confrontation. New members like Aisha and Hana wanted to keep harmony within the group even when it meant taking on others' responsibilities. They felt that it was their responsibility as a part of the group to keep peace rather than to hold others accountable for their mistakes. Sacrificing the self for the benefit of the group will be discussed in more depth in the cultural section, since it was obvious that culture influenced this part of their leadership identity.

### *Self Awareness*

When talking about themselves, the participants referred to the self as part of the group, which also supports Komives's LID model (Astin, 1993; Cress, et al, 2001; Kezar & Moriarty, Komives et al., 2003, 2004 2000; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tromprnaars & Hampden, 1998; Rogers, 2003; Rost, 1993). The participants understood that leadership requires being able to communicate and socialize effectively with other members inside and outside the council. Aisha reflected on this as a way to "break out of her shell, and use her voice" but for others, it was awareness that they were natural social beings. Amani stated: "the college helped me develop a sense of independence that enabled me to find my voice and articulate what was important to me, being part of the council enhanced my leadership skills and my knowledge about myself". The participants were able to recognize parts of their unique personalities and skills and they were searching for a way to use them in a way to help others and leave a positive print at the college. During the in-depth interviews I noticed that the participants were very articulate when it came to talking about their values, beliefs, attitudes and emotions. Furthermore they showed a remarkable mental construction of experiences they went through at the college, and they were able to connect those experiences to their development as leaders and as members of Emirati society. All the participants

commented on the value of being a member at the council and how being involved in activities added to their growing sense of self. Research on college student development demonstrates that being involved in leadership activities develops the students' cognitive and psychological development (Astin, 1985; Cress et al., 2001; Logue, Hutchens & Hector, 2005; Onorato, 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Shjoon the president of the council became very mature in her thinking. I categorized Shjoon as an experienced leader since she no longer worries about how to belong in the council, and she is now concerned more with how to develop others on the council and to inspire her peers to work harder so they can take leading positions. As the president of the student council her main goal was to prepare the next leader by offering advice and guidance when necessary.

### *Self-Esteem*

Literature on identity argues that self-esteem is an important factor that influences the female college students' leadership identity development and leadership aspiration (e.g., Astin & Leland, 1991; Boatwright & Egidio, 2003; Gecas 1982; Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983; Rosenberg, 1990; Rosenberg et al. 1995). Self-esteem refers to the degree to which female college students feel they are people of value to their peers in the college context and this is extended to how they feel their worth to their society (Gecas 1982; Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983). The participants who were categorized as experienced leaders showed high levels of self-esteem that affected how they view themselves individually and as an essential part of the students' council.

Amani: "Being the former president of the council gave me the chance to lead many successful events at the college like, poetry night, students' fashion show and students' graduation ceremony. With the help of other members we were able to make a difference on how other students view the council members. This culminated in

many students viewing the student council in a positive light, and thus deciding to apply to join the council.”

According to Brown (1994), Gecas and Burke (1995), Holcomb-McCoy and Moore-Thomas (2001) and Rosenberg (1979), self-esteem can be a strong psychological force that endorses students' social involvement, “educational achievement, popularity with peers, social competence, individual success, and personal happiness” (p.54). Boatwright and Egidio (2003), Greenberg et al. (1992), Johnson et al. (1997), Leary et al. (1995), and Lynch (2003) argue that high self-esteem is considered an important factor that affects women's leadership identity development, how female students perceive themselves and their capabilities, and how they contribute to their social settings. This is evident in Aisha's case. Several studies have demonstrated that peer support and friendship can increase the students' self confidence and provide emotional support especially during the college years since they are very critical in students' identity development (e.g., Astin, 1993; Boatwright & Egidio, 2003; Bush, Peterson, Cobas, & Supple; 2002; Giordano, 1995; Osterman, 2000; Rodgers, 1990; Sax & Astin, 1998; Wolf-Wendel, 2000). According to Aisha, this new found confidence inspired her to give more to the council and empowered her to share her thoughts at council meetings and events. “I have a voice now and I am not afraid to use it”, Aisha commented. Several experts have argued that self-esteem is a self-regulated trait that is empowered by situations and responsibilities, and if the students were encouraged to participate in social experiences they will step up to the occasion and prove themselves (e.g., Abel, 1997; Baumeister et al., 1993; Dutton & Brown, 1997; Heatherton & Polivy, 1991; Johnson et al., 1997). Hana stated: “I always challenge myself to take more responsibility as a member of the council, and it's highly motivating and satisfying when I overcome challenges.”. Miller & Winston (1990) put forth that culture and ethnic background can have a deep influence on women's self-esteem. Students are guided by the culture they grow in, which affects their psychosocial

development and eventually contributes to their leadership identity development. Culture can affect the way they deal with men, whether they are supported to pursue leadership options and the kind of activities they participate in. I will explore this area in more detail in the cultural influence section.

### *Mental Construction of Experiences*

To my surprise at this age the participants have high reflective skills; they reflect on leadership activities and decisions they make during their day-to-day activities. According to Mezirow (1998, p.23) “Reflection, or the process of critically thinking about our behavior, attitudes, beliefs and values, has been identified by many researchers as an important part of any learning process”. This reflection process gives them a chance to evaluate themselves, understand others and construct meaning from experience (Kolb, 1984; Schon, 1991). After each event, council members have a meeting where they reflect on their achievements and talk about ways to develop. As council members they are also expected to enroll in a leadership development course where they have intensive sessions that sometimes last more than three days. Here they are exposed to many leadership theories and practices and are involved in highly reflective conversations about leadership. Komives et al. (2003, 2004) argue that involving college students in leadership conversations enable them to reflect on their understanding of leadership and learn from others’ experiences. It is also a good opportunity for them to share their ideas in a supportive environment where they can connect theories to their day-to-day activities. The participants shared how much they learned from sharing and reflecting on leadership tasks and activities they are involved in. According to Hatcher and Bringle (1997), Varner and Peck (2003) and Ramsey (2002) developing the students’ reflective abilities can be accomplished by encouraging the group to get involved in

deep discussions about certain topics or practicing making journal entries based on open-ended questions to facilitate deep thinking.

Hana: “During the leadership course, sometimes we would be asked to discuss leadership theories and share our experiences. I find those assignments very useful because they will allow me to think more about leadership and transfer those theories to real life examples which I can connect to”.

Noora: “As a part of the council I had to attend a leadership training course that talked about different kind of leaders and their characters. The exercises were very interesting, but the reflection sessions were much more enjoyable than the activities. I really like to hear others ideas and perspectives, as these sessions allow me to know what others think and how they perceive information. For me knowing how people think is powerful because it enables me to predict their behaviour and allows me opportunity to utilize their strengths to help the group develop”.

Shjoon: “Being involved in leadership activities and representing the council on many occasion inside and outside HCT, gave me great opportunities to learn from others and observe how they act in leadership situations. I would always make a mental note to myself not to repeat a mistake that I noticed with one leader, or remind myself to follow some leaders’ footsteps in some situations”.

The participants had the chance to “observe” leadership in action through being involved in group activities and small tasks. They also had the opportunity to see leadership from their peers’ different viewpoints. All participants reported that they joined the council because they



wanted to develop their leadership skills and to belong to a group who shared their desire, have fun, and make a difference to RAK community and their country. Once they became actively involved in the council they began to hold positional roles and think more about how to develop and prove themselves to other members and mentors. This is evident in frequent remarks like the following: “they saw something in me”, “she could see potential in me”, “they believed in me when no one did”, “I have to prove myself to the group”, “I was committed to earn their respect”, and “I enjoy how the council makes me feel”. Shjoon, the president of the council who had been a member of the council for the past four years, is at a different stage of leadership than Hana and Aisha. She is more mature because she had more experience that helped her build her personality and deal with many situations:

“The council shaped my life; I spent more time with these girls than I did at home. I learned how to understand them through their own perspectives. I am aware of my effect on the other members. This year is my last year at the college before I graduate; now I realize that it’s my role as the president to prepare the next leader. It’s my role to strengthen the commitment of the group and encourage others to participate more at the council”.

## *2. Family Factors*

According to the findings of this study the most influential factor that contributed to the formation of the students’ leadership identities is their family. It helped shape them in a number of ways including the following discussed in this section: parents’ encouragement, mother’s influence, having a non-Emirati mother, the parents’ educational attainment and family attributes.

### *Parents' Encouragement*

All participants frequently referred to the support and encouragement of their parents and how significant it was to their leadership development, a factor recognised frequently by academics in this area (e.g., Astin, 1993; Bowen & Bo, 1998; Fiedler, 1967; Hartman & Harris, 1992). “Especially my Mother,” Aisha declared, “because I really respect her. I wanted to make her proud and I want to show her that I can be a great leader like her!” Hana commented on the direct impact her parents had on her as “they tried to encourage me to do stuff for the community and not just to think of myself all of the time”. Making their families proud was another response that was stressed and shared by all of the participants. Hartman (1999), Wells (1998) and Stephens (2003) argue that having a supportive family environment that cultivates a sense of competency and confidence in girls’ childhoods has a crucial influence on their leadership formation as women. This is evident in Noora’s description of her childhood experience: “I was responsible for planning my family trip since I was young. In the beginning, my father would urge me and my brother to choose the destination for our summer holiday. Then it was our responsibility to choose the accommodation and plan the trip, and then we were responsible for booking the tickets and hotels. I never viewed this as a challenge; on the contrary I felt I had the power to make decisions that matter and I felt the trust from my family”.

During my observation of the participants while being involved in leadership activities they often referred to support from their families. Having a supportive family that encourages their daughters to be involved in leadership activities has a strong influence on their leadership identity formation which is found in many empirical studies done at the Arab world and in international research (e.g., Beltman and Wosnitza, 2008; Gallant, 2008; Krause et al., 2005; Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; Lynch, 2003; Madsen, 2009; Renn & Arnold, 2003; Sharif &

Jamal–Ena, 2002). Madsen (2010) reports that discussing leadership in a family context and encouraging girls to participate in leadership activities has a great influence on Emirati women’s leadership development. Ainsworth (1989), Feldman (2009), Penick and Jepsen, (1992) found that when college students are supported by their parents’ trust, they are more willing to be involved in an environment that provides leadership opportunities.

### *Mothers’ Influence*

The second family factor is the mother’s influence. I noticed a common pattern among the participants - they all recognized their mothers as the strongest influence on their leadership development. Their mothers served as sources of support and encouragement, and they were solid role models for them. A number of studies have shown that women leaders reflect on the influence of their parents during their leadership development, and they emphasise the role of their mothers in installing their self-confidence when interviewed (Coutu, 2004; Hojaard, 2002; Madsen, 2008; Madsen, 2010; Matz, 2002, 2009; Robinson, 1996). All five participants reported the strong influence they had from their mothers while growing up. The culture of UAE supports this result - in the UAE fathers are expected to be the providers for the family so they spend less time at home. Four of my participants had stay-at-home mothers who were always available to take care of them until they grew up. Shjoon, despite having a working mother, described how this never stopped her from taking care of her family and that the family was always a priority to her.

### *Non-Emirati Mother*

In the early stages of piloting the interview guide, one of my participants (Amani) raised the issue of having a non-Emirati mother and how that affected her leadership development. Since then, I included a question that asks about the nationality of the mother. It surprised me

that four of the five participants have a non-Emirati mother. Those four participants commented on the advantage of being exposed to two cultures, the expectations from their parents as well as growing up with positive images of women. Literature shows that parents' expectations can have an influence on the students' social involvement and identity development (Chao, 2000, 2001; Peterson & Hann, 1999; Peterson & Leigh, 1990). As the participants talked about their past experiences it was obvious that being a minority influenced their leadership identity development. Being a minority group in UAE and using leadership to help people of their ethnicity. Although Aisha was privileged to be exposed to two cultures that are supportive of women, she grew up ashamed and bullied by others just because of her mother's origin. Aisha is not alone in this - three more of my participants reflected on their childhood memories and how they were bullied just because they had non-Emirati mothers. They spoke about how differently the community would look at them solely because they are half Emirati. Amani, who has a Filipino mother, was bullied by her peers because she looks different, and sometimes their cruelty would take the form of calling her the "maid's daughter." Being called the maid daughter affected Amani greatly, but her mother kept assuring her that she was special and one day she will be a very successful leader who is sensitive to others' needs and feelings.

Amani: "Maybe because of my mother's origin I stand out from others; I mean I look like my mother a lot as we share the same features which would always provoked others' curiosity to ask if I am a half Emirati. It used to bug me when I was younger, but not anymore. I know how to answer them and I am very proud to be unique.

Amani and the other three ladies with non-Emirati mothers realized that doing better in their studies and working hard to stand out will give them the chance to prove themselves to

society and show that they deserve to be called Emiratis. Amani shared: “Being pure Emirati is not about having an Emirati mother or Emirati father; it’s not even about speaking Arabic in the right accent. It’s about how much you love this country and how you are willing to give back when it needs you. I am lucky to be brought up in a house that support me and raised me to be different”.

I was born to an Egyptian mother myself and I understand what they spoke about. The stereotypes held in society about certain nationalities can create many challenges to children growing up. While searching for research to support my results I came across a television documentary called *Enough is Enough* (2011) that was directed by Aisha Al Hammadi, an Emirati director who chose to tell the story of five Emiratis who chose to break their silence and speak about their experiences growing up having non-Emirati mothers. She described how they were treated by society. Aisha Al Hammadi stated, "The reason I decided to come out is because I noticed a lot of people who made a big difference in the UAE, a lot of them had non-Emirati mothers. They're more creative and they do stand out." My participants with non-Emirati mothers all regarded this factor as having a significant influence on their identity development, causing them to prove themselves and show that even if they were looked at as half-Emirati in their society, they could still contribute positively in making their country a better place.

Historical records show that the rate of Emiratis marrying non-nationals was high during the 1960s because men used to travel between Arab countries for work and business (Alsharekh, 2007; Zacharias, 2013). Those Emirati men marrying women from other countries mostly chose wives from India, Egypt, and other Gulf countries. Although there are no national statistics reporting on this before 2005, other sources demonstrate that work and business

oftentimes resulted in Emirati men marrying women from other nationalities (Alsharekh, 2007; Zacharias, 2013). The National Statistics Bureau (2005) records show that the percentage of Emiratis marrying non-nationals was 27 per cent in 2005, and this rose to 37 per cent in 2011 as a result of increased globalization in the region.

Mixed marriage is a topic that is causing fear and tension now in the UAE especially since the percentage is getting higher each year (Burue, 2010). The Emirati population is very small and they are a minority in their country, representing only 16.5 per cent of the total population (Samir, 2009). According to Zacharias (2013) Emirati men tend to marry non-nationals because of the high cost of marriage. To control this phenomenon the UAE government offers financial support of up to 70,000 Dhs to help with wedding expenses. Emiratis lose this support if they marry a non-national. The UAE government advises nationals “not to marry foreign women due to social, legal and financial complications that arise following such marriages” (Zacharias, 2013). It is a commonly held view in Emirati society that foreign mothers will somehow “dilute” Emirati culture. (Zacharias, 2013). As a consequence, authorities are executing media and social campaigns to emphasize the negative side of Emiratis marrying non-Emiratis and how it might affect the culture of UAE.

According to Zacharias (2013), “The issue of identity and who you are and where you're coming from is becoming more aggressive, and people are becoming more vocal. Nationalism is definitely an issue (p.43)”. Due to this development, participants with non-Emirati mothers reflected a sense of will power, persistence and determination to earn their respect in society. My participants fight to prove themselves and to contribute in a positive way to their countries. Because they have to work harder to deserve to being called Emirati, I noticed a common set of characteristics in their character development that lead to a

leadership identity and role as discussed above in the Personal Attribute section. Al Othman (2012) argues that Emiratis with non-local mothers, or who have educated mothers, receive more support and encouragement to continue their education and to participate in public life in social, economic and political ways. He also reports that daughters of non-local mothers are more liberal in their thinking and willing to challenge the hindering structural obstacles placed by the society due to the differences in cultural origins.

### *Parents' Educational Attainment*

Many studies have shown that parents' educational attainment could have a positive impact on students' identity development (e.g., Blau & Duncan, 1967; Sewell, Haller & Portes, 1969, Haveman & Wolfe, 1995). This is evident also in the participants of this study. Amani talked about her educated father and how he keeps pushing her to do better and pursue her studies. While Aisha's father was an educated man, he passed away when she was very young, but she referred frequently to her mother's education. "My mother taught me to work hard; she taught me that my attitude can be my strongest friend or my worst enemy. My mother can read and write and she is very knowledgeable because she reads a lot. People would be rather amazed with things she knows about, and I would feel very proud of her because she taught herself how to read and write".

Among my participants, I noticed some characteristics that are common amongst educated parents. They tend to value education and understand it more, probably because their experience gave them a greater understanding of the value of an education which allowed them to more effectively support their daughters' learning. They also empowered their daughters to participate actively in decision making, especially with respect to choosing the right college program. Most Emirati parents place a very high value on their children's

education, and this is especially true for mothers, who strongly encouraged their daughters to pursue higher education. Their regard for education is based on both its intrinsic value and its instrument value in entering professions. This is based on the Islamic understanding that the educated strong Muslim is better than the ignorant weak Muslim (Nabulsi, 2014). Understanding Islam and the real interpretation of its main texts has a great influence on the way parents raise their children. I will cover the role of Islam in more detail in the cultural section of this chapter.

### *Family Attributes*

Another factor that was common among participants, despite not being quite as visible, is being surrounded by supportive brothers who are close in age and who could understand what they are going through. This actually contradicts the stereotype that others have of Arab countries (e.g., Abu Dhabi Women's College, 2006; Al Abed, Vine, & Potts, 2007; Cole, 2009; Khaleej Times, 2007; Shaheed, 1999; Madsen, 2008, 2010; Nader, 2013). The UAE has a unique culture that differs from surrounding Arab countries (Madsen, 2010; Morris & Madsen, 2007). According to them their brothers acted as empowering agents who helped them develop and grow. Where this might not be very significant factor another cultures, Emirati women can usually count on the support of their male siblings and their encouragement even in instances where they needed a travel companion in order to pursue their goals (Madsen 2008a, 2008b, 2010). This particular point is very significant for women in Arab cultures, because they do not have opportunities to interact with males due to cultural and religious norms. Their brothers and fathers are the only males they interact with until they work or get married. They go to separate schools, and have their own activities. For all participants except Noora, college was the first time they had to deal with male peers.



### *3. Cultural influences*

The UAE has witnessed a rapid development over the past few decades. This modernization has affected the country's cultural and social development (Walsh, 2010). The culture of UAE has great influence on the daily social life of its citizens: it affects the way they think and interact with each other. As discussed above the culture of the UAE affects how female students deal with their peers and their perceptions of leadership. Studying cultural influences also includes investigating the challenges and obstacles that the women go through during the formation of leadership identity. Understanding cultural context enables educators and decision makers to identify the main influences that develop leaders' understanding of social interactions and offer guidance to align their social goals with the country's culture (Schein, 1985). The culture of the UAE has also been affected by modernization that has introduced new customs that have become embedded in the social lives of the Emirati people which eventually affects the culture of UAE. According to Schein (1985, 1992), culture has a significant impact on shaping leaders and leadership identity.

Many researchers like Satin and Leland (1991), Cantor and Bernay (1992), Eagly and Carli (2004) and Klenke (1996) agreed that leadership is a socially and culturally constructed model formed by culture, social expectations in society, so it is impossible to ignore the role of society and culture on leadership development. Islam is considered the strongest influential factor that shapes the social identity of the UAE. According to Thomas (1992, p. 50), "Culture refers to the socially standardized ways of thinking, feelings, and acting that are shared by members of a society". He argues that culture has a direct influence on individuals through families, social organization and schools. According to Wilkins (2001, p.263), "Arab culture emphasizes status in all areas of society, family and work". Abdalla (2006) argues that here in the Gulf countries, people are treated differently depending on factors like

gender, position, family, age, qualifications, title, and occupation. This status-conscious culture has an effect on the structure of organizations and how decisions are made in organizations. According to Schein (1992) cultural analyses are critical to understanding how these factors influence organizations and are influenced by organizations.

According to Kets de Vries (2006, p. 175) “a nation’s character (a concept here widely constructed to include leadership style and choice of social and organizational practices) is rooted in its culture”. He argues that cultural value can be seen as the building block for behaviours and actions in society. He argued that many aspects of leadership are affected by cultural values like: the attitude toward power and authority, behaviours and patterns of interactions, style of decision-making, motivation and control, and the language of leadership. To understand the social identity of UAE, I will be exploring many cultural dimensions that shape the identity of the UAE like: “the environment, action orientation, emotions, language, space, relationships, power, thinking and time” (Wilkins, 2001, p. 212). As explained by Vries (2006) all these dimensions have something to offer when we are looking to understand the different cultural setting and leadership styles of a country. Ruth Benedict (1934/1950) suggested that individual’s psychological knowledge is shaped by different experiences in their lives. These experiences come from being exposed to the values and beliefs of their society, by being exposed to different expectations and challenges from their cultural group.

As noted by Onorato (2010), cross-cultural researches explore the importance of social identity and the effect of family relations on individuals’ life adjustments and identify development. Cross-cultural research suggests that when individuals have a better understanding of themselves, they demonstrate higher levels of psychological well-being and

better attitudes towards other groups. So it is very important to address those psychosocial factors because they can have a great influence on the relationships between individuals, and they can affect their leadership styles eventually.

In an important study, Al-Qudsi (1990) was the first to establish that family life is an essential aspect that determines women's participation in the workplace in Arab countries. He argued that it depends on the age of marriage and number of the children they have. He reported that Arab mothers with multiple children find it very hard to continue working or get promoted due to their family commitments. However, social attitudes toward young, single women are much positive since they do not have to worry about their responsibilities at home. According to Mostafa (2003 p.12) "Arab customs and norms concerning marriage and family thus influence not only women's attitudes towards work, but also wider societal attitudes about their ability to remain in work, and their ability to rise to positions of authority". With modernization, Arab society is showing a decline in the average family size, and people are waiting longer to get married compared to the past which has affected women's aspirations to strive for leadership positions nowadays (Mostafa, 2003).

According to Rugh (2007) there were three main reasons that contributed to shaping the political culture of UAE: 1) the British involvement in the affair of the tribes; 2) urbanization; 3) the wealth owned by some rulers from the discovery of oil. Power in the UAE was occupied by just a few powerful tribes, and this was always based on consultation, consensus and cajoling, except for some accessions when the safety of the tribe is endangered (Rugh, 2007). Rugh also notes that the tribal leaders gained more power by satisfying their followers, and they attempted to achieve more to secure the status of the whole tribes. Sheikh Zayed used his charismatic leadership to create the union of the seven emirates to ensure more commitment; he extended his influence to potential rivals by sharing power, wealth and arranging marriages to encourage closer relationships.

Rugh (2007) noted that individuals in the UAE have moral commitments to their personal relations-tribal, family and outsiders. This moral commitment stems from the understanding that as members of the group, individuals have the responsibility to give, not to take. Those moral commitments have a great influence on the development of individuals' identities.

*Tribal model:* the individuals' responsibility to their tribe success, to strengthen the group against enemies and have the loyalty to sacrifice all means to protect their tribe.

*Family expectations:* the family model is more authoritarian and hierarchical than the tribal model. In this model each family member has a role and responsibility which depends on factors like their age, sex and role within the family. A family member should follow their role and obey older members, and they must abide by these expectations because they define their personal relations. According to Rugh those two models establish the group feelings (group spirit) that Ibn Khaldun defined as a necessary element to the success of any group.

*Outsider model:* this model is established to protect the basic solidarity of the society. It is possible for outsiders to become family or tribal members, but they can distance themselves from any relationship and break any agreement for the benefit of the group.

Those three models work together to draw a picture of how UAE society functions. The tribal model stresses egalitarianism, the family model is related to hierarchical and authoritarian family dynamics, and the outside model shows flexibility. Those three levels influence how individuals function in society, especially as leaders. When they need to rely on they invoke the family system. When the situation requires an egalitarian approach, the leader can use the tribal model. In addition, as I highlighted earlier leaders have the right to distance themselves from any situation and use the outsider model.

Literature shows that Emirati society that have an influence on the participants' social and psychological understanding of leadership and their roles in society which eventually influenced their leadership identity development. As discussed in the theoretical framework, Geertz's (1968) approach to culture regards it as having the power to affect individuals' social and psychological understandings through the way they make sense of their surroundings and social norms. It is very difficult to separate the effects of culture from those of social norms on the psychological understanding of individuals' development especially since it includes social norms. Some researchers hold a negative image about Islam and women in Arab countries (e.g., Croft 2012; Nader 2013). However, culture should be challenged for such a view not the religion. Many authors have pointed out that Islam gives women equal rights, but it is culture and social norms that create barriers for women (e.g., Abdalla, 1996; Barakat, 1993; El Saadawi, 1997; Jamali et al., 2005; Sidani and Gardner, 2000; Mernissi, 1991). All participants felt that religion provides a support system, not a barrier to their leadership development (see stories in chapter four).

These findings demonstrate that certain cultural traditions and assumptions have an influence on how people perceive women's leadership in the UAE. These traditions are already changing with other rapid changes that the UAE is going through such as, dealing with men in general, dealing with men in the world of work, and travelling abroad to attend meetings and conferences (Atiyyah 1996; Abdallah, 2003; ADCCI, 2002; Ahmed, 2003; Al-Adhab, 1992; Madsen, 2008; Madsen, 2010; Omair 2011). However, to a certain extent there are still some restrictions and expectations that influence Emirati society's understanding of women's leadership that were shared by the participants, including the following: women's primary place is in the house domestic capacity taking care of her family; women's ability to travel abroad without a male companion, developing professional working relationships with male

colleagues, travelling overnight on business from one emirate to another. There are also cultural assumptions regarding study options and jobs that a woman can hold. Fields like engineering, aviation and business are prohibited by some families because it is implied that women will be dealing with men in a mixed environment. All five participants demonstrated an understanding of the effect of culture on their leadership development and they regarded the culture of the UAE as changing to expect more from women especially with the unconditional support they have from the government and Sheikhs in the UAE.

There is another cultural aspect that was observable and had an influence on leadership development which is “giving back to others”. This value is fundamental to the council members’ concept of leadership. All participants thought more in terms of “we” as opposed to “I”, showing what Hofstede (1997) calls a strong collectivist orientation. The UAE is predominantly a collective culture, evident in how Emiratis hold long-term commitments to the ‘member group’ manifested in family, extended family and tribal relationships. According to Hofstede (1997), loyalty in collective cultures is paramount, over-riding most other societal rules. So in collective culture people can overlook mistakes or rules just to keep harmony and maintain loyalty to the group. When students are involved in a group they show commitment to that group and they view it as a family, and the council as home. Keeping harmony is also on display through the tendency to avoid conflict and confrontation. These women do not want to upset other members or “rock the boat” since being in a group that has harmony and unity is very important to them.

There are some religious values that were common among the participants and rooted in the culture of UAE like the following: kindness, simplicity, generosity, protection and care for followers (quiwama); continuous learning and development; and “benevolence towards others (shurah). All these cultural values influence the context of women’s leadership in the UAE and the region (Metcalfé, 2006). Women’s empowerment is another cultural attribute

that affects how a society views women which can eventually ease up on some of the old perspectives that hinder their leadership development. Additionally, the UAE has an unique identity in this respect, and it is at times dramatically different from other Gulf countries where Emirati women are expected to be educated and continue their higher education. This is clearly evident when you look at the fact that 77% of women are enrolled in higher education as compared to 32% of men (HERI, 2008). I included women's empowerment as a cultural value because it became an important part of UAE culture that was initiated by His Highness Sheikh Zayed and continues to be supported by the laws, policies, and norms of the UAE (UAE Yearbook, 2013; O'Sullivan, 2008).

#### *4. Social Influences*

This section will focus more on the social aspects that effect the development of leadership identity amongst the women's college students. The following social factors were regarded by the participants to have an influence on their leadership development: the role of government policies and legislation; the role of education; citizenship; and influential role models.

##### *The role of (government) policies and legislation*

UAE government policies and legislation were perceived as being supportive of Emirati women's leadership. When the subject of women's empowerment comes to mind, Emiratis recognize the role of His Highness Sheikh Zayed in supporting the role of women in society, including leadership positions. Sheikh Zayed was very liberal towards women's rights compared to his contemporaries in the Gulf countries.

Women have the right to work everywhere. Islam affords to women their rightful status, and encourages them to work in all sectors, as long as they are afforded the

appropriate respect. The basic role of women is the upbringing of children, but, over and above that, we must offer opportunities to a woman who chooses to perform other functions. What women have achieved in the Emirates in only a short space of time makes me both happy and content. We sowed our seeds yesterday, and today the fruit has already begun to appear. We praise God for the role that women play in our society. It is clear that this role is beneficial for both present and future generations. (UAE Interact, 2008, p. 20)

The UAE is a very young country and it is difficult to find much research on the development of women's leadership (AME Info, 2005; government.ae, 2006; Mostafa, 2005). Very little research on Emirati women's leadership had been completed before November 2007, when Shaikha Fatima bint Mubarak, Chairperson of the UAE Businesswomen's Council, gave the keynote address at the opening ceremony of the first World Women's Economic Forum, which was held in the UAE (Khaleej Times, November, 19, 2007). In her speech she encouraged Emirati women to be "proactive and take their aspired role along with men in the development of their country" (p. 29). She emphasizes the high expectations they have on Emirati women and the vision they see for them: "We in the Arab world no longer want to see women standing on the margin of events. Women should work hand-in-hand with men to achieve progress and prosperity we all aspire for" (p. 29). In addition, the Minister of Economy and Planning in the UAE, H.E. Sheikha Lubna Bint Khalid Al Qasimi (2007), has argued that UAE was able to create a supportive culture for Emirati women that empowers them to construct professional roles that are culturally appropriate. In addition she believes that the UAE has built up in its citizens substantial intellectual and social capital which translates into citizens playing a stronger role in the governance and administration of the



nation. Furthermore, she contends that the UAE has been able, through all of these progressive changes, to preserve its unique cultural and social heritage.

I believe that the pace of women's empowerment is set to unfold even more quickly...By creating an environment in the UAE that enables women to be flexible in their approach to work—to choose a career path, to balance the demands of home, and the office, to contribute to the development of this nation, we are unquestionably contributing to the growth of the UAE's GDP... The benefits of having women as agents for social change through taking a more visible role in society is not limited to paid employment...Women play a vital economic role in every country in the world, including the UAE, that keeps nations like ours moving forward...These women, whether they are doctors or homemakers, are on the front lines of our community in transition. They are demonstrating that women have a voice, as well as a unique perspective, and a key role to play in the social and economic development of the Arab world. (pp. 33-35)

All participants are aware of the support the UAE government gives to women, and that gave them motivation to gain new experiences and go through challenges to prove themselves and change the image of Arab women. Emirati culture is strong in most parts of the country, and the Emirati people are devoutly Muslim providing one measure through the daily and seasonal practices that help maintain traditional social structures and practices (Al-Ali 2008; Rugh 2007).

### *The Role of Education*

Attending college opened many doors and offered many opportunities to the participants in this study. In all cases, both parents were supportive of them attending college. For them Ras

Al Khaimah College was the most suitable and appropriate place for their daughters to study. It is a federal institute that offers quality programs, a convenient location, and transportation which brings their daughters safely to and from the college each day. For all of my participants going to Al Ain University was not a good option. Amani explained, “I always knew that I would end up studying in HCT as my family was not supportive of me travelling to Al Ain and coming back only on weekends”. Similarly Aisha said “I always dreamed of going to Al Ain University to study Media, but since I am very close to my mother and she is very protective she encouraged me to stay in RAK go to HCT so I can take care of her and stay close”. Shjoon commented “Although both my father and mother are graduates of Al Ain University and they met there and fell in love, they preferred that I stay in RAK and go to the HCT especially since it offers a strong program in IT engineering which is what wanted to do all my life”.

With the changing general perception of Emirati women, and with the continuous support and encouragement of government and leaders, the UAE has witnessed a huge increase in the number of educated and employed women. By 2014 this number had reached 43% of all Emirati women (Al Oraimi, 2011; Bristol-Rhys, 2010; Maestri, 2011; Yaseen, 2010). In UAE Education is considered as “social capital that has contributed to the movement of people from a lower socio-economic class to the middle and higher classes” (UAE Year Book, 2001, p. 223). Parents in UAE are placing a high value on their children’s education especially recently with the modernism movement, because they know that education can bring lots of opportunities for a better future (UAE Year Book, 2001). The traditional view about women is changing in UAE; women are expected to be active on society and participate in political and economic decisions and not only play a supportive role for the men. This perception has changed significantly in just the last few years, especially when women joined the UAE

parliament as ministers and were able to prove themselves and represent the UAE while keeping their culture and social identity intact (Gallant, 2006; Mohsen, 1985).

### *Citizenship*

The students were motivated to participate in the council, gain experience pursue opportunities and meet challenges just to leave a print on their college, community and eventually give back to their country. Emirati women are raised to think that they owe it to their community and country to be educated and successful; they place a high value on education and on acquiring leading positions to make their families and country proud (Mostafa, 2005). The participants were driven and motivated to be positive role models for others, and to seek new opportunities that would provide them with opportunities to shine and develop. They were driven mostly by their desire to change the image of the UAE, by their Muslim faith, and by other Arab women. All participants are planning to work after college while continuing their higher education, findings that are similar to the findings in other studies (e.g., Al Oraimi, 2011; Kazim 2000; Lootah 2006). These findings are a reflection of the support they have from their families and of the high expectations they have to be active members of society.

### *Peers and Influential Role Models*

The value of hard work, determination, inspiring others to do better, and leaving a positive print on society were common characteristics that the participants deemed important in a successful leader (Astin, 1993; Astin & Kent, Gardner, 2010; 1983; Pascarella, Ethington, & Smart, 1988; Schuh & Lavery, 1983). Participants believe that those are the qualities that they expect in role models, and that is why they view their mothers as role models, ; their mothers are leaders at home, they provide support to their families, and they lead them

forward in times of crisis while keeping harmony among family members. For these reasons they refer to their mothers as leaders. I was not surprised by this result, but was surprised when I asked the participants to name role models other than their mothers and they could only come up with male role models like: Sheikh Zayed, Sheikh Mohamed bin Rashid, and Sheikh Sultan. Was this part of the culture? Or was it the influence of social factors that men are responsible for women (Qiwama)! I could not answer this question and neither could they.

### *Peers*

All participants reflected on the influence of their peers in being involved in leadership activities or clubs during school and up through their college years (Chickering, 1969; Gardner, 1996; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1999). Aisha gave as an example her friend Nahla in high school being the reason behind her joining the student council at college. According to Astin (1993), Renn and Arnold (2003) and Whitt et al. (2003), the higher education environment promotes positive communication between students which eventually results in building a campus peer culture. Once students joined a club or became a council member, their peers serve as role models for what they aspire to become. Having supportive and encouraging relationships had a great influence on the students' leadership development at the college level. However, it was evident that parents and family members provided the most influential support system that contributed to their identity development as leaders during their younger years, especially by encouraging them to participate in leadership activities while the role of peers and mentors were more significant at college level.

### *Mentors*

I will refer to the word "mentor" for teachers, advisors and older adults who are deemed by the participants as influential role models who contributed to their leadership identity development. A number of authors have argued that mentoring is a very important factor in

shaping students' leadership identity (e.g. Astin, 1993; Dugan & Komives, 2007; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Komives et al., 2005; Thompson, 2006). Mentoring could be accomplished through modelling leadership behaviour and by providing support and guidance during their developmental stages (Godshalk & Sosik, 2000; Popper & Lipshitz, 1993).

Amani reflected in this way on her mentors: "My teachers were very supportive and would always encourage me to participate in activities, even if it's not a college activity. Kathy, my teacher when I was back at the foundation introduced me to Terry fox run. She provided me with the details on the activity and encouraged me to give it a try. It's a charity race that aims to support cancer research, and I have been volunteering in the organizing committee for the past 3 years. I would help with organizing the crowds, handing them water at the water stations, or registering the runners. Participating in such an activity is very fulfilling and makes me feel good because I am giving back to my community. I feel very proud when I see Emirati ladies participate in similar activities. When I first joined I was among 2 other Emirati female students from my class who decided to go just to please the teacher; but when it was done I realized that this is the thing I enjoy doing the most. Last year we had more than 70 females who joined and volunteered to organize the event. I was proud to see that big number and I felt pride when they told me that they are here because I am their inspiration".

Faculty and teachers can be both supportive and intimidating when it comes to students' leadership development. Some teachers provided a supportive relationship with the students where they encouraged them beyond classroom by support them with advice related to their academic life and how to deal with study pressure. This left a positive impact on the minds of

the students and generated more opportunities for them to consider new challenges. However, others left a negative impression that affected the students' self-image and confidence and made them think that they were not welcomed to seek their teachers help for anything other than their studies. Advisors seemed to have a stronger impact on student leadership development, providing a supportive environment that encouraged students to think critically about leadership and challenged them to pursue new opportunities. Armino et al. (2007) and Komives et al. (2005) argue that at this age students view their mentors as role models and seek their advice and guidance on leadership issues.

Leadership literature highlighted the important role of female mentors on developing the college students' leadership identity (Lowe, 2003; Wolverton, 2002). The participants reported that "a female mentor is perceived to be a role model and guide who can better relate to the experiences of the female mentee". Another factor that was shared by the participants was having a female Emirati mentor as a teacher or advisor at the college level. The participants explained how those ladies inspired them to consider leadership opportunities, like joining the council, representing the college in different events, and acting as role models to other students to present the Emirati ladies as positive role models to others. On several occasions during the interviews, participants shared how their mentors encouraged them to consider new opportunities that they may not have thought about on their own (like, participating in volunteer work, joining new workshops). Their mentors helped them understand that leadership is not positional but instead is a process where everyone in the group contributes to the success of the team. Participants also expressed how interacting with their mentors and asking for guidance assisted them during large projects and drew on their experiences on how to deal with conflict.

### *5. Involvement in Leadership Activities*

Higher Colleges of Technology philosophy towards education is that takes place both inside and outside of the classroom. This means that staff is committed to providing learning opportunities for the students to learn and acquire new skills outside the classrooms through exposing them to extra-curricular activities. The activities can vary from attending different clubs at the college to joining different students associations and groups like the students' council and sport council. The College Student Council is a student leadership group. One of its main goals is to support students by representing the views and concerns of students to the College administration. They also plan and organize college events and other activities of general interest to students throughout the year (See Appendix I).

Student council members are expected to enroll in a series of leadership training programs as a part of their membership and to help them develop as leaders. HCT is investing a lot in those students since they serve as college representatives at important events. Consequently, they need to make sure that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to perform their role as young leaders at the council. The Kafa'at Leadership program was developed for college level Emirati students to help them learn the essential leadership skills that will help them for the future. These skills include the ability to relate with others, integrity, measuring progress, decision making and problem solving. This program was developed by Emirates Foundation under the guidance of Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed who believes in the importance of equipping Emirati youth with knowledge to help them succeed in the workplace after graduating from college (Kafa'at, 2014). This coaching and training program is accredited by the Institute of Leadership and Management in the UK, and provides the students the chance to learn some essential life skills, and it enables them to discover the power within themselves to be successful in whatever they chose to do, identifying leadership

strengths (Achieving Adaptability, Analyzing, Organizing) as well as areas for improvement using some assessments and sharing their results with the students.

This training course last three full days and is delivered through theoretical learning (transformational leadership, strengths-based leadership, team building) and interactive activities where the students are expected to practice and apply many of the skills related to their college course work like, conflict management, problem solving, and decision making. The students are also expected to be involved in intensive leadership conversations based on case study analysis where the students reflect on the activities they are involved in as well as share their ideas and concern about leadership issues. This program has three main phases. The first phase occurs when the students pass all the leadership assessments, and this is followed by the mentorship phase where they learn how to mentor and guide others (Savitz-Romer, et. al. 2009). The final phase is the internship phase where the students will be exposed to internship opportunities in the private sector and many job readiness programs after graduation. Although it is an intensive training course that the students need to attend during the academic year, they enjoy this program because it gives them the chance to learn and ask for advice from some influential leaders who attended the sessions to share their experiences and guide the students, like the “Green Sheikh”, Abdul Aziz Al Nuami, and Shaikha Lobna.

As part of general studies courses, before graduating the college students are expected to enroll in six credit hours of leadership courses that aim to develop their leadership skills and competencies (see Figure 9: Leadership courses). Students learn about different leadership theories, cross-cultural leadership theories, and concepts like power and empowerment (See Appendix J).



**Figure 9: Leadership courses**

BUS 1003	Management and Leadership	3
EGN 3313	Engineering Practice and Leadership	3
LSH 2143	Leadership Communication	3
LSH 2903	Community Service Learning	3
LSH 3003	Global Education and Leadership	3
MAR 4033	Leadership and Management	3
MAR 4163	Leadership	3

The students' council officials have serious responsibilities to fulfill; they act as a link between the students and the management of the college. The students' council members are drawn from all programmes and levels, and they attend regular meetings to exchange information and plan activities for the students and RAK community. They prepare and organize many activities like National Day celebration, the welcoming ceremony for all the students at the beginning of each year, the Terry Fox marathon, the RAK half marathon, and other sport activities. In June of each year the newly elected Executive Committee select their committee members from volunteers with leadership experience (HCT student handbook, 2014). The selected council officials have specific responsibilities that they have to perform along maintaining good academic standards. For example as a president of the council, Shjoon has to perform the following:

- Act as the official spokesman
- Chair meetings
- Oversee activities and financial affairs
- Sign contracts, letters, and documents in the name of the HCT Student Council
- Handle correspondence relating to the HCT Student Council
- Report to Policy Council at half-year intervals on the activities and financial affairs in December and May

Involvements in leadership activities were most apparent in the interviews as formational influences on the participants' leadership identity development. Komives et al. (2007) argue that significant contributions from adults and peers, along with students' meaningful involvement in college activities, are strongly influential factors that contribute to the students' leadership identity development. Participating in leadership training and workshops is an essential part of the HCT system council's plan to develop the student council members in all campuses. Such programs are regarded as important especially when students are asked to participate in leadership conversations during leadership activity and peer conversations. Being involved in community service activities is also a common factor that was shared by the participants. Although each participant's story is different, there was a common thread - they all identified a wide number of leadership activities and choices available to them at the college level. Unlike high schools, they were exposed to many clubs and student groups at the college that were suitable for a wider range of student interests.

Aisha: "We receive regular mails about new clubs and activities available at the college and outside the college".

Hana: "This is what I like most about being at the college, they will send an email to all the students through college email and encourage everyone to ask and participate. I think this gives me responsibility to choose what suits me and my interests, and if I missed a chance then it is my choice and I would have to deal with the consequences. This taught me to grab opportunities when they come and that I am responsible for my own development. I never had such power before!".

The activities that the college offers for Emirati women provide social skill and other skill building activities. As a result they can end up being beneficial to many areas like, making

friends, and developing their personality and other important skills. Amani described how being involved in leadership activities changed her view about college and helped her understand that the college is not only a place to study, but a place to develop and grow and enhance skills:

The college provided us students with many resources and encouraged us to participate. I realized that college is not only a place to attend classes then go home. There is another interesting side to college life and I am glad that I had the chance to be part of it. I am a graduate now and I already have a job, but I would jump at the opportunity to participate in college activities when my time allows it. It was here when I started my journey and it will never end. I am part of HCT even if I am not studying here anymore.

The four participants felt that they belong to the council and they were not treated as minorities anymore. This had a huge influence on their self-esteem and empowered them to give more to the council and invest in their skills and leadership development. A number of authors have shown that being involved in leadership activities during college life has an impact on leadership identity development especially since it involves diversity of students (gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation) and encourages positive development of leadership by building personal identity (Arminio et al., 2000; Liang et al., 2002; Porter, 1998; Rhoads, 1997, 1998; Sutton and Terrell, 1997; Yamasaki, 1995). All five participants reflected on the importance of being involved in activities and how holding formal leadership positions at the council inspired them to work harder to live up to that role. They understand that they are entrusted with a significant role in representing their colleagues at the council as well as representing RAK colleges in activities across the system.

Noora: “because of being part of the council I was able to travel to other emirates for meetings and events. I was the students’ council president back then and I was representing Ras Al Khaimah Women’s College. I had the chance to meet with many representatives from other emirates and share ideas and thoughts. I was also privileged to interact with male representatives in a very professional and supportive environment”.

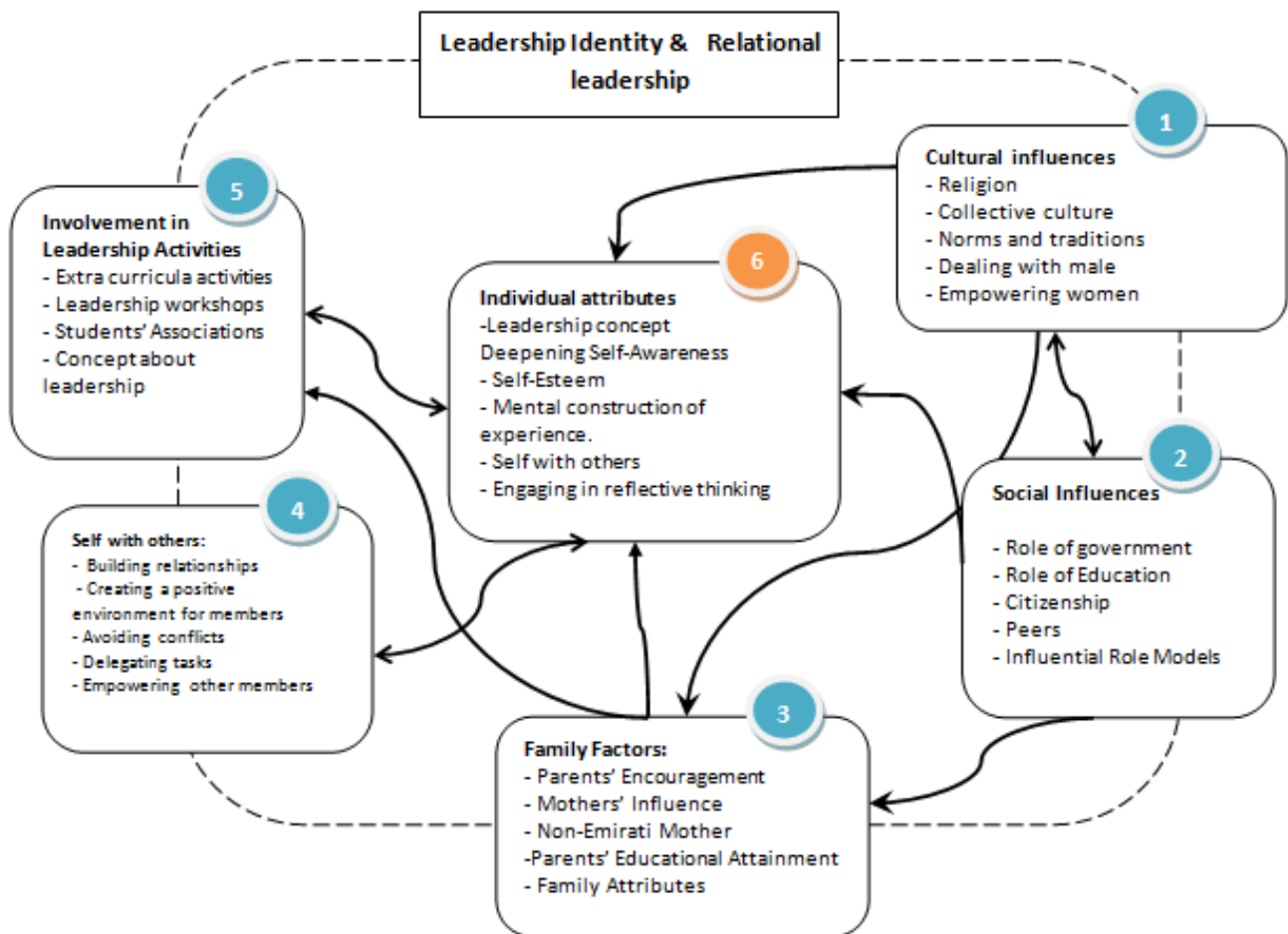
According to Hollander and Howard (2000) and Komives et al., (2003, 2004) involving college students in meaningful leadership activities results in developing their social cognition by helping them transfer the theories to real life situations where they can tie it to their value system and group norms. Burke (2000) argues that developing leadership activities based on the social cognitive theory where college students are introduced to more reflective activities on their leadership experiences is quite beneficial to the students. More specifically, it can help the students move the content of their practical experiences to a process where they can connect that meaning to their real life situations.

### **Emirati Women Leadership Identity Development Model**

Based on the findings of this study, I developed the following chart (Figure 10) that explains the psychosocial influences that effect the leadership identity development of female college students in Ras Al Khaimah Women’s’ College. As discussed in the introduction there are a number of factors that shaped the design of my study, focusing on psychosocial factors like family, culture and self-awareness, that have an influence on female students at college level who are showing high relational leadership as suggested by Komives (2007), and are part of Ras Al Khaimah Women’s College. The chart below explains the common psychosocial influences of the five participants and how these factors affect each of them, and how these

influences eventually shape the leadership identity development of my participants. The arrows are significant to the understanding of this complicity of the process.

**Figure 10: Emirati Leadership Identity development Model**



Where Komives’ LID theory (2005) views family, social and cultural influences as developmental factors that affect the students’ leadership identity development on the early stages of their lives, the Emirati model argues that they are strong influences that keep influencing the students even after the college level. The new Emirati model argues that family, social and culture factors contribute directly to shaping individual attributes and their understanding of leadership concepts. They can either provide support or hinder students’ leadership development. Positive messages from family, significant others and society can have a great impact on developing individuals’ self-awareness and self-confidence,

establishing interpersonal efficacy, developing leadership skills, and clarifying goals. The model also acknowledges the role of group and peer influence on the students' leadership formation and development. In addition, as emerging leaders, students rely on their group members for support and encouragement, but when they became experienced leaders they start to act as mentors and guides to new members. When reaching the experienced leaders stage, students focus more on empowering other members and achieving tasks, and they pay less attention to seeking others approval. The Emirati model addresses the issue that female students do not have a lot of opportunities to practice leadership in school settings, and it strongly advocates student involvement in meaningful leadership activities at college level.

## Chapter Six

### Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the analysis of the findings a number of conclusions were drawn from my interpretation of the findings. Firstly, leadership identity development is a very complex and on-going process that is influenced by students' social context and experiences. The Emirati ladies in this study shared their leadership development as a process, and gave a snapshot of the current stage of their leadership identity development journey. Secondly, the findings confirmed that past and current experiences along with societal factors play a key role in this developmental process. One very startling discovery was the fact that gender expectations pose limited if no challenges for Emirati student leaders. I thought the participants would reflect on how hard it was to grow up as a female and their ability to be strong leaders. There was no mention of it as an influential factor that hindered their leadership aspirations. On the contrary, the participants felt that they owe it to their country to represent Emirati women to the best of their ability both locally and internationally. Participants reflected on the support that the government offers to women and the countless opportunities offered to college students, especially women, to build and develop their leadership identity and aspirations. Thirdly, it highlights the value of leadership programs and students' involvement in cognitive and psychosocial development in relation to leadership identity and aspiration. The research findings also suggested that there are various identities to which one ascribes ethnic, gender, orientation and ability. These variations contribute to the students' identity formation and development process and they prove to be different among various groups of students. This chapter will give an overview of the study, a summary of the findings, and discuss the study's limitations. This will be followed by recommendations for future research particularly in

terms of higher education and stakeholders who are interested in developing leadership programmes that suit Emirati women.

### **Overview of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore the psychosocial factors that contribute to shaping the leadership identity of Emirati women at the college level through multiple case studies using a hermeneutic and psychosocial approach. A review of available literature from 1980 to 2011 was discussed in relation to women leadership at the college level. Although I came across limited resources that undertake research on women's leadership and leadership formation in Arab countries, I relied on international resources while focusing on cultural and social differences. Reviewing literature on women's leadership, I realized more research is required on the psychosocial factors that shape women's leadership identity development and understanding, particularly in relation to the cultural context. My thesis aims to offer an understanding of how Emirati ladies at the college level develop as leaders and how they form an understanding of leadership while exploring such factors as personal attributes, family, social, cultural influences and involvement in leadership activities.

Three in-depth unstructured hermeneutical interviews, observations and a focus group meeting were conducted using a protocol and interview guide to answer the research questions. Due to the nature of the study and its in-depth narratives, five participants were selected following certain criteria to ensure that that the study focused on students involved in relational leadership, and that it showed them while in situations that exemplified their leadership qualities. The emerging themes were identified after constructing the participants' stories then looking for common themes that contributed to shaping their leadership identity.



### **Limitations of the Study**

The results of this study, while valuable and informative, should be interpreted with caution as they do not represent the experiences of all female college students' in the United Arab Emirates. The participants selected for this study do not necessarily represent the strongest leaders among the students' council, but the ones who were also able to show a high level of relational leadership which is what I was looking for in my study. Due to the nature of the study the researcher focused on the depth of the participants' experience rather than the number of the participants. The findings might also not be applicable to other Emirates since they explore the lived experiences of female students who attend Ras al Khaimah Women's College which has its own separate identity among the campuses within the HCT system. As a result of the site selection, the findings may not be transferrable to other college students attending other campuses. Female students who attend other institutions like Al Ain University where students are expected to spend more time on campus away from their families, and this may reveal different experiences in their leadership development identity process. So I will leave it to the reader to determine the applicability of their context to the results of this study. Recently there government legislation was passed that allows Emiratis who have local mothers or non-Emirati fathers, or who are Quimerian students to join public higher education institutes in UAE. It is possible that those individuals may experience similarities and differences in their development of leadership identity.

### **Summary of the Findings**

The research findings hold potential significance on the theoretical and practical level of women's leadership formation and development. First, they contribute to the literature of women's leadership in Arab countries and, in particular, they fill the research gap in Emirati women's leadership literature. Secondly, this study was grounded in the belief that higher

education administrators and faculty should be aware of the implications these young Emirati women individuals ascribe to their leadership identity development in order to effectively develop and implement leadership programs that educate participants on the impact of gender, race and ethnicity on leadership. Moreover, the study also helps to close the gap in women's leadership in the country. Thirdly, the results can assist policy makers and educators in designing suitable programs and extra curricula activities that reflect an awareness of the factors that contribute to student leadership development and address their different needs accordingly. Although there is a considerable amount of literature on the development of leadership identity in other countries, very little is written on exploring the development of leadership identity in Arab countries, and not very much attention in this literature was given to studying the psychosocial factors that affect leadership identify development. The results of this study suggest that values, attitudes, behaviours and personal attributes were influential to the leadership development of undergraduate women in addition to the institutional environment and family members. Peers, faculty, staff, administration, culture and society all played a significant role towards shaping the leadership identity of women at the college level.

Personal growth and development also appeared to have an impact on the Emirati women's leadership identity development. The participants talked about how the following have affected their leadership identity at the college level: self-awareness, desire to grow and develop, and their mental construct of leadership concepts and experiences. Participants also regarded the importance of family and mothers' origin in their development. These were especially true with respect to their perspectives on proving themselves and gain the approval from their society by being successful members and contributing to the development of the country. The double message they received from their mothers while growing up was to be

successful women and to reach their potential by keeping an open mind to opportunities that arise in their paths. Being surrounded by supportive relationships and being involved in students' council and sorority also had a great influence on the participants' leadership identity development, particularly early on in their experience. Participants confirmed that family, mentors and peers were the ones that first encouraged them to engage in extracurricular activities and were often the reason they continued to engage in new and more challenging involvement experiences. Reflecting on meaningful experiences was regarded as an important factor as well; participants confirmed that through supporting peer relationships and reflective activities, their view and understanding of leadership concepts developed and evolved.

### **Policy implications**

More focus should be given to providing involvement opportunities to college students like, living environments, student governments and associations, extra-curricular activities (Mable & DeCoster, 1981), organizational involvement (Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Posner & Rosenberger, 1997), as well as state and national student associations (Downey, 1981). Where other campus and colleges in different Emirates may have more opportunities for their students to be more involved in international trips and students associations, I noticed that cultural and social influences in Ras Al Khaimah played some role on the number of opportunities that the students are exposed to in RAK colleges.

The research findings demonstrate that many students come to college with established leadership talents that require more experience, whereas others are not aware of their abilities until they join the college. Upon becoming a college student they are then provided with a number of opportunities that help them to discover, develop, and demonstrate their leadership

potential which is consistent with the findings of Boatwright and Egidio (2003). As suggested by the findings of this research, the students need to be more involved in leadership cognitive development environment by exposing them to college curricula and extra-curricular activities (Burke, 2000; Magolda, 2001). Using the new suggested model of Emirati leadership identity development, curriculum developers can design suitable leadership co-curriculum to support the students' cognitive development by incorporating a deeper reflection on the meaning of leadership, relational leadership, and shared leadership. The new model will enable educators to transform student involvement from simply performing tasks into an exercise in both the content (tasks) and processes (identity development) of leadership. Making clear connections with the leadership experiences of students in other identity based groups like, Emirati Students, women's association group, men's group, and international groups, could help emerging student leaders find their place of service within the larger context of a diverse campus.

Based on the findings of this research female students practice more relational styles of leadership and emphasize relating to others, which was supported by other studies like Hoyt (2007), Kellerman and Rhode (2007), Kezar and Moriarty (2000), and Tedrow and Rhoads (1999). Additionally, administrators, students' services department members and educators should understand that their relationship with student leaders is an essential part of the students' leadership identity development. They must be open to conversations, supportive of new initiatives, and set positive examples for women seeking or currently in leadership positions, both as male and female administrators in the field. They could also involve the students more in advisory capacity and strengthen practices like Shura and empowerment of other members. Further, female administrators are in the unique position to serve as mentors and as role models to their female student leaders. As indicated by many of the students, they

were able to see women succeed in multiple roles as professionals, mothers, leaders, or as individuals with outside interests and aspirations. Female faculty and staff can seek opportunities in which to further engage with their students, including advising student organizations, serving on panel discussions, and participating in established mentoring programs both on and off-campus. When given the opportunity, mentorship can be a powerful tool both in the leadership and personal development of female students.

Institutions must also recognize and appreciate the value of the out-of-classroom experience, which includes not only involvement in the student government but also athletics, community service, and other campus programs and activities. Providing a holistic education, which includes leadership and personal growth outside of academic study, is a critical component of the undergraduate experience. In today's globally connected economy, it is not enough to prepare students academically. Our students must be adept at communicating with different types of people, understanding how to effectively lead in unstable situations, and assess the myriad of expectations placed upon them. Higher education institutions must make it a priority to support educating the whole student and promote the opportunities that are available to students outside of the classroom in order to develop their leadership capacities. One way to achieve this is by developing strategic goals that include being student-centric and ensuring that this principle guides institutional policies and values.

This study is only a starting point to understand the factors that can have an impact on female Emirati students' leadership development; there is a lot of information yet to be uncovered. Future investigations could be either quantitative or qualitative. However, I personally believe that exploring past and personal experiences is more rewarding and informative, especially when we are analyzing stories of individuals' leadership development. Similar

research should be done to explore whether differences exist between college students in Ras Al Khaimah and other Emirates. This would provide the practitioners, curriculum developers and policy makers with greater ideas on how to develop more effective programs to help our students and how to assign resources and opportunities to campuses around the system. Higher educational institutes should also work on developing strategies that help students form groups and associations across other Educational organizations and campuses and provide opportunities for identity based groups and non-identity based groups to form coalitions and create change around larger issues. As research has demonstrated that students' multiple identities impact the involvement opportunities in which they choose to engage, coalitions among diverse groups need to assist in developing awareness and understanding of the implications of differences between these groups. Additionally, further aid is required to highlight the significance of including diverse perspectives to enrich students' abilities.

Another valuable aspect of this research is the need for students' affairs administrators to develop leadership pathways based upon students' experience with leadership. For example, the emerging, intermediate, and experienced leaders in this study placed different meaning on leadership, were at different places in their leadership identity development, and therefore had different needs regarding leadership development. Tracks or experiences that cater to students at these different levels would support their specific needs and provide for commonality of experience. Opportunities to engage with older peer mentors, faculty and staff in these contexts are also important in the development of student leadership identity. Furthermore, student affairs administrators must become educated regarding the implications of gender and ethnicity on leadership. As evidenced in the data from this study, advisors served a critical role in the leadership identity development of the participants. I believe it is

important that student affair administrators to be exposed to the literature about the significant impact of being minority on a student's leadership identity development.

### **Recommendations**

To provide a better understanding of the process that Emirati students go through to develop their leadership, more research should be done not only at the college level, but at the early stages of their lives examining their childhood experiences and early experiences of leadership involvement. More research that aims to explore student identities (ability, race, ethnicity, gender and socioeconomic status) should be done in the UAE. This would help to discover the impact on college student leader's development of a leadership identity. Moreover, a greater understanding of the Emirati student leadership develop process could be achieved by exploring any differences that might exist within educational contexts or between groups within particular educational contexts.

More studies focusing on exploring a student leader's identity after she graduates from college should also be conducted. The participants in this study were gathered as a case in a particular context; roughly similar age group, the data emerged suggesting that this context had particular implications on their development of a leadership identity and that their leadership identity at that point in time was a snapshot that would change based upon future experiences. Exploring how these students' leadership identity change upon graduation from the Higher Colleges of Technology would also enhance our understanding of student leaders' identities. More studies exploring any connections between leadership identity development and the cognitive development of student leaders, particularly those who have participated in identity based leadership programs, would also generate interesting data that would increase our understanding of college students and leadership.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

Email to be sent to Ras Al Khaimah Women's college student council supervisor

Date:

Dear [student council supervisor],

I am writing to ask for your assistance in identifying students to participate in my doctoral research study. The purpose of this study is to explore and describe the leadership identity development of a group of Emirati female students who shows leadership potentials at Ras Al Khaimah women's college. I will focus my research on students from the student council. In total, I plan to interview 3 female students. Each student will participate in three individual in depth semi structured interviews lasting approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours each and a focus group interview lasting about 1 ½ hours in duration.

As the student council supervisor, I am asking for your assistance in identifying potential student leaders who are interested in participating in my study. I hope to solicit participants who show high leadership qualities, highly involve in leadership activities inside or outside the college. Three criteria are established for participation in this study;

1. Emirati student
2. Currently enrolled student at Ras Al Khaimah women's college.
3. Currently enrolled student at the student council committee and showing high leadership quality.

If you would, please speak with individuals whom you believe will best represent these criteria and ask if they are willing to participate in this study. Then, please forward the names, emails and phone numbers of these individuals to me at your earliest convenience.

If you have any questions, or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at [Aisha\\_alnaqbi@hotmail.com](mailto:Aisha_alnaqbi@hotmail.com) or at 0503700443.

Sincerely,

Aisha Al Naqbi

## Appendix B

### Guiding questions for individual interviews

#### **Personal information:**

1. Tell me about yourself and your family?
2. How many brothers and sisters do you have?
3. What is your order among your siblings?
4. How many girls and boys in your family?

#### **Understanding about leadership:**

1. What does leadership means to you as a person?
2. In your own opinion, what makes a great leader?
3. When we talk about leadership, who's the first person come to your mind?
4. Do you think of yourself as a good leader? Why?
5. Tell me about someone you admire or consider a role model?
6. What about him/her do you admire?

#### **Leadership experience:**

1. Tell me about a key experience from elementary school where you were acting like a leader?
2. How about from high school? And in college?
3. What about those experiences was significant?
4. Who was involved and what role did they have?
5. How did (experience) change how you saw yourself?

#### **Influence of the family:**

7. Did your family support you to participate in similar activities?
8. Did being female influence these experiences?
9. What messages did you hear about being female while you are growing up?
10. Did these messages affect you?
11. Tell me more about experiences you had learning to work with other people?
12. Tell me about an experience that didn't work well for you? And why?
13. What about working with people different than you? How do you deal with people who disagree with you in the group?
14. Does your leadership change if men are involved?
15. What are some of the factors that influenced your leadership development?
16. What is the most significant factor? Why do you think it affect your leadership development?
17. What does power mean to a leader? And how can you describe power from a leader perspective?
18. Who has the power/influence in a group and how do you know that individual has the power?
19. When you are in a group who gets things rolling and how do you know they are moving things forward?
20. How do you react to people calling you a "leader"?
21. What's your philosophy of leadership and has it changed? If so, how?

#### **Leadership opportunities:**

22. How has HCT shaped your leadership?
23. What does it mean to you to be a part of the student council?
24. Why did you choose to join the student council?

25. What did change since you join the council? Tell me more?

26. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Those are the areas that i will try to explore in my studies:

**Adaptability, Compliance, Communication, Conflict management, Creativity and Innovation, Decisiveness, Delegation, External awareness, Flexibility, Independence, Influencing, Integrity, Leadership, Sensitivity to others.**

## Appendix C

### Letter of Informed Consent

Letter of Informed Consent to Interviewees Participating in the Research Study

**Title: Exploring the Influence of psychosocial factors on Emirati female college students' leadership identity development**

Dear Student,

You are being asked to participate in a research study. The principal investigator of this study is Aisha Al Naqbi, a doctoral candidate in the British University in Dubai, Department of Educational and Leadership Policy Studies in BUID. The study will include three female Emirati students at Ras Al Khaimah Women's college who are currently involved in student council committee. Your participation as an interviewee will require a total of approximately 6 hours of your time. I want to learn more about your experiences as a college student who is involved in leadership activities.

The purpose of the study is to learn about the journey of Emirati female students who are involved in leadership opportunities on campus, through their words and experiences. The study will include three in depth semi structure interviews, each approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours with each female who participates and a 1 ½ hour group interview, for a total time commitment of approximately 6 hours. I am seeking to understand how your experience with involvement and understanding of what it means to be a part of the student council, have guided you to become the lady you are today, and, how these experiences and understanding may guide your future.

During the interview you will be asked questions about your childhood experiences, your schooling, people who have impacted your life, your leadership experience, and your future goals. These questions will serve as a guide to the interview, but the format of the interview is open to reflect what you wish to share and you may elect to skip any questions that you do not want to answer. You are not required to participate in this study for any reason and you have the ability to end your participation at any time, for any reason. In addition, I will answer any questions you may have concerning this project.

In addition, you may find that participating in this study provides a unique opportunity to reflect upon the ways that your experiences have guided and will continue to guide you. The transcripts of each interview will be provided to you for your review prior to my analysis of data. I do not expect any harm to you by being in the study.

All of your answers are private and confidentiality will be maintained in the following ways:

- 1) The recording and transcript of your interview will be identified by a special number (not your name or student number).
- 2) I will ask that you develop a pseudonym that will be used in all written documentation.
- 3) In addition, the recorded interviews will be deleted at the conclusion of the dissertation process.

If you would like more information about this research, you may contact me at any time at 050-3700443 or via email at **aisha\_alnaqbi@hotmail.com**

Your signature below indicates that you have read this document, that all of your questions have been answered, that you are aware of your rights, and that you would like to participate in this study.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I have explained the research procedure, subject rights, and answered questions asked by the participant. I have offered her a copy of this consent form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Appendix D**

### **Focus Group**

**Date:** 18/12/2013

**Time of Interview:** 10:00am

**Place:** Conference Room 108

**Interviewees Code Names:** Aisha, Amani, Hana, Shjoon and Noora

**Group:** Student council leaders

**Length of Interview:** 1 hour 33 minutes 15 seconds

**Researcher:** Welcome ladies, thank you so much for making the time to be here today. It is a pleasure to meet you all and hopefully you had a chance to meet each other already. Before we begin I would like to reiterate some information that you already know. Remember that whatever you say in this focus group session is strictly confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this study. Your comments may be used as part of my data analysis but if these are used then you will not be identified by name. Your interviewee codes are on name tags in front of you. I invite you please wear these and assume for the next hour or two your new names because these will identify you in the transcripts later on. This conversation or rather this discussion is going to be audio taped so I hope that the microphone does not bother you. Feel free to stop me at any time if you don't understand my questions.

Firstly, let's consider why you are here, why you have been invited to participate. The aim of this study is to understand the psychosocial factors that contribute to building the leadership identity of Female Emirati students at RAKC. Considering this broad aim, we want to talk about the emerging themes that came out from your individual interviews. We want to talk about what does leadership mean to you?

Now, then before we begin let me talk a little bit about focus groups because most of you told me that this is the first time you participate in a focus group. So let's talk about what a focus group is. A focus group is really a group discussion; consider this forum to be an open discussion in which you can share your experiences and your perspectives. There is no need for everyone to answer all the questions and we're not going around the table each one giving an input, no, we will talk with each other, interrupt if need be and we want you share your views and experiences. You can disagree on matter or challenge your colleagues. Your input



is very valuable to us and I will facilitate this conversation by making certain that everyone gets a chance to speak and to share and by redirecting conversation if required because of the time. Any questions before we start? Okay let's start.

What does leadership means to you?

Do you consider yourself as a leader?

What makes a good leader?

Talk about the family influence on your leadership formation and development.

Talk about the social factors that contributed in building your leadership identity.

Talk about the cultural factors that contributed in building your leadership identity.

What other factors that contributed in building your leadership identity?

**Appendix E:**

**Emiratization Policy**

## Appendix E:

### HCT Student Council Constitution

#### 1. Definition

*The HCT Student Council* is a constituted elected student body that represents the College Student Councils across the system. Membership of the HCT Student Council is drawn solely from College Student Councils.

*The College Student Councils* are elected student bodies that represent the students enrolled in the colleges in the seven emirates. Each college has one constituted College Student Council, named as follows:

Al Ain Men's College Student Council

Al Ain Women's College Student Council

Abu Dhabi Men's College Student Council

Abu Dhabi Women's College Student Council

CERT College Student Council

Dubai Men's College Student Council

Dubai Women's College Student Council

Fujairah Men's College Student Council

Fujairah Women's College Student Council

Madinat Zayed Men's College Student Council

Madinat Zayed Women's College Student Council

Ras Al Khaimah Men's College Student Council

Ras Al Khaimah Women's College Student Council

Ruwais Men's College Student Council

Ruwais Women's College Student Council

Sharjah Men's College Student Council

Sharjah Women's College Student Council

#### 2. Objectives

The objectives are:

- a) Representing the student body nationally and internationally at educational institutions, conferences and student forums.
- b) Advocating students' interests.
- c) Participating in discussions of national and international issues related to students.
- d) Promoting communication between students of HCT Colleges.

### **3. Composition and Membership**

#### **3.1 Composition**

Membership on the HCT Student Council is composed of representation from the College Student Councils. Each HCT College is represented on the HCT Student Council by the President of the College Student Council.

#### **3.2 Membership Entitlement**

The President of each College Student Council is entitled to represent his or her College Student Council, provided they fulfill the membership conditions.

#### **3.3 Membership Conditions**

An HCT Student Council member must fulfill the following conditions:

- 3.3.1 Be a member of the College Student Council.
- 3.3.2 Comply with the constitution of the HCT Student Council.
- 3.3.3 Be an enrolled student in one of the HCT colleges.
- 3.3.4 Personally attend all the meetings of the Administrative Board of the HCT Student Council. Where the President is unable to attend, he must designate the vice president as the representative. The designee may vote on his behalf.
- 3.3.5 Have at least one year's experience of participation in college leadership activities.
- 3.3.6 Comply with the regulations and objectives of the HCT Student Council.

#### **3.4 Membership Types**

There are three types of membership.

##### *3.4.1 Observer Membership:*

One member from each College Student Council, with the exception of the President, is entitled to serve as an observer member on the HCT Student Council. Observer members do not have nomination or voting rights. They may participate in all the HCT Student Council activities.

##### *3.4.2 Administrative Membership:*

Membership of the Administrative Board is made up of the President from each College Student Council. Administrative members have the right to nominate, elect and vote for the recommendations and decisions and to participate in all the HCT Student Council activities. Administrative members may designate the Vice

President of the College Student Council as his representative in Administrative Board meetings.

### 3.4.3 *Honorary Members:*

Membership shall be granted, with the approval of two-thirds majority of the Administrative Board members, to persons who have provided services to the HCT Student Council, or those whose expertise in any relevant area may be beneficial. The membership shall have the same duration as the Administrative Board. Honorary Membership is restricted to HCT Alumni only and does not carry nomination and voting rights. Honorary members may participate in all HCT Student Council activities.

## **3.5 Membership Duration and Termination**

Membership shall be for a maximum of two years, and is terminated on:

3.5.1 Resignation

3.5.2 Dismissal from the Higher Colleges of Technology

3.5.3 Resignation or dismissal from a College Student Council

3.5.4 Withdrawal, deferral or suspension from the Higher Colleges of Technology

3.5.5 Non-fulfillment of one of the membership conditions

A member may be dismissed by unanimous vote of the Administrative Members if he is found to have committed any of the following:

3.5.6 An act that is offensive or harmful to the HCT Student Council

3.5.7 A violation of the regulations and objectives of the Student Council

3.5.8 Misuse the HCT Student Council funds.

## **4. Administrative Board**

### **4.1 Advisor**

An advisor appointed by the Vice Chancellor serves as the mentor of the President of the Administrative Board, and acts as advisor on procedural matters.

### **4.2 Administrative Board Composition**

The Administrative Board is made up of one representative from each of the Colleges' Student Councils and is composed of:

- One President (the Chairperson)
- One Vice President
- One Secretary
- One Treasurer
- Thirteen ordinary members

The four officials are elected by at least two-thirds majority of the Administrative Board members in attendance before the end of the eighth week of the first semester each academic year.

The Chairperson remains the representative of his /her College Student Council while serving as the chairperson.

The responsibilities of each of the officials are as follows:

*The President:*

- Acts as the official spokesman,
- Chairs meetings,
- Oversees activities and the financial affairs,
- Signs contracts, letters, and documents in the name of the HCT Student Council,
- Handles correspondence relating to the HCT Student Council, and
- Reports to Policy Council at half intervals on the activities and financial affairs in December and May.

*The Vice President:*

- Deputizes for the President in his / her absence, including in Administrative Board meetings,
- Ensures the election and voting procedures comply with the Constitution,
- Follows-up to implement the decisions of the Administrative Board, and
- Decides on administrative affairs.

*The Secretary:*

- Sets the agenda for meetings,
- Ensures the agenda and minutes of meetings are properly recorded and distributed to the College Student Council Presidents, and
- Keeps the official seal of the HCT Student Council.

*Treasurer*

- Handles financial transactions ,
- Deposits funds in a Sharia-compliant bank account,
- Receives funds and issues official receipts for funds received,
- Prepares cheques,
- Pays the amounts owed against invoices due, and
- Prepares the financial reports.

#### **4.3 Meetings, voting and quorum**

- Meetings may be held with members face-to-face or linked electronically or by a combination of both methods.
- Only members in attendance (present face-to-face or linked electronically) may vote.
- The quorum for Administrative Board meetings is at least 75% of all the College Student Councils. Any meeting that is not quorate within half an hour of the designated start time will be adjourned by the chair to another date.

- Decisions are made by resolution of at least two-thirds majority.
- The President has an additional vote in case of a tied vote on all resolutions.

## **Appendix F**

### **Ethics Form**

NAME OF RESEARCHER: Aisha Al Naqbi

CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER: +971503700443

EMAIL ADDRESS: Aisha\_alnaqbi@Hotmail.com

DATE: 9<sup>th</sup> March 2012

PROJECT TITLE: Exploring the Influence of psychosocial factors on Emirati female college students' leadership identity development

#### **BRIEF OUTLINE OF PROJECT:**

The purpose of the study is to learn about the journey of Emirati female students who are involved in leadership opportunities on campus, through their words and experiences. The study will include three semi structure interviews, each approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours with each female who participates and a 1 ½ hour group interview, for a total time commitment of approximately 6 hours. I am seeking to understand how your experience with involvement and understanding of what it means to be a part of the student council, have guided you to become the lady you are today, and, how these experiences and understanding may guide your future.

MAIN ETHICAL CONSIDERATION(S) OF THE PROJECT: students will be asked to sign the consent letter that explains their rights as participants. They have the freedom to withdraw from the study anytime without explaining the reason.

DURATION OF PROPOSED PROJECT (please provide dates as month/year):

About three months

DATE YOU WISH TO START DATA COLLECTION:

At the beginning of the first semester of the academic year 2012-2013



**Please provide details on the following aspects of the research:**

What are your intended methods of recruitment, data collection and analysis?

Focus group: 1/5 hour

Three semi structure interviews. 1 to 1:30 hour each

Documents analysis.

Field notes, Ethnographic notes.

How will you make sure that all participants understand the process in which they are to be engaged and that they provide their voluntary and informed consent? If the study involves working with children or other vulnerable groups, how have you considered their rights and protection?

I explained everything in the interview protocol and the consent form. The participants have the right to ask any question regarding the study and will have all the contact information of the researcher.

How will you make sure that participants clearly understand their right to withdraw from the study?

Talk to the participants before they sign the consent form. I will explain that they have the right to withdraw from the study when they feel uncomfortable without explaining the reason behind their action. They only need to inform me about their decision.

Please describe how will you ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of participants. Where this is not guaranteed, please justify your approach.

I will use the coding system to ensure the confidentiality of my participant, I will avoid using their college IDs or family names that could cover their real identity. We will agree on a pseudo name that I could use in my study.

How will you ensure the safe and appropriate storage and handling of data?

The data will be kept safely in a closed desk in my study room at home. And will be destroyed after three months of submitting my thesis.

If during the course of the research you are made aware of harmful or illegal behaviour, how do you intend to handle disclosure or nondisclosure of such information (you may wish to refer to the BERA Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, 2004; paragraphs 27 & 28, p.8 for more information about this issue)?

Ask the advice of my DOS before I share the nature of the issue.

If the research design demands some degree of subterfuge or undisclosed research activity, how have you justified this?

I will not use such activities. My main concern is the participants' experiences and their self interpretation of their context.

How do you intend to disseminate your research findings to participants?

Before I begin the analysis phase, I will provide my participants with the interview transcription to ensure the validity of my data.

Declaration by the researcher

I have read the University's Code of Conduct for Research and the information contained herein is, 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 the Faculty of Education Ethical Guidelines, and any other condition laid down by the BUiD Ethics Committee.

Aisha Al Naqbi

Signature:

Date:

### **Declaration by the Chair of the School of Education Ethics Committee**

The Committee confirms that this project fits within the University's Code of Conduct for Research and I approve the proposal on behalf of BUiD's Ethics Committee.

Print name:

(Chair of the Ethics Committee)

Signature:

Date:

## Appendix G

### Cross Case Interpretation Report

Positive pre-college situation was influential	12
Negative pre-college situation was influential	24
Standards and ethics were important	6
Raised with strong morals/values	33
Focused on others, not herself	22
Did not like conflict and confrontation	22
Strength was in traditionally male areas (i.e. math, science)	2
Communication	53
Went above and beyond expectations	21
Personal recognition of efforts was not important	4
Needed support from others	22
Listening to others	15
Believed that if people were happy/had fun in an organization, they would	
Participate	15
Important for members to feel a part of their group	31
Did not like focus to be on self	3
Being involved in activities at home helped her to mature	21
Motivation (giving and/or receiving)	15
Emphasized respect	15
Active in high school	32
Academics were important	55
Observed others in positive leadership situations	13
Found tolerance to be important	2
National identity is important	51
Looked to others as role models	35
Served as a role model to others	25
Time management/organizational skills was important	5
Commitment	5
Self-confidence/self-esteem/self-worth was important	51
Trust	2
Balance in life was important	15
Positive attitude	2
Appreciative	3
Conscientious of how others viewed her	3
Gave as much as possible to projects for which she was responsible	5
Wanted to make others proud of her (non-parents)	4
Determined/Persistent	4
Protective of others	2
Liked to be around people	3
Learned diversity by being around different cultures	4
Peers influence	42
Personal involvement is important	33
University Honors Program was influential	25
Looked to university as a home-away-from home	3

University offered many opportunities for involvement	15
Made many good friends in college	5
Supportive friends in college	15
Academic advisor was influential	4
Organizational advisor(s) was/were influential	4
Good, longstanding relationships with academic faculty	3
Did not feel comfortable around academic faculty	2
Parents/family were supportive	45
Mother was most influential	35
Parents/family were most influential	22
Parent(s) was/were role models/leaders	5
Mother (s) were roles models / leaders	52
Mother (s) nationality was influential	4
Grandparents were influential	2
Facing challenges were influential	3
Became independent after parents divorced	2
Wanted to make parent(s)/family proud	5
Family time was important	33
Sorority involvement was influential	5
Worked hard to fix what had failed in organization from previous leadership	2
Looking forward to her future contributions to society	15

## Appendix H

### Final Theme Interpretation Report

Investment of self	27
Responsive interaction with others	16
Pre-college involvement (family, high school activities)	13
University offered many opportunities for involvement	14
Peers influences	10
Organizational advisor(s) was/were influential	8
Academic advisor was influential	3
Relationships with academic faculty (positively and negatively)	4
Parents/family were influential	33
Mother was most influential	17
Mother's nationality influential	21
Desire to make parents/family members proud	14
Desire to give back to their country	14
Sorority involvement was influential	5
Looking forward to her future contributions to society	13

## Appendix I

### Students' council responsibilities

The responsibilities of each of the officials are as follows:

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## Appendix J

### Course Student Learning outcomes

<b>COURSE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES</b>		
<b>Course</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Course Student Learning Outcomes</b>
AD N225	Command Leadership & Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss the requirement for leadership and tactics in the military</li> <li>2. Outline the sources of power and influence in leadership</li> <li>3. Discuss the effectiveness of leadership on the operation of an organisation and the leadership effectiveness expected of a military commander</li> <li>4. Discuss motivation and form an understanding of the motives that drive behaviour</li> <li>5. Describe and practice leadership communication skills</li> <li>6. Review styles of leadership identified in management and military learning</li> <li>7. Outline the model of leadership and leadership principles adopted and promoted by the UAE Armed Forces</li> <li>8. Discuss the skills required of the successful leader in the UAE Armed Forces</li> <li>9. List common activities carried out by successful leaders</li> <li>10. Discuss how team building activities can be used to improve the effectiveness of any team</li> <li>11. Explain the roles and expectations of subordinates for a military leader</li> <li>12. Discuss the concept of Emotional Intelligence in a military context</li> <li>13. Discuss the similarities and differences between Management and Leadership</li> </ol>
BMHR N450	Organisational Development and Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analyse and explain organisational behavior in the international workplace.</li> <li>2. Analyse and describe the functions of management in organisations operating in the United Arab Emirates.</li> <li>3. Evaluate the nature of leadership in organisations.</li> <li>4. Discuss the role of culture in organisations.</li> <li>5. Analyze and discuss the principles for managing change, conflict and power in organisations.</li> </ol>
BUS 1003	Management and Leadership	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain the management functions, roles and skills in an organization.</li> <li>2. Predict the impact of leadership in organizations.</li> <li>3. Classify organizational culture, ethics and motivation.</li> <li>4. Show how individual and organizational behavior impacts performance, and how team working is applied in organizations.</li> <li>5. Apply the communication model and the principles of effective interpersonal communication in organizations.</li> <li>6. Discuss emerging issues and challenges in management and leadership</li> </ol>

		in the current business environment.
EGN 3313	Engineering Practice & Leadership	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss the meaning, motivation, leadership, core values and various structural models of professional societies/organizations and investigate how this can impact future membership.</li> <li>2. Analyze and discuss multicultural and cross-cultural issues in relation to organizational behavior in the international engineering marketplace.</li> <li>3. Demonstrate a knowledge of team, team dynamics, conflict resolution, and processes of managing change.</li> <li>4. Discuss the relationship between professional ethics, engineering rights, responsibilities and practices, and corporate social responsibility.</li> <li>5. Formulate and communicate consistent, coherent, ethical responses to engineering case studies and critically examine the ethical positions held by others.</li> </ol>
ETEC N305	Organizational Behaviour and Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe organisational structure and culture.</li> <li>2. Describe different approaches to management and leadership and theories of organisation.</li> <li>3. Discuss the relationship between motivational theories.</li> <li>4. Demonstrate an understanding of working with others, teamwork, groups and group dynamics.</li> </ol>
LSH 2113	Foundations of Leadership	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe, analyze, and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of core theories of leadership.</li> <li>2. Identify theories of leadership to better understand real world leadership challenges.</li> <li>3. Develop the skills of both leading and following class mates required for effective teamwork in group settings, both inside and outside the classroom.</li> </ol>
LSH 2143	Leadership Communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analyse and discuss the meaning of leadership and the leadership styles of UAE leaders to better understand real world leadership challenges.</li> <li>2. Utilise Leadership communication tools to develop the leadership skills of both leading and following class mates, required for effective teamwork, both inside and outside the classroom.</li> <li>3. Develop a greater understanding of individual strengths through exploring and using a range of self-assessment and self-awareness tools.</li> </ol>
LSSS N240	Organizational Behavior	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss the meaning and importance of organizational behavior. Discuss various models of organizational behavior.</li> <li>2. Discuss motivation and leadership within the organization.</li> <li>3. Analyze and discuss multicultural and cross-cultural issues in organizational behavior.</li> <li>4. Demonstrate a knowledge of groups and group dynamics.</li> <li>5. Discuss the principles and processes of managing change</li> <li>6. Analyze and discuss conflict and power in organizations.</li> </ol>



