Parents, Teachers, and School Leaders' Perception of Developing Internationally-Minded Students in an International School in Qatar

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Abstract

Parents at Madrasat Qatariya (MQ), an international school in Qatar, communicated their fear about their children losing their Qatari and Muslim identity as a result of international-mindedness education. Despite this fear, parents still sent their children to MQ, which offered the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme through a mission of developing students who are internationally-minded in terms of intercultural exchange, global engagement, and multilingualism. This conflictual situation created challenges among MQ parents, teachers, and school leaders related to the implementation of the standards and practices of IB. Through the lens of the cosmopolitanism and neoliberalism theories, the following case study aims at deepening the understanding of how MQ parents, teachers, and school leaders perceive international-mindedness, and consequently the strategies they use to deal with the challenges resulting from such an education. 190 parents, 80 teachers, and 7 leaders took the questionnaire, while 13 parents, 20 teachers, and 7 leaders participated in a more intensive qualitative data collection process including interviews and questionnaires, which I analysed through the Thematic Coding Analysis approach.

The findings show that parents, teachers, and school leaders share a diverse understanding of international-mindedness, which is leading to challenges that are impacting the learning and teaching process at MQ. The major strategies that MQ teachers and leaders use to address parental concerns related to international-mindedness include collaborative teamwork, avoiding taboo topics, as well as a flexible approach to the overall implementation of the IB curriculum. Drawing on the findings of this study, I highlighted three strategies that international schools, similar

to MQ contexts, can use to help develop students with international-mindedness including building a definition and ultimately a common understanding of international-mindedness within the particular context of the school, establishing external partnerships within the local community, and raising parental awareness though a comprehensive parent education programme.

Impact Statement

An important aspect of the research programmes at the University College London (UCL) is that it focuses on spreading impact within the academic disciplines and beyond to reach out to the local and global communities. In fact, UCL's research strategy is to "deliver impact for public benefit", emphasizing two types of impacts including *inside academia* and *outside academia*. In this statement, I would like to reflect on and share how I aim to use my research findings about developing internationally-minded students in an international school in Qatar to make an impact both inside and outside academia.

The academic world is fascinating and endlessly changing, which allows us to continuously refine our theories and practices based on trustworthy findings and reliable results. As a researcher, I feel a responsibility to participate in the advancement of the academic field related to education in general and to international schooling in particular. To this end, I aim at spreading the findings of my work from this research through three main academic engagements. First, I would be summarizing this research and publishing it with its findings in a peer-reviewed journal so other scholars can benefit from the context of my research as well as the strategies that I found useful in developing internationally-minded students. My second academic action will include presenting my findings at a UCL poster conference in the autumn of 2022. Participation in such a conference will not only allow me to disseminate my findings, but also it is a great opportunity for me to receive peer feedback on my work and to be able to further refine my methodology and theoretical work for the future. Last, within the inside academia impact, I will be sending proposals to participate as a speaker in the International Baccalaureate regional conference as well as the Near East South Asia (NESA) fall leadership conference, where I can present my findings about developing internationally-minded students in contexts that are similar to MQ. These

conferences will also allow me to engage in academic discussions with colleagues and ultimately compare the application of the strategies I found within difference geographical and cultural contexts.

Concerning making an impact outside of academia, my first project that I am trying currently to fund is to develop a series of podcasts that are available to the public where I can host guests from different international schools from the Gulf countries and other countries in the region in order to discuss their experience with international-mindedness and create a collaborative learning environment. Through these podcasts, professionals facing common challenges related to international-mindedness can come together and benefit from one another's experience leading to the spread of practices that promote the development of internationally-minded students. Another action that I am planning on taking is to create a committee for leaders in international schools in the Gulf area, which will meet on a monthly basis with a general aim of exploring how the establishment of different policies could positively impact the development of internationally-minded students while instilling and preserving their national and cultural identities.

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Acknowledgments

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Besides my supervisors, I would like to thank MQ students, parents, leaders, and teachers for their time and their flexibility throughout the data collection process. Without them, this thesis would have never seen the light, and thus I hope my work brings them valuable and practical strategies to support their learning and teaching of international-mindedness.

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It's my privilege to thank my father and mother who made me the lifelong learner that I am today. I hope my father is looking down on me from heaven and

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Reflective Statement

What a journey it has been! September 2015 was a date that will forever mark my professional and academic identity. When I first decided to pursue a doctorate degree in the summer of 2015, I thought that I was dreaming big, that I was aiming at goals that are too challenging and far from being attainable to me, or more precisely to the professional I thought to be. Receiving the news about getting accepted for the Doctor of Education programme at UCL was an overwhelming surprise, filled with mixed feelings of excitement, joy, fear, and anxiety. I definitely knew that I wanted to pursue a research degree, yet my self-confidence was very low and led me to believe that I will never be able to accomplish the doctorate programme and that failure will soon become the reality that was haunting me day and night since the moment I received my letter of acceptance. Today, as I am writing this statement, I feel a happiness from deep inside and a smile on my face that tells the world the pride I am feeling for being able to accomplish a huge milestone in my professional and academic journey that will opens up many opportunities on a completely different calibre. In the below, I would like to take you with me through this journey highlighting my learnings, linking them to my professional practice, and reflecting on how this programme has shaped and redefined my identity to become the reflective professional I have become.

The Taught Courses Stage

When I first started the taught stage particularly with the Foundation of Professionalism course, things did not make sense to me at all. I remember my first week in London feeling lost, parachuted in a community that I felt was too advanced and on a much higher level of thinking than me. I felt confused, scared,

and regretted my decision of joining such a challenging programme. While for many years, professionalism seemed to me a very simple way of acting that is translated in a well-defined set of practices, it suddenly became an abstract concept grounded in complex theories that made me question each and every belief I previously had about the term. During my Foundation of Professionalism assignment, I chose to further explore how the cultural background of teachers impacts their professional identities, particularly in relationship to Dali's (2008) clusters of professionalism. The initial feedback I received from the course tutor was shockingly scary as it did not even address the concepts I was discussing, but rather the weakness of my academic writing style. I have to admit that this feedback shook me badly and made me want to just turn my back and run, yet I accepted the challenge. I extensively read about academic writing, took online workshops, and re-wrote the paper to receive outstanding feedback related to my ability to improve my writing skills in such a short period. This moment was particularly important to me, because it showed me that there is nothing that is unattainable, it is all a matter of how much time and effort one is willing to invest. I was ready to invest and thus my journey took a major switch at this point from wanting to run away from this programme to feeling ready for the challenge. The challenge of understanding my strengths and areas of improvement, in order to be able to refine my academic and professional skills to show myself before anyone that I can do it!

I started the second course, Methods of Enquiry 1, with much higher confidence and a readiness to conquer any challenge that comes along the way. In this module, I was asked to write a research proposal including a theoretical framework, a literature review, and a methodology for data analysis and connection.

The challenge I faced in this course is to understand the rationale behind a theoretical framework and how it links to the data analysis stage. After conducting research and having lengthy discussions with my colleagues and supervisor, I was able to build an understanding of the role of the theoretical framework in a research and the elements that constitute a strong theory structure. However, due to focusing heavily on the theoretical framework, the feedback I received on my assignment included a weak methodology of collecting and analysing data. I felt satisfied that I learnt the theoretical framework part and was ready for the next challenge o refining my methodological skills.

The last taught course in my first year in the EdD programme was the Methods of Enquiry 2, where students had a chance to pilot a study based on the learning they have acquired so far. I was truly excited for the idea to be able to translate all that I have learned so far in terms of academic writing, building a strong theoretical framework paired with a rich literature review, into a real research practice and report. My research was about the ways 11-12 years old Qatari students negotiated he relationship between home and school, which was later the topic for my Institution-Focused Study (IFS). Despite the excitement, I faced a major challenge during this project related to taking the raw interview data and turning it into trustworthy qualitative findings. After review of the different methods of data analysis, I decided to use the Thematic Coding analysis for its flexibility and generic aspect (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and started my analysis process where I took hours to listen to interviews to generates codes that I later transformed into themes and subthemes. Although I had no clue if I was conducting the TCA the way it should be done, the feedback to the assignment came back very positive and highlighted the

thoroughness of the data collection and analysis process that I developed and that I documented in my thesis.

The taught courses stage was an intensive learning journey that transformed me from an amateur to a more mature researcher. A researcher who understood professionalism and its relation to academic and how to transform observations from the practice into research topics that are explored through a rich review of the literature, a strong theoretical framework, and a steady methodology, leading to trustworthy findings that make a positive contribution to the field.

The IFS Stage

The taught courses stage got me excited for the next stage of the EdD programme that consisted of conducting an Institution-Focused Study (IFS) about a topic connected to my thesis focus. Similar to the MOE2 module assignment, I chose to focus in my IFS on how 11-12 years old students in a private international school in Qatar negotiated the relationship between home and school. The IFS stage brought me back to a mix of feelings that I experienced when I first joined the EdD programme. In fact, although excited about conducting my first real study ever, I constantly doubted my skills and was haunted by the idea of unintentionally falling into ethical issues. Additionally, writing a 20000 words academic report sounded overwhelming and again unattainable. Particularly, I was not able to understand how I can create a comprehensive findings and discussions section from raw data generated from discussions with students. The first step in my IFS was to write a literature review about the previous work that was conducted related to my research topic. Although my literature review was rich and diverse, my supervisor communicated that it lacks the criticality aspect. It was basically a listing of all the

previous work without reflecting any connections between the different findings or my position related to the work. To be very transparent, I did not feel empowered at this stage to question the work of scholars, who in most cases have years of research experience compared to my very beginning level. My supervisor was very encouraging and empowering on this level, he pushed me to build on ideas, interrogate findings, and question the findings of a certain work particularly related to its applicability in different contexts, across places and times.

The second challenge I faced during my IFS was related, as mentioned above to my data analysis process. I wanted to ensure I conduct a data collection and analysis processes that will lead to trustworthy results, which was not very evident to the young researcher I was. Before I even started my collection and analysis of the data, I focused on ethical considerations and potential issues that researchers might face in similar contexts to my study. Insider researcher, the age of my students, as well as my positionality as a researcher, were few of these considerations that framed my IFS work. Once I understood the ethical considerations and potential issues, I dove into my data collection process that I particularly enjoyed. My focus groups' discussions with the students were very engaging and revealed valued data. It was the first time that I actually listen to students and understand their perception of topics related to international-mindedness. In fact, my focus group data revealed more themes for my TCA than the ones I generated as a starting point. My fears of not being able to write a thorough findings and discussions section seemed so easy to handle after my discussions with students, as they provided me with content rich of ideas and

strategies that will help other students in similar contexts negotiate the relationships between home and school.

Conclusion

The EdD journey was a life changing experience not only on the professional and academic levels, but also on the personal level. On the academic level, the programme helped me gain and develop research skills and competences, and equipped me with tools that opens up endless scholarly opportunities. On the professional level, the EdD programme developed my understanding of educational practices and strategies and refined my ability to find and implement research-based practices that enhance students' learning. In addition to the academic and professional levels, I feel that the EdD programme has reshaped my identity and helped me change from an individual who had low self-confidence and was too scared to question ideas and carefully think about literature, to a critical academic who feels empowered to build on other scholars' ideas, challenge their findings, and interrogate their generalization across contexts. An academic and a professional whose voice is strong enough to make a positive impact within, across and beyond education, by translating findings local and global actions that contribute in making the world a better place for all.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1. Context of the Study

1.1 A Glimpse at Qatar

The journey of this study could be traced back to 2011, the year I took the decision to move to Qatar and enter the international school world. Before this move, I was a special education teacher in the public school system in a district in the state of Florida in the United States of America. My move to the international education world started with a wish to get closer to home, which I consider Lebanon, a small country in Western Asia. Since the move to Lebanon was impossible due to the continuous economic and political instability of the country, Qatar was my second choice, where I was just three hours away from home. Although the move was initially motivated by pure personal choices, it later became an interesting professional journey that gave birth to my thesis focus, as detailed below.

Qatar is a small peninsula, bordered from the south by Saudi Arabia, and home to around two and a half million people coming from different countries of the world. Qatar, similarly to many other Gulf countries, is characterized by having the expatriate community constitute the majority of its population, with only half million from the people that live in Qatar being Qataris. For the purpose of this paper, the expatriate community is defined as the group of Qatari residents who do not hold the Qatari citizenship, yet have moved to Qatar for work purposes and usually for a temporary period of time.

The official language in Qatar is Arabic, yet English is a popular language as it is considered the common language shared by most expatriates living there. Concerning the religions, Islam is Qatar's primary religion, with 71% of the population in 2014 being Muslim and the rest a mix of Christians, Hindu, Buddhist, and other secularist and atheist groups (Nation Master, 2014).

Qatar got its independence in 1971 from the British and became a key player in the oil and gas industry in the region. For a long time, Qatar's economy was solely based on oil and gas until 2008, when the General Secretariat for Development Planning (GSDP) launched the government initiative of Qatar National Vision (QNV) 2030. QNV has four different aspects including economic, social, human, and environmental development (General Secretariat for Development Planning, 2008). This vision has two components that are of a particular interest to this study, first it communicates Qatar's wish to move from an oil-based to a knowledge-based economy, and second, to transform Qatar into a country that is mainly run and lead by Qataris, hence relying less on its expatriate population.

1.2 International Schools in Qatar

In order to make the switch from an oil-based to a knowledge-based economy possible, the State of Qatar, similarly to other Gulf countries, adopted neoliberalism ideologies and principles particularly in the education sector (Anderson, 2000; Ferguson & Gupta, 2002; Lazzarato, 2009; Pearse, 2021; Pettinger, 2018; Western et al., 2007; Woo, 2013). One of the major factors that constitute a strong knowledge-based economy is related to the education and higher education systems of the country. For this purpose, the Qatari government

pushed for a rise of international schools across the country as detailed below in this section.

International schools initially started back in 1950 with the International School of Geneva, where a group of teachers met together and created a first definition for international education (Course of Teachers Interested in International Education, 1950). The initial definition of international schooling stressed the importance of human commonalities and promoted global citizenship. Later, particularly with the establishment and development of the international baccalaureate programme, international-mindedness became a predominant characteristic of international education, and thus many international schools, who offered the IB programme, included the development of internationally-minded students as a major component of their vision and mission statements.

The literature review chapter of this thesis will take you through an analysis of the definition of international schooling in general and how it applies to the international baccalaureate programme. However, I would like to clarify a few points related to defining international schooling that I find important to my study. Hayden and Thompson (2013) discuss three different types of international schools including *Type A traditional, Type B ideological, and Type C non-traditional*. The *traditional* category, or *Type A*, includes international schools which are established to provide education for children of parents who move frequently such as diplomats and other employees of multinational companies. *Type B* constitutes the group of schools that focus on developing students who are internationally-minded, and *Type C*, which is the newest, is similar to the ideological group, yet introduces international education as a for profit corporation and/or includes a population of

students that is composed of mainly indigenous students. Based on Hayden and

Thompson's (2013) categorization of international schooling, the school I will be

focusing on for my research is of a *Type C,* which is a prek-12 institution that offers

the International Baccalaureate programme to a group of Arab students, with more

than 90% being native Qatari citizens as detailed in the below section. A prek-12

institution is an American term that refers to schools who offer education to children

from three all the way to 17-18 years old. Students start their education in this

system at age 3 in a pre-kindergarten class and end their school journey in Grade

12, as senior high schoolers.

1.3 The Madrasat Qatariya School Context

This research is based on a case study that took place in an international

school in the southern part of Qatar, 30 minutes away from its capital Doha, here

given the pseudonym of Madrasat Qatariya (MQ) in order to aim at protecting the

confidentiality of the school and all participants of the study at all times. MQ started

in 2011 as a bilingual school offering the American and the Qatari national

curriculum to students from pre-kindergarten 3 (3 years old) all the way to Grade 2

(7-8 years old). Each year, MQ opened a new grade level to now reach grade 12

and its first graduating class in 2022. When it first started, the school had a plan to

be a co-educational international school that aimed at delivering an American

education to its student population, mainly composed of Qatari students. However,

with the years, a few things have changed. Concerning the curriculum, MQ received

the International Baccalaureate Programme authorization and thus started offering

the IB curriculum from prek3 (3 years old) all through to grade 12 (17-18 years old).

Another change that happened at MQ was the change from a full coeducational

setting to a mixed setting depending on the grade level. In fact, MQ kept the co-educational system for its early years and elementary division until grade 5 (10-11 years old), but then changed to become a gender segregated school from Grade 6 (11-12 years old) upward. What is important to note is that, according to the school's leadership team, this change happened upon parents' request and the MQ parent community not accepting for their boys and girls to participate in learning activities together. Mixing between boys and girls, particularly in the teenage years onward, goes against many MQ parents' beliefs and values, which creates a whole debate about the parents enrolling their children at MQ, regardless of its misalignment with their cultural beliefs.

MQ was created as part of Qatar's initiative of providing Qatari students with a higher calibre of education that is internationally recognized yet still connected to the Qatari culture and heritage. To this end, MQ and its sister schools have an admission policy that prioritizes enrolment of Qatari students. At MQ, around 97% of students are Qatari, while the remaining students come from other Arabic-speaking countries including Sudan, Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon. 100 % of the students at MQ are Muslim and many come from traditional Qatari families, where Qatari values and traditions play a major role in the daily life choices of the individuals. If culture and religion seem so important to MQ families, how can these families deal on a daily basis with their children attending an International Baccalaureate (IB) school with a focus on promoting international-mindedness?

Due to the nature of the school, being bilingual with an international and a national curriculum, the teaching team is divided into two groups including the expatriate teachers and the Arabic teachers. The expatriate teachers are mainly

responsible for delivering all subjects that are offered in the English language, while the Arabic team is recruited to teach the subjects that are taught in Arabic including Arabic language classes, Islamic studies, and Arabic social studies. It is important to note that expatriate teachers are mainly hired from western countries, mainly the United States of America and Canada, with a few others coming from other English-speaking countries such as the United Kingdom and South Africa.

MQ's mission is to serve the local southern community of Qatar by developing students who are "internationally-minded" and who "take ownership of their learning" (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2018, p.23). To reach this goal, MQ aims at "delivering high quality learning and teaching that is based on international standards and rooted in the Qatari heritage and culture". Having to "deliver an international curriculum" and to "promote international-mindedness" has been an interesting journey for MQ teachers, leaders, and parents, that inspired the focus of the study as detailed below in the following section related to the rationale and importance of this research work.

2. Rationale and Importance

With globalization and the interconnectedness aspect of today's world, many countries have witnessed a rapid and continuous growth of international schools (Brummitt & Keeling, 2013). In fact, the process of globalization has opened up many opportunities for people to work in different parts of the world, often dealing with individuals from different cultural beliefs (IMF Staff, 2002). Cosmopolitanism is not anymore considered exclusive to the elite population as it became in many cases an imposed need on individuals who are finding it difficult to survive in their home country, and thus seeking work in different parts of the world ((Beck &

Sznaider, 2010). Globalization paired with Qatar's neoliberalism principles of adopting western well-established international curricula has led Qatar to witness in its turn a rise in the number of international schools particularly in the capital city Doha, and in other secondary cities in the southern and northern part of the country. As discussed above, the International Baccalaureate schools established in Qatar aimed at offering an international education to Qatari children, while preserving the cultural heritage and national identity. While the mission of MQ and other sister schools seems to be ideal on paper, the implementation of these principles at MQ has been facing many difficulties due to conflicts arising between parents on one side and the school leaders and teachers on the other side.

The initial thoughts for this doctoral research project started back in 2013 after working for two years at MQ first as a Grade 2 English teacher and later as an instructional coach and as the head of the learning support department. During my six years of work at MQ, I had the opportunity to work with different groups of students, parents, and teachers, giving me a holistic view of the school's practices in regard to its vision and mission. My informal observations and discussions with different stakeholders revealed frustrations on many levels. Students were struggling in negotiating between home and school, as the culture at home was very often resistant to what the child was learning at school. Conversations with teachers and leaders often communicated challenges with the implementation of the Primary Years Programme (PYP) and Middle Years Programme (MYP) of IB and a fear of getting in trouble for going against the QM parents' values and beliefs. From their side, parents expressed frustrations and sometimes anger with what was

being taught at school, yet insisted on keeping their children enrolled at MQ mainly because of the reputation that the school had in the community.

Witnessing these conflicting situations and frustrations among students, colleagues, and parents, I felt the need to act. At first, I was confused in what direction I needed to head in order to help MQ reach its mission of developing students who are internationally-minded. Inside deep in my heart I believed that this could happen. I had and still have strong beliefs that developing internationally-minded students in the MQ community would be easy, if students and stakeholders are provided with the right tools and strategies. But what are these tools and strategies? How can I get to them and share them with my colleagues, students, and MQ parents? To answer these questions, I decided to pursue a doctoral degree and drafted a research proposal that was welcomed at UCL. Of course, since my start of the programme and drafting my initial research proposal, my questions, methodology, as well as academic writing has significantly changed and led to this final thesis that I am writing so passionately today as it gave me relevant insights and knowledge to share with the MQ community.

3. Research Questions

Before I could compile and recommend strategies that could help MQ in its journey in developing students who are internationally-minded, I found it important to better understand the perception of leaders, teachers, and parents about internationally-mindedness. Although the students will not be participating in this part of my research, it is crucial to note that I have already addressed the students' perception of the conflicts between home and school in my earlier Institution Focus Study (IFS) research at UCL, followed by a published article in the Journal of

Research in International Education (Frangieh, 2017). Three questions will help me gain a deeper understanding of the parents', teachers', and school leaders' perception of international-mindedness as follows:

- How do parents of students at MQ understand the term international-mindedness?

- How do teachers and school leaders at MQ understand the term international-mindedness?

- How do school leaders and teachers respond to parental concerns about international-mindedness, if these emerge?

- What strategies could support teachers and school leaders in developing students who are internationally-minded at MQ?

4. Thesis Structure

To answer the above questions and ensure the relevance of my research, I went through different stages starting with a design of my theoretical framework that created the basis of all my analysis, and then moved to conducting a comprehensive literature review and a reflection on how the literature connected to my theoretical framework and the context of my research. Once I completed developing my theoretical framework and my initial review of the literature, I worked on my data collection tools as detailed below followed by a methodological design that led to the collection and analysis of my findings. Finally, I concluded this thesis with a summary of my findings as well as my recommendations and implications of my work first in academia in terms of further developing the concept of international-mindedness in education, and then on the ground by providing tangible strategies to use at international schools similar to MQ.

4.1 Theoretical Framework

My theoretical framework evolved significantly since I started the work on my thesis proposal until the final outcome of my work. When I first started designing my research, I wanted to use the acculturation and marginalization theories as a base to my work. After many discussions with my supervisor, and the advice of the upgrade review panel, I decided to put away the acculturation and marginalization theories and instead focus on cosmopolitanism and neoliberalism for the following reasons.

Gunesch (2004) argues that cosmopolitanism is a manifestation of globalization and frames the relationship between people from different cultural backgrounds, while Hannez (1990) defines cosmopolitanism as the individual's ability and disposition to engage in intercultural exchanges. In fact, whether I consider cosmopolitanism as an ethical matter or if I look at it from a more aesthetic or empirical standpoint, I can't help it but notice the strong connection between cosmopolitanism and international-mindedness in terms of intercultural exchanges and the appreciation of diversity. Many international schools around the world aim at promoting this cultural understanding by centring their mission and vision statements on diversity and global citizenship (ISC Research, 2021). Research shows, however, that cosmopolitanism could have a negative connotation in terms of leading individuals to become rootless, abandoning their cultural and traditional beliefs (Cameron, 2006). This ambivalent view of cosmopolitanism has also been reflected in some IB schools, where parents perceived international-mindedness as a threat to their cultural beliefs (Al Farra, 2012). In order for me to better understand the perception that parents, school leaders, and teachers at MQ have of

international-mindedness, it was important for me to research cosmopolitanism and how it has shaped and continues to shape international-mindedness in different places and times.

Along with cosmopolitanism, a study of the neoliberalism ideology allowed me to better understand the reasons behind the rise of international schools across the world (ISC Research, 2021) along with the rationale behind parents' choice of this type of education for their children. In fact, Neoliberalism saw a rise in 1979 in the UK with Margaret Thatcher in her role as prime minister, and similarly with Ronald Reagan who took over the United States presidency in 1980. Both Thatcher and Reagan established several initiatives that encouraged the privatization of the public sector such as housing, telecom, and schooling and promoted tax cutting for the wealthy population. These ideologies have been heavily criticized and blamed to have increased inequalities and social injustice around the world, boosting the power of the rich and reinforcing in-work poverty and the needs for debts for the lower economic class (Lazzarato, 2009; Pearse, 2021; Pettinger, 2018).

4.2 Literature Review

Starting from the ideologies of cosmopolitanism and neoliberalism, I conducted a review of the literature of international-mindedness and international education, two aspects of cosmopolitanism and neoliberalism that I found relevant to my thesis work. I studied international-mindedness through history and built a deep understanding of its evolution, its development and assessment, as well as its challenges. Since MQ is an International Baccalaureate (IB) school, I decided to adopt the IB definition of international-mindedness which includes three main

components including intercultural exchange, multilingualism, and global engagement (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2008).

The second focus of my literature review was about the creation and development of international schools around the world and particularly in Qatar. This review allowed me to define international education in the context of my research to then explore the principles of IB related to international-mindedness and how the standards and practices of IB were implemented in the context of MQ.

The literature review that I conducted did not only give me an understanding of the extant literature, but also provided me with an opportunity to analyse and interrogate the extant findings and how they connect to the work I am conducting. It also allowed me to reflect on and analyse the rationale behind extant occurrences throughout history, grounding them in my theoretical framework and assessing their validity and effectiveness in the context of my research.

4.3 Research Methodology

The research methodology chapter of this thesis reflects the journey of defining my philosophical assumptions, developing my data collection tools and process, framing my data analysis, and considering potential ethical issues. The first step of my methodology work included framing my philosophical beliefs as a researcher particularly in terms of how I perceive the building of knowledge and how I understand the concept of perception. Perception of international-mindedness was the core focus of my research, and thus it was deemed necessary to understand this concept and to position my research work against extant literature.

Once I established my philosophical assumptions framework for my research methodology, I moved to develop my data collection tools, which were revised many times to reinforce trustworthiness of the data. Once my tools were ready and my ethical approval was obtained from UCL, I proceeded with the data collection, keeping a data diary at hand throughout the process to note my observations and connections along the way, which supported the analysis of my data.

4.4 Findings and Discussions

This chapter at the end of the thesis reflects the connections between my theoretical framework, my literature review, my methodological assumptions, and my data collection and analysis. The sections and subsections of this chapter were the results of the Thematic Coding Analysis (TCA). The titles were obtained from the different themes that were generated from my initial coding and then grouped into more general categories. Under each section, you will find the expressed perceptions of the different participants as well as my analysis of these perceptions linked to the theoretical framework and literature review.

5. Conclusion

In summary, this thesis aims at providing the MQ community with strategies to support school leaders and teachers in developing students who are internationally-minded. It also aims at easing the frustrations of teachers, leaders, and parents, in order to optimize the students' journey at MQ and help them develop as internationally-minded citizens. In the conclusion part of this thesis, I will provide you with a summary of the findings and my recommendations to MQ. I will also discuss the significance and implication of my work on the educational field in

general and on international schooling in particular, before I end this journey with recommendations related to areas that will require further research.

It is important to note that throughout this thesis I will be using the terms *perception*, *understanding*, and *perspective* interchangeably, because I believe that in the context of this research, they help me express the same phenomenon. In the methodology section, I will take the time to discuss what I mean by participants' perception, which could be summarized as the process an individual goes through when trying to assimilate the subjective reality of this world. The terms *understanding* and *perspective*, will be used in the same way when referring to the participant's perception of their subjective reality of international-mindedness and other related concepts, because their literal definitions are very similar to each other's and won't affect the interpretation of the data (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

It is also worth mentioning that this thesis is mainly based on the Primary Years Programme (PYP) and Middle Years Programme (MYP) of the International Baccalaureate. This thesis work did not address the Diploma Programme, as during the data collection phase, MQ had not yet started the Diploma Programme courses.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

In order to better understand the parents', teachers', and school leaders' perception of developing internationally-minded students in a Qatar private school, my work was based on two main theories: cosmopolitanism, and neoliberalism. Cosmopolitanism was used to address parents', teachers', and school leaders' perceptions of international-mindedness. Neoliberalism, on the other hand, allowed me to better understand the concept of international schooling, and its importance in today's world. Neoliberalism also offered some clues related to the reasons' Qatari parents enrol their children in international schools.

1. Overview

Although there are debates about how far back globalization can be travelled, in the last century, globalization has had and continues to have a major impact, in different countries around the world, on the economic, educational, technological, cultural, and political levels (UNDP, 1999). The effect of globalization on the educational sector included the rise of international schools and curricula that aim at developing students who have a strong national identity and whose thinking is globally oriented (Bunnel, 2021). As a result, the concept of international-mindedness started to become more popular among international schools. In the context of these schools, international-mindedness calls for the hope for worldwide peace, an understanding and collaboration between nations, the respect of human rights, and an overall wish to make the world a better place (Hill, 2012). The International Baccalaureate programme is one of the most adopted curricula among international schools, with 5400 IB schools in 159 different countries (International

Baccalaureate Organization, 2022). The International Baccalaureate Organization mission is to develop internationally-minded students through the promotion of different attitudes framed in the IB learner profile (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2020b). A case study conducted by Lineham (2013) suggested that the IB programme is effective in delivering its mission, yet the degree of the influence of the IB education on students was not determined. A point that is of interest to study particularly when looking at IB schools in different part of the world and their effectiveness in developing internationally-minded citizens.

Through informal discussions with parents, teachers, and school leaders, during my six years of working at MQ, I noticed that all stakeholders do not necessarily share the same understanding of international-mindedness. Hence, in order to better understand the challenges, if any, of developing internationally-minded students in a Qatar private school, it was deemed necessary to better comprehend the stakeholder's perception of international-mindedness. Since my work was mainly focused on the social and cultural aspects of globalization, I used the cosmopolitanism theory that could be traced back to the first and second centuries.

According to Gunesch (2004), cosmopolitanism is an occurrence of globalization that focuses on the relationships between individuals from different cultures, while Hannerz (1990) defines it as the disposition of an individual to engage with others who belong to different cultural backgrounds. Gunesch (2004) also discussed cosmopolitanism as related to the development of human beings in terms of skills and competences that allow an individual to succeed in a global world. It is important to take the time here to think about success. From a neoliberal

point of view, success may be linked to wealth and power, as evidenced by Forbes's list of the richest people in the world, which include Tesla's owner Elon Musk and Amazon's Jeff Bezos (Forbes, 2022). From a human rights perspective, success could be measured by the extent of an individual's' voice, choice, and ownership of the decisions they make in their life. This view connects with Starkey's perspective of freedom, viewed as the core of human rights and defined in a particular place and time within a democratic context (Starkey, 2012). For the purpose of this work, I focused on success as being the opportunity for an individual to have a voice, choice, and ownership in their life decisions including those related to choosing their identity by defining their personal beliefs and values (United Nations, 1948, Article 18).

The neoliberalism theory was used mainly when discussing the concept of international schools, because many aspects of neoliberalism have led to the development of international schooling, which was further discussed in the section titled neoliberalism below. Romanowski (2014) defines neoliberalism as an attempt "to develop and make trade between nations easier, freeing the movement of goods, resources, and enterprises with the goals of finding cheaper resources and to maximize profits and efficiency" (p.4). In general, neoliberalism aims at reducing the power of the state nation and empowering the private sector by removing regulations and promoting privatization of varied social services (Woo, 2013). However, this is what neoliberalism is from one perspective and does not include many other standpoints that view in neoliberalism a vehicle to increased inequality and social injustice (Lazzarato, 2009; Pearse, 2021; Pettinger, 2018). Pearse (2021) argued that neoliberalism has impacted the values of many human beings who,

driven by competition, do not pay much attention to the how and the whom of the process as long as it leads to power and wealth success. Lazzarato (2009) argued that neoliberalism has increased poverty by promoting inequalities and reducing the union protection of workers and their wages.

Neoliberalism could be linked to the promotion of the privatization of educational services. The impact of neoliberalism on international schools is also enhanced by the role that several transnational organizations have played. For example, IMF and the world bank provide loans and other technical assistance for educational companies, whereas UNESCO works on promoting a high calibre of learning and teaching in order to increase the competition among international schools in different countries. By encouraging competitiveness, these organizations are pushing schools to increase their accountability and the assumed quality control of their services (Robertson, n.d.). However, how do these strategies respect human rights and the pace and learning needs of every learner? Do accountability and quality control need to be linked to pure quantitative data or should it be more of a process of triangulation, where the school's ability to support and challenge every child is taken into consideration?

Regardless of the impact of neoliberalism on student learning, the strategic privatization of education has caused many countries around the world to witness a rapid increase in the growth of international schools (ICEF, 2018), that are created to fulfil the wishes of mobile parents as well as many other national parents, mainly coming from a more advantaged socio-economic class, who are looking to provide their children with what is perceived to be a global education. Waterson (2015) linked the increase in the number of international schools to parental awareness in

terms of local job markets limitations. However, do international schools truly equip children with skills and competencies needed for the 21st century world, and what are these skills and competencies assumed to be? Do MQ parents and other parents of students in international schools solely enrol their children in such programmes because of their awareness of the local job market's limitations, and how do neoliberal assumptions underpin this awareness? These questions were answered and reflected upon in the findings and discussions chapter of this thesis as MQ parents discussed the reasons behind choosing international schooling for the education of their children.

In addition to understanding the importance of international schools for MQ parents, I also used the principles of neoliberalism, including privatization, competition, choice, and freedom of markets (Western et al., 2007), to comprehend the reasons behind the high rise of international schools in Qatar. In fact, Qatar has seen an increase in the number of international schools serving more than 200,000 students across the country. This increase was mainly due to the importance Qatar gives to its educational sector as part of its globalization vision, spending around QR. 22 billion on schools as a significant investment in the year of 2020 (Qatar Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2020). Qatar's Ministry of Education and Higher Education has actually stated its mission as being centred on developing independent learners who can think critically about the world. Thus, the ministry aims at constructing its curriculum in alignment with international standards, as policy makers believe that an international education allows the country to reach its national 2030 vision to become progressive and able to independently sustain its systems and their continuous development. The

importance Qatar gives to its international schools is also evidenced in the number

of private international schools, exceeding 332 schools, while the number of public

schools remains at around 207, with only 124,600 students attending compared to

the 296,300 students enrolled in international schools (Qatar Ministry of Education

and Higher Education, 2020). The Qatari government actually encourages parents to

enrol their children in private international schools by offering funding that covers

part of the private school tuition fee around QAR 28000, which is equal to 6124

GBP (Qatar Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2020). However, this leads

to some ambiguity concerning Qatar's global vision. In fact, Qatar, as per its

Ministry of Education and Higher Education (2020), states that education is the right

for every Qatari child and thus it is compulsory and free of charge for public

education. Additionally, the Qatari government has developed the Qatar National

Vision (QNV) 2030, with human development being a core pillar along with three

others. Through the official QNV 2030 document, the Qatari government under the

pillar of human development is expecting its citizens to perform in a knowledge-

based and competitive environment. The vision seems promising, yet the vehicle to

reach it appears to be more in the private sector. Is Qatar providing aid to its

citizens to attend private schools because its public sector could not meet the

expectations of a knowledge-based economy? Or is it because they would like to

simply offer their citizens a wider choice for the education of their children? If this is

the case, one can infer that this choice is only available to the upper class, and thus

wonders what human rights are being threatened in relation to ethnicity, race, and

wealth?

2. Cosmopolitanism

With Martha Nussbaum's article "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism" published in 1994, new cosmopolitanism appeared to re-advocate for a cosmopolitan education, whose goal was to develop individuals who display loyalty and faithfulness to all citizens around the world regardless of their cultural background. Nussbaum (1994) brought back the concept of cosmopolitan education, introduced first by Greek stoicism and then by Kant through his book Toward Perpetual Peace, published in 1795. The literature about cosmopolitanism shows a diversity in the perspective used by researcher to better understand this process. Anthropology, cultural studies, sociology, philosophy, political science, and even tourism theories were a few of the angles that individuals interested in cosmopolitanism took to communicate their understanding and knowledge about this concept (Cicchelli et al., 2019; Delanty, 2018; Kleingeld, 2016; Starkey, 2012; Werbner, 2008). When described in literature, cosmopolitanism is sometimes described as the individual's knowledge of another culture, their ability to integrate that culture and act according to its standard, their open-mindedness, appreciation, and curiosity for the difference, and their ability to look at the world from different perspectives, while in other times authors have drawn the profile of a cosmopolitan person as rootless, valueless, corrupt, or immoral people (Cameron, 2006).

Highlighting this contradiction in the different perspective on the traits of a cosmopolitan person is particularly relevant to my study when looking at the parents' and teachers' perception of internationally-mindedness. It would be interesting to look at to what extent the cultural and religious background of a person could have an impact on the way they perceive an internationally-minded

person, a point that I have elaborated more on in the findings and discussion section of this thesis.

For the purpose of this thesis, I divided this section into sub-sections based on the three different standpoints that I found most relevant to my work including the standpoint that look at cosmopolitanism as a global ethic, then the aesthetic standpoint, and finally the empirical perspective.

2.1 Cosmopolitanism as a Global Ethic

Nussbaum (1994) and Appiah (1998) had significant contributions in the work conducted on global ethics as a framework for cosmopolitanism. Appiah's depiction of cosmopolitanism highlighted two major strands including the individual's obligation to others regardless of the type of their relationship and the serious consideration and appreciation of the other's values through understanding the practices and beliefs that matter to them. In the debates around cosmopolitanism from a global ethics perspective, Schefler (1999) distinguished between political cosmopolitanism and cultural cosmopolitanism.

Political cosmopolitanism focuses on social justice and how norms and values should be applicable to a global population rather than single societies. In this view, cosmopolitanism calls for individuals to become citizens of the world that share a common set of values and principles. This kind of cosmopolitanism could be perceived as a threat to some individuals in the Qatari society, where a major some nationals highly value their traditions and beliefs and are keen on preserving their identity and excluding any other perspective. Cultural cosmopolitanism, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of belonging to a certain group within the close community. Advocates of the cultural perspective tend to believe that

nationalistic tendencies, whether religious or cultural, provides individuals with the support needed to succeed in today's global world.

Nussbaum (1994), from her side, took a position that stressed more the view that world citizenship should have priority for individuals above all other affiliations. Nussbaum's ideas were closely aligned with the Stoics who believed that our respect and obligation to humanity in general should come first and should precede our allegiance to our immediate and extended family, local groups, city and country, however, without losing our local identity. Nussbaum advocated for a cosmopolitan education that could support the promotion of world citizenship. In her opinion, today's education should be centred on world education rather than on patriotism and democracy. She actually criticizes patriotic education to be a sort of jingoism, which leads individuals to become aggressive against the outside world and everything that surpasses their national boundaries. According to Nussbaum, world citizenship education or cosmopolitan education is crucial for many reasons. First, cosmopolitan education teaches us to better understand ourselves, our traditions and practices, from a global perspective (Nussbaum,1994). It allows an individual to look at their own cultural characteristics through the lens of others, in order to better understand what is important in the local but not global level, and what from our daily practices is wider and shared among citizens around the globe. To support her idea, Nussbaum gives the example of the raising of a child and how this could differ from one community to another. In western communities, the caring for a child is more of the responsibility of the immediate small family, while as in other societies the child upbringing obligation is not limited to the immediate family, but extends to the larger circle of family, as well as neighbours and other local

community members. This idea could be linked to my findings in the study I conducted about how Grade 6 students in an international school in Qatar negotiate the relationship between home and school (Frangieh, 2017). Through this work, I argued that parental authority, and more of the father figure in a Qatari family, could be a challenge for the students to accept other ideas and develop to become internationally-minded citizens. In fact, in many families at MQ, as reported by MQ students, the father has the final word and going against his decision is considered an insult and a treason to the family. Thus, some students chose to follow their father's rules and expectations, even when they go against the school's standards, in order not to break this family trust. Understanding that this parental authority is just one perspective among many others extant around the world, a Qatari child can make a more informed decision on whether to respect this conception or put it on the side to adopt one that better fits their needs and preferences in today's world. However, what will the parent's reaction to the child's decision be if they refuse to follow the parental authority? How much will this affect the individual's reputation in their community and within their family? Although logically raising children's awareness about parental authority could allow them to make more informed decisions, the practical and realistic side of this reasoning could not be as simple and might lead to unintended controversiality.

Appiah (1998) and Scheffler (1999) propose a counterargument to Nussbaum's view. They both defended partiality in the context of culture and advocated for a more moderate form of cosmopolitanism. In fact, Appiah (1998) highlighted the importance of differences that exist among individuals coming from diverse cultural backgrounds and looked at these differences as an opportunity to

learn from each other. Appiah (1998) refused the idea that all human beings need to follow one lifestyle and that this defeats the purpose of cosmopolitanism, in which individuals have the right to carry on values and beliefs that fit their particular mode of life.

Based on this logic, Appiah justified partiality in cosmopolitanism, stating that although morality should be at the basis of our relationships, it is not reasonable to consider that this morality should oblige us to treat everyone equally. For Appiah, favouritism is healthy when it comes to close relationships, as long as we are treating everyone else with respect. Yet, this partiality in Appiah's cosmopolitanism has been widely criticized by other authors who are broader in their view of cosmopolitanism. For Rorty (1998) for example, Appiah's rooted cosmopolitanism leads individuals to sympathize more with their family and close circle of friends, which defeats the idea of treating everyone equally or more accurately the idea of caring about all citizens around the world regardless of kinships and citizenships. Thinking of the Qatari parents at MQ, the school I conducted my research work at, I can't help but highlight how important the perception of cosmopolitanism could have an impact on parents' perception of international-mindedness. Through my six years of observation and informal conversations with parents, I tend to believe that parents of MQ students would be more willing to accept the standpoint on cosmopolitanism if it takes into consideration their roots, traditions, and cultural and religious beliefs. The more inclusive view of cosmopolitanism, which Rorty (1998) defended, could lead parents to believe that international-mindedness will make their children develop as rootless and valueless citizens, which goes beyond their national and religious beliefs.

In addition to gaining a better understanding about ourselves, Nussbaum (1994) argued that world citizen education allows us to better solve global issues that arise each and every day in our intertwined globalized world. In fact, to solve issues that affect us all as world citizens, such as environmental and ecological problems, one's need to not only be able to connect with other individuals in different places in the world, but also be able to understand and respect their priorities and commitment, and consequently propose solutions that are considered culturally safe and respectful. Furthermore, cosmopolitan education allows students to understand their moral obligations to the rest of the world and not only within their local context. Nussbaum (1994) highlights the idea that Americans look at themselves as superior than others and consider themselves as entitled to a special form of respect. What Nussbaum is sharing here closely resonates with my informal observations of expatriate teachers in MQ, who frequently implied themselves to be the sole owners of knowledge and universal values, and thus perceived part of their role as to spread this superior understanding among the Qatari student population. This situation created many frustrations from both the teachers', the parents', and the students' sides, hence the purpose of this study. By clarifying these conflicts and understanding the theory behind the teachers', students', and parents' actions, individuals and teams can make more informed decisions that are truly universal in terms of respecting everyone's traditions and values, which will ideally help in making the process of developing internationally-mindedness students smoother and less conflictual.

2.2 Aesthetic Standpoint

The aesthetic standpoint of cosmopolitanism presents a more specific way of embracing this concept, without the activism connotation that usually comes along with cosmopolitanism as a global ethics perspective. Hannerz (1996) is one of the main advocates for and contributors to the research about cosmopolitanism as an aesthetic standpoint:

A more genuine cosmopolitanism is first of all an orientation, a willingness to engage with the Other. It entails an intellectual and aesthetic openness toward divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity. To become acquainted with more cultures is to turn into an aficionado, to view them as artworks. (Hannerz, 1996, p.103)

From their side, Urry (1995), Szerszynski and Urry (2002, 2006), and Tomlinson (1999), discussed aesthetic cosmopolitanism as being a personal disposition to accepting other people, particularly those from different cultural backgrounds. It is important to highlight that the aesthetic standpoint stresses heavily the individual's choice and preferences. In fact, this perspective calls individuals to select from different cultures the traditions, values and beliefs that suit them. Similarly, Hannerz (1996) argued that individuals take ownership of their identity and be allowed to change it as they see fit during a certain time and place, without being forced for a long-term commitment. It gives individuals the freedom to disengage with any value or belief, at any point, which clearly contrasts the notion of patriotism and lifetime allegiance to one's country. From a Qatari perspective, taking into consideration the strong sense of patriotism and belonging to the local culture, this view of

cosmopolitanism could be behind some parents' resistance to their children to develop as internationally-minded citizens.

Based on these characteristics of a cosmopolitan person, Hannerz (1996) distinguished between a "traveller" and a "tourist". According to him, tourists are just observers, who are frequently exploited by locals due to their lack of understanding of the local context, and consider them somehow unskilled. On the other hand, travellers usually seek immersion in the local culture. They try to go unnoticed within the locals' crowd. Travellers seem to be active participants in the community they are visiting and try as much as possible to learn the traditions and practices of the locals and usually keep practicing the ones that suit them when back to their home environment. Hannerz (1996) admitted that there is a hint of narcissism in his conception, which made him face criticisms from different scholars. Robbins (1993) blamed Hannerz (1996) for re-approving Mannhein's' principle of "free-floating intellectual" (Mannhein, 1929, as cited in Loader, 1997) and promoting the notion of cosmopolitan's privilege. From their side Jokinen & Veijola (1997) accused Hannerz (1996) for presenting cosmopolitanism as a privilege as not every individual can afford to be a *traveller*. To them, this conception is conditional to a male western person, who can economically afford such a long sojourn without heavy financial implications. Nowadays, travel has changed from what it used to be in 1997, yet it is still a valid point to claim that individuals who travel are the more privileged ones, particularly when the travel is about education or with a purpose of being immersed in a new culture. In fact, the idea of a cosmopolitan person being a traveller rather than a tourist, could create a more

significant problem for some Qatari families who have enrolled their children at MQ, with the hope to preserve their national identity and cultural heritage.

2.3 Empirical Standpoint

Cosmopolitanism as global ethics highlights the individual's obligation toward others and looks at differences as opportunities for mutual learning. The aesthetic standpoint, also discussed earlier, aligns with the global ethics standpoint, yet without the activism connotation, and stresses the individual's choices and preferences, rather than obligations and responsibilities. On the other side of these two perspectives of cosmopolitanism, comes a third that seems to significantly drift from both of them. In fact, the empirical standpoint looks at cosmopolitanism as being an involuntary process that is being forced on all societies and individuals in this beginning of the third millennium. From the empirical standpoint, cosmopolitanism is a natural response to a lack of fulfilment of basic needs, a political suppression, or a threat of malnourishment (Beck & Sznaider, 2010). For example, some people might travel to find a job that can provide for their families when it is not a possibility in their own country, others choose to leave to a different country because of lack of freedom of speech in their own.

Consequently, becoming a cosmopolitan becomes a way of living that does not exclude nationalism. This point is of a particular importance to my research, as Qatari parents, as discussed by Al Farra (2012), and as evidenced through my informal observations during my six years at MQ, look at international-mindedness and the process of cosmopolitanism as a potential threat to their national identity. Removing this barrier of exclusivity of either cosmopolitanism or nationalism, could create a security zone for Qatari parents to be more open to the idea of their

children developing as internationally-minded citizens. Definitely, these parents might still reject international-mindedness, yet since they are choosing to enrol their children in an International Baccalaureate school, it is their right to be provided with a clearer view of the school's rationale behind promoting international-mindedness in the context of MQ.

To further elaborate on the empirical standpoint of cosmopolitanism, it is important to gain a deeper understanding of the theory of *Word Risk Society* (Beck, 1999). Through this theory, Beck explained that societies are more and more troubled and infused by a range of global interdependencies such as terrorism and all ecological issues, which in fact coerces them to connect and leads to creating stronger bridges between the high and low-income countries. For Beck (1999), the acknowledgement of the common world threat will lead to cosmopolitan norms and agreement, which consequently create a more official form of cosmopolitanism that is shared among countries from around the globe. However, one can't help but wonder about whose responsibility it is to define terrorism and other global issues. Do all countries have the same opportunity of voicing what they consider to be a global threat, or are countries being classified and global occurrences are being sorted by few dominant high-income western countries?

The empirical standpoint has a significant impact on the research field, as the notions of national and international, local and global, native and expatriate start to lose their well-defined borders. With this in mind, the interpretation of the data in this research work carefully examined the new meanings of social affiliation and the unit of research that could still be relied upon when discussing cosmopolitanism versus nationalism.

3. Neoliberalism

Similar to other conceptual terms commonly used in literature, the definition of neoliberalism seems to have evolved throughout the years, yet still being disputed until today with no common definition that has been agreed upon. It is interesting to report the increase in neoliberalism literature starting with 100 scholars' entries between the year of 1980 and the year of 1989, to increase to around a thousand in the 1990s, and then witnessing a significant peak of more than 7000 google scholar citations between the years of 2000 and 2009 (Venugopal, 2015). The scholastic increase around this concept could be linked to the leading role that neoliberalism has been playing on the worldwide policy agenda. Anderson (2000), for example, framed neoliberalism as being "*the most powerful ideology in word history*" (Anderson, 2000, p.17). What is more appealing than the concept of a "free" market that drastically reduces the dominance and control of the state? However, this potential freedom comes with a potential price of having private corporations such as Google, Microsoft, or Nestle dominate the world, obliging us to adopt their principles, values, and beliefs. Whether it is about the definition of the term or about its benefits or lack of benefits, the concept of Neoliberalism seems to bring along noteworthy ambiguity and controversy, making it hard on scholars to define it in an absolute context, but rather opt to do so in the very particular context of their work.

3.1 Defining Neoliberalism in the Context of my Study

Digging in the literature, it is noticeable that there have been many approaches to how one can define the term neoliberalism. The first approach, a theoretical approach, consists of finding key authors in neoliberalism for a reading

of their work and consequently the determination of the origin and path of their

ideas through an authentic and deep interpretation of their texts (Mirowski &

Plehwe, 2009). The second approach seems more linked to the practice of

neoliberalism as it identifies neoliberalism occurrences as encountered by authors

in the actual world. Once identified, these phenomena are traced in a multi-

dimensional approach to be then understood through their interactions (Crouch,

2011). The third approach does not look at neoliberalism as a set of written work in

need of analysis, nor as factual happenings in need to be grounded in a theoretical

framework. This approach to defining the concept of neoliberalism studies what the

term means to scholars by looking at how it has been used. It consists of inspecting

the extant definitions and analysing how the conceptual understanding has evolved

by identifying patterns of usage and interpretation (Venugopal, 2015). This approach

embraces the diversity of perspectives by highlighting trends and occurrences,

rather than relying on the interpretation of theory or practices from one single angle.

Based on the above approach of defining neoliberalism through the patterns

of usage, for the purpose of this paper, I will look at neoliberalism as a market-

oriented process where all services, including education, could be bought and sold

based on the local and global market needs. This free-market ideology led to

several neoliberal initiatives such as tax cuts for the wealthy, limitation of unions,

and cutting of public spending, which had a direct impact on the increase in poverty

and the reinforcement of social injustice (Western et al., 2007).

Regardless of the adopted definition, scholars seem to agree that

neoliberalism emphasized the role of the private market, including the private

international schools' market, which was mainly created to fulfil the needs of mobile

parents. Nowadays, some parents, counting in MQ parents, see in international

schooling an opportunity for their children to thrive and excel in today's competitive

world. What role did neoliberalism and the privatization of education play in the rise

of a knowledge-based economy in Qatar? How is the building of knowledge

happening throughout this process and how does it reflect on MQ's educational

policies? What problems could arise from this process when it comes to MQ

teachers and parents when implementing or following the adopted policy, which

sometimes prove to be very far and little related to the Qatari cultural and religious

context?

3.2 Knowledge-Based Economy

According to Hvidt (2013), Qatar, similarly to the UAE and other Gulf

countries, relies heavily on its petroleum wealth, which has reached as high as 91%

of its overall export earnings in 2011. In parallel, the country is profoundly

dependent on foreign labour with expatriate workers constituting more than 80% of

the total Qatari workforce (Parcero & Ryan, 2016). The shy presence of Qatari

nationals in the private sectors is highly due to the public employment package that

the State of Qatar has been implementing for its citizens as part of the Qatari

citizens' wellbeing principle. The attraction to the public sector is the result of the

high wage offered to Qataris by the government, when compared to the private

sector (Forstenlechner & Rutledge 2010). In fact, according to the Arabian Business

magazine (2014), the number of Qataris working for the private sector did not

exceed 1% as of 2014, which became worrisome to the government who became

aware that the public sector could not accommodate all nationals. As a result, the

Qatari government launched an initiative called "Qatarization" that aims at having

more nationals work in the private sectors in the hope of decreasing the country's reliance on expatriates.

The extant literature suggests many definitions of a knowledge-based economy, yet for the purpose of this paper, I will adopt the World Bank definition (World Bank, 2007) as it highlights different characteristics of such economy, including but not limited to the role the depth of knowledge plays in such an economy:

> [The] knowledge economy…meaning is broader than that of high technology or the new economy, which are closely linked to the Internet, and even broader than the often-used information society. Its foundations are the creation, dissemination, and use of knowledge. A knowledge economy is one in which knowledge assets are deliberately accorded more importance than capital and labor assets, and where the quantity and sophistication of the knowledge pervading economic and societal activities reaches very high levels. (World Bank, 2007, p. 14).

If we were to dissect the above definition of the knowledge-based economy, we will be able to identify at least three pillars including information and communication technology (ICT), education, and innovation (Vora, 2014). As stated above, education plays an important role in building a strong knowledge-based economy, and thus the crucial role of schools and higher education institutions in such an environment. In order to reach high levels of understanding and depth of knowledge, Qatar, similarly to the UAE and other Gulf countries, tried to borrow well-established educational systems from the west such as the American and the British curricula, as well as the International Baccalaureate programme, to name a

few. MQ is a typical example of neoliberalism within the framework of knowledge-based economy. In fact, MQ is part of a wider organization, a non-profitable one, that focuses on education, research, and Qatari community development. Its goal, as stated earlier, is to implement the Qatarization vision to enhance the potential of Qatari citizens in order for them to take charge of the country and its development, which in itself could question the globalization and cosmopolitanism aspects of this initiative. This non-profit organization mission started by migrating many well-reputed colleges from the world to Qatar, so Qatari citizens can have access to high quality education within their country. However, after a few years of opening these universities, the Qatari government realized that students are not being well-prepared to be able to succeed in such competitive colleges. Thus, came the idea of starting with educating students on international standards as early as early years, and consequently many K-12 institutions were created including MQ and its sisters' schools across Qatar. MQ in particular was established to serve the community of Al-Wakra, the second largest city in Qatar and situated 15 km south of the capital Doha. Although geographically close to Doha, Al-Wakra community is known to be more inward-looking than the capital population. When thinking of neoliberalism and the import of policies and practices, one can't help but question the smoothness of this process particularly when the culture of the import country significantly differs from the culture of the host country in terms of values, beliefs, and tradition.

3.3 Neoliberalism in Qatar

Exploring recent literature about Neoliberalism revealed a trend where authors in the field started looking at Neoliberalism as interconnected with the local

culture (Cahn, 2008; Ferguson, 2006; Freeman, 2007; Urcioli, 2008). According to

this work, Neoliberalism is established through interactive discussions and

practices, rather than through a rigid set of policies and ideologies (Hoffman et al.,

2006). To better understand this perspective of Neoliberalism in the context of Qatar

and similar Gulf countries, I will be discussing in this section the concept of

Arabized Neoliberalism, the perception of a flexible citizenship in such settings, and

finally comparing and contrasting between the Qatarization vision and globalization,

and consequently analysing the role that cultural neoliberalism plays in bridging

between both.

      3.3.1 Arabized Neoliberalism. The recent literature shows that governments

from around the world have displayed flexibility and cultural responsiveness when

implementing the neoliberalist ideologies in their contexts (Ferguson and Gupta,

2002). These ideologies and policies have been adapted in different settings so that

they serve the country's political and economic goals as well as to better blend with

the local identity and traditions. A perfect example of the cultural adaptation of

Neoliberalism is the Singapore case (Ong, 2006). In fact, Ong argued that in

Singapore for example, the government has shaped the ambition of its citizens who

wish to become successful in their career journey. To better align with the country's

economic strategies, governmental authorities in Singapore restructured their

market place in a way to push Singaporeans to not just settle to work for

multinational companies, but rather become themselves the entrepreneurs whose

goal is to attract global investment to the global market. Another adaptation in

Singapore was related to the medical field, and the campaign from the government

to accept surgeries and organ transplant, a concept that was rejected among

Singaporean Malays. Building on Ong's example of reshaping the Singaporean identity as a result of neoliberalism, I argue that the same is happening in the Qatari society. In order to promote its strategy of transitioning from an oil-based economy to a knowledge-based one, the Qatari government has reconditioned the appropriation of a new job in terms of redefining the qualifications of candidates, particularly those related to leadership and more decision-making positions across the country. Nowadays, many Qatari citizens, especially the younger ones, are aware that they need to pursue higher education in a well-reputable international college, usually western college, in order to earn the opportunity of securing a prestigious job in the private sector. Thus, some Qataris, including several MQ families had to enrol their children in the school, regardless of the misalignment of their beliefs and those of MQ, to ensure they are preparing their children for the competitive future, which I further discussed in the findings and discussion chapter of this thesis.

3.3.2 Flexible Citizenship. As a result of cultural neoliberalism, the concept of flexible citizenship started appearing in the literature. Kanna (2010) highlighted this notion in his essay "Flexible Citizenship in Dubai" by discussing the features that characterize such citizens. In his view, Kanna (2010) drew the portrait of the flexible Emirati as being an individual that is distinguished on many levels particularly those related to the language, the social background and ethnicity, as well as gender. Considering the similarities of the Emirati and Qatari cultural contexts, Kanna's (2010) example of Emirati flexible citizenship could be easily adapted to the more progressivist Qatari citizens, as detailed below.

According to Kanna (2010), a flexible citizen is proficient in the English language, usually because they have completed their higher education in western universities. Qatar Foundation has brought many well-reputable colleges to Qatar for Qataris to have easy access to high calibre western education, as confirmed by different international accreditation agencies such as New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), Council of International Schools (CIS), the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). Another aspect that plays a major role in allowing citizens in fitting Kanna's (2010) flexible citizenship definition is their ethical background. Kanna (2010) suggested that families who come from different backgrounds, whether from the mother, father, or both sides, have more opportunities to bypass national traditions. Although they might still worry about keeping their reputations, these families can afford being less rigid when it comes to cultural traditions. Kanna (2010) argues that these families could accept the idea of their female child traveling for studies abroad without being accompanied by a male guardian, which opens up many opportunities for this woman to develop as a flexible citizen. The third factor that shapes a flexible citizen, as per Kanna's definition, is their gender. Kanna (2010) suggests that male citizens in Dubai have more opportunities to travel and invest in their higher education, since women on many occasions are still expected to stay at home and take care of the children and elderlies in the family. In fact, travel in Qatar until now has been restricted to women, without the approval of a male guardian such as a father or a husband (Naar, 2020).

3.3.3 Bridging Between Qatarization and Globalization. While in theory Neoliberalism aims at transforming the world into one market place where

individuals are hired based on their skills and competencies regardless of their

cultural and ethnic background, Qatarization aims at empowering Qataris in

particular due to the significant domination of the expatriate's population in the

Qatari workforce. This contradiction between these two concepts should not be

ignored nor brusquely rejected, but rather understood in the particular context of

Qatar and other Gulf countries. In fact, I argue that Qatarization is actually Qatar's

vehicle to globalization through the notion of flexible citizenship, discussed earlier.

By refashioning the Qatari's identity to meet the Qatarization vision, the Qatari

government is indeed guiding its citizens into the globalization journey. While the

start of this process could be to take a leading role in the country, with time, those

flexible citizens might develop from local flexible citizens to more global individuals,

whose ambition could surpass their country's border. Promoting flexible citizenship

among young Qataris might result in a cultural change that reflects increased open-

mindedness and globally-shaped minds. However, are Qatari families ready for

such a change?

4. Conclusion

Cosmopolitanism is a philosophical and political approach that advocates for the

moral and political responsibility of individuals to act on behalf of the global

community (Nussbaum, 2006). It emphasizes the interconnectedness and

interdependence of all people, and calls for a global ethics that respects the dignity

and rights of all individuals.

However, cosmopolitanism has been criticized for its potential to reinforce

exclusions and inequalities, particularly within the context of neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism is a political and economic ideology that promotes free markets,

minimal government intervention, and individual responsibility (Harvey, 2005). It has often been associated with policies that prioritize economic growth and efficiency over social welfare and equity. Some critics argue that cosmopolitanism, when coupled with neoliberalism, can result in a narrow focus on individual rights and freedoms, and a lack of attention to issues of social justice and structural inequalities (Robinson, 2008). For example, cosmopolitan ideals may be used to justify free trade policies that prioritize the interests of transnational corporations over the needs of local communities, or to support military intervention in the name of human rights without addressing the root causes of conflicts (Bhagwati, 2004). In order to address these concerns, some scholars have called for a "cosmopolitanism from below" that prioritizes the voices and experiences of marginalized and oppressed groups, and works to challenge and transform the structures of power and privilege that perpetuate inequality (Mignolo, 2011). This approach sees cosmopolitanism not as an ideology imposed from above, but as a grassroots movement for social and political change. One example of this approach can be found in the work of Martha Nussbaum, who argues for a "capabilities approach" to cosmopolitanism that emphasizes the equal worth and dignity of all individuals and calls for the creation of conditions that allow everyone to lead lives of "human flourishing" (Nussbaum, 2006). This approach recognizes that individuals have different needs and aspirations, and that addressing social and economic inequalities is crucial for achieving a more just and inclusive global society.

According to Appiah (2006), "while cosmopolitanism has the potential to promote a global ethic of respect and responsibility, it must be carefully considered in light of its potential to reinforce exclusions and inequalities" (p. xi). Furthermore,

David Held (2010) argues for a "cosmopolitanism from below" that prioritizes the voices and experiences of marginalized groups, and works to challenge and transform structures of power and privilege, in order to offer a more inclusive and just vision of global citizenship (p. 184).

Chapter 3

Literature Review

After exploring cosmopolitanism and neoliberalism and their relationship with international education, I focused in this chapter on some of the extant literature that is relevant to me answering my research questions related to parents', teachers', and school leaders' perception of international-mindedness, as well as the way the school team, including leaders and teachers, respond to parental concern about international-mindedness, when they emerged. For the purpose of better understanding international-mindedness in the context of this research work, the below literature review explored the history and evolution of the concept of international-mindedness within the parameters of intercultural understanding, multilingualism, and global engagement, its development, assessment, and challenges, the International Baccalaureate Organization's view of international-mindedness, as well as the Qatari society perspective related to this concept based on the Holy Qur'an and several scholars' work in Muslim societies (Al Farra, 2012; Bowen, 2012; Frangieh, 2017). Along the way, I linked, when possible, this literature to my theoretical framework, discussed above, to be able to better understand how neoliberalism and cosmopolitanism have shaped the extant literature in general and how it could have affected the development of international education in Qatar in particular.

1. Overview of International-Mindedness

International-mindedness has been at the core of learning and teaching in international education, with different international schools around the world

developing their vision and mission statements in a way that reflects this concept

(ISC Research, 2021). The International Baccalaureate schools for example

established policies that promote multilingualism, global engagement, and

intercultural understanding (Singh & Qi, 2013b). Skelton et al. (2002) discussed two

main reasons why international-mindedness is worthy of study. The first is related to

the economic aspect, which highlights the globally interconnected world that we are

living in. Nowadays, with the growing number of multinational companies around

the world, people find themselves constantly traveling from one country to another,

thus dealing with individuals from different cultural backgrounds and beliefs, which

links back to the empirical standpoint of cosmopolitanism, where people are

somehow forced to travel for better life conditions. The second reason that gives

international-mindedness its importance is connected to the environmental factor.

Global issues discussions are at the top of the news in different countries, and the

solution to most of these environmental problems need cooperation among all

citizens of the world. International-mindedness helps raise awareness about

protecting the environment within the local and global communities. It also claims to

equip individuals with competences needed to act worldwide, and not just in the

individual's own region or country, and to give them the skills required to engage in

intercultural exchanges. Vanvooren and Lindsey (2012) further supported the

importance of international-mindedness in today's world by linking it to the

globalization of mass media and the expansion of teaching in an international

setting. This expansion was mainly caused by the dominance of the neoliberal

ideologies that started to invade the world significantly after the 1970 economic

crisis in the USA that led to high unemployment and high inflation (Pettinger, 2018).

Since then, privatization of education has become the trend, and inequality in general and in education in particular seems to have increased (Pettinger, 2018), leaving us with questions about the credibility of international education programmes that call for social justice yet are born from within a perfect example of injustice.

2. History of International-Mindedness

The term international-mindedness was first used in 1951 during the UNESCO Conference of International Schools in Paris, as stated by Hill (2012). Nevertheless, echoes of international-mindedness, such as being a citizen of the globe and not a citizen of one country, could be heard in many cultures throughout history starting as early as the 4th century BC with the Greek conception of cosmopolitanism, then again in the 9th century in the Adab tradition (Afsaruddin, 2005), and with Comenius, a Czech philosopher considered to be a pioneer in developing the principles of modern education (Norlin, 2020). The 18th century was yet another period of history in which international-mindedness was highlighted under different terms but within the same underpinning principles, particularly with Kant in his book Toward Perpetual Peace, published in 1795.

In his book Toward Perpetual Peace, published in 1795, Kant, a German philosopher, advocated that cosmopolitan law is a key principle for societies to achieve a sustainable peace among them. He sketched three main articles for a never-ending peace including that: a. the civil constitution of every state should be republican, b. the law of nations shall be founded on a federation of free states, and c. the law of world citizenship shall be limited to conditions of universal hospitality (Bennet, 1967). However, Kleingeld (2004, 2012) criticized Kant for advocating for a

federation of forceful powers, which could be linked to the pitfalls of international-mindedness that I discussed later in this chapter, particularly the one related to viewing international-mindedness as a convenient way for the western countries to force their beliefs and values on low-income countries.

During the 19th century, many other authors brought up some tendencies of international-mindedness, such as Victor Hugo in France (1848) and Dickens in England (1864) who pushed for the creation of an international school system that aimed at developing schools across Europe, which teach the same curriculum in order to facilitate the transition of students from one European country to another (as cited in Sylvester, 2002). However, Hugo and Dickens' idea of international-mindedness could be criticized for many reasons. First, it was focused on the European region and far from tackling international exchanges. Second, Hugo's view of international-mindedness lacked the presentation of educational practices that help teachers develop students who consider themselves as citizens of the world.

The 20th century was also marked by different events that led to the development and evolution of international-mindedness. One such event was the founding of the International School of Geneva in 1924 (International School of Geneva, n.d.). The school's mission was to educate international students and promote peace and understanding among different cultures, which laid the foundation for the idea of international education. In the 1950s and 60s, a group of educators recognized the need for a standardized and internationally recognized curriculum for mobile students (Peterson, 2011). One of the key figures in the establishment of the International Baccalaureate (IB) program was Dr. Kurt Hahn, a

German educator who had previously founded the Salem International School in Germany and the United World Colleges (International Baccalaureate Organization, n.d.). Hahn believed in the power of education to promote international understanding and peace, and in the importance of exposing students to different cultures and perspectives. He also saw the value in a standardized curriculum, as it would make it easier for mobile students to adjust to different education systems (Peterson, 2011). In 1962, a conference was held in Geneva, Switzerland, where educators and representatives from various international schools came together. It was decided at this conference that a new organization, the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), would be established to develop and administer a standardized curriculum for international schools (International Baccalaureate Organization, n.d.) The Diploma Programme (DP) was officially launched in 1968, with the first IB examinations taking place in 1970. The DP programme was designed to provide a challenging and comprehensive education for students in the 16 to 19 age range. The DP now is recognized as a qualification equivalent to national education systems in several countries around the world.

International-mindedness is a core aspect of the International Baccalaureate (IB) organization and is defined as "a mindset that recognizes our interdependence and shared humanity and that engages us in responsible and respectful action, based on mutual understanding and a shared sense of purpose." (International Baccalaureate, n.d.). The idea of the DP programme originated from the League of Nations, an international organization that existed from 1920 to 1946, whose primary goal was to promote cooperation and prevent future conflicts. According to Peterson (1987), the League of Nations had proposed the idea of an international

education program, which would "promote peace and understanding among nations."

The IB programme is designed to promote international mindedness among students by providing them with a curriculum that focuses on the development of critical thinking, research, and communication skills, as well as a deep understanding of different cultures and perspectives. The IB Diploma Programme, the Career Programme (CP), the IB Middle Years Programme, and the IB Primary Years Programme, all include a global perspective in the curriculum, which requires students to explore and analyse issues from multiple perspectives, and develop an awareness of global issues. Additionally, the IB program encourages students to take action in their communities and to become active and responsible global citizens.

According to Peterson (2011), IB has been successful in promoting international-mindedness among students. He states that the four IB programmes aim to equip students with the tools and understanding necessary to navigate and succeed in an interconnected world. This typically includes the ability to appreciate and understand different cultures, communicate effectively with people from other countries, and critically analyse global issues. Peterson (2011) also suggests that IB has been successful in promoting peace and understanding among nations, by providing students with a shared sense of purpose and a deep understanding of the interdependence of nations.

3. Contemporary Definition of International-Mindedness

The early 20th century saw new technological developments such as long-distance telephone calls, jet-propelled air flights, and television, leading to

increased movement of people around the world and new needs for transient families. This led to the creation of international schools that aimed to provide a unified curriculum for moving children so their education would not be interrupted (Hill, 2012). However, this development was not without its problems.

In 1919, the International Labour Office was created in Geneva followed by the League of Nations in 1920. These two organizations consisted of staff coming from around the world, which led to the population of Geneva becoming more internationally diverse. As a result, the International School of Geneva/Ecole Internationale de Genève was founded, with an aim of providing children of these families with an education that accommodates their constant movement (Ecolint, n.d.; Hill, 2012).

The pedagogical philosophy of the school became aligned with the mission of the league, to focus on "internationalism", which back then meant a spread of world peace through intercultural awareness and understanding (International School of Geneva Student-Parent Handbook, 1924, as cited in Hill, 2010). However, the goal of promoting universal peace through the league of nations failed in the 1930s due to the rise of fascist dictatorships in many countries, including Germany, Japan, and Italy (Ikonomou, 2021; McCarthy, 2013; Pedersen, 2007).

Not only were nations against the league constantly challenging its authority, but some of its main members, including France and Britain, started ignoring the league in an effort to calm Hitler's anger, which contributed to the eruption of the Second World War in 1939 (Hill, 2012). This historical event highlights the challenges of promoting international-mindedness during the first part of the 20th century, as the general conditions of this era made it difficult for the concept to see the light.

The rise of dictatorships in many countries, such as the Nazism in Germany with Adolf Hitler, the Empire in Japan of Hideki Tojo, and the fascism in Italy of Benito Mussolini, was a significant concern during this period of history. These dictators had strong personalities and used terror and force to suppress the citizen's freedom of speech and thoughts, stripping them from their basic civil rights. Instead of promoting cultural understanding, Nazism, for example, aimed at eliminating Jews in the most horrible ways. According to Delman (2015), German Jews were not targeted by the Nazi regime simply for opposing it, but rather due to their distinct identity that differed from that of the German Nazis. As a result, they were subjected to continuous victimization under Nazi rule.

While the early 20th century saw an increase in movement of people around the world and the creation of international schools to provide education for transient families, the historical conditions of this era made it difficult for the concept of international-mindedness to thrive.

4. The International Baccalaureate Organization

The International Baccalaureate (IB) organization was founded in 1968 by a group of educators from around the world who believed in the importance of international education and the need for a common curriculum and set of standards. According to Peterson (2011), the organization's initial goal was to offer an education that is geared towards internationally mobile students through a demanding and challenging curriculum. The organization's first programme, the IB Diploma Programme, was established in 1970 and was intended for students aged 16-19. The programme is a two-year curriculum that focuses on the development of

critical thinking, research, and writing skills. The curriculum is divided into six subject areas: language and literature, language acquisition, individuals and societies, sciences, mathematics, and the arts. In 1994, the IB Middle Years Program (MYP) was established for students aged 11-16. This program is designed to provide students with a broad and balanced curriculum that focuses on the development of critical thinking, research, and communication skills. The MYP curriculum is divided into eight subject areas: language and literature, language acquisition, individuals and societies, sciences, mathematics, the arts, physical and health education, and design (International Baccalaureate Organization, n.d.). In 1997, the IB Primary Years Program (PYP) was established for students aged 3-12. This program is designed to provide students with a curriculum that focuses on the development of critical thinking, research, and communication skills. The PYP curriculum is divided into six transdisciplinary themes: who we are, where we are in place and time, how we express ourselves, how the world works, how we organize ourselves and sharing the planet (International Baccalaureate Organization, n.d.).

The IB programmes offered schools a curriculum framework characterized by a set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students should gain in order to develop as internationally-minded citizens. Within IB, the concept of international-mindedness back then focused on three main areas including intercultural understanding, global awareness, and critical thinking skills (Hill, 2012). In addition to basing its philosophy on international-mindedness, the IBO developed a learner profile that listed a series of attitudes that IB learners should display in order to help create a more peaceful world and that somehow created a framework to international-mindedness. Foust et al. (2009) conducted in-depth interviews with IB

students to better understand their perception of the International Baccalaureate programmes. This study showed that the students appreciated the learning and teaching practices that DP teachers used in the classroom as well as the values that their teachers promoted in their daily teaching. They mentioned how they are able to transfer many of their DP knowledge and skills into their everyday life and how DP teaching shaped them into the responsible citizens they are. Another study conducted by Hayden et al. (2002) highlighted how IB students valued the way they are taught to address topics and global issues from different perspectives, which helped increase their intercultural understanding and appreciation.

5. **Developing and Assessing International-Mindedness**

International mindedness is an essential aspect of global citizenship, and its development and assessment are crucial for individuals and organizations operating in an interconnected world. As defined by Barratt-Hacking et al. (2017), international mindedness is the capability of an individual to comprehend and value the points of view and experiences of people from various cultures and to respond to global concerns and challenges in a responsible and suitable manner. The development of international mindedness requires a multi-faceted approach including cultural self-awareness, language proficiency, and assessment.

Cultural self-awareness is a critical component in developing international mindedness. According to Castro et al. (2015), when individuals are exposed to different cultures, they are more likely to develop a greater understanding of their own cultural values and beliefs. However, it is essential to recognize the power dynamics and privilege that may be present in cultural interactions (Savva & Stanfield, 2018). For example, individuals from dominant cultures may not fully

understand or appreciate the experiences of marginalized groups, and it is crucial to be aware of these power dynamics and actively work to challenge them.

Language proficiency is another important aspect of developing international mindedness. Haywood (2007, 2015) argues that the ability to communicate effectively in multiple languages is essential for understanding and engaging with different cultures. However, it is important to recognize that language proficiency alone does not necessarily lead to international-mindedness. The ability to speak another language does not automatically translate to understanding and appreciating different cultural perspectives and the language itself may be shaped by the culture and power dynamics.

Assessing international mindedness is a complex task and different approaches have been proposed. Barratt-Hacking et al. (2018) suggests that a combination of self-reflection, peer assessment, and expert evaluation may be the most effective way to measure international mindedness. However, it is important to consider the limitations of these methods, as self-reflection can be biased, peer assessment may not be reliable, and expert evaluations may not be representative of the population being assessed. Furthermore, it is essential to recognize that international-mindedness is a dynamic and ongoing process, and thus, assessments should not be seen as a one-time event but rather as an ongoing process of reflection and growth (Barratt-Hacking et al., 2018).

6. Challenges of International-Mindedness

International mindedness is a valuable skill in today's globalized world, but it can also present a number of challenges. One major challenge is the lack of understanding and awareness of cultural differences. Barratt-Hacking et al. (2017)

note that many individuals are not familiar with the customs, beliefs, and values of other cultures, which can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts. Additionally, Barratt- Hacking et al. (2018) argue that many individuals may not have the necessary knowledge or skills to engage effectively with people from different cultures.

Another challenge of international-mindedness is the potential for cultural bias and prejudice. Castro et al. (2015) argue that individuals may have preconceptions and stereotypes about other cultures, which can influence their interactions and communication with people from those cultures. Haywood (2007) notes that these biases and prejudices can be difficult to overcome and may require individuals to critically examine their own beliefs and attitudes.

A third challenge of international-mindedness is the difficulty of maintaining an open and inclusive mindset in the face of cultural differences and conflicts. Haywood (2015) argues that individuals may find it difficult to remain open and respectful in the face of cultural practices or beliefs that they perceive as threatening or unfamiliar. Savva and Stanfield (2018) also note that it can be challenging for individuals to navigate the complexities of cultural differences, especially in situations where there is a lack of common understanding or agreement on important issues.

7. International-mindedness in IB

The concept of international-mindedness is situated at the heart of the International Baccalaureate (IB) philosophy. Accordingly, an IB learner is considered to be a citizen who has a local and global sense of belonging. These dimensions are manifested by a set of key values, attitudes, knowledge, understanding and skills,

which are reflected in their learner profile (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2017). According to Singh & Qi (2013a), international-mindedness in the IB is an attitude to how open and curious an individual is to the world and cultures around them. Its goal is for an individual to be equipped with the values and skills needed to understand the complexity, diversity, and the motives of the different human beings' actions and interactions. In the Language and Learning in the IB programmes document (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2013), the IB highlighted its aim by stating that internationally-minded learners should be open to cultural diversity and comfortable with dealing with conflicts across cultures, regardless of its complexity (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2013).

Although such an attitude can be found across cultures as discussed above, it has become associated with western liberal ideal of education, which aims at equipping students with skills and competencies to be able to approach diversity and prepares them to develop as responsible global citizens. The reasons behind the connection between international-mindedness and the western liberal ideologies could be linked to the fact that most teachers in international schools come from western countries and consequently the principles of international-mindedness are presented through their western values and attitude (ISC Research, 2021). However, could these principles be applied across cultures regardless of their compatibility with the local values and beliefs? Could these principles be considered well-aligned with the Qatari society and by default be considered accepted by MQ parents?

Additionally, the IB organization promotes an education that fosters critical thinking and encourages students to question the world around them. This is a very

delicate point particularly in non-democratic societies. In such a context, one can't help but wonder about the government position toward this way of educating its citizens. Is the government and its systems ready to face a generation that is equipped with a strong voice and prepared with agency toward a more globalized world? Facing these challenges, Al Farra (2012) conducted a study to explore international-mindedness in similar contexts. However, in her analysis, Al Farra (2012) assumed that Islam, based on selected verses of the holy Qur'an, is compatible with the guiding principles of international-mindedness, yet do not offer practical strategies for school leaders and educators to implement. Al Farra's (2012) standpoint of the compatibility between international-mindedness and Islam could be highly interrogated, as the Muslims' view of what is considered to be an "Islamic value" varies widely from one community to another, as discussed in the below section.

One key strategy of developing international-mindedness in IB is the emphasis on intercultural education. Barratt-Hacking et al. (2017) argue that intercultural education can be a powerful tool for developing international mindedness, and the IB curriculum includes many opportunities for students to learn about other cultures through language learning, cultural exchange, and study abroad programs. Additionally, Barratt-Hacking et al. (2018) suggest that global citizenship education, which is an integral part of the IB curriculum, can help students to understand their roles as global citizens and to engage with global issues.

Another strategy used in the IB program is the emphasis on critical thinking and reflection. Castro et al. (2015) argue that critical thinking is essential for understanding and engaging with cultural differences and the IB encourages

students to think critically about cultural issues and to reflect on their own cultural identities and biases. Haywood (2007) also notes that reflection is an important aspect of developing international-mindedness, and the IB curriculum encourages students to reflect on their own experiences and learning in relation to intercultural understanding.

8. International-Mindedness in the Qatari Society

As mentioned above, some aspects of international-mindedness could be traced back in the years to many old civilizations. Similar to its appearance in the Greek era, this concept was also brought up in the Muslim religion by Prophet Mohammed, such as when he called for respect toward all people regardless of their religious background (Qur'an, Al-Kafiroune: 6) and when he denied race superiority (Qur'an, Al-Hujurat: 13). Two key points related to international-mindedness are referred to in these verses including the diversity of human beings as well as social equality.

In his book "A New Anthropology of Islam", Bowen (2012) highlighted the differences between the Islamic verses as stated in the holy Qur'an, their interpretations, and the practices among different cultures and societies. He concurred that Muslims around the world have adapted the words written in the holy Qur'an to fit their local cultures and constraints, which has led to many worldwide debates about which Islamic practices are appropriate and which are not (Bowen, 2012). I agree with Bowen on his views of the diversity of the practice of Islam among different cultures particularly after observing all the challenges that teachers and school administrators at MQ face when helping students develop as internationally-minded citizens. The results of the case study I conducted on the

negotiation of the relationship between home and school, showed that grade 6 students, in an international school in Qatar, perceived significant differences between the values and skills taught at home and the ones that the MYP and their teachers were preaching for (Frangie, 2017). According to Al Farra (2012), parents in the Gulf perceived international schooling in general and the IB in particular as a threat to their national identity and culture. Why then do these particular parents enrol their children in a programme that goes against their beliefs and values? Al Farra (2012) suggested that this is due to the prestigious aspect of the IB programme and the global opportunities it provides their children with at the time they want to join worldwide colleges or enter the job market. Being involved in the admission process at MQ, I concur with Al Farra (2012). However, Al Farra (2012) in her study assumed an alignment between internationalism, the Arab heritage, and Islam, which was not seen in my own practice as evidenced by students' interviews during my study on the negotiation of MQ students between home and school (Frangieh, 2017). After exploring the challenges that Qatari students face when negotiating between home and school (Frangie, 2017), this thesis explored what parents of MQ students understand of international-mindedness and how they negotiated the threat, perceived or otherwise, internationalism posed to the national and religious identity of their children. The difference in the interpretation of the Qur'an between MQ parents and Al Farra's (2012) view is due to the complex nature of Islam and what is considered to be "Islamic values".

Chapter 4

Research Methodology

1. Overview

This research studied how parents of students, teachers and school leaders at MQ understood international-mindedness. It also analysed how school teachers and leaders at MQ responded to potential parental concerns, about international-mindedness. It focused on understanding how Qatari parents who perceived IB as a threat to their national and religious identity, identified through the parents' questionnaire administered as part of this study, negotiated this threat and the economic benefits that IB promises. In this chapter, I discussed the philosophical assumptions behind my methodology, my research design, my data collection and analysis, as well as ethical issues and considerations that could have affected the design of this research work.

2. Philosophical Assumptions

2.1 Research Paradigm

In this section, I aimed at explaining my philosophical assumptions when it comes to the research paradigm. Lincoln et al. (2011) framed the research paradigm around four belief systems including axiology, ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Since axiology is directly related to our values and beliefs in accessing and building knowledge, I discussed it in my ethical issues section later in this chapter. The methodology aspects were explored throughout this chapter particularly in the research design part. The below details my assumptions on the research epistemology and ontology, and how as a researcher I believe knowledge is constructed, and in this view, what I consider to be reality.

In order to make sense of the data I collected and throughout my analysis

process, I used the social constructionism framework for several reasons that I

stated further below in this section. Social constructionism approaches, also

referred to as interpretive/interpretivist approaches (Robson & McCartan, 2016),

provide social researchers with a framework that helps them interpret the social

world around them. Gergen & Pallak (1985) highlighted five characteristics of a

social constructionist approach that, according to Burr (2015), are still considered

key components of this approach. First, a social constructionist approach considers

our perceptions of the social world to be subjective and dependent on the context,

rather than objective and independent of place and time which directly challenges

the positivism and empiricism point of views that are heavily based on testable and

scientific data. Although both the social constructionist and the positivist approach

have their advantages and disadvantages depending on the topics to be explored

and purposes to be achieved, in the context of social research, the social

constructionist perspective is clearly more appropriate, especially when it comes to

defining people's perceptions – in this case, of international-mindedness,

cosmopolitanism, and neoliberalism, as this approach allowed me the space

needed to publicize and investigate in detail my participants' voice rather than

limiting them to quantitative data and numbers. As a member of the accreditation

evaluation team that visits schools when they wish to obtain accreditation status

from the Council of International Schools (CIS), I can relate to Burr's theory of

subjective reality when it comes to the school's expectation of developing a

definition for international-mindedness. CIS does not impose a certain definition on

the school team, but rather expects them to explore extant definitions and establish

one that works best in their particular context, which seems to work better. Yet, the question that should be asked here is about the extent that the school can adapt the definition of international-mindedness to the community's own beliefs and values, from the extant definitions usually created in western high-income countries. What are the limits that a school has for reflecting the reality of a concept based on its own cultural contexts? These questions connect us to the second aspect of social constructionism that Burr (2015) stated when defining this approach. In her work, Burr (2015) argued that the meaning we give to the world and the manner of categorizing its different aspects, as well as the established concepts, are all based on a particular historical and cultural background. She also elaborated on this idea to assert that even within a same cultural context, the definition of concepts and the categories created are tightly dependent on the specific social and economic situation of this period of time.

This subjective social perception of reality discussed in social constructionism is not built through disconnections and through individuals living in their own bubble. Social constructionists believe that the way that the world is understood is constructed through their social exchanges. These aspects of interchange and interconnection of social constructionism have a major impact on how we subjectively view the reality of our social world. A good example of this would be the Covid-19 Pandemic and how much influence it had on people around the globe. During the pandemic, confinement was imposed on many citizens around the world who found themselves trying to build new systems whether at home, work, or on different other levels of their lives to ensure they can adapt to the new way of living. In education, schools saw an extreme need to develop digital

citizenship and give it a new meaning in a period where students as young as three years old, if not younger, were expected to access platforms and began to develop as independent digital learners. The limitation of the social contact that the pandemic and consequent confinement brought, led to a different perspective on education, which in my opinion opens up horizons to new educational research and a need to investigate the impact of such a major global issue on our perception of international-minded.

A final aspect of social constructionism that framed the theory of this research is related to the actions that are taken based on the new constructed knowledge. According to Burr (2015), actions change with the reshaping of our understanding of the world. For example, in education, the way we handle students' discipline continues to change as we build new knowledge about the reason children act the way they do. In the context of this research, this aspect of social constructionism informed how I analysed the perception of the actions the different participants took, whether teachers or parents, in response to the recent grasp or comprehension of the world around them.

In order to answer the research questions of this study, I hence collected qualitative data through parents', teachers', and school leaders' questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups. The collected data allowed me to analyse my participants' perception of international-mindedness and the way school teachers and leaders addressed concerns, if any, through the framework of social constructivism principles that I discussed above.

2.2 Importance of Qualitative Data

Since I believe that people construct their own perspectives of reality through their social interactions, and to be able to explore these perceptions, I needed to collect qualitative data instead of quantitative data. It would have been hard to understand my participants' subjective realities solely through numbers or closed-ended questions, similar to what a survey in quantitative data for example could provide. Robson and McCartan (2016) argued that qualitative data provides a more holistic approach, if appropriately collected and analysed, to addressing social occurrences. In their book *Real World Research*, Robson and McCartan (2016) drew a comparison between the main features of qualitative data and those of quantitative research. According to them, qualitative data is centred on understanding and building knowledge and takes into consideration different perspectives, which could be also achieved by triangulation in a quantitative data approach. Subjectivity is highly valued in this research approach because advocates believe that reality is constructed through social interchanges and highly influenced by the cultural and historical context. I held to those beliefs about subjectivity and considered them to be crucial to the success of my research work that significantly focused on the perception of the participants of international-mindedness. It aimed at investigating the voice of the different stakeholders when it came to strategies for developing internationally-minded students in an international school in Qatar. The features of qualitative data were essential for my research and this approach has earned its place over the years in terms of rigor and trustworthiness of the data. In fact, many researchers now consider the debate

between qualitative and quantitative research to be outdated (e.g., Bryman, 2006; Walsh, 2012).

Nevertheless, after reading about the qualitative data approach I believe it is crucial for researchers to better understand its components as compared to the quantitative approach in order to enhance trustworthiness and decrease the downfalls of a more subjective approach. In their book *Understanding Research in Early Childhood Education*, File et al. (2016) highlighted many aspects of qualitative data and how they differ from quantitative data in order to help researchers interested in early years education conduct thorough and rigorous work. Of the different elements they discussed, I focused for the purpose of my work on three of them including the place of the research within previous studies, the way the information is interpreted and the logic that is followed, the researcher's role, and finally the trustworthiness of the work. While quantitative studies usually follow the order of reviewing the literature and finding gaps in their results and then describing the contribution of the work to the field, qualitative data uses a different approach to situating the study. What is important about this approach is that it does not try to find unanswered questions but rather the extant understanding is challenged and reshaped in order to include different perspectives or to better comprehend its relevance in a new social and cultural context. A clear example of this approach is the work of Souto-Manning (2014) who challenged the concept of "ideal" classroom in an early year setting stating the following:

> I suggest that the normative construct of the 'ideal' early childhood
> classroom needs to be challenged, deconstructed, and reconceptualized.
> (Souto-Manning, 2014, p. 610)

I was able to relate in my work to this concept of deconstruction and reconceptualization particularly when it came to international-mindedness. For a long time, authors in the field have defined international-mindedness from the perspective of western cultures. Breaking down this definition and unpacking its meaning in the context of MQ and its stakeholders, led to a better understanding of how to develop students as internationally-minded in the context of the MQ community and other similar contexts.

A second aspect to qualitative data that Fine et al. (2016) referred to is related to the reasoning approach and the difference between the deductive style of quantitative research versus the inductive reasoning that frames qualitative approaches. In qualitative data, a theoretical framework is used as a base for discussions and interpretations of the knowledge gained in a certain context. An important aspect of the inductive reasoning approach that I was careful about is to ensure my data findings and discussions are constantly aligned with my theoretical framework. That said, I do not believe that my findings needed to confirm all components of a theory, but rather I aimed at placing these interpretations within these conceptual understandings and frameworks. Subjectivity and objectivity have always been a debate between quantitative researchers on one side and the proponents of qualitative data on the other. Gersten (2013) suggested that objectivity in quantitative research has been rethought to become more of an aim for researchers to try to achieve rather than an absolute fact that is assumed to exist without room for subjectivity. Qualitative data on the other hand allows ample space for subjectivity, and thus researchers following this approach need to deeply understand the principles and guidelines that come with this methodology.

Positionality and insider/outsider researcher's perspective, as discussed by Fine et

al. (2016), should be clearly stated to ensure the research work is trustworthy as

well as subjective. Reflecting on my cultural background and beliefs and

consequently my ideologies and assumptions along with discussing my role as an

insider researcher was included in detail in the ethical issues and considerations

section later in this chapter.

Finally, yet most importantly, I would like to discuss the aspects of

trustworthiness of my findings. In order to ensure a high level of credibility of my

work and to ensure I supported my claims with enough evidence, I used the

triangulation method as suggested by Fine et al. (2016). Although triangulation is a

term that is rather connected to quantitative data, I used it in the context of my work

as a way to affirm alignment among the findings. The triangulation of my data took

place through the process of aligning my findings from the questionnaires to the

findings of my focus group interviews with teachers and parents, and the individual

interviews of leaders. Looking at three different methods of gathering data allowed

me to increase the trust of my readers and facilitate their understanding of my

interpretations in the context of my research. The process of triangulation was

discussed further in my data analysis section to give the readers a more detailed

understanding of each step of the triangulation journey along with concrete

examples.

2.3 Perception Research

Johnson (1994) reported that perception in education is crucial for the

practice and for the research conducted in the field. In fact, the International

Baccalaureate (IB) Organization has highlighted the voice of the learner in its

enhanced publication related to the Primary Years Programme (PYP) standards and practices. For IB-PYP (The Primary Years Programme, 2018), the learner category involves all the learning community members particularly students, teachers and leaders. In the new enhancement of the PYP, schools need to establish policies, systems, and practices that promote the voice of the learners, give them choices, and allow them to gain ownership of their learning, in order to be able to take global and local actions that aim at bettering the world. The reason I am discussing agency as stated by IB-PYP (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2018) is because it aligns with the concept of participants' perception and the value that this perspective could add to the findings of research in education. Although perception is frequently dependent on the cultural background of the individual (Scherer & Walbott, 1994), culture is not the only factor that could influence the way human beings perceive the world around them. I can give an example from the work I did in my Institution Focus Study (IFS) where I looked at how students negotiated relationships between home and school when both contexts are very different in terms of values and expectations (Frangieh, 2017). Through this work, I noticed that even when students came from the same cultural background, they perceived conflicts differently and thus negotiated their problems using a wide variety of strategies. Kearney (1984) stated that even when the perceptions are similar, their interpretation could differ from one person to another due to several internal and external factors. It was important for me to investigate the diverse perspectives of parents, school leaders and teachers, in order to be able to build a holistic picture of international-mindedness at MQ, the challenges, if any, that participants faced,

and to conclude with strategies that can help MQ reach its mission of developing internationally-minded students.

In the context of my work, an investigation into perception played an important role in terms of how parents, teachers, and leaders perceived international-mindedness, potential conflicts if any, and suggested strategies to promote the development of students who are internationally-minded at MQ. Lewis (2001) stated that it is important for researchers to understand the concept of perception and the series of actions it involves before they attempt to understand the participants and their perspectives. A review of the literature showed me that authors have addressed perception from many angles and across disciplines particularly in philosophy and psychology (McBurney & Collings, 1984), yet Johnson (1994) suggested that most of the work conducted on perception remains loose and does not lead to firm conclusions in terms of what this concept really means. For the purpose of this research and the interpretation of my collected data, I used Shaver & Tarpy's (1993) definition of perception, which concluded that the process of perception is about constructing meaning of the world through the collection of mental images using all our human senses. I chose this definition in particular for this work because it aligns with how I believe knowledge and understanding are built through the constructivism framework discussed above. My role through the data analysis process was to reflect not only on how participants perceived the different phenomena, but also on the reasons that could have led them to build these perceptions.

Included in this process are three fundamental aspects described by Jordaan & Jordaan (1996) and involve the person that is perceiving, the object that

is being perceived, and the context of the situation. Those fundamental aspects, in addition to three conditions related to the sensory system and stimuli, affect the perceptual process and the way individuals attribute meanings to phenomena. As I was interpreting my participants' data, I needed to carefully consider these factors in each step of the conceptual process detailed below.

Perception and the construction of meaning is a complex process that many researchers have explored (Griffin & Moorhead, 1992; Hicks, & Routledge, 2013; Jordaan & Jordaan, 1996; Randolph & Blackburn, 1989; Toews et al., 2016; Wasonga & Christman, 2003). In order to gain a better understanding of this process I reflected on Randolph and Blackburn's (1989) perceptual process that involves six steps including the senses, the observation and selection of focus, the frame of reference filter step, the allocation of meaning, heuristics, and finally the intersubjective nature of perception. Although I did not describe each of these steps in detail due to the space limitation of this work, I highlighted the components that played an important role in the interpretation of my data. Randolph and Blackburn (1989) suggested that after the senses acquire the information, a selection process starts based on many factors related to the perceiver, perceived information, and the cultural and social context of the perception including the place and time of the occurrence, which aligns well with Jordaan's and Jordaan's (1996) three fundamental aspects of perception mentioned earlier. Authors such as Randolph & Blackburn (1989) and Jordaan and Jordaan (1996) emphasized internal factors that can influence perception such as previous experiences, motivation, and the individual's personality and cognitive competences, whereas other researchers focused more on the role that the social and cultural background played in the

process of perception (Forgus & Melamed, 1976; Johnson,1994).Although for this research work, I was not able to draw a conclusion on what definitely impacted the participants' perception of international-mindedness, it was important to be aware and always reflect on these factors whether internal or external in order to prevent assumptions and to widen my scope of work.

3. Design

3.1 Case Study

Choosing the design for my study was not an easy task. I wanted a framework that could at the same time give meaning to my research, yet not mislead readers into generalizing the findings that resulted from a limited number of participants, in a very particular setting. In this section, I explained why I chose to conduct a case study by looking at the definitions, characteristics, the different extant models, and the foundations of such a structure, in order for me to build a strong framework that helped me increase the trustworthiness of my qualitative data.

Elliott and Lukes (2008) reported that case studies started to appear in the 1970s as a result of researchers wanting a method that allowed them a deeper understanding of learning and teaching in the classroom (Merriam,1988; Stake, 1995). For those researchers, the positivist model and quantitative approach was not satisfying them in terms of understanding human behaviour and their interaction with the social world around them. Stenhouse (1979) advocated for case study particularly in terms of its ability to address complex situations which could not be simplified by numbers and other quantitative means. Stenhouse (1979) also argued that case studies prevent assumptions, built up from our previous experiences and

prior knowledge, from happening, particularly when the researcher knows the context where the research is taking place. Pollard (1996) supported Stenhouse's view of the benefits of being familiar with the context and subjects of the research by stating that case studies strengthen the knowledge and connection of the researcher with his or her field which allows for a deeper picture of the phenomenon. Although I agree with both Stenhouse (1979) and Pollard (1996), I would like to argue that this advantage could also lead to the issue of the insider researcher that I further elaborated on in my ethical issues section of this chapter. Many authors in the field suggested definitions for case studies that in many cases, were reviewed to reflect a more accurate description of this simple yet complex research method (Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Merriam (1988) for example, is one of the authors whose definition has significantly changed with time moving from focusing on the outcome of the case study, to being more centred on the process along the way. Stake (1995) on the other side encouraged individuals to transfer their knowledge of the case they are reading to their particular context. I believe this is an important point in the case of my study, where readers won't be able to generalize my findings, yet they can compare and contrast the conclusions I got to, in order to reflect on how it could apply or be used to improve their own relatability.

For the purpose of this paper, I used the definition suggested by Robson and McCartan (2016), which supports Yin's (2009) views of this concept:

Case study is a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context using multiple sources of evidence. (p.150)

Many keywords in this definition support my choice of this approach for my

research. First, it is an empirical approach, which means that findings are

significantly based on collecting and analysing data. In the case of my work, the

evidence is neither my observation of the occurrences, nor the analysis of

documents, and not even looking at numbers, but rather my interpretations of the

perception of my participants of international-mindedness, its definition, and how it

was interpreted in the context of MQ.

The second component of this definition that I focused on is related to the

particularity of the case that is being studied. My work took place in one

international school in Qatar, offering an International Baccalaureate programme to

a population of mainly Qatari students. During my selection of the interviewees, I

tried to focus on parents who felt a conflict between international-mindedness and

their cultural beliefs and identity, which I further discussed in my data collection

section below. The reason I am mentioning this here though is because I would like

to stress the particularity of my work and how it is not in any way meant to be

generalized. The findings could be transferred, as mentioned above, to another

setting, yet readers need to be careful about using the findings as is in their own

particular context, without reflecting and assessing its application in their specific

place and time. The last element of the definition that I would like to highlight here is

the use of multiple sources of evidence. For this work, I used questionnaires,

interviews, and focus groups, in order to support with the triangulation of my data

and the mining of my evidence, which aimed at strengthening the trustworthiness of

my findings (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013).

Stake (1995) distinguished between two types of case studies, *intrinsic* and *instrumental*. While *intrinsic* studies are more holistic and focus on the whole picture of the situation, *instrumental* cases are more centred on one aspect of the case. Despite the fact that the intrinsic case study could in my opinion be more generalized, as it takes into consideration the different elements of the school, I believe, in the case of my work, it could have limited the depth of my work. Taking into consideration the sample of data collected and the limitations of the word count for my thesis, I believe that an intrinsic type of case study would have prevented me from digging deep in each of the concepts in order for me to investigate the participants' conceptualizations of international-mindedness. An instrumental case study allowed me to focus on an aspect of the school, international-mindedness in my case, in order to explore it in a more comprehensive manner. Although I appreciated the distinction that Stake (1995) presented and my ability to position my work more toward the instrumental type that he presented, I argue that my work could not totally ignore the other aspects of MQ that could have impacted in some way the perception of teachers and parents of international-mindedness. For example, the admission process to the school, which seemed to be unrelated to this work, might have affected the way parents perceived the school and its curriculum before enrolling their children. Same goes to the physical facility and premises of the school, the financial situation, as well as many other aspects. Definitely those will not be the centre of my discussion, yet in my findings and discussion chapter later in this thesis, those aspects were analysed and brought up to the conversation and connections were made when deemed necessary.

Case studies could bring a lot of flexibility to the table and offered me a space where I was able question, reflect, and suggest solutions based on a set of data collected and analysed. Yet, with this type of studies, as with any other types, come many challenges that Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013) pinpointed including the bias aspect of the researcher, the variation of the perspectives being looked at, and the ethical issues related to the insider researcher. All these challenges were further discussed in my ethical issues and consideration section later in this chapter.

3.2 Data Collection

The data collection process in a case study constitutes a core element of the research process and needs to be carefully designed in order for the researcher to be able to gather as many richly detailed perspectives as possible in the least biased way possible. According to Robson and McCartan (2016), real world researchers collect evidence by observing people, questioning them, or looking at evidence that these people have constructed throughout a certain period of time. For my research question, and as explained earlier in my philosophical assumptions section, my aim was to focus on the participants' perception of international-mindedness and the way school leaders and teachers addressed potential associated challenges. To this end, I chose to do a questionnaire, followed by interviews and focus groups, which could be looked at as a combination of quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative data collection tools (interviews and focus groups), within an interpretivist framework. The rationale behind this choice was based on three reasons including filtering potential participants that could bring more insight into my work, triangulation of data, and an overall strengthening of my

findings. Olsen (2004) called for the triangulation of data in order to boost the trustworthiness of the findings by using different sources of data or by mixing between qualitative and quantitative methods. Robson and McCartan (2016) from their side advocated for the use of multiple methods to collect data in order to amplify the value of the findings by producing a more holistic picture of the work being conducted. They particularly called for a mix between quantitative and qualitative data collection tools, as the qualitative methods could help interpret the numbers and give them a more thoughtful meaning. However, Robson and McCartan (2016) stated that the mix in the methods comes with its risks in terms of facing contradictory data that researchers are unable to make meaningful connections between them. They also discussed the time and resources needed that could make the mixed methods not practical to use. As detailed below, in my work mixing between data from questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups gave me deep insight into the participants' perception of international-mindedness. It also helped me save time by flagging, through questionnaires, the participants that are of high interest for my interviews and focus groups.

3.2.1 Questionnaires. Robson and McCartan (2016) reported that questionnaires are frequently used in social research as a method of collecting data, and thus it is important for real world researchers to better understand its advantages, disadvantages, and the process involved in designing such a tool. In this section, I discussed how I built my questionnaires, the process I followed to ensure the validity of my tool, as well as the issues I encountered and the strategies I used to solve them. According to Robson and McCartan (2016), a good questionnaire is described by its ability to answer the specific aspects of research

questions, its power in getting the participants to respond, and its potentiality to get

accurate data. To this end, they discussed the researcher's role, the participant's

job in answering questions, and the formulation of questions being used. I started

designing my questionnaire by thinking of the research questions as a start point for

the questions I wrote. As a reminder, my research questions were as follows: How

do parents of students understand international-mindedness; how do school

leaders and teachers understand international-mindedness; and finally, how do

school teachers and leaders respond to parents' concerns, if they have any, about

international-mindedness. Once it was clear to me what I needed to find out, I

started thinking of questions that are directly linked to themes leading to answering

those research questions. My questionnaires were sent to participants by email to

independently respond to them. There was no interaction between me and the

participants at this point, hence I was very careful about the clarity of my questions.

To ensure that all my participants understood well the questions, I created the

questionnaire for leaders and teachers in English (see Appendix A), which was the

common language used at MQ among staff, and used the Arabic language for the

parents' questionnaire (see Appendix B), as many of them did not understand

English well enough, or were not comfortable with expressing themselves in

English. I wanted to prevent the language from being a barrier to the collection of

accurate data. Another factor that I considered well when formulating my

questionnaire was the type of questions I included and to what extent I lead my

participants to think in the direction that matched my assumptions. For example, I

did not want the parents to think of concerns when it comes to international-

mindedness, if they did not really feel it beforehand. A question such as "What

concerns do you have about international-mindedness" could have pushed some parents to start thinking of concerns that did not exist before I asked them the question, which could have highly impacted my data and the reality of the situation. Instead of such a question, I tried to focus on participants' perception of the alignment of international-mindedness with their cultural beliefs. My questions were mainly closed-ended in the questionnaire with two open-ended questions in each questionnaire. The reason I focused more on closed-ended questions in this part of my data collection was because my questionnaire was mainly designed to serve as a screening tool and to flag potential candidates that could be an asset to my interviews and focus groups.

The teachers and leader's questionnaire that I designed, found in the appendix section of this thesis, was sent to all 80 teachers and six leaders of MQ, whereas the parents' questionnaire was sent to all 423 parents, one questionnaire per household. Both questionnaires were sent electronically using Google Forms. The response rate to the questionnaires was 45% for parents, 80% for teachers (Prek- Grade 7), and 100% from leaders. It is important to note that at MQ most expatriate teachers are Americans with very few exceptions of Canadians and South-Africans (not more than 4 all together on the team), hence my data discussion will mainly include quotes from American teachers.

Using the internet to collect my questionnaire data had many advantages including time saving, confidentiality of the process, and definitely the automatic recording of the data. However, using this method, particularly with parents, ended with a lower response rate (45% of the parents responded to the questionnaire) and could have included some misunderstanding that I might not have been able to

clarify. Looking at the response of the participants, I believe that understanding the questions was not an issue, as the responses reflect a clear understanding of what the participants were being asked and the answers were straight to the point. I believe using the preferred language of participants and cross-checking my Arabic wording with the Head of Arabic department at MQ, have helped prevent the challenge of misunderstanding that Robson and McCartan (2016) warned about. After having collected the responses from both parents and teachers and leaders, I reviewed the data in order to select my participants for the interviews and focus groups, as discussed and detailed in the following sections.

    3.2.2 Interviews and Focus Groups. As discussed above, and in order to be able to triangulate my data as Olsen (2004) recommended, I used questionnaires to complement the data I collected from the interviews and focus groups. In fact, the questionnaires for me served as a tool to identify participants that saw particular concerns related to the alignment of the principles of international-mindedness and the cultural beliefs of MQ parents. After reading the questionnaire responses, I picked the teachers and parents who highlighted challenges related to developing internationally-minded students in MQ and invited them to a focus group or to a one-on-one interview. Leaders of MQ, on the other hand, were all invited to participate. Examples of statements that were expressed by teachers who were picked for the focus groups were: "Parents sometimes request that students do not participate in activities due to cultural reasons" and "Sometimes parents don't like the school to celebrate an international event". Similar statements were relied upon when selecting parents such as: "It is haram to do music" or "Mother's Day is against our religion for example". Appendices G, H, and I contain tables with a

description of each participant who took part in the interviews and focus groups

along with the date and time of each process.

Both my interviews and focus groups were semi-structured in a way that

allowed me flexibility, particularly in the order I followed to ask the questions. Rubin

and Rubin (1995) highlighted the value of what interviews and focus groups can

bring to the table in terms of depth and richness of knowledge. The flexibility of a

semi-structured design enhances the profundity of the discussions as it allows

participants to elaborate on aspects that are most relevant to them and allows the

researcher to ask further, probing questions based on the participants' responses.

Additionally, I believe that the flexibility of semi-structured interviews allows for the

gathering of different perspectives, a process that could be limited with highly

structured interviews. Before the interviews and based on the data I gathered from

my questionnaires, I developed interview schedules (see Appendix C and Appendix

D) that contained an introductory message, a closing sentence, and a set of open-

ended questions that I had placed in a certain order, yet was ready to change

based on my participant's interaction. Robson and McCartan (2016) discussed the

focus of the questions being asked and the complexity of each based on whether it

is addressing a fact, a behaviour, or a belief. According to them, belief questions

need to be really well thought out, so they do not mislead participants or push them

to say what the researcher would like to hear. Similar to my questionnaire, my

questions were well-thought through, reviewed many times after receiving my

supervisor's feedback, and finalized in a way that ensured the least leading and

presumptions. Additionally, I took the time to conduct mock interviews with two of

my colleagues at work using the same interview schedules in order for me to better

understand the kind of data they will be generating and whether or not they will allow me to answer my research questions. After the piloting exercise, I made minor changes particularly to areas I thought were still leading participants to give an answer that I desired.

I was not able to conduct face to face interviews due to the pandemic, thus my interviews were all conducted through Zoom or Microsoft Teams, depending on the preference of the participants. Furthermore, having the interviews with cameras on, gave me the opportunity to observe the non-verbal cues, whether in terms of facial expressions or body language, which enhanced my understanding of the perspective my participants were sharing.

Conducting my interviews through Zoom and Microsoft Teams had some further advantages as well as disadvantages (Archibald et al., 2019). For the advantages, it was definitely less costly and more time convenient, it also allowed me to interview participants that were in different parts of the world as I conducted my interviews during summer, where teachers and leaders were on vacation. However, my biggest fear and some disadvantages of Zoom and other video conferencing tools is that it relied heavily on the quality of the internet. I was anxious about losing connection in the midst of an important discussion, particularly when living in Beirut-Lebanon, where the connection is known to be weak. I was lucky enough to not have any major cut in the internet throughout all my interviews and focus groups, yet I occasionally had participants leave the call and join again within seconds, which I do not believe has significantly affected my data collection process.

A disadvantage to interviews and focus groups as a method of data gathering is the time involved, which Robson and McCartan (2016) also highlighted as a downside for interviews. I wanted my interviews to be long enough to be able to provide me with valuable insights, yet I did not want them to be lengthy to a point where participants are unwilling to participate or where they get tired and consequently withdraw from the discussion. For this reason, I structured my one-on-one interviews to be 30 minutes long, whereas my focus groups were a bit longer and lasted for an hour to allow all participants to have an opportunity to voice their opinions.

Concerning senior leaders (see Table 1), my one-on-one interviews included the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the Primary Years Programme (PYP) principals and assistant principals and the PYP and MYP coordinators. I chose to conduct these interviews in a one-on-one setting because these leaders were considered key members in terms of dealing with parental and students concerns.

Table 1

Interviews Participants- Senior Leaders

Participant	Age Range	Arab/ Non-Arab	Years at MQ	Sex
PYP Leader 1	50-60	Non-Arab	9	F
PYP Leader 2	30-40	Non-Arab	11	F
PYP Leader 3	30-40	Arab	2	F
MYP Leader 1	30-40	Arab	3	M
MYP Leader 2	50-60	Arab	8	F
MYP Leader 3	30-40	Non-Arab	3	F

Teachers and middle leaders who also had teaching loads were grouped in four different focus groups as follows: one group for middle leaders, one group for homeroom teachers, one group for specialist teachers, and one group for Arabic teachers (see Table 2, Table 3, Table 4, and Table 5) I purposely had homeroom teachers and specialists in separate groups, because I wanted to give time for both to fully express their perception and discuss how international-mindedness applies in their particular setting. I chose to have a separate group for Arabic teachers as I did not want them to be influenced nor intimidated by the expatriate group of teachers, and at the same time did not want any group to feel shy and not sharing fully their opinion, so that they are not scared of hurting or insulting colleagues that belonged to the other cultural group.

Table 2

Focus Group Participants- PYP & MYP Teachers

Participant	Age Range	Arab/ Non-Arab	Years at MQ	Sex
PYP Teacher 1	50-60	Non-Arab	5	F
MYP Teacher 1	30-40	Non-Arab	7	M
PYP Teacher 2	20-30	Non-Arab	4	F
MYP Teacher 2	20-30	Non-Arab	2	F
MYP Teacher 3	20-30	Non-Arab	3	M
PYP Teacher 3	30-40	Non-Arab	8	M
MYP Teacher 4	50-60	Arab	7	F
PYP Teacher 4	30-40	Non-Arab	10	F

Table 3

Focus Group Participants- Arabic Teachers

Participant	Age Range	Arab/ Non-Arab	Years at MQ	Sex
MYP Arabic Teacher 1	30-40	Arab	9	F
MYP Arabic Teacher 2	50-60	Arab	11	F
PYP Arabic Teacher 2	30-40	Arab	3	F
MYP Arabic Teacher 3	30-40	Arab	8	F
PYP Arabic Teacher 3	20-30	Arab	2	F

The focus groups were composed of six to eight teachers as Morgan (1998) recommended because this number allows enough space for everyone in the group to express their thoughts within the scheduled time frame, and at the same time it gives diversity in the participants' perspectives, which could enhance the quality of the discussions. The middle leaders focus group was composed of four leaders. The questions asked in the interview for teachers and leaders mainly focused on what they thought international-mindedness was, whether they believed that teachers at MQ shared a clear understanding of this concept, the challenges, if any, that they faced during their daily learning and teaching practices, the support from the administration and parents when such concerns are faced, and the strategies they suggest to decrease parental concerns about international-mindedness. All interviews for teachers and leaders were conducted in English, except for the focus group with Arabic teachers that was conducted in Arabic.

Table 4

Focus Group Participants- Specialist Teachers

Participant	Age Range	Arab/ Non-Arab	Years at MQ	Sex
Music Teacher 1	30-40	Non-Arab	11	F
Music Teacher 2	40-50	Non-Arab	2	M
Art Teacher 1	30-40	Non-Arab	8	F
Art Teacher 2	40-50	Non-Arab	7	F
PE Teacher 1	30-40	Non-Arab	4	F
PE Teacher 2	30-40	Non-Arab	2	M

Table 5

Focus Group Participants- Middle Leaders

Participant	Age Range	Arab/ Non-Arab	Years at MQ	Sex
Middle Leader 1	40-50	Arab	10	M
Middle Leader 2	30-40	Arab	10	F
Middle Leader 3	30-40	Non-Arab	7	M
Middle Leader 4	40-50	Non-Arab	9	F

The parents' interviews (see Table 6) were conducted through focus groups as well. There were three focus groups gender segregated, to allow freedom of expression. In fact, in my previous Institution Focused Study work, I found out that gender segregation allowed Qatari students to be more at ease during interviews as they do not need to worry about the other gender's judgment of their views

(Frangie, 2017). The parents that were selected for the focus groups were also the ones that expressed concerns through the questionnaires. These parents were grouped into two female groups and one male, each of the group contained 4 to 5 parents. The questions of the interviews were focused on what they thought the term international-mindedness meant, whether they felt that this concept contradicts their cultural beliefs, the reasons behind their choice of MQ for the education of their children, and their satisfaction with the curriculum offered in terms of developing students' Qatari identity. All parents' interviews were conducted in Arabic so parents can fully express themselves and feel comfortable with elaborating on their thoughts and ideas.

Table 6

Focus Group Participants- Parents

Participant	Age Range	Arab/ Non-Arab	# of Children at MQ	Sex
Parent 1	20-30	Arab	2	F
Parent 2	20-30	Arab	2	F
Parent 3	30-40	Arab	2	F
Parent 4	40-50	Arab	4	F
Parent 5	20-30	Arab	2	F
Parent 6	30-40	Arab	2	F
Parent 7	30-40	Arab	3	F
Parent 8	40-50	Arab	2	F
Parent 9	30-40	Arab	3	F
Parent 10	20-30	Arab	1	M

Parent 11	40-50	Arab	2	M
Parent 12	50-60	Arab	3	M
Parent 13	40-50	Arab	3	M

It is important to note a few differences between my focus groups and my interviews. While focus groups allowed for discussions among participants, which enriched the collected data, they were lengthier in time, and on occasions I had to intervene to redirect the discussion in order to allow everyone an opportunity to participate and to minimize the dominance of the voice of one or two participants. On the other hand, interviews were mainly in the form of monologues, where the participants were voicing an opinion or thought with few interactions from my side in terms of asking clarifying or elaboration questions. The advantages of the one-on-one interviews however, were related to time efficiency and to providing participants with a safe place to talk. In the interviews, participants had less reservations to express their ideas, which they communicated to me on many occasions during our discussion.

3.3 Data Analysis

My data analysis was extensive with a lot of back and forth between my research questions, literature review, theoretical framework, the quantitative data I obtained through my initial questionnaire to parents and teachers, and the transcribed data from the interviews and focus groups. In this section, I detailed the journey of data analysis, how I ensured trustworthiness of my data analysis, the transcription process, as well as an extensive discussion about my thematic coding analysis exercise. What is important to note for this section, is that across literature

about the constructionist approach and particularly when using thematic coding analysis, there seems to be a lot of flexibility and definitely not a well-defined recipe. To this end, Robson and McCartan (2016) recommended for beginner researchers to seek advice from more experienced researchers in order to ensure trustworthiness. Elliot (2018) from her side highlighted that this method of data analysis is very loose and significantly depends on the context and purpose of the research, yet recommended a set of main principles that needs to be followed to ensure trustworthiness and validity of the process as detailed below in this section.

  3.3.1 Transcription Process. The first step of my data analysis started with the transcription of my interviews and focus groups with parents, teachers, and leaders. Stuckey (2014) argued that the transcription of data could have a significant impact on the data analysis process, and thus researchers should follow a clear framework with precise principles throughout this process to ensure trustworthiness of the work. During my transcription exercise, I generally followed the steps that Stuckey (2014) suggested particularly *deidentifying data* and *transmission of meaning to the text*. However, for each of these steps I made changes and adaptations in order to better fit my research context as detailed below.

  In order to ensure anonymity of the data, I followed the deidentifying technique that Stuckey (2014) recommended. The process consisted of assigning a number for each participant that took part in my interviews or focus groups. The goal was to remove any identifiable variable from my data, and thus participants' names were replaced by numbers (e.g., PYP Teacher 1). Additionally, I made sure I removed any other information that might identify the participant such as their exact

position in the school. Instead, I coded the positions by general categories as follows: P for parents, T for teachers, and L for leaders. However, this coding process was kept for the draft version of my analysis, as I chose to refer to participants in my findings and discussions section by their general job title instead of using the above labels, in order to prevent dehumanizing and impersonalizing the statements provided in my thesis.

In the next step of my transcription process, I went through the process of ensuring that my transcription captures the important information that I am looking for to answer my research question (Stuckey, 2014). It is important to note that I completed the transcription process on my own without the help of a transcriptionist for several reasons. First, since I am a beginner researcher, I wanted to build a deep understanding of this exercise and reflect on the experience so later in my research journey I could have more solid conversations with transcriptionists based on personal experiences and reflections. Additionally, my work was not funded and thus I was not able to afford hiring a transcriptionist to do the work for me, which I believe was at my advantage as it allowed me to pause for each statement before I type it and make notes of my initial reflections and thoughts. Although I did not use a transcriptionist, I did follow the advice that Stuckey (2014) gave as pillars for this process. The first principle was to transcribe the whole interview in full in order to gain a complete understanding of the participants' perception, and this is what I ended up doing. Additionally, I tried to note any non-verbal cues and behaviours that I believed communicated more insight about the participant's response and included them in my transcript. Reflecting on my transcription process, I would admit that it was lengthy and included many

frustrating moments. Yet, the lessons I learned and the aha moments I experienced were worth the pain and helped me ensure a higher trustworthiness of my work as detailed below in this section.

The last step of my transcription process included the assignment of meaning to the text. Stuckey (2014) argued that the way participants voice their ideas and thoughts plays a major role in the interpretation of data. In her work on the first step of data analysis, she discussed the role of inflections in the process. Following her advice, during my interviews and focus groups discussions I ensured to ask further questions when there was an inflection point that triggered my curiosity and pushed me to want to know more about the topic. For example, when a parent mentioned that the school told them to follow the rules without questioning it as they had agreed to it during enrolment, my next question to this participant was if they did follow the rule or not. It was important for me not only to hear the participants but to also understand the action taken so I better understand the behaviour of the parents when they face a certain concern related to international-mindedness. Inflections were well noted and documented in my transcripts as they were used significantly during the analysis process. Another element that I came across during this phase were the fillers, such as "um" that people used as a pause to their speech when they were further thinking about an idea. What was important here is for me to make the decision about whether I keep these fillers or I just ignore them for my transcript. Sandelowski (1994), believed that those fillers are not important in most cases and could be easily omitted so researchers focus on the information communicated. In my transcription however, I did leave some of these fillers when I felt that they communicated some kind of feelings such as hesitations

of voicing up the concerns. Retaining these fillers allowed me to look at trends of when they are mostly used by participants to better understand their perception of different aspects of my research questions. Additionally, I closely noted smiles, laughs, and other body gestures or sights that took place during my interviews and focus groups to evidence some of my statements in the findings and discussions chapter.

3.3.2 Thematic Coding Analysis. Thematic Coding Analysis (TCA) is an approach to qualitative data analysis that is not particularly linked to any theory (Robson, 2011). Instead, it is a very general approach that is characterized by flexibility and simplicity of the process. Braun and Clarke (2006), suggested that the simple aspect of this approach makes it popular among beginner researchers. I would argue though, that even when the steps appear straightforward, the flexible feature of this approach could make it harder on new researchers who usually do not have profound experience with interpreting and analysing data. It is important in my opinion that beginner researchers carefully study and understand each step, with the advice of more experienced scholars, in order to increase the trustworthiness of the work. Due to its flexibility and simplicity, TCA is sometimes criticized in the literature (Boyatzis, 1998; Roulston, 2001; Tuckett, 2005). For these scholars, the lack of principles and guidelines of TCA makes it a weak approach to data analysis. To address these concerns, I detailed below the different aspects of this approach, the framework I followed in each step, and later in the trustworthiness section I discussed how I increased the reliability and validity of my work. According to Roberts et al. (2019), TCA is an approach to qualitative data analysis that looks at trends and patterns to make sense of the raw data. The

information transcribed from interviews and other data collection tools is transformed into codes, categories and then themes are generated.

Stuckey (2015) suggested that researchers thoroughly read the data and create a storyline before starting the coding process. What is important about the creation of the story line is that it allows the researcher to be fully aware of the research questions and to centre the data analysis around those in terms of how the data would allow them to widen their understanding of the research questions. Following Stuckey's (2015) recommendation, I started by reading my transcripts twice each and organized the storyline in relation to my research questions. After I read each transcript, I tried to write a paragraph summarizing the main idea that the participants were communicating, as well as highlighting new findings or contradictions that resulted from the different perceptions of participants. I did this process for all my transcripts, keeping in mind that those were not final decisions but rather an initial draft for me to have a general idea of how much of my research questions were answered and whether or not more data was needed to be collected. Once my storyline was finalized, I moved to the second step of my thematic coding analysis, which consisted of generating codes and categories through a deductive-inductive mixed approach as detailed below (see Appendix J). Coding is an important step in TCA as it allows researchers to condense large amounts of data into a more organized meaningful narratives that could be interpreted and linked to the research questions, literature review, and the theoretical framework of the research. Creswell (2015) discussed the amount of work required in such a process of data analysis in a very simple yet comprehensive way:

Text data are dense data, and it takes a long time to go through them and make sense of them. (p.152)

Coding allows researchers to identify the themes that are most relevant to their work and to answering their research questions. It helps them deeply understand the data and the relationship between different codes, categories and themes. Through the literature, scholars referred to a code in many different ways. For the purpose of this work, I followed Elliot's (2018) suggestion and definition of the different types of coding because it helped me transform my participants' raw statements into abstract concepts and more generalized ideas. The first level of my coding, which was mainly descriptive and more on a concrete stage, was referred to as codes. My codes were generated manually using Microsoft Word and the comment feature of tracking changes. Each time a sentence or paragraph was deemed connected to one of my codes, I add the code next to it as a comment. In order to limit the number of codes I was generating, I followed mainly the "structural coding" approach that Saldaña (2009) recommended and that consisted of choosing codes using key words from the research questions as a starting point. Those codes were very few and were selected through a deductive approach, which could limit the research scope and reduce the participants' voice (Creswell, 2015). In order to prevent this from happening, I decided to mix between an inductive and deductive approach of generating codes, thus most of my thematic analysis codes were generated from the data and added to the main set. For my inductive approach, I tried to include many *in vivo* codes, which is the process of using the same words that the participants used (Elliot, 2018). My decision of including *in vivo* codes was made based on my wish to increase participants' voice,

as my research's aim was mainly to look at the participants' perception of my research questions. During my coding process, and before moving to the categories, I developed a codebook as suggested by many scholars (Belotto, 2018; Roberts et al., 2019) in order to increase reliability of this process and augment its rigor. My codebook was developed throughout the process. It started by listing my deductive codes mainly from research questions, defining them and describing how they could appear in my data with examples from my raw data. Table 7 represents an example of my initial codebook that was later developed to include the inductive codes.

Table 7

Example of a Code Definition Codebook

Code	Definition	Example
Concern	Communicating a struggle related to a practice of international-mindedness	*I don't want my daughter to engage in Haram. Being internationally-minded is telling her that it is ok to do anything she wants.*
Opportunity	Expressing a positive impact of a practice related to international-mindedness	*I want my daughter to be able to travel the world and work. I don't want her to cook and sit at home. She can do a lot.*

| Practice | Sharing a practice that helped decrease concerns related to international-mindedness | *On many occasions I called my colleague who teaches them Islamic to discuss with them and convince them that music is not haram. This sometimes works with younger students more than with middle schoolers.* |

The next step of my TCA consisted of generating categories from the different codes I was able to create. Compared to the codes, my categories were more general and grouped several codes. Also, as Elliott (2018) suggested, the categories were more conceptual than my codes and described a higher level of interpretation and connections. After defining my categories, I moved to the process of developing my themes. In order to organize this process and increase its rigour, I developed a content analysis table (see Table 8) that included the categories and the primary themes for this category, and when applicable I mentioned the secondary themes. The themes were mainly created from the patterns and trends that I noticed from the different categories, and constituted the main titles of my findings and discussions chapter.

It is important to note that throughout my data analysis process I used *analytic memos*, that File et al. (date) suggested in their work on research approaches in early childhood education. I started writing my memos since my first read of the transcripts, communicating my thoughts and reflections as I was unfolding the information. My *analytic memos* also served as a way to triangulate my data by supporting claims that I made throughout my findings and discussions section.

Table 8

Example of a Content Analysis Table

Category	Primary Themes	Secondary Theme
Challenges	Curriculum	Censorship, historical and current events, performance arts and visual arts, and physical education
Strategies	Current Strategies	Empowering students, ripple effect, flexible approach

3.3.3 Trustworthiness. As I mentioned earlier, qualitative data approaches could be challenging for beginner researchers and could lack rigor and trustworthiness if the researcher does not take the time to assess the methodology and methods being used to collect and analyse the data. To this end, I took the time in this last section of my data analysis to discuss how I ensured validity and reliability of my practices, in order to generate a trustworthy thesis that could add to the knowledge and work that has already been done in the field of international-mindedness.

I would like to highlight that as part of my content validity process, my questions were reviewed by my supervisor as well as by two members of the review panel of my thesis proposal. I also conducted two pilot interviews with two of my colleagues, in order to have a clearer idea on the kind of data that would be generated. Several changes have been made after receiving the feedback, as discussed in the ethical issues and considerations section.

In order to ensure quality assurance of my data, I followed different steps that Belotto (2018) recommended. First, I tried to immerse myself in the data by reading and rereading the interview and focus groups transcripts several times. I read each of my transcripts at least two times, and some even more, when I felt that I needed to gain a deeper understanding of the perception being communicated. Secondly, after each interview or focus group, I was listening to them again to highlight where the main ambiguities and misunderstandings lay so I could address them. I also always referred back to my research questions to ensure that I was heading in the right direction and that I was staying on track in relation to these questions, but without allowing these to limit my perception of the diverse meanings the participants might be attributing to the themes discussed, which might differ from or contradict those of the research questions. The last step I did in my quality assurance process is that I scrutinized my interviews and ensured as far as possible that I have not asked any question that could have led the participants to answer in a certain desired way. Following these three steps allowed me to continuously check my work, its validity and reliability, reviewing and refining my process each time it was deemed necessary.

To ensure the rigor of my work and check the validity of my methods, I also assessed interrater reliability by testing it on a sample of my data (Barbour 2001; Campbell et al., 2013; Marques & McCall, 2005). For this reason, I asked two colleagues, who were well experienced in TCA, to review my process after I coded my first two transcripts. After they reviewed them, we sat together and discussed misalignment. Then, I went and coded a third one that they reviewed as well. At this point, our coding was better matching, which gave me the confidence to continue

with the process, as it was clear that, at this point, I had gained a deep understanding of the coding process and of the whole exercise of transforming the information from raw data into codes and categories.

4. Ethical Issues and Consideration

It was very interesting and important to conduct a reading about ethical issues and considerations and to link the extant theories to the context of my work. The first question I had as I started to research the literature related to ethical issues and particularly during the first stages of my thesis was the reason behind researchers having to allocate one section of their writing to this area. To me, the novice researcher, getting the ethical approval from my university seemed to be sufficient. I can't describe my happiness and excitement the day I received my ethical approval from UCL and the confirmation that my research work was indeed registered in the social research field and is in line with UCL's Data Protection policy. However, soon after I started reading the literature and creating my data collection tools, I realized how insufficient this process was in terms of ensuring my work displayed ethical conduct at all times. Definitely the ethics committee is important, and its work is crucial to the protection of participants, researchers, and anyone else involved in the work, yet this process is a onetime issue and does not consider the ethical issues and considerations that arise along the way. Many authors in the literature actually supported this view and suggested concepts and frameworks that help deal with this situation. Tracy (2012) for example discussed "situational and relational ethics'', whereas Guillemin and Gillam (2004) tackled the concept of reflexivity. Both of these concepts are to be addressed by the researchers throughout their work, each time they are interacting with participants

or they are faced with a decision that they have to make. In the below section, I discussed different ethical issues and considerations that are relevant to my work and how I addressed them throughout this journey. These considerations included the participants' informed consent and right to withdrawal, unintended consequences of my work, anonymity and confidentiality, the insider researcher situation, the process of reflectivity and reflexivity, and my positionality as a researcher when it comes to the context and nature of my work.

4.1 Informed Consent and Right to Withdraw

When I first started creating my data collection tools including my questionnaires and interview schedules, my supervisor immediately told me about the consent form that I needed to develop and took me through a review of the form, which I had to revise many times as a result of his feedback before it was finalized. At this stage, the insistence on this piece of paper did not make much sense to me, yet after I started reading about scholars' views of this process and the examples provided when an informed consent was not obtained, I understood the importance of this step and the significant impact it could have on participants. Robson and McCartan (2016) cited many unethical works that have marked the research field. One example is the American Tuskegee Syphilis study that was conducted by the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) and was characterized by the miscommunication of information to participants as well as uninformed consent. Participants in the study were denied treatment so researchers can evaluate the development of the disease when no medical procedures are being applied. Although this is an extreme case, it is not the only one that has happened in the research field. Scholars such as Milgram (2005) actually defended

their lack of obtaining informed consent by stating that sometimes consent could affect the results and findings of a study. I argue that knowledge is important and developing understanding is crucial to the improvement of the quality of life, however some boundaries should never be crossed. Participants should be informed at all times of the work being conducted so they can make informed decisions about whether they wish to participate or not. If limitations happen as a result of the informed consent, scholars should mention it in their study report but not refrain from obtaining it. To this end, my participants' consent form (See Appendix E and Appendix F), as Robson (2011) recommended, included an introduction of the researcher, a description of the purpose of the study, the rights of participants to participate or not and to withdraw at any point from the research, as well as a direct statement that communicated to participants that their refusal to participate won't have any negative impact on them at any point. The consent form for parents was written in Arabic, whereas the teachers' one was in English, as it was the common language fluently spoken by MQ's faculty.

The right to withdrawal was another component that I clearly highlighted in my consent form. It was important for me to make my participants understand that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any point. I even explained that the data collected from them will be taken out and no consequences will happen as a result. Robson and McCartan (2016) discussed the impracticality of participants leaving the study, yet insisted on its ethical importance as participants might experience higher levels of stress or discomfort as a result of their participation. I was lucky to not have any participant leave my study, but rather most of my participants expressed interest in reading my thesis, as to them the problem I was

addressing was becoming a major barrier to the learning journey of their children and students.

4.2 Anonymity and Confidentiality

Robson and McCartan (2016) discussed the importance of keeping the participants' information confidential and stored in a place away from where the whole data is kept. They encouraged researchers to develop clear procedures related to this aspect of the research. In my research setting, although the discussions were not very private, they still required that participants' confidentiality be respected for different reasons. Participants, whether teachers or parents, were voicing out their opinion about the school vision, mission, and practices. Participants felt safe communicating their views with me, as transparently as possible, because they knew that their identity will be kept confidential. I was lucky actually to have built a trustful relationship with most of my participants, which I further elaborated on in my insider researcher section below. In order to ensure the confidentiality of my participants, I established different procedures during the course of my research. As discussed earlier in my data analysis section, my participants were assigned numbers instead of names or specific titles. As such a participant will be Leader 1 or Teacher 2 or Parent 5 for example, which reduced the leads that could help release their identities to the readers of my thesis.

An interesting point that Robson and McCartan (2016) highlighted is that an informed consent does not mean that the researcher can invade the privacy of the participants, but rather use the information they provide in an anonymous format. In certain cases, however, participants need to be made aware that in very few occasions, such as sharing illegal activities, their identity could be shared with the

relevant participants. Reflecting on my informed consent form, I have to admit that I have missed this point, yet I made sure to highlight it in the introductory statement during my interviews and focus groups discussions. It is important to clarify that none of the information collected through this work was of a criminal or illegal nature, and thus no identity had to be revealed at any point.

4.3 Unintended Consequences

Merton (1936) was one of the pioneer scholars who discussed the concept of unintended consequences, now known as the "law of unintended consequences" (Robson & McCartan, 2016). This concept consists of researchers facing unethical practices in their research, even when they had the best intentions in mind. Robson and McCartan (2016) gave several examples of research that led to unintended consequences such as the evaluation of the Brazilian project which was aimed at helping families and empowering women but ended up with putting the responsibility on children to be able to access this support. Similarly, Robson and McCartan (2016) discussed the work of Evans et al. (2014) on the negative consequences of social emotional interventions used in schools on certain children, whereby children faced negative labelling which led to them being rejected among their peers who did not receive the intervention.

The reason I am mentioning the unintended consequences as part of my ethical considerations is because it resonated with the process I went through when formulating my research questions in order to avoid any kind of unintentional harm. My aim was to understand if parents, teachers, or leaders, felt challenges or concerns when developing internationally-minded students in the context of MQ. Yet, the exact formulation of my questions was very important to ensure I was not

creating feelings that the parents or teachers had not felt before I asked them my questions. In other words, I did not want to create a new perspective other than theirs just because I have mentioned it in my question. To this end, I went through a process of reviewing and editing my questions in terms of the vocabulary words used and the structure of my sentences with the support of my supervisor and the two members of my thesis review panel. This reflective process refined my questions and ensured that I was not unintentionally creating negative feelings, impressions, or new challenges to parents or teachers when it comes to developing internationally-minded students in the particular context of MQ.

4.4 Positionality

The last component of my ethical considerations, and probably the most impactful factor, is related to the concept of positionality and how it has affected or could have affected me as a researcher, my participants, as well as the validity and reliability of my data collection and analysis processes. Positionality refers to the effect that an individual's position and power in society has on their ability to access information. Misawa (2010) posited that our identities are shaped through our daily social interactions as well as through the different groups that we belong to. In order to explore the concept of positionality in the context of this research, I considered in the below section my status transformation from insider to outsider researcher, then I reflected on how my Lebanese-American identity could have influenced my access to the data, and finally discussed how reflexivity helped me throughout the process and ensured I am engaging in ethical practices at all times.

When I first started my research during my Institution Focused Study (IFS), I had been working at MQ for many years and was officially an insider researcher.

Back then, I wrote my ethical considerations section with a focus on the impact that an insider researcher had on the collection and analysis of the data. Now, on the other hand, things are not as clear. I left MQ five years ago when I moved out of Qatar to join an international school in Beirut. My data collection was not completed before I left the school, and thus I had to get in touch with everyone two years later to launch the process. At that time, I definitely did not fit the definition of insider researcher as Breen (2007) defined this as a researcher that is conducting research within a group that they belong to. At the same time, Breen (2007) continued to say that an outsider researcher has no connections at all with the group or the institution they are studying. Saying that now that I am not working at MQ excluded me from the insider researcher category, could be somehow naive and could underestimate a significant ethical consideration for my research. Over the years at MQ, I made strong relationships particularly with leaders and teachers, who became very close friends. Additionally, new teachers at MQ knew somehow my connections within the school team and my close relationship with the head of school. As Bonner and Tolhurst (2002) suggested, these relationships had several advantages including participants being very open and comfortable with sharing, as well as having access to information that other outsider researchers might not have had. At the same time, the pitfall of these connections is that they could initiate lack of trust particularly among participants, who I did not have such strong connections with, leading them to be careful about what to share. In order to deal with this concern, I spent additional time engaging with unfamiliar participants discussing my values as a researcher and how important they were to me. I stressed on the

confidentiality aspect of my work and allowed them to ask any question that could make them feel more comfortable and could increase their trust in the process.

In addition to the insider-outsider researcher status, my identity as a Lebanese-American person might have affected my access to the data. In fact, parents in particular, connected to my Arab origins and assumed that I share the same beliefs as theirs. This was very obvious in one of my interviews, where participants kept telling me that they were sure I understand their views well because we shared the same background, and were somehow waiting for my validation of their point of view. Fortunately, I was well prepared for such a situation and as Holmes (2021) recommended I had a direct confrontation with the participants where I gently stated that my beliefs are very different from theirs, yet I was interested in finding out their perspective and voicing it out. From the teachers' side I had the complete opposite reaction, where they were a little conservative when it came to criticizing the Qatari culture. To them, I belonged to this culture and there are limits that they believed could not be crossed. Similar to what I did with the parents, I explained to the teachers that I do not relate to the Qatari culture in any way and that they are free to express any opinion without the fear of insulting me.

Reflexivity was my powerful weapon in order to address the concerns that resulted from the concept of positionality. Reich (2021) called for looking at positionality as a richness to the work rather than a limitation. Being aware of our position as researchers and the participants' position allows us to better understand our assumptions and judgements, so we can reflect on them throughout the process and ensure they are not overtaking the perception that the participants are

communicating to us. Since the start of my research project, even at the very

beginning stages, I developed a research diary where I noted all my feelings, beliefs,

and assumptions, which I kept checking along the way until the last moment of my

data analysis to lower the impact that positionality could have had on the findings

and discussions of my research.

Chapter 5

Findings & Discussion

1. Overview

All the work that I have conducted so far aimed at ensuring the findings and discussion part of this research work offered valuable insights that would contribute to the knowledge in the field and allow readers to refine their strategies when developing students who are internationally-minded in a context similar to MQ. My insights also contributed to the academic knowledge in the field of international education, particularly in relation to developing internationally-minded students in international schools in communities similar to MQ. After reviewing the literature, framing my theory, and defining my methodology, my goal for this chapter was to develop a deep understanding of the collected data by reflecting on the participants' perceptions, linking them to extant knowledge, exploring them in relation to my theoretical framework, and ultimately building on and interrogating previous work when needed. As discussed in my methodology previously, the skeleton of this chapter was based on different themes that were generated from the literature review and the theory I used. The themes of this chapter were also the result of a thematic coding analysis, through which I conducted a thorough reading of the data, identifying meaningful segments that I referred to as my codes (see Appendix J-List of Generated Codes & Categories) and then transforming these segments into categories (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Once my codes and categories were developed, I began identifying the themes and patterns that were emerging then started looking for quotes that directly related to the themes and patterns identified. I made sure that the selected quotes were representative of

each particular theme and that they provided an illustration of the finding. Another factor that I took into consideration when choosing my quotes was their structure and how concise and how meaningful they were (Neuendorf, 2016). During the selection process of my quotes, I also ensured they are properly contextualized and that they respected at all times the ethical considerations that I discussed in my methodology section earlier.

In the following, I started by discussing international schooling and its importance to teachers and leaders on one side and to the parents on the other side. Then, I focused on international-mindedness as perceived in the MQ community and its dilemma of being an opportunity and a threat at once. From there, I moved to reflect on the strategies that MQ teachers and leaders used to overcome the challenges of international-mindedness, when presented, and how they perceive that these challenges are shaping over the course of the years. Finally, I discussed what I perceived the MQ community believed could help them move forward in developing students who are internationally-minded.

2.The Importance of International Schooling

International schooling plays an important role in today's world as discussed earlier in the literature review section of this thesis. When asking teachers, leaders and parents about their perception of the importance of international education, their answers were varied, yet revealed trends that are discussed below. In the following, I first analysed the perception of teachers and leaders of the importance of international schooling and then moved to look at the parents' perception. As the below data suggested, reasons that pushed individuals into the international world fluctuated between economic factors, the appreciation of diversity, the freedom that

the international curriculum provided, the perceived prestigious and high-quality education offered in international schools, and last but definitely not least the future of MQ students.

2.1 Perception of Teachers and Leaders

2.1.1 Financial Implications for Teachers and Leaders. During teachers' and leaders' interviews and focus groups, the financial aspect as a main attraction to international schooling was obvious. When asked about why they have chosen international education, several teachers and leaders mentioned the package that international schools offered, which lead them to gain better life standards. The comments about money were at times very direct as stated by an elementary teacher:

> For the money to start. For real, the United States is the worse when it comes to teachers' salaries. (PYP Teacher 1, Focus Group 1)

The above-quoted teacher is American and has lived all her life in the United States before moving to Qatar. She has worked for more than 20 years in the States as a teacher, yet felt her pay remained unsatisfactory throughout the years and too low compared to the financial package she got in international schools. Murnane et al. (1991) suggested that salaries play a crucial role in recruiting and keeping high quality teachers. Dolton & Marcenaro-Gutierrez (2011) from their side also highlighted the power of money when it comes to good teaching, which, as they stated, is applicable as well across many other professions. However, on the other hand, other research found that the correlation between job satisfaction and employees' salaries is relatively weak (Blacksmith & Harter, 2011, Judge et al., 2010).

In western countries, particularly in most states in America, where several MQ teachers came from, teachers' salaries are very low, as reflected in the teacher's quotation above. In previous centuries, when travel was not as easy, American teachers stayed in their country occupying positions that barely allowed them to pay their bills. However, with the new nature of the world and the interconnectedness aspect of today's societies, teachers are more and more tempted to leave their home country for better financial opportunities in countries that sometimes are very different from their own cultural background.

In addition to the salary and all benefits that come with it, MQ teachers mentioned the opportunities that international schools usually offered their employees to participate in worldwide conferences and workshops that allowed them to continuously grow on the professional level. As one homeroom MYP teacher communicated during a focus group:

> There are a lot more opportunities with international schools to attend conferences and workshops. It's a rich environment and you feel that you are growing with them. (MYP Teacher 1, Focus Group 1)

This teacher considered the professional development opportunity as having a direct implication on her salary package, as workshops and international conferences participation fees are high, and in many cases not attainable unless the teacher is sponsored by an organization or academic institution.

MQ teachers' financial satisfaction with the school packages was also reflected in the number of years they spent at the school, as stated by a Primary Years Programme (PYP) leader:

We can retain our teachers because we pay them well compared to other

international schools. (PYP Leader 1, One-on-one Interview)

More than 50% of the teachers who took the questionnaire for this study stated that

they have been working at MQ for more than 3 years. While the reason for retention

could be associated to different factors other than the one stated above such as

teachers' wellbeing and workplace culture (De Stercke et al., 2015), teachers'

retention rate has a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning (Ballou,

1996; Figlio & Stone, 1997). However, I wonder if money was truly the main motive

for teachers' retention at MQ, would this alone positively impact the quality of

learning and teaching? Or were there other factors that MQ offered that was

contributing to its good quality of education, as evidenced by the New England

Association for School and Colleges (NEAC) and the Council of International School

(CIS) accreditation report to QAW?

2.1.2 Transient Nature and the Diversity of International Schools. In

addition to the financial implication as an attraction for MQ teachers to join the

international school community, the transient nature of the programme seemed to

be as tempting. In fact, many teachers during their focus groups and interviews

mentioned that the advantage of working in international schools was that there are

usually great opportunities for intercultural exchanges. As one of the teachers

stated:

You always meet someone new and learn about their culture, even if they are

coming like you from the US but from a different state, you get to learn

something new about them. (PYP Teacher 2, Focus Group 1)

This teacher seemed to see opportunities in international schools for cultural growth through connecting and working with a different group of teachers who join MQ then leave for other job opportunities.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme, a common programme used among international schools, was created mainly to serve the needs of children of families whose work nature forced them to travel. It aimed at providing children with a unified curriculum that helped the continuity of their learning regardless of where they were in the world (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2008). Hence, international education somehow was built on a transient nature mainly for students. With time, with the ease of travel and with it being affordable to more people and not just the elite class, the transient aspect of international schooling started to include teachers and leaders. Having this privilege of working with different people from across the world, provided teachers with opportunities to learn about different cultures, religions, accept them, and more focus on the human commonalities instead of differences. As one teacher stated:

> We learn from each other. I always ask the Arabic teachers if I have doubts about the appropriateness of an activity, and they are usually very honest with me and helpful. (MYP Teacher 2, Focus Group 1)

As it is clear in the above statement, teachers helped each other get the cultural and religious understanding needed in the context of MQ. Expatriate teachers relied on Arabic teachers to help them gain a deep understanding of what is appropriate and what is not in the Qatari culture, at the same time Arabic teachers mentioned that they learn, from their fellow expatriate teachers, new strategies that they can

implement in their Arabic classes to make learning more engaging for students, as per what an Arabic teacher stated during one of the focus groups:

> I have learnt so much from the homeroom teachers in my grade level, and I feel now I am a better teacher and I am able to better connect with students.
>
> (MYP Arabic Teacher 1, Focus Group 2)

Intercultural understanding is a main component of international-mindedness (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2008), and thus I believe that in the context of MQ, it is not only students that are developing as internationally-minded but also teachers. Teachers and leaders from all around the world came together with different cultural backgrounds, different work experiences, and different beliefs. Yet, once at MQ, these teachers shared the same mission of developing students who are global-minded responsible citizens. They celebrated success and faced challenges together on a daily basis. They seemed to have each other's back and worked closely together in teams to build on their capabilities and deliver good quality learning and teaching that is culturally appropriate.

This transient nature of international schooling definitely has many advantages as stated above, however I would like to take a moment to reflect on the negative impact that it might have. In fact, as an international school leader, I have experienced how much the transient nature of international schooling could affect the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. When we hire new international teachers, we pay a significant amount of money to move them from one country to another, we usually provide them with accommodation to ensure they are feeling well taken care of and ready to teach, and we invest a large part of our budget in professional development as teachers coming from different

backgrounds might not share the same learning and teaching standards and practices. This important financial investment could become a burden on school, even when teachers are retained for three or four years (Synar, 2010). To deal with this concern, MQ had a 5-years financial bonus for teachers who stayed for 5 consecutive years at the school. This strategy helped the school embrace the transient nature of international schooling without it becoming a threat for the quality of learning and teaching (Hanusheck et al., 2016; Ronfeldt et al., 2013).

2.1.3 The Nature of the IB Curriculum. Three sub-themes were generated from my data analysis that I elaborated on in this section including the familiarity of the curriculum, the flexibility aspect, and the innovation that the curriculum led to in the context of MQ. As mentioned earlier, the IB programme is commonly offered in international schools across the world. Sharing the same curriculum across countries, provides teachers with a stable aspect among all the instability that comes with the nature of international teaching. As one of the expatriate teachers mentioned during a focus group:

> I chose to work at MQ because I am familiar with the curriculum. As an American in Qatar, everything seems new, different, and takes effort to get used to. The curriculum is my safety net. I am very comfortable with it because I have a lot of international experience. (MYP Teacher 4, Focus Group 1)

The neoliberalism ideology that Qatar has adopted as part of its globalization process, has led its international schools to borrow well-established curricula, such as the IB, in order to allow students learning in international schools in Qatar to gain access to a high-quality programme that helps them develop as global citizens. This

aspect of borrowing international curricula has had a positive impact on attracting teachers to MQ and giving them a securing element among many other challenging variabilities. Yet, I have to raise a concern about teachers becoming familiar with a certain curriculum and the quality of its implementation as the below PYP leader stated:

> I work hard with teachers to make sure that our teaching and learning matches the IB standards and practices. Some teachers come from other IB schools, yet they do things very differently. (PYP Leader 2, One-on-one Interview)

Although familiarity with the curriculum could be a positive aspect of The IB PYP and MYP curricula, the risks of sharing and circulating misconceptions and misunderstandings of its implementation through the participants' responses could not be ignored. I believe that the purpose of IB accreditation is to control these misconceptions of implementation, however one can't help but wonder if the accreditation process, that comes once in five years, is enough on its own to completely address the issues related to misunderstanding and misalignment of practices.

The second subtheme that I have not thought about that came up during my literature review was the flexibility of the IB-PYP curriculum and the freedom it offered to teachers. I was surprised by how frequently this aspect came up during my conversations with PYP teachers and leaders in focus groups and interviews when asked about the importance of international schools for them and the reason behind their choice of teaching internationally. Three out of six leaders and nine out of 20 teachers mentioned the flexibility of the PYP on different occasions. In fact,

the Primary Years Programme (PYP) and the Middle Years Programme (MYP) are known for the choice they offer teachers and schools when implementing them. Definitely there are sets of guiding principles and standards that schools need to follow, however in the context of PYP and MYP, IB authorities do not dictate to teachers what they need to teach exactly. This feature seemed to be an added value to teachers who choose international teaching as per the below American teacher:

> I chose what I want to teach based on my students' interest and also based on what is happening around us in the world. I can manipulate the curriculum and that is very motivating to me. (PYP Teacher 3, Focus Group 1)

From the above statement, it was clear that this MQ teacher felt that they were empowered in terms of planning the learning for their students. Agency, is actually at the heart of the PYP and MYP and was more stressed on in the enhanced PYP launched in October 2018 (Preparing for the Enhanced PYP, n.d.). The benefits of this flexibility are related to the fact that it allows the learning to be more relevant and more engaging to students, which, particularly in the context of MQ, came with a lot of challenges. When a teacher is given the freedom to pick what they want to teach, they might select topics or use resources or tools that are not culturally sensitive, which could lead to the challenges of developing internationally-minded students at MQ that are discussed further below in this chapter and that this MYP leader clearly communicated:

> It is nice to choose what to teach. But sometimes I get calls from parents upset from a learning experience in the classroom that could lead to serious

issues. For example, once a teacher was discussing the rights of the LGBTQ community in her classroom, which is not only inappropriate but goes against the Qatari law. (MYP Leader 1, One-on-one Interview)

2.2 Perception of MQ Parents

2.2.1 Prestigious Education. When asked about what international schools meant to them, six out of 13 MQ parents during the focus groups mentioned the prestigious aspect of such education and the opportunities it could offer their children. As one parent said:

I chose MQ because it's very prestigious, because it is very well spoken about. (Parent 12, Focus Group 6)

During many of our conversations, MQ parents mentioned the importance that the image in the society plays in a Qatari person's life. To them, the way others in the community look at a person could either make that person successful or could make them a failure. Thus, MQ parents were keen on providing their children with a high-reputable education that can open up many opportunities for them and allow them to succeed in the new Qatari society. This aspect of giving special attention to the reputation of education could be linked to neoliberalism and more particularly to Qatarization that I discussed in my theoretical framework chapter. In fact, among many other goals, Qatar's 2030 vision is to lead the nation to sustain its development and empower Qataris to play major leading roles across different initiatives in the society. The government is somehow reshaping the identity of a successful Qatari woman and man to centre it more on higher education, knowledge, competences, and expertise. Unlike earlier years, when Qatar was starting to develop and was heavily relying on expatriate and Arab recruits to lead

the country's initiatives, the goal of the Qatari government now is to recruit less expatriates and Arabs and more Qataris to fulfil its leadership positions, hence leading parents to seek for high-reputable institutions for the education of their children:

> I want to give my daughter the best education I can because this will allow her to go to prestigious universities and find a very good job in Qatar. (Parent 3, Focus Group 4)

Kanna's (2010) idea of "flexible citizenship" could hence be applied when analysing the wish of Qatari parents to enrol their children in international schools due to its prestigious aspect. These parents want their children to definitely preserve their identity but also to earn the English language skills and other global mindedness skills needed to be considered successful Qatari citizens as mentioned by the below mother of a Grade 6 girl:

> I don't want my girl to be like me sitting at home. I want her to become like Sheikha Moza very active in society. I want her to have high position in society to help our country. At MQ she can learn English and learn leadership skills. (Parent 7, Focus Group 5)

The prestigious reputation of the school pushed parents to choose MQ for the education of their children, in a hope to provide them with the skills and competencies needed to secure their future in the Qatari society.

2.2.2 Appropriately Balanced Education. Apart from the prestigious aspect and how others in the society will look at the children as being educated in an international school, some MQ parents stated that their choice of international schooling for their children was related to the balance that MQ provided in

particular between international education on one side and cultural and religious education on the other side. When asked in the questionnaire about their satisfaction with the curriculum offered at MQ, 60% of MQ parents reported that they picked MQ because of the international curriculum that it offered and 100% of the parents communicated that they were satisfied with the balance that the curriculum offered between international and national curriculum. As per the parent below, MQ's curriculum focuses on teaching the English language and also on behavioural skills as well as on teaching Islamic studies and the Arabic language:

> I appreciate that MQ focuses on the social and emotional development, in addition to the bilingual aspect of the curriculum. They focus a lot on the Arabic language and Islamic studies, which I appreciate. (Parent 5, Focus Group 4)

It is important to note the smile and pride that this parent communicated through her body gesture when she stated the above comment. I was able to notice as well two or three other mothers nodding their heads in agreement with her. Most MQ parents, around 86%, who participated in the focus groups communicated great satisfaction with the learning outcomes and the balance that MQ curriculum offered. Parents from these groups also referred to the teachers and the support they provided to students, as the below father communicated:

> MQ hires very good teachers from America to teach our children how to read and write in English. They also love our sons and daughters. (Parent 13, Focus Group 6)

This parent as many others in the focus group was happy with the way teachers treat the students. The parents seemed to look up to the teachers and respect their

expertise in the teaching of the English language and the international curriculum in general. However, this respect and trust did not seem to be as strong when it came to knowledge about the Qatari traditions and Islamic values, as communicated for example by the below parent:

> The curriculum is good and teachers love our kids but I think they sometimes teach them haram things and this makes me upset. (Parent 4, Focus Group 4)

By "Haram" this parent meant acts or values that go against the Islamic religion as practiced in this Qatari community. Many examples of "haram" teaching, as defined by MQ parents, was further discussed in this chapter when reflecting on the challenges of developing internationally-minded students from the perception of these parents.

2.2.3 Future Careers. With globalization and the interconnection existing among different parts of the globe, Qatari parents, similar to parents in many different countries of the world, perceived that they have to reshape the way they look at the future of their children. During my focus groups, it was interesting to note how many times parents referred to older times and compared these times to today's education. To them, things have drastically changed, and as this parent mentioned, MQ parents feel forced to follow the trend that globalization and the Qatarization initiative imposed on them:

> We don't have a choice. We have to take the risk because we want our children to have a job later in Qatar. Nothing is easy anymore. (Parent 10, Focus Group 6)

This statement mentioned by one of the fathers when asked about the reason he has enrolled his children in an international school, connects to many elements that I discussed in my theoretical framework chapter. First, the notion of not having a choice resonates well with the empirical cosmopolitanism that I have discussed earlier. In this theory, cosmopolitanism is believed to be imposed on citizens as a way of living. It pushes them to adopt a lifestyle that might not be of a choice for them but more of a must to keep up with the 21st century period. To be more specific about this theory in MQ context, MQ parents, taking into consideration Qatar 2030 vision and the Qatarization initiative, found themselves forced to send their children to schools that prepare them to attend western universities so, according to them, they can stand a chance in finding a well-respected job in Qatar. When asked about what a well-respected job meant to them, as an elaboration on our discussion during the focus group, one Qatari parent stated:

> To be a director or CEO of a company. (Parent 10, Focus Group 6)

For MQ parents, it appeared important that their children occupy high leadership positions in the country, going back to the government's vision of empowering Qataris to lead the country. This takes us back to the flexible citizenship concept, where a successful Qatari is now pictured as speaking English fluently and attending western higher education colleges. According to the below mother, this profile will be the child's ticket to a successful career in Qatar:

> My child will not have to leave Qatar to make a good life. He will lead his father's company when he comes back from London. He is going to study there.

MQ teachers perceived the importance of international schools to be linked to a financial aspect, a transient nature that allows for intercultural exchange, and to the nature of the IB programme. MQ parents saw the need for their children to receive an international education that will prepare them for their future careers. They wanted to send their children to MQ due to its prestigious reputation, for the balanced education that MQ offered, and consequently for them to secure a good future. However, this does not come without a price, as many of them communicated. As I discussed below, many MQ parents went through daily conflicts between wanting the best for their children and going against their cultural and religious beliefs. Will there be an end for such a conflict? Could some strategies be put in place so MQ parents feel more comfortable with the education of their children? Those are a few of the questions that I answered in the following sections of this chapter based on the teachers', parents', and leaders' perception of developing internationally-minded students in the context of MQ.

3. International-Mindedness for the MQ Community

For the International Baccalaureate (IB) and as an adopted definition for my research work, international-mindedness is defined through three main concepts including intercultural understanding, multiculturalism, and global engagement (Hill, 2012). In this section, I analysed and reflected on the parents', teachers', and leaders' perception of international-mindedness as it is positioned toward these three concepts. Based on my theoretical framework, I also communicated my interpretation of these perceptions of international-mindedness, and later discussed the challenges that the community faced and the strategies that could support the development of students who are internationally-minded within the context of MQ.

3.1 Perception of Parents

3.1.1 Level of Understanding. 70% of the parents who participated in the questionnaire defined an international-minded person as being an individual who has the knowledge and skills that allow them to appreciate and respect other people coming from different cultural and religious backgrounds. When asked to state their opinion about whether they believed international-mindedness is aligned with Islam and the Qatari culture, the parents' responses varied between perceiving international-mindedness as totally aligned with the culture from one side (34%), and seeing in international-mindedness a potential and serious threat to the Qatari culture on the other side (66%). The focus group interviews with these parents revealed relevant findings that were discussed in this section.

MQ parents perceived international-mindedness as being closely linked to their travel and how they do respect other cultures and beliefs:

> We know international-mindedness because we travel to London. We respect others in London and we expect them to respect us. (Parent 1, Focus Group 4)

This parent communicated the mutual intercultural understanding of international-mindedness. MQ parents in the focus groups seemed to agree on respecting others, yet the question was debatable as to in which context these individuals are to be respected. In fact, several parents talked about Qatar being a safe zone for their children and that they are ready to respect any tradition and cultural belief as long as it does not happen on Qatar's territories, which made me question the depth of their understanding of international-mindedness, as it seemed to be conditional upon time and place.

Another parent who was young and seemed to be a strong advocate for international-mindedness focused his understanding of international-mindedness around empathy:

> Islam tells us to help other people, this is international-mindedness. I show empathy for problems in different countries in the world and we send donations. (Parent 10, Focus Group 6)

To this father, international-mindedness and Islam were well aligned because to him, Islam is about global engagement, which is definitely a main component of international-mindedness. However, if I were to dig deeper in the global engagement that the holy Qur'an call for, MQ parents refer to it as Zakat or Sadaqah and they believe it to be a requirement and a contribution from one Muslim to another. Thus, global engagement in Islam, as discussed with MQ parents, is targeted toward people who shared the same religious beliefs, which could be far from international-mindedness that calls for global engagement to support citizens of the world regardless of their cultural and religious affiliations.

A comment that I heard from one of the parents when I asked about their understanding of international-mindedness is the following:

> I don't go to school with my daughter, how will I know what international-mindedness is? (Parent 6, Focus Group 5)

When this parent said this comment, two other mothers in the group nodded with agreement. To them, since they do not attend school, there is no way for them to understand this concept. This statement pushes me to reflect on how aware MQ parents are about the vision and mission of the school when it comes to developing internationally-minded students.

While intercultural understanding and global engagements were referred to in one way or another in the parents' perception of international-mindedness, multilingualism did not seem to be focused on. None of the MQ parents who took the questionnaire or participated in the focus groups mentioned the language aspect of international-mindedness. An explanation to not mentioning the multilingualism aspect is simply because MQ parents did not know that it is included in the IB definition of international-mindedness, which MQ follows, and thus a clarification and a common understanding of the term, as it applies at MQ, needs to be worked on in the community for everyone to be on the same page.

From the collected data, it was evident that parents' perception of international-mindedness varied from one person to another, with some parents not having a clue about what it meant, to others having a basic understanding, and also to a third group that had misconceptions about the meaning of international-mindedness as defined by IB. Definitely, a first step for MQ is to raise awareness of international-mindedness among its parents' community, a strategy that is further discussed later in this chapter. For this section, after discussing the parents' level of understanding, I focused more on how some parents perceived international-mindedness as an opportunity for the future for their children, while others considered it a serious threat that had to be contained.

3.1.2 Opportunity for the Future. With globalization and the Qatarization initiative, it was clear that some MQ parents were starting to look at international-mindedness as being an opportunity for their children that will support them in succeeding in their future careers. MQ parents that participated in the focus groups could be classified into two groups when it comes to the opportunity aspect. The

first group included the parents who saw international-mindedness solely as an opportunity and the second group who saw in international-mindedness an opportunity, yet this group believed that this opportunity came with a high price that could include the vanishing of the Qatari's traditions and religious beliefs. My discussion and reflection of the second group were left to the following section that talked about international-mindedness being perceived as a threat. For this section, I focused on the group that perceived international-mindedness as a complete opportunity.

Whether through the questionnaire data or the focus group data, it became clear that the age of parents plays an important role in their perception of international-mindedness. Out of the 190 parents who participated in the survey, 83 belonged to the age category of 30-39. 86.5% of the parents in this age category embraced international-mindedness for different reasons that are discussed here. In fact, many young MQ parents, who themselves had good mastery of the English language, saw in international-mindedness a key for their children that will open up many opportunities whether in Qatar or abroad. As this mother said:

> I want my daughter to be able to travel the world and work. I don't want her
>
> to cook and sit at home. She can do a lot. (Parent 2, Focus Group 4)

I believe that this statement is powerful on many levels and links back to the flexible citizenship component of neoliberalism. This young mother seemed to have understood that the world is changing and that even within Qatar and with the Qatarization initiative, the profile of a successful citizen is not the same anymore. She communicated her wish for her daughter to move out of the house, as being the mother and housewife, to become a working woman who is free to travel. This

young mother's opinion on international-mindedness and what she would wish her daughter to be, created a bit of discomfort in the room as communicated by the other mothers' body gesture and facial expressions. I could also hear mothers saying "astaghfirullah", which is an expression commonly used by Muslim in Qatar to express their disapproval of and shock with what they are experiencing. This is a small example of the misalignment of beliefs that was noticed among Qatari parents during my data collection process, and which was further discussed in the suggested strategies section of this chapter.

Going back to the mother and her opinion on international-mindedness as an opportunity for the child, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the level of understanding that this mother could have when it comes to a person developing as internationally-minded. Definitely, from her statement, the mother showed an understanding that international-mindedness is an advantage to an individual when they need to travel and find jobs in different parts of the world. This shows that the mother, even though she might not necessarily understand what this process involves, had a basic understanding that her daughter needed to acquire skills and competences in order for her to succeed in today's world. My question though here is how tolerant will the mother be with her daughter embracing other cultures in terms of acquiring their values and beliefs if she feels she can relate to them?

Another example of finding in international-mindedness an opportunity was this father who stated:

> I want them to attend colleges in London. They won't be able to survive
>
> there if they don't learn to accept others, I studied in London and I know.
>
> (Parent 11, Focus Group 6)

This father based his perception of international-mindedness as being an opportunity from his own experience in college. He himself attended a western university in the UK and had somehow an idea on the skills and competencies needed for such a learning context.

There is a difference I believe between intercultural understanding and intercultural exchange that need to be well defined when it comes to being internationally-minded. As this father communicated in one of our focus groups:

I am fine with my son learning about other cultures as long as he does not start doing like them. (Parent 12, Focus Group 6)

This statement is actually an example of the differences between understanding and exchange when it comes to culture. This father clearly accepted that his son learns about other cultures, yet he refused that his son engages in any behaviour that reflects the values of other cultures. With this statement, and other comments in my collected data, I can see that international-mindedness is still not clear to parents or that they are still scared from it, as evidenced further below. Yet, my question here is why is this fear? Is it that MQ parents have built misconceptions about international-mindedness or is it that international-mindedness was defined and shaped on the basis of a particular culture that MQ parents cannot relate to?

3.1.3 Threat to the Qatari National and Religious Identity. As discussed by Al Farra (2012), QM parents, similarly to many parents in the UAE, saw in international-mindedness a threat to their cultural and religious beliefs. MQ parents that took the questionnaire and participated in the focus groups and who had concerns about international-mindedness showed two different attitudes toward international-mindedness. The first group of parents, mentioned above, understood

that international-mindedness could be an opportunity for their children's future careers, yet thought that this opportunity came with a significant risk. The second group of parent respondents completely disagreed with international-mindedness and considered it a powerful tool that threatened their Qatari culture and Islamic beliefs on a daily basis, yet still sent their children to MQ thinking that they could eventually change the school curriculum to better fit their beliefs. However, one can't but question the effort these parents are putting into trying to change the school's practices when they can simply enrol their children in a different school. In this section, I discussed the reasons why Qatari parents perceive international-mindedness as a threat and later reflected on strategies that could help ease MQ parents' fears.

The comments about international-mindedness being a threat was reported commonly among MQ parents (66% of the parents that took the questionnaire). During our discussions in focus groups, many misconceptions about international-mindedness were communicated by parents, such as the below parent:

My daughter comes from school with ideas against Islam. She wants to be like her teacher. This is not ok in our society. We have to wear hijab; we have to respect our values and traditions. (Parent 8, Focus group 5)

To this mother, as to 66% of MQ parents who took the questionnaire, international-mindedness meant that it was ok for their children to engage in any behaviour they wanted. From their facial expressions, I was able to feel the anxiety and serious fear that these parents were experiencing. This above-mentioned mother's comment actually made me think and reflect on what I have discussed earlier in my literature review chapter about the interpretation of the Qur'an and how each

community interprets the acceptable and unacceptable behaviours differently. For MQ parents, many competencies and skills that international-mindedness calls for are classified as unacceptable, as simple as a boy and a girl collaborating together in a class or a child reading a book that mentions a different religion than Islam. In this section, I did not go into the details of the topics that were considered off limits as I extensively discussed them in the challenges part of this chapter.

An interesting comment that was mentioned by a mother was the following:

> I don't like that my children learn about different cultures. They will want to do like them and leave Qatar and Islam. (Parent 9, Focus Group 5)

This mother, like seven others of the MQ parents who participated in the focus groups, shared her fear of international-mindedness and wanted to protect her children by placing them in a bubble. She believed that her children were safe if they did not know that other values or beliefs exist. This is a very important point about international-mindedness and about raising children who are internationally-minded. In my opinion, children could be at a higher risk of engaging in unwanted behaviours, if they are not taught the skills and competencies that allow them to differentiate between what is good and what is bad for them. Instead of teaching them these skills, parents like the mother above tried to avoid their children's exposure to diversity, whether it is diversity in beliefs or values. This mother might be using the avoidance strategy due to her lack of knowledge of its impact on her children or simply because she felt that she had no other way to protect her children from the openness of today's world. It is important that MQ parents are provided with a deep knowledge and understanding of the IB's definition of international-mindedness as well as its emphasis on the importance of helping

students develop skills and competencies that will enable them to make appropriate

choices in a world that is full of temptations and where there are no limits to what a

child or an individual in general could be exposed to.

3.2 Perception of Teachers and Leaders

Based on the questionnaire data that was administered to teachers and

leaders at MQ, 88.9 % of the respondents claimed that they had a clear

understanding of what the term international-mindedness meant. When asked to

elaborate, teachers and leaders provided different answers to what international-

mindedness is to them. To some, it was about embracing diversity and respecting

differences, while to others, it was more about global engagement and considering

themselves citizens of the world and not of one area of the world. Although there

were no wrong answers provided, as compared to the IB definition of international-

mindedness, it was clear that the questionnaire data similarly to the focus groups

and interviews data showed different understanding of the IB definition among the

MQ teachers and leaders, which I discussed below in this section. In the following, I

reflected on the teachers' and leaders' perception of international-mindedness as

an act of embracing other cultures and as a global engagement attitude, as both

categories were frequently mentioned in all three focus groups discussions with MQ

team. In this section, I also reflected on the difference that I saw between Arabic

teachers and the expatriate teachers when it came to their perception of

international-mindedness, and finally ended this section with an analysis of how

internationally-minded were teachers and leaders at MQ.

3.2.1 Embracing Other Cultures. As a result of globalization,

cosmopolitanism started to occur among people from different cultures (Hannerz,

1990). As a reminder, cosmopolitanism, for the purpose of this thesis, relates to the intercultural relationships that people continuously build in today's interconnected world and their ability to engage in intercultural exchanges (Gunesch, 2004).

During my conversations with MQ teachers, I noticed how much cosmopolitanism has affected their way of thinking as well as how they prioritized intercultural understanding and exchange over other components of international-mindedness. In fact, teachers and leaders resumed their understanding of international-mindedness by discussing how it helped citizens from around the world with accepting diversity and differences as stated by the below MYP teacher:

…accepting and embracing another people's culture. (MYP Teacher 3,

Focus Group 1)

It is clear from this comment and other similar ones that a group of MQ teachers understood that to be internationally-minded is to be able to accept others from different cultural backgrounds. When asked about giving an example about what embracing diversity meant, a middle leader during an interview said:

It's for example accepting that I am Christian and try to learn what

Christianity is. (Middle Leader 3, Focus Group 7)

If I think about this comment and the data I collected from the parents, I could notice a conflict between this leader's belief and a group of parents who participated in the study. To some MQ parents, their children need to be protected from the outside world and not be told about values and beliefs in different cultures with a fear of pushing the child to abandon their Qatari values and Islamic beliefs. The above-mentioned leader obviously did not agree with the same beliefs of the group of parents, as he believed that to be internationally-minded is to learn about

other cultures and not just to accept that they exist. This topic connects with the different standpoints of cosmopolitanism and whether we can look at it in the 21st century as an occurrence that is optional or forced on citizens. Reflecting on the difference of opinions between MQ teachers, leaders, and parents, I believe more and more that cosmopolitanism has become a natural response (Beck & Sznaider, 2010) that citizens cannot avoid anymore but rather need to choose their set of values and beliefs in terms of how to approach it.

Regardless of the direction that MQ would like to go with in terms of defining internationally-mindedness, it is important that parents, teachers, and leaders agree on common sets of values and expectations so they do not put students in conflicting situations, as discussed in my previous study about how MQ students negotiate the relationship between home and school (Frangieh, 2017).

Another interesting comment that an expatriate teacher mentioned during one of our focus groups was:

At MQ, international teachers try to teach new cultures and new ways to

think about things outside of the box. (MYP Teacher 3, Focus Group 1)

What got my attention in this comment is the way the teacher put it as a group of expatriate teachers coming to MQ to teach new cultures and ways of thinking. This statement is strong in its unidirectionality, where the exchange came from one side and not from the other. Additionally, what does "*outside of the box*" mean? When I asked this teacher to further elaborate on this statement he said:

... for example, to see what Americans do and do like them. (MYP Teacher

3, Focus Group 1)

I did not elaborate much on this point in this paragraph, although very important and relevant to my work, as I preferred to allocate the last part of this section to discuss it and reflect on how internationally-minded some teachers at MQ are and how they addressed the development of internationally-minded students.

3.2.2 Global Engagement. Based on the IB definition of international-mindedness, global engagement is one of the main components that describe an IB learner who is expected to make the world a better place (Hill, 2012). Through global engagement, the IB encourages its learners to critically think about global issues and address them by taking actions that aim at bettering the life of people in their local community and also worldwide in the global community. A group of leaders and teachers from the interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires communicated that they perceived international-mindedness as the ability and willingness of a person to be globally engaged and to contribute in making the world a better place. Even when talking about international-mindedness as a global engagement, teachers and leaders at MQ showed different understanding. To some, as communicated by this Grade 6 teacher:

> ... (IM) is about teaching an international problem. (MYP Teacher 2, Focus
> Group 1)

To this teacher, international-mindedness was about teaching the students about an issue that is happening around the world. Definitely, teaching and informing students about current happenings is best practice in education, however this perception lacks the action part, which IB stresses on. In fact, as mentioned above, a significant part of the PYP and MYP is to develop agentic students who have a

voice, choice, and ownership in their learning in order to initiate actions that make the world a better place to all (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2018).

Another group of MQ teachers and leaders discussed taking action as part of global engagement, as communicated by a Grade 2 teacher:

My students are learning to be internationally-minded by helping poor people in Africa. We just finished collecting money to dig a well in a country in Africa to provide residents with clean water. (PYP Teacher 4, Focus Group 1)

This teacher, as others at MQ, saw in international-mindedness an opportunity to support each other as world citizens, which could be compared to Zakat in Islam. However, the difference here is that the action was done for a non-Muslim community, whereas Zakat is usually a charity act from one Muslim to another. In order to be able to take such actions, students in the above-mentioned teacher's class were learning skills and competencies that allowed them to be more successful in helping today's world. These skills and competencies could be linked to the ones that Gunesch (2004) advocated for when discussing cosmopolitanism and the need to support our children in gaining knowledge of and expertise in how to take part in intercultural actions.

Whether it is about global engagement or about other components of international-mindedness, it was clear that MQ teachers' and leaders' perception of international-mindedness was on different levels as communicated by a Primary Years Programme Leader during my interview with her:

I don't know if we are all on the same page maybe in regards to international-mindedness. We have not talked about it in a while. (PYP

Leader 2, One-on- one Interview)

This leader told me that when they had an accreditation agency come in, they had sat as a whole team, 8 years ago, and came up with a definition of international-mindedness. For her, this helped her team be on the same page when it came to understanding international-mindedness in the context of MQ. Yet, as per her comment, this exercise has not happened for many years and the teams have changed a lot:

Maybe it is time to engage in another similar exercise. (PYP Leader 2,

One-on-one Interview)

Definitely this primary leader saw a need to bring the team again together in their understanding of international-mindedness. I would also suggest including parents and other stakeholders in this process, which I further discussed in my proposed strategies later in this chapter.

3.2.3 Difference between Arabic and Expatriate Teachers. Throughout the analysis of the data, I obtained from the questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups with MQ teachers and leaders, I couldn't but notice the difference between Arabic teachers and expatriate teachers in terms of the way they perceived international-mindedness. It is important to note though that there were no Qatari teachers who took part in this study. At the time of my research, only one teacher and one assistant teacher were Qataris at MQ, yet did not consent to participate in this study, for unknown reasons. For some expatriate teachers, who were mainly western American teachers, international-mindedness was about bringing a part of their culture to the Qatari people, as a Grade 4 teacher stated:

Bring a piece of our country to Qatar to teach them to be open-minded.

(PYP Teacher 2, Focus Group 1)

I would like to take a moment to reflect on the above statement in particular as it links to different aspects of my literature review and theoretical framework. First, it is again the unidirectionality of international-mindedness, where teachers from a western culture, more precisely Americans, are bringing new values and beliefs to the Qatari table, without them expecting or seeking to take anything from this culture. This statement is a clear misconception of the IB definition of international-mindedness where the exchange aspect does not seem to be mutual. It is more about a western culture bringing added value to a less developed country or local community. It brought me back to the idea that I discussed in my literature review when I talked about how international-mindedness seemed to be defined and set on values and beliefs that are far from the Qatari culture.

From the other side, some Arabic teachers viewed international-mindedness as an area of expertise that expatriate teachers can teach them about, as per the below MYP teacher:

Foreigners have a lot of knowledge about international-mindedness, I learn

from them. (MYP Arabic Teacher 3, Focus Group 2)

To this Arabic teacher, she felt she could learn about the west from her expatriate colleagues who, according to her, knew what international-mindedness truly was. Although teachers can definitely learn from each other and, as IB leaders, we want as much as possible to promote peer mentoring in our schools, I would like us to be very careful about this point. How do we actually know that this teacher is transmitting an inclusive idea of international-mindedness that aligns with MQ's

definition of international-mindedness, if any? Is it internationalism that is being promoted here or westernization? Although I couldn't come to a clear conclusion about this through my present work, I could argue that the data I collected and analysed showed that MQ teachers did not share the same conceptualization of international-mindedness, and thus it would be wise for the MQ team to come to an informed consensus about international-mindedness.

3.2.4 How Internationally-Minded are MQ Teachers? Based on the above discussion and after hearing similar comments from teachers about their perception of international-mindedness, I found it important to take some time to reflect on how internationally-minded were MQ teachers who were expected to develop internationally-minded students. It is essential to note though that I have not administered any assessment or scale to understand the extent to which MQ teachers are internationally-minded.

One of the comments that I heard from a Grade 3 expatriate teacher was the following:

> I teach them to be internationally-minded but they are still very closed-minded. They refuse to work with a student from the other gender. (PYP Teacher 2, Focus Group 1)

I definitely could see the perspective of this expatriate teacher, yet I cannot help myself but question if this teacher had an inclusive understanding of what international-mindedness meant. To her, refusing to work with the other gender in a co-educational school was completely not acceptable and a sign of close-mindedness. Definitely, this student was not following the school rules, however why is this child refusing to work with a student from the other gender? Does home

or the Islamic studies that this child received at school send a different message? This is another type of conflicts that I found in my study when I looked at how MQ students negotiated the relationship between home and school (Frangieh, 2017). I am mentioning this example not to blame the above teacher, but rather to highlight the diversity in the conceptualization of international-mindedness as perceived by the different members of the MQ team. Maybe this teacher would be looking at open-mindedness versus closed-mindedness from a different perspective if she is giving the opportunity to build her knowledge and understanding about this topic.

The above statement is just an example that does not represent all teachers at MQ. I was able actually to hear reflective statements about being an internationally-minded teacher, such as the below comment from a music teacher:

How internationally-minded am I when pushing Qatari students out of their comfort zone to learn music? I need as a music teacher to understand that music has different roles in different cultures. (Music Teacher 2, Focus Group 3)

How powerful this statement is when I think about the different attributes that define an internationally-minded person through the IB definition. Definitely, the above music teacher was a reflective person who was feeling very uncomfortable with imposing the music lessons on his students. During our conversation, he was trying to brainstorm, as he was talking, ideas on how to make the music lesson more culturally appropriate. Is this international-mindedness? Do we need more teachers to be thinking this way? I don't believe there is a yes or no answer to these questions. It is more about what MQ wants for their students as aligned with its mission and vision statements and as discussed and agreed upon by all

stakeholders, including governing board, parents, teachers, leaders, and when possible, students as well.

4. Challenges of International-Mindedness

One of my research questions was about how MQ leaders and teachers responded to concerns about international-mindedness, if any. Before I could answer the question, I needed to take the time to understand the different concerns that were brought up by teachers, leaders, and parents related to developing students who are internationally-minded at MQ. After analysing the data, I was able to generate three sub-themes related to the challenges that I detailed below. The first sub-theme focused on the curriculum and the particular areas of the curriculum that appeared to be a concern. Then, I talked about the parent's voice and how the parent's involvement at MQ was perceived as a challenge for MQ teachers and leaders. Finally, I discussed the consequences of these challenges particularly on students' voice and teachers' overall attitude toward teaching.

4.1 Curriculum

The international-Baccalaureate in the primary and middle years programmes offers a holistic approach to education, which aims at providing students with a comprehensive education that targets their academic, social, emotional, and ethical needs. In the primary years, skills and concepts are grouped under six transdisciplinary themes that are taught from the Early Years to Grade 5 or 6 depending on the structure of the school (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2019). Similarly, in the Middle Years Programme (MYP), learning is interdisciplinary and happens across, within and beyond the different disciplines (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2020a). The nature of the PYP and MYP and the

flexibility and openness they offered to teachers and school leaders has created

different challenges in the context of MQ that were communicated during interviews

and focus groups with parents, teachers, and leaders.

    4.1.1 Censorship. Although, as stated in teachers' interviews and focus

groups, the leadership at MQ supported the team and empowered them in

delivering the PYP and MYP, there were topics that were:

"non-negotiable" (MYP Leader 2, One-on-one Interview) as one of the leaders

referred to them, that should never be addressed at any time regardless of the

situation. MQ purchased many of its resources from the United States of America

and thus many books and other teaching tools appeared to be inappropriate to use

within the MQ community. During my focus groups with teachers, I heard

frustrations, as communicated with their body gesture and their voice tonality, with

the censoring process that they needed to go through on a daily basis. Early years

and lower primary teachers in grade 1 and grade 2 were particularly upset with the

fact that they couldn't show the picture of a pig to children, as communicated by

the below KG teacher:

    Imagine I can't show any pig picture to my students. Every KG story has a

    pig because it represents the short i sound. (PYP Teacher 1, Focus Group 1)

The picture of a pig might sound banal and not as relevant compared to other

problems we face in life, however in the context of this research this fact is of a

unique importance. To give you a background about the pig concern, In Islam in the

MQ community, eating pig is considered *haram*. It is considered a major sin for a

Muslim to consume any product that contains pigs. Nevertheless, there is no

mention in the Qur'an that good Muslims should not know about the existence of

pigs or look at pictures of pigs. This brings us back to how Islam is interpreted in different communities and cultures and what is considered *haram* could vary widely between one place to another, making the teaching and learning process more challenging in the context of schools similar to MQ. Also, this could be linked to bigger educational questions, not only on the schools' level, but also in our societies concerning who decides what is censored and what is allowed to become public knowledge. A great example of the censorship process is now trending with Elon Musk, Tesla Inc. CEO, taking over Twitter with a vision to significantly decrease its censorship of the users post, which also have caused many concerns about spreading hate speech and sharing wrong information.

Other example of censorship that were provided included Valentine's Day. Valentine's Day is a holiday widely celebrated in the west and particularly in the United States of America. It represents the celebration of love whether the love of a partner, or a parent or other family member, or even the love that exists between friends. As a result of the spread of the holiday, and with many companies taking advantage of holidays to boost their sale, this teacher had to go through the process of covering every heart in a catalogue before she was able to hand it to her students:

> ... like last year I had to sit with my assistant and cover every picture related to Valentine with a smiley face sticker before I can hand the Scholastic catalogues out to my students. (PYP Teacher 4, Focus Group 1)

Since the mission of MQ was to develop internationally-minded students, I would say that the practice of covering the pictures would not help the students. I would definitely support the idea of explaining to students that Valentine's Day and other

holidays are celebrated in some cultures in some countries in the world, and help them understand the history behind it. Also, one question that could be asked is related to MQ choice of using scholastics. Is it because of lack of resources coming from publishers that better understand and take into consideration the Qatari values and beliefs? Or is it because MQ is seeking a level of exposure that Scholastic is providing? Through this process, teachers will be able to help students build the skills and competencies needed to be internationally-minded in terms of accepting and appreciating diversity. However, how will parents take this education? Are MQ parents ready to support such exposure of their children to such topics? Do MQ parents have the skills and competences that we are developing in students for them to see in such education a richness rather than a threat to their identity and cultural and religious beliefs? The data I collected suggested that MQ parents, similarly to teachers and leaders, have a diverse range of skills and competencies related to international-mindedness, and thus an action is needed from the school team to try to align those skills within the MQ community.

4.1.2 Historical and Current Events. Going back to the PYP and MYP, the conversations with teachers and leaders during the focus groups and interviews revealed that the flexibility that these programmes usually provide teachers with was more of a challenge than an asset in the context of MQ. In fact, several MQ teachers and leaders communicated their frustration with the topics they couldn't address with the students whether those related to historical or current events or even topics related to scientific matters. Concerning history, MQ students do not learn the history of any other country but Qatar as per the below Middle Years Programme (MYP) teacher:

We don't teach history. Only a little about Qatar history, which is in my

opinion very well picked. (MYP Teacher 2, Focus Group 2)

There are two aspects of the above comment that I would like to stop on as I have

very different opinions and analysis of them. First, not teaching any history other

than Qatar history brings up many questions. Since intercultural exchange and

understanding is at the hub of international-mindedness education in IB, how can

MQ develop students who are internationally-minded without first exposing

students and guiding them to critically think of historical events and how they have

affected and continue to affect our present world? Starting to teach history at MQ

appears to be logical if the school would like to continue its mission of developing

internationally-minded students. However, is the MQ community including parents,

teachers, and leaders ready for this step? Whose history would be taught, how will

the selection be made? I argue that before being able to indulge in such an action,

MQ leaders should draft a strong plan about first defining international-mindedness

for its community and then ensuring there is a common understanding of this

definition and its implementation at MQ, before embarking in a journey that might

cause more frustrations and challenges if the success conditions are not yet there.

The second part of the above-mentioned MYP teacher's comment is of a particular

interest to me. In fact, this teacher mentioned that Qatar history that was included in

the curriculum is: "very well picked" (MYP Teacher 2, Focus Group 2). It is definitely

a very interesting point that this teacher has brought up, yet my question here is,

isn't this applicable to all world history? Is there a history curriculum out there that is

taught in any part of the world that was not carefully designed to highlight some

events and bury others? I believe that the history we teach in our schools is

politically loaded and, in many instances, serves as a vehicle for the government to

circulate and spread a certain image that serves its goals. Of course, politics

change overtime and one could argue that the history curriculum does not change

much. I totally agree with this, but if we think of the bigger picture and we think for

example about the history of the United States of America, we cannot but question

why some historical events were chosen to be taught to generations over and over

while others have been totally disregarded (Culpin, 2007; Hernandez, 2020).

In addition to historical events, teachers and leaders at MQ seemed to face

challenges with current global issues that needed to be addressed with students or

that teachers liked to discuss in their classes. One of the main components of

international-mindedness, as defined by IB, is global engagement. By global

engagement, IB refers to its learners being first aware of and educated about

economic, environmental, social and political issues that are happening around the

world in order for them to act and contribute in making the world a better place to

all. What was interesting about the education about current world events at MQ, is

that it seemed to be very different from one class to another as this leader

communicated:

> Some teachers are comfortable and confident to talk about current issues
>
> with their students. Other don't like to go there. (MYP Leader 1, One-on-one
>
> Interview)

This statement is at the same time very powerful yet alarming in terms of delivering

a coherent and consistent curriculum across all classes at MQ, which should be

desirable to help MQ reach its vision and mission. In fact, as per the above-

mentioned leader, teaching about current global issues was very dependent on the

confidence of teachers and their confidence in addressing this issue. This leader

elaborated in his thoughts and told me that usually new teachers don't dare to go

there because they are worried to get in trouble. MQ teachers' problematic attitude

toward the challenges of developing students who are internationally-minded was in

fact brought up more than 10 times during our focus groups and interviews

discussions and thus I took the time to reflect on it in the consequences of the

challenges part of this section. For now, what is important to focus on is teacher

empowerment and strategies that need to be put in place for all teachers regardless

of whether they are new to MQ or senior MQ teachers to help them feel confident

about addressing intercultural global issues in their classes, particularly those

related to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948). Yet,

could we empower them without first having team discussions and common

agreements about the direction that MQ would like to follow when it comes to

international-mindedness? Will this be a discussion that involves only teachers and

leaders, or should it include all stakeholders including parents, board of governors,

and even students when possible? What approach should be used in the decision-

making process? Should it be following the wishes of the majority or should there

be key people who will take everyone's input and then make the decisions on their

behalf? Those are all questions that MQ leadership should go through in order to

help with reducing the challenges faced by teachers when delivering a curriculum

based on developing students who are internationally-minded in the particular

context of MQ.

4.1.3 Performance Arts and Visual Arts, and Physical Education. In the

last part of the challenges related to the curriculum section, I discussed the

concerns that teachers and leaders brought up that were particularly linked to the specialist subjects that are taught at MQ including performance arts, visual arts, and physical education. Each of these subjects presented different challenges to the MQ community, which I analysed and reflected on the factors that could be leading to such challenges. As mentioned earlier in my literature review, the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) calls for a holistic approach to education, where students participate in a balanced curriculum that includes a variety of subjects that promote their academic, artistic, physical, as well as social and emotional development.

Performing arts at MQ included mainly the teaching of music as drama and dance were not offered in any of the cycles, although students were asked to participate in role play activities across different subjects. Music education was brought up as a main concern at MQ in my discussions with teachers, leaders, and parents. One of the parents' focus groups that took place with six mothers of children from different grade levels in PYP and MYP showed particular frustration toward the challenges related to music as the below mother stated:

> Why is everyone not understanding how serious this is. Ms. Maha music is haram for us in Qatar. They are making our children do haram. (Parent 3, Focus Group 4).

What was really touching in the above statement is that this mother had tears in her eyes as she was trying to explain to me the seriousness of this matter. This mother, along with at least two others in this group, looked desperate about having their children participate in music classes. To them, music in the Qatari culture and more

in their interpretation of the Islamic principles was considered a major sin. This could be linked to the Luqmaan surah in the holy Qur'an which states:

> But there are some who employ theatrics,1 only to lead others away from Allah's Way—without any knowledge—and to make a mockery of it. They will suffer a humiliating punishment". (Qur'an, Luqmaan 31:6)

This surah was interpreted differently by different Muslim scholars such as Ibn 'Abbaas who linked it to singing, whereas Mujaahid connected it to playing the drums (Qur'an Majeed, 2019).

The above-mentioned mothers communicated to me their lack of understanding of why MQ was giving so much importance to music education where a lot of parents were against it, which communicated their lack of understanding of the IB programme. They even told me how they tried to approach the leadership team with suggestions about what could replace the teaching of music to be more appropriate for the MQ community

> We told them to teach them languages instead. Teach them French. This will help them when they travel to France. (Parent 8, Focus Group 5)

This statement does not only provide a substitute for music education, but also brings up the multilingualism aspect of international-mindedness that was not brought up in any other of my discussions with teachers, leaders, and parents. Should MQ stop teaching music and instead replace it with language learning to help ease the challenges that parents are facing? Will this be the solution? Or should the community instead sit together to better understand what music education looks like in the context of MQ and try to align it accordingly? Where is the fear of arts coming from, when Islam is known for its rich arts, dance, poetry,

and certain sorts of music? Those are definitely topics that need to be addressed particularly that the challenges related to music education were also brought up during my conversations with teachers and leaders as well, who seemed not to understand how to tackle this issue as this music teacher communicated:

> I really don't know what to do. Should I force them to learn music or should I give up? I am really confused. (Music Teacher 1, Focus Group 3)

> Apart from music, visual arts and physical education seemed to present a different set of challenges. However, what was different from the music subject was that the arts and physical education seemed to be closely related to gender. For the arts, parents in my focus group communicated that in the Qatari culture art was a subject for girls to engage in and should not be offered to boys as stated by this father:

> Drawing and colouring is not for boys. My boy should do more man related stuff, not color like girls. (Parent 13, Focus Group 6)

To this father, arts is a feminine activity that should not be an option for boys. Parents were afraid that teaching arts to boys would make them weaker and not as manly as they expected them to be. As this mother communicated:

> In our cultures, boys don't do soft things. They don't color, they don't cry. They are strong." (Parent 1, Focus Group 4)

This mother definitely brought up her perception of a Qatari man that should not show any sign of sensitivity but rather be the symbol of strength and power. This could be linked to the Qatari culture where males represent the authority figure in the family and where they play a major role of protecting their families and ensuring they make the hard decision for the safety and wellbeing of all.

Similar to arts, physical education was a challenge that was tightly linked to gender. While it was very welcomed in the education of Qatari boys, PE seemed to present a major concern when it came to Qatari girls, as this mother communicated:

It's haram for our girls to jump and do PE exercises. Our body should be respected. (Parent 4, Focus Group 4)

This was mainly a concern for this Grade 4 parent where PE took place in a gender mixed class, with girls having to engage in exercises in front of boys. Several of these girls in Grade 4 wore the hijab and as this PE teacher communicated could have felt very uncomfortable participating in PE activities in front of boys:

Some girls totally refuse to participate in my (PE) class, and I can push them, although I feel that sometimes they are just lazy and they use this as an excuse. (PE Teacher 1, Focus Group 3)

The comment from the above PE teacher raises the question of sexism and gender inequality, which is only partly connected to religion. Many researchers in fact stated that schools are a place where many social inequalities develop (Bernstein, 1977; Delamont, 1980; Giagkoumidis, 1997; Gogou-Critikou,1994). Zaravigka and Pantazis (2012) from their side suggested that girls need to feel more confident about their competencies in PE in order to perform at their fullest potential. The above teacher was well aware of the discomfort that the child is feeling, yet also brought up the matter as being used as an excuse in some cases. How do we draw the line between a cultural boundary and a lazy attitude? What could help MQ PE teachers know when they can push students to participate in PE activities and when they should respect their wishes in order to embrace the culture? Those seem to be very straightforward questions yet will require plenty of discussions and

agreements among MQ stakeholders in order to prevent these challenges and ensure teachers feel empowered and well aware of MQ's principles and values when it comes to the teaching of different subjects. Although one can think that MQ should not accept children if their parents do not agree with IB value, I do not believe that the school has this option, as acceptance of Qatari students at MQ is closely monitored from the organization that MQ belongs to, and that aims at enhancing Qataris' international education regardless of the challenges.

4.2 Parents' Voice

Throughout the literature, parents' voice and more particularly parents' appropriate involvement in the education of their children has been proven to be very positive and helped increase students' overall performance at school (Knopf & Swick, 2007; Sheridan et al., 2019; Smith, Sheridan et al., 2020).Similar to many other international schools, the leadership team including the school director at MQ had an open door policy, where any stakeholder could come in at any time to discuss any concern. In this section, I analysed the level of voice parents had at MQ as communicated through my collected data, then I discussed the different strategies that MQ parents used to try to negotiate the education of their children, and finally reflected on the domino effect and how it played sometimes a positive role while in other instances it appeared to be more on the negative side.

4.2.1 A Loud Voice. What appeared to be a common agreement among all participants in this research study is that the parent's voice at MQ was well heard and played a significant role in the decision-making process at the school. As mentioned earlier, neoliberalism and the Qatari wish, as represented by its government and more particularly the ruling family, to transition from an oil-based

economy to a knowledge-based system has led many Qatari parents across the country, such as MQ parents, to enrol their children in international schools that they considered to have better opportunities for a successful future. As one of the school leaders mentioned, it seemed that MQ had an informative admission process, where the admission team fully explained to parents about the school curriculum, its co-educational aspect for the early and primary years, as well as about MQ's mission of developing students who are internationally-minded

> ...(parents) they seem to agree with everything we say during the admission process. They want their children in. They never complain about having boys and girls together or about their children to be offered an international education. (PYP Leader 1, One-on-one Interview)

Yet this leader continued to say:

> ...but when their children are in, they want to change our systems and education. They start complaining about every little thing. (PYP Leader 1, One-on-one Interview)

This leader seemed to be frustrated as she did not understand why the parents switched in their thinking. To her, they could have chosen not to enrol their children at the school considering the international nature of the offered curriculum, yet they enrolled them and tried to change the school system. Entering the system and then trying to make change it was something that parents at MQ used in fear of the type of education they have chosen for their children. MQ parents seemed to be fully aware of the benefits of enrolling their children in an international school, and thus agreed to any terms and conditions that the school imposed during the enrolment

process, yet once their children were in, I believe they started to see in practicality what it really meant to be in an international school.

During the parents' discussions, everyone seemed to agree on the good relationship of the parents with the school. From their side, the parents felt heard and they appreciated the easy communication channel that the school offered. The teachers and leaders on the other hand, seemed to find the voice of the parents overwhelming and too prescriptive as communicated by the below teacher:

The administration listens to parents and always tries to calm them down. Sometimes we feel that we are just running away from the problem and not facing it because the administration wants the parents to be happy. (MYP Teacher 4, Focus Group 1)

This teacher felt that the voice of parents was not helping the school move forward, but rather was leading the school to use the Band-Aid approach that did not necessarily tackle the problem, but rather treated it temporarily on a shallower level (Evans & Thompson, 2016; McIntosh & Hayden, 2022).

Interestingly, while teachers and leaders felt that the parents' voice was well heard, some parents communicated during the focus group that they did not feel that the school acted based on their complaints:

They hear us and change the little things. Like they remove a book. But they don't change the big teaching of haram. (Parent 11, Focus Group 6)

To this parent, the MQ leadership team seemed to be responding well when parents communicated their disagreement with a certain book or another resource being used in the classroom, yet this support was not perceived as much efficient when it came to the bigger issues such as the teaching of music that I discussed earlier.

From all the discussions I had with the different participants, I argue that the beneficial role of parents' voice of MQ did not seem to be clear to everyone. The good intention of parents' involvement in the education of their children was definitely evident, yet it was not clear to what extent this involvement was beneficial and was having a positive impact on MQ students' journey at the school.

4.2.2 Parents' Strategies. Through my focus groups and interviews with the different participants, it was interesting to learn about the varied strategies that parents used in order to make their voice heard and, in their attempt, to change the course of education of their children at MQ. It is important to note that I discussed the parents' voice and strategies in the challenges section because of the concerns that several participants communicated during our conversations when it came to parents' input.

The collected data suggested that parents used in general three different types of strategies when they wanted to communicate their concerns with MQ leadership and teachers. The first group of parents expressed their disagreement with the teaching and learning in a soft way, gently talking directly to the teacher as to them, as communicated by the below parent, the teacher's intention was not to hurt their children:

> I go talk to the teacher and explain to them our culture. She loves my kids but she does not know that this is haram for us. She is American and things are different there. (Parent 6, Focus Group 5)

This parent seemed to be fully aware of the difference in cultures, nevertheless did not want her children to be exposed to learning that did not align with the Qatari culture. She highlighted that teachers did not know the Qatari culture and that's

why it was the parents' role to educate them. It is an interesting perspective which

pushes me to wonder if it is truly the parents' role to educate teachers, and if so,

how can MQ utilizes this initiative in a more positive proactive approach where

parents organize culturally-responsive workshops for teachers and vice versa?

Unlike the above mother, some parents at MQ used a more aggressive

approach when faced with similar situations. Around 40% of the parents that

participated in the focus groups seemed to be upset with MQ curriculum and felt

that they needed to aggressively protect their children from inappropriate learning

and teaching:

> I go directly to the director. It's not good for my children to learn haram. We
>
> live in Qatar and they need to respect our culture. The director always listens
>
> to me. (Parent 12, Focus Group 6)

This parent seemed to look at the situation as more of a disrespect of the culture.

To him, it was not negotiable for teachers to expose his children to topics and

materials that were not appropriate for the culture. He seemed to be satisfied with

the director's response to her frustration, which made him perceive this strategy as

efficient to use. In my opinion, this parent's behaviour raises a red flag if I would like

to think of it from the perspective of reducing challenges. If MQ wants to lessen the

challenges of developing-students who are internationally-minded, it is crucial to

rethink the message it is sending to parents or to rethink how the parents are

understanding this message.

The third strategy that parents used is different from the first two, as this

below parent seemed to have given up on the battle:

At the beginning, I used to talk a lot. I did not see a change. Now I talk to my

children only. I explain to them that this is haram and that for us Qataris we

do not agree with it. I talk to them a lot. (Parent 3, Focus Group 4)

Although this parent seemed to be using this strategy out of desperation, I believe

that she was supporting her children to build the skills needed in an intercultural

environment. In fact, one of the components of international-mindedness is to

develop skills and competences that allow individuals to deal with diversity. This

parent allowed her children to be exposed to topics that she and her family

considered "*haram*", or culturally inappropriate, yet took the time at home to talk to

them to why it is haram in relation to the Qatari culture and the Muslim religion as

interpreted in the family's community. However, is this mother truly helping her

children deal with diversity and developing them as internationally-minded, when

she considers everything that is not aligned with the Qatari culture not only different

but rather bad? Is this what international-mindedness is supposed to be about? I

believe that although perceived as negative sometimes, the strategies mentioned

above could be reshaped and refined in order to be used in a positive way to

strengthen the communication and overall relationship between home and MQ.

4.2.3 Domino Effect. During my discussions with MQ parents, it came to my

attention that MQ families were very careful about their image in their local

communities. Several mothers and fathers mentioned how the reputation in the

society could ruin the individual's future or on the contrary could become a great

asset to them. One of the fathers I talked to said:

I would accept my daughter to travel with the school on a field trip. But what will people think of her? They will not look at her in a good way if she does this. (Parent 13, Focus Group 6)

According to this statement, this father would have accepted that his daughter travels, if it was not for the impact it would have on her in the society. He was worried that this behaviour will ruin her reputation in their community and thus would not accept her to engage in such activities. The importance that Qatari parents gave to the image in the society and how much it affected their decision, was actually being used by some parents through mainly WhatsApp groups to stop some school's practices and initiatives. As this parent said:

The best way is when you talk on WhatsApp. You have so many parents agree and then the school has to do what we want. (Parent 2, Focus Group 4)

This mother actually used the domino effect, where she would start a conversation about a concern in a parent WhatsApp group to influence others, and consequently pressured the school to respond to her needs.

Definitely, the domino effect in this situation presented a challenge to MQ, particularly that some parents seemed to believe that it was effective in influencing the school. How can MQ use this domino effect in a more positive way that will support the school in promoting its international curriculum while keeping a space for parents' voice and involvement? This would need to be a strategy that redirects the negative influence in order to be used in a more constructive way to provide students with an education that is more culturally responsive.

4.3Consequences of the challenges

Although this research work does not aim at understanding the consequences that the challenges of developing internationally-minded students has on the learning and teaching at MQ, I found it important to take a moment to reflect on initial participants' thoughts about this topic. In this section, I briefly discussed how the challenges faced in the MQ community were affecting student agency and teachers' attitude in the classroom, as perceived by the participants of this study.

4.3.1 Student Agency. In the enhanced Primary Years Programme (PYP) released in 2018 (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2018), IB highlighted and promoted learner's agency in terms of providing learners in IB schools with a voice and a choice in their learning and pushing them to build ownership of their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. MQ teachers, particularly in the primary years, seemed to give a lot of importance to learners' agency as they referred to it on several occasions during our conversations. The interesting part about agency for this research was the perspective of the below teacher when she discussed the challenges of developing internationally-minded students in the context of MQ:

> I can't provide my students with a big choice. I have to be careful about what they research. But how can I develop an agency if I have so many limitations? (PYP Teacher 2, Focus Group 1)

This teacher actually felt the weight of the limitation of the cultural context particularly when she was trying to put the IB principles into practice. She wanted to support her students in building their research skills as well as developing their

critical thinking skills, yet she felt that there was a huge barrier as the resources needed to be intensively filtered before they reached the level of the students.

I believe that the conflict this teacher was facing needs to be addressed. How much filtering should we do before we expose students to resources if we were to help them develop their critical thinking and research skills? Is there a possibility to have clear guidelines in terms of how much tolerance MQ community can take when it comes to picking the type of information that needs to be filtered? These are all questions that need to be addressed between the different stakeholders at MQ so all parties are aware of the decisions being made as well as the impact of these decisions on the education of MQ students.

4.3.2 Teachers' Attitude. The final point in the challenges section that I took a moment to discuss was related to how those challenges were affecting the teachers' attitude in the classroom. 45% of the teachers who participated in the focus groups, 30% of which were newly hired, were experiencing some kind of anxiety as a result of the cultural context and the nature of curriculum that was offered, as communicated by this teacher that had joined MQ almost two years before our interview took place:

I feel that I am always on my toes. I don't want to get in trouble but I don't

know what is ok and what is not. (MYP Teacher 2, Focus Group 1)

This teacher was obviously not feeling empowered when it came to what she could and could not teach in her classroom. She felt that she was constantly anxious because she might unintentionally take an action that could be considered completely inappropriate in the context of MQ.

This statement made me think of two things. First, how much are teachers and leaders aware of what they can teach and not teach? Is this something that teachers gain with their years at MQ without being provided with proper guidelines? Could there be a set of clear guidelines and expectations that can support empowering teachers and lessen their anxiety so they can focus more on teaching and learning? From my conversation with teachers, I was able to understand that MQ has already implemented a few initiatives to support its newly hired teachers such as developing a mentoring programme and providing an onboarding programme that helped teachers better understand the Qatari culture. However, seeing the position of the above-mentioned teachers, I believe it is worthwhile for MQ to reflect on these programmes and think of refining them so every teacher can feel empowered and provided with a safety net regardless of their years of experience at MQ.

5. Strategies

My conversations with teachers and leaders showed that the school already had many individual initiatives put in place that leaders and teachers used, without even being conscious of their efficiency sometimes. In this section, I aimed to put strategies together and reflect on them in the context of this research in order to provide MQ with a stronger framework related to strategies that the school can use to lessen the challenges of developing students who are internationally-minded. First, I analysed the strategies that teachers and leaders stated they were already implementing and then I moved to reflect, as an experienced IB leader in different Arab countries, on their suggestions of how to move forward in order to lessen the

challenges and increase the opportunities of developing students who are internationally-minded.

5.1 Current Strategies

In this first part of the strategies section, I analysed the strategies that the MQ team had already put in place in order to face the daily challenges that resulted from the teaching of an international curriculum to MQ students. I addressed the role that the leadership team played in addressing concerns as well as the role of other members of the team. Then, I reflected on how some strategies such as avoiding taboos and sensitive topics could be helping MQ in the short term but not necessarily in the longer term. Finally, I discussed strategies that could be powerful if implemented in a more proactive way with clear guidelines and expectations to all stakeholders particularly to teachers and leaders, based directly on my interpretation of what teachers, leaders and parents have told me.

5.1.1 Leadership role. Throughout my conversations with teachers, it became evident that the leadership team played an active role in addressing concerns related to developing students who are internationally-minded at MQ. Teachers in the primary and middle years seemed to agree that the director of the school as well as the phase principals were usually the ones that communicated with parents directly about their concerns, as this MYP teacher commented:

> Principals and directors are the ones who handle the problem. They talk with parents and solve it. Sometimes we don't know about it. (MYP Teacher 3, Focus Group 1)

According to this teacher, concerns related to cultural sensitivity and other components of international-mindedness were addressed by the Senior Leadership

Team, without the teacher being aware of it happening in some cases. In case the situation needed to be addressed, they reported that leaders usually talked to the teacher directly and calmly without making a big deal about it, asking them to refrain from engaging in such activity in the future. There was no mention of more serious consequences on the teachers' level throughout all the interviews and focus groups.

However, despite feeling supported, MQ teachers did not always agree with the way their director and principals addressed the concern:

> They do what parents want, and this is not always good because it makes parents want more. (PYP Teacher 1, Focus Group 1)

This primary teacher was evidently not happy with how the school's administration responded to parental concerns about international-mindedness. To her, this strategy of doing the parents' way could lead parents to feel more empowered and put even more pressure on the school to reshape the curriculum in a way that suits their wishes. Another teacher in continuation to the above comment said:

> …but when it is something from IB, they don't listen to parents. They tell them it's IB. (MYP Teacher 4, Focus Group 1)

This statement is of a relevant importance to me as it shows us that actually the administration is using a flexible approach and picking their battles in terms of what to fight with parents about and what not to fight about. The leadership team, as perceived by the above-mentioned teacher, felt more empowered to fight for practices that were directly expected from IB and listed as the programme's standards and practices than for practices that were less evident as being a requirement from IB.

Although the strategy of picking battles could be powerful in the context of MQ addressing international-mindedness challenges, the data showed that not all teachers understood the rationale behind it and how it was exactly implemented. The data from my one-on-one interviews with the PYP Leader 1 and the MYP leader 1 suggested that MQ leadership discussed this strategy with the teachers, clarifying the reasoning behind it and unifying the guidelines for its implementation, as per the below leader:

> I always tell them that we need to choose what we fight for, not because we want to make parents happy but because we need to deliver our curriculum in the smoothest way possible. (MYP Leader 1, One-on-One Interview)

5.1.2 Working as a Team. In addition to relying on administration support, teachers worked collaboratively among each other in an attempt to lessen the challenges they faced with the students on a daily basis. Arabic and more particularly Islamic teachers seemed to be a great asset to expatriate teachers when they were facing problems with their students about refusing to participate in certain activities that they claimed to be considered "*haram"* in their religion and culture*.* In such cases, the expatriate teacher called on an Islamic teacher to come to the classroom and discuss the matter with the students, as stated by the below music teacher:

> On many occasions I called my colleague who teaches them Islamic to discuss with them and convince them that music is not haram. This sometimes works with younger students more than with middle schoolers. (Music Teacher 1, Focus Group 3)

As evident in this comment, the music teacher who came from a western culture did not feel that students trusted her judgment when it came to what behaviour were appropriate in Islam for students to engage in and what they should avoid regardless of whether they get in trouble or not. Calling another teacher to the class has been deemed efficient for this teacher in certain cases, yet my question here is how much this strategy could affect the overall respect that students have for their music teacher. Definitely, the music teacher is going above and beyond to reach out to her students and to be able to engage them in her music lessons, yet having to call another teacher for validation of practices could weaken the students trust in their expatriate teacher and consequently affect the quality of music learning that is happening in the classroom, unless done systematically and sensitively.

5.1.3 Avoiding Taboos. Another strategy that teachers seemed to be using was to avoid discussing topics that they believed could have created cultural discomfort or could have made the students feel uncomfortable as stated by the below MYP teacher:

> I choose carefully what topics to talk about. Sometimes I just ignore the questions as I don't know how to talk about them. (MYP Teacher 2, Focus Group 1)

Although this strategy seemed to have worked well in the short term for this teacher and few others, as communicated during Focus Group 2, I do have a few concerns about the long-term efficiency of this method particularly when it comes to the quality of learning and teaching. From the above comments, it seemed that the topics discussed in classrooms were closely dependent on the teacher's willingness to approach sensitive topics as well as their comfort and confidence level in

handling the conflicts that might have resulted from such conversations. Such statements push me to question the criticality in the delivery of the curriculum at MQ, particularly in the subjects related to social studies and other culturally loaded topics. Additionally, could this be the case in picking the science topics, where the evolution theory and other sensitive information are not addressed when teachers do not feel comfortable? If this teacher was using this strategy, it is because she felt unable to find another solution to the challenges she was facing when tackling culturally sensitive topics at MQ. To support this teacher and others who might be feeling the same way, I would recommend that MQ leadership invests the time and resources to better equip their teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to teach an international curriculum, such as the PYP and the MYP in the context of MQ. One example of these strategies could be for MQ teachers to co-teach the social studies classes with an expatriate teacher and an Arabic teacher in the classroom. That way, students could build their knowledge of the concepts, while cross-checking them and positioning them against their cultural and religious beliefs.

      5.1.4 A Flexible Approach. As I have noted so far, MQ teachers and leaders, even unintentionally sometimes, were implementing strategies that could help develop students who are internationally-minded in the context of MQ, particularly if these strategies become more systematic and planned through a proactive approach instead of a reactive one. Another strategy that seemed to be used by leaders and teachers at MQ is the use of a flexible approach to address concerns. An example of this flexibility was evident in one of the statements that a leader gave when discussing his way of dealing with international-mindedness challenges:

We try to accommodate the parents' requests. For example, for the trip we

had with Middle school students we allowed parents to come along and stay

in a nearby hotel without them seeing their children. This is good for the

children's image in society. (MYP Leader 1, One-on-One Interview)

In the example that the leader provided, the school was going against its rules to

allow more students to go on international trips. According to this leader, MQ

parents agreed to certain practices yet refused them because they worried about

their family's image in society. By providing this accommodation, this leader

collaborated with the parents and somehow bargained in a way that allowed the

child to experience the international trip. Although he gave up the rule stating that

no parent should go on trips, he ensured that students are independent and had no

interaction with parents by asking the parents to not show up at any point during

the school trip. Negotiation was a common strategy that leaders and teachers used

on a daily basis to be able to optimize the international learning and teaching at MQ.

This negotiation was also the strategy students used to try to alleviate the conflicts

that they were facing between home and school, which was part of my Institution

Focus Study that I have conducted in 2017 with Middle schoolers at MQ (Frangieh,

2017).

    5.1.5 Empowering Students. As I discussed earlier, students' voice plays an

important role in IB particularly with the enhanced PYP that calls IB schools to

focus on learners' agency and to put agency at the centre of learning and teaching

(International Baccalaureate Organization, 2018). Based on such practices, a few

teachers at MQ tried to empower students to debate with their parents, subjects

that are considered inappropriate in their homes, as the below MYP teacher communicated to me during a focus group:

> When a child tells me that this is not ok, that his parents won't agree, I try to discuss with them and help them come up with arguments that they can use in the conversation with their parents to try to convince them. Some students show readiness to do so, others don't and I don't push them. (MYP Teacher 1, Focus Group 1)

This teacher was empowering his students to go and discuss with their parents the reasoning behind learning about certain culturally sensitive topics. I believe that by doing so, this teacher was not only helping the child for the short term to solve the challenges with their parents, but also supporting students in developing skills and competencies needed to self-advocate later in their life in different situations. My concern about using the student empowerment strategy on an individual level without pre-agreement between teachers, leaders, students, and parents could put the students in conflict situations with their parents and consequently making the problem even harder on them. Thus, I encourage the MQ team to make use of this powerful strategy and plan it in a way that enhances international-mindedness among its community member and allows students to further develop their self-advocacy skills and competencies.

5.1.6 Raising Parental Awareness. The last strategy that teachers and leaders shared to address the international-mindedness challenges at MQ was related to their individual initiatives of raising parental awareness about the importance of international-mindedness as well as the consequences of the child

not fully participating in IB. Teachers used this strategy and found it useful as the below MYP teacher stated:

> I just invite parents to meetings when I feel the child is really being resistant and discuss with them how it is important to prepare their child so they can later attend western colleges. (MYP Teacher 3, Focus Group 1)

According to MQ teachers and leaders, MQ parents valued higher education for their children and wanted them to attend western colleges after high school. Again, the parents' wish for international higher education was a result of neoliberal pressure and more particularly the Qatarization initiative that made the international job market very competitive for citizens even within Qatar. The MYP teacher mentioned above took advantage of this opportunity and used it to try to convince parents to be less resistant to the culturally sensitive material and content that he taught in his classroom, bringing us back to the continuous paradox of parents wanting to send their children to MQ, despite their disagreement with MQ's major principles and practices.

Other MQ teachers also used the parental awareness strategy to try to make their curriculum more accessible to their students, but instead of discussing the importance and benefits of international-mindedness for the students, they focused on the consequences of not fully participating in the curriculum, as the below music teacher explains:

> I tell them that I won't force their child to practice music, but the lack of practice will be shown on their report cards. (Music Teacher 1, Focus Group 3)

According to this music teacher, MQ parents gave a significant importance to their children's school performance and how it was reflected on their report card. Hence, she found the strategy using the reporting system to lessen parents' resistance very efficient in her class setting. This may be another individual teacher initiative that could be deemed powerful in lessening international-mindedness challenges, yet could raise a coercion concern leading to more significant challenges if not clearly clarified and well-aligned with other practices at MQ.

5.2 Projected Strategies

In this final section of my discussions and findings, I took the time to analyse and reflect on the teachers' and leaders' perception of what strategies could ease the development of internationally-minded students at MQ. My discussions with the different participants suggested different strategies including parental education, building common understanding of international-mindedness at MQ, establishing external partnerships, and creating opportunities for diversity and intercultural exchange. Finally, a common factor that many participants mentioned in our discussions is the factor of time and how such cultural change within the MQ community could not happen overnight but would rather take years of implementation for international-mindedness to start shaping up in the context of MQ students.

5.2.1 Build Common Understanding. Based on the collected data, around 70% of the teachers and leaders who participated in the different focus groups and interviews, reported a need for developing a common understanding of international-mindedness within the context of MQ. The collected data showed that even among teachers within the same team, there was a diverse understanding

between different teachers, leaders, and parents, when it came to developing internationally-minded students at MQ. During my focus group discussions, teachers discussed transparency as being an essential factor to building a common understanding of international-mindedness as this PYP teacher stated:

> The blunter we are with parents, the more specific the better. (PYP Arabic
> Teacher 3, Focus Group 2)

According to this teacher and several of her colleagues, what lacked at MQ was a transparent approach to what the school vision and mission were. MQ parents had definitely access to the written version of the school's guiding statements including its mission and vision statements, in Arabic and English, yet the translation of these statements into daily practices seemed not to be as clear. MQ teachers were advocating for leaders to discuss transparently with parents how MQ perceived international-mindedness and how this type of education could touch on beliefs and values that could be sensitive for the Qatari community.

According to the below MYP teacher, extensively discussing with parents the importance of international-mindedness as well as the rationale behind the different aspects of the curriculum could help build the common understanding and decrease the parental resistance to international-mindedness:

> ... (parents) they need to understand why. They need to understand that we
> are not trying to make their children less Qatari or less Muslim. (MYP Teacher
> 3, Focus Group 1)

To this teacher, parents feel a threat related to what was being taught at MQ and its aim at taking away the students' religious and cultural identity, and thus it was important for them to understand the true rationale behind this. However, thinking

about these statements, I can't but first question the teachers' and leaders' understanding of the rationale behind international-mindedness at MQ. What is the "true" rationale behind developing internationally-minded students at MQ? Do the school team share a common understanding of this rationale? If not, how could the school address this issue in order to be able to move to the next step of sharing the rationale and educating its parents community about it?

5.2.2 Parents Education. As a follow up to the above strategy about developing a common understanding of international-mindedness among MQ parents, teachers and leaders in our focus group discussions mentioned particular strategies that could be powerful in educating parents about international-mindedness, the rationale behind it and the importance of international-mindedness education when preparing our students to an unknown future. Three different professional development formats were presented by leaders and teachers including creation of snippets, organization of bilingual workshops, and hosting of roundtable discussions. When one teacher mentioned creating snippets for parents, I noticed agreement among two other team members who either nodded their heads or expressed their accordance with the positive impact of this tool:

> We should create snippets for parents. Very quick presentations about different aspects of international-mindedness and make them available at any time for them. (MYP Arabic Teacher 2, Focus Group 2)

Snippets are short and quick videos that could actually have many advantages in the context of MQ. First, in order to create a snippet and publish it, the MQ team needs to discuss the content and thus indirectly the team will be building a common understanding of the different components of international-mindedness

and the message MQ would like to relay to parents. Secondly, snippets are quick and short, which could be catchier with parents in their busy lives. These snippets would be always available for parents on a certain website that MQ would create, which could be a great reference for parents, particularly if developed in both Arabic and English, to go to as a first step before asking to meet the director or other leader to lessen a concern related to international-mindedness.

The second strategy that MQ teachers felt could have a strong impact on the community was to host bilingual workshops that continuously ran at MQ, as the below Early Years teacher communicated:

> We should have more parent PD in both languages English and Arabic. We have some now but we are not consistent. Also, we need to think how to make these parents attend them. (PYP Teacher 2, Focus Group 1)

In the above statement, several aspects were of a particular importance to developing internationally-minded students at MQ. First the bilingualism aspect of the workshops and the consistency of their implementation. Additionally, this teacher brought up the challenge of parents' involvement. To her, the school might host them yet parents won't really attend, which was a comment that I heard from two or three other teachers. Thus, the MQ team needs to focus not only on the creation and implementation of these workshops but also brainstorm and implement strategies that can improve parents' attendance and commitment to those events, such as having the option of live streaming or flexibility in timing, or even engage parents in co-planning and co-presenting these sessions so ownership could be increased. Similarly, parents, with coordination with the Arabic and Islamic team at MQ, could be also invited to plan workshops to teach

expatriate teachers about the Qataris' traditions and cultural beliefs or even to teach them the Arabic language in order to help strengthen their connection with the Qatari culture.

The third strategy that was mentioned during one of the interviews with an MQ leader was the use of roundtable discussions:

Roundtable discussions are very important. They allow parents to express their frustration so we can talk about them and build understanding together. (PYP Leader 2, One-on-One Interview)

This PYP leader was bringing the principles of teaching and learning in IB to her approach with parents. She believed that knowledge is constructed through discussions and through sharing of ideas and experiences. In her statement, she also highlighted the importance of giving the parents a voice in the education process by providing them with the space and structure to discuss their frustrations in a more constructive manner (Fung & Lam, 2012; Ludicke & Kortman, 2012; Tatto et al., 2001).

5.2.3 External Partnerships. Some MQ teachers and leaders believed that the task of developing internationally-minded students would be very difficult to happen at MQ if not provided with external support. To them, the community support could be in the form of other community members coming in for an intervention with students and parents, or an initiative from the government that supports the development of internationally-minded students in Qatar.

Concerning the community members' involvement, one MYP teacher suggested the following:

> We need to invite Qataris who studied or worked abroad and came back to
> Qatar to come talk to our parents and students. They will tell them why they
> should be open to IB learning. (MYP Teacher 1, Focus Group 1)

This teacher understood the influence that Qataris had on each other and the importance MQ parents gave to their image in society, and thus wanted to use this factor as an asset to help the development of internationally-minded students at MQ. I believe that this strategy could be very helpful because these community members could share their experiences including struggles and successes with the students and parents and might, since they share the same cultural and religious background as the students and parents, get a higher buy-in in terms of the importance of international-mindedness in the 21st century global world.

Another leader looked at external partnership beyond MQ local community to seek help from the government and more particularly from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Qatar, as follows:

> The ministry has to have policies to back us up. (MYP Leader 1, One-on-One
> Interview)

This leader was requesting the support and intervention of the ministry of education. He felt that if the ministry included international-mindedness in its policies, it would be easier for schools to implement it and for parents to accept it. However, my question here is how much politics could be involved in such a step? Is Qatar ready to include international-mindedness in its state policies and mandate it across its schools and educational institutions? This will depend on Qatar's overall relationship with the IB and the western world, which is a complex topic that could not be fully addressed in the context of this particular study.

5.2.4 Create Opportunities for Diversity. The last strategy that MQ leaders and teachers communicated during our interviews and focus group discussions was related to creating more opportunities for students to experience diversity. As discussed in the introduction of this thesis, students at MQ were mostly Qataris coming from the same small town situated south of the capital. Usually, students in international schools have authentic exposure to diversity due to the students' body. In these schools, students develop on a daily basis skills and competencies that allow them to learn with peers from different cultural and/or religious backgrounds. The case at MQ is different, as the international aspect of the school came from the teachers' and leaders' teams as well from the curriculum. The student population was very homogeneous and did not provide opportunities for intercultural exchange. In order to deal with this aspect, some teachers at MQ felt the need to create opportunities for intercultural exchange and understanding and to ensure they had clear expectations and guidelines on this type of connection. According to one PYP teacher, there was a certain attempt for students to exchange letters with students from a school in America, however this teacher faced a major challenge as discussed below:

> My students wrote letters to the students in the Us and were waiting impatiently to receive the letters. When we received them we gave them directly to students without thinking of having any censorship. Unfortunately one of the US students included a story about his family that was composed of two fathers. It was a shock to my students and parents were upset. (PYP Teacher 4, Focus Group 1)

The above example showed that intercultural exchange and communication should be rethought before being implemented at MQ. Although this teacher's intention was purely to develop cultural understanding among her students, the results created major problems and challenges and pushed her to stop initiating any similar practices in the future. MQ leaders and teachers need to establish clear guidelines that should be also discussed with parents about this type of communication, so the school is well prepared to address matters similar to the one stated by the above-mentioned PYP teacher.

5.2.5 Time. Although time could not be considered a direct strategy to be implemented at MQ, I wanted to bring it up as a natural element that could help MQ through its journey of developing students who are internationally-minded, as it provides the luxury of frequency of practice. In my discussions with teachers and leaders, more than 80% of the teachers and leaders who participated in the interviews and focus groups mentioned how things were changing overtime, as stated by this leader who has been working with MQ since its establishment in 2011: We have come a long way. I know we are still far behind but we can't

> underestimate the progress we have made. (PYP Leader 2, One-on-One
> Interview)

This leader was particularly positive about developing internationally-minded students at MQ. To her, it was just a question of time before international-mindedness became a natural part of MQ and widely accepted from all community members. This leader's thinking was definitely positive and maybe too positive, however we should with no doubt take the time factor as a significant element for change. With every change, particularly when it comes to a cultural change and way

of thinking, comes a period of resistance, frustration, and anxiety before this change becomes a daily lifestyle habit for the individual. Of course, the amount of resistance and other challenges that come with change depends on the individuals, the nature of change, and the context where it is happening, yet, it would be quite impossible that change comes as a smooth process without few or more than a few bumps along the way, particularly with the political changes that happened in Qatar alone apart from the world since 2011 onward (Battaloglu, 2008; Fromherz, 2012). Some of these changes could have a positive impact on the development of internationally-minded students at MQ such as Qatar's decision of eliminating the labor sponsorship system "Kafala" in March 2015, whereas other political changes made it even more difficult for MQ to witness a smooth change, like the Qatar diplomatic crisis that took place in 2017 between Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and other GCC countries, due to Saudi's concerns with Qatar's assumed connections with terrorism (BBC News, 2018).

Chapter 6

Conclusion

In this last chapter of my thesis, I reflected on relevant elements that might have affected my work, and then summarized my findings answering each of my three research questions directly and explicitly. Once my answers were clearly summarized and linked to the extant theories and literature, I reflected on the significance of my research as well as on its implications by providing MQ with practical recommendations extrapolated from those presented in the data, and finally discussed how my work created a need for further research and findings.

1. Research Journey

1.1 Taught Modules and IFS

Although the official work on my thesis started after the approval was received from the formal review of my research proposal, I would like to take you back with me to the first day of joining the Doctor of Education programme (EdD) at UCL, as I believe that each moment since then has played a significant role in the success of this work. The first two years of my enrolment in the EdD programme were full with excitement. Not only was it my first time visiting the United Kingdom, but also it felt like I was being introduced to a whole new academic world of a different calibre. I was living in Qatar back then and still working at MQ and used to eagerly wait for my module classes to start in London each term as they were full of learning and professional and academic discussions. Throughout these taught modules, I was able to refine my research methodology skills as well as my academic writing competences. The class discussions, assignments, peer conversations, and the reading of many resources allowed me to grow as a

researcher and to become aware of the extensive requirements of generating an academic research report.

The second phase of my research journey took place during my Institution-Focused Study (IFS), where I had the opportunity to put in practice all the methodology principles that I learned by conducting a pilot study related to my main research topic. For my IFS, I chose to focus on how students at MQ negotiated the relationship between home and school, considering the different cultural backgrounds between both settings. After my IFS work got approved, I published an article summarizing my findings in the Journal of Research in International Education (Frangieh, 2017), which felt like a great achievement at that time.

1.2 The Thesis Stage

Following my IFS work, I drafted my thesis proposal in order to submit it for a formal review by a panel of researchers, as part of the EdD programme. To me, the formal review was not just a logistical step along the way. It was actually an opportunity for me to receive constructive feedback and thus act upon it to refine my thesis work and consequently increase the trustworthiness of my findings. Based on the feedback received from the review panel, I had to revise, with the support of my supervisor, three major areas including the research questions, my data collection tools, and my theoretical framework. Concerning my research questions, I reformulated them to reflect exactly what I was trying to inquire about. I also took the time to edit my questionnaires and interviews and focus group schedules to ensure my questions are neutral and do not impact the participants' answers as much as possible. The biggest change after the review was related to

my theoretical framework, as I discussed earlier in the introduction chapter of this thesis. I switched from the acculturation and marginalization theories to the cosmopolitanism and neoliberalism ones, which was deemed to be more relevant and directly applicable to my study (Gunesch, 2004; Hannerz, 1990; Lazzarato, 2009; Pearse, 2021; Pettinger, 2018).

Once my data collection tools were ready and my research proposal was finalized, I started reading and researching to gain a deeper understanding of my theoretical framework before I started writing my literature review. During that time, Covid-19 hit and my plan of going to Qatar to collect my data directly on campus seemed unrealistic. To this end, I switched my interviews and focus groups from being face to face to being virtual through Microsoft Teams and Zoom platforms, depending on the preference of the participants. Thankfully, my work was more focused on the perception of my participants rather than my direct observations of international-mindedness at MQ, and thus this work was not significantly affected by the pandemic. The last step of my work consisted of the analysis of my data and my reflection on the findings. I particularly enjoyed this part as I felt that I can voice my ideas and thoughts, while always referring back to my theoretical framework and literature review.

2. Findings Summary

Based on the data that I have collected and analysed throughout this research, in this section I highlighted the most interesting findings and how they contributed to the academic work associated to our understanding of international-mindedness, in relationship to cosmopolitanism and neoliberalism. For this purpose, I summarized my main themes generated from my data analysis and

emphasized how each key aspect contributed to the development of the literature and theories related to international-mindedness.

2.1 Parents' Perception of International-Mindedness

The parents' perception of international-mindedness at MQ was looked at from two different angles. The first one was related to their perception of international schooling and the reasons behind choosing this type of education for their children. The second angle was more directly related to the parents' perception of the different components of international-mindedness and how they believed it applied to their children.

In summary, the parents at MQ perceived that international schooling was important for their children for three different reasons including the prestigious aspect of such education, the high-quality learning environment that this type of schooling provided, and finally the impact it had on the children's future careers. Concerning the prestigious aspect, MQ parents thought that enrolling their children in international schools looked good in the society and helped them build a strong image in their local community, hence leading them to be more respected among peers and other community members. Additionally, some parents believed that the high calibre of education that MQ and similar international schools provided their children with the competencies and skills needed for today's world. In fact, they thought that such education helped their children develop their critical thinking skills and consequently considered it to be a key for their admission into western colleges and universities. The last reason why MQ parents enrolled their children at MQ was because of the opportunities it offered them related to their future careers. According to this group of parents, international education would support their

children in securing jobs within Qatar preferably, or even overseas, by equipping them with the skills and competences needed in today's competitive job market.

These findings related to the parents' perception of international-schooling connects directly to the Arabized neoliberalism discussed in the theoretical framework chapter of this thesis. In fact, the Qatari government seemed to have shaped MQ parents' thinking in terms of the qualities of a successful Qatari citizen. Similar to Ong's (2006) theory of the cultural adaptation of neoliberalism in the Singapore case, the data from this thesis showed that Qatarization and the Qatari Vision 2030 may have pushed MQ parents to consider international schooling as a must in today's world, a key for their children to be able to secure their future careers.

Despite believing that international schooling was in some ways important to their children, MQ parents still communicated mixed feelings about their perception of international-mindedness. The collected data revealed that MQ parents' understanding of international-mindedness and its application at MQ varied from a group not having a clue of what it meant, to some parents having some understanding, all the way to a group that had built misconceptions about the concept of international-mindedness as defined by the International Baccalaureate Organization. Regardless of their level of understanding, MQ parents seemed to share a mix of feelings between finding in international-mindedness an opportunity for their children's future on one hand and a threat to their national and religious identity on the other hand. What was interesting to note was that their perceptions were heavily based on the intercultural understanding component of the IB definition, with little or no reference to global engagement and multilingualism. From

the collected data, MQ parents seemed to live a daily conflict and they communicated frustrations, fear, and anger, as they found themselves facing a major problem that they did not seem to have a solution for. What is important to note is that Al Farra (2012) reported the same concerns and mix of feelings among UAE parents whose children attended international schools as well, which made it evident that the challenges that MQ parents faced were of a concern to many other parents in the area that might have seen the importance of international-mindedness, yet were too scared for their children to abandon their cultural and religious beliefs and values.

2.2 Teachers' Perception of International-Mindedness

From their side, teachers and school leaders communicated their perception of international schooling as well as international-mindedness particularly within the context of MQ. Concerning their choice of international schooling, teachers and leaders communicated different benefits including financial implications, opportunities for intercultural exchange, and the flexible nature of the IB curriculum. To some teachers, the packages offered by international schools compared to their home countries, mainly the United States of America, were very tempting and made it worth leaving home and working within a culture that was sometimes very different from their own. While some teachers and leaders focused solely on the direct financial implications, others discussed how working in international schools helped them grow professionally as they were presented with many opportunities to attend international conferences and workshops. In addition to the financial benefits, teachers at MQ discussed how the transient nature of international schools as well as the diverse environment was of a significant attraction to them. These

teachers and leaders enjoyed having colleagues come and go from different countries of the world, which broke the routine of their jobs and offered them plenty of opportunities to learn from others. Diversity was mentioned during the three teachers' focus groups, where they discussed how the diverse nature of the teaching team allowed them to share and gain new perspectives and practices. A third benefit to international schooling and particularly to IB schools was the flexible nature of the curriculum. According to MQ teachers, IB allowed them to choose what to teach in the classroom, which made them feel more empowered and valued as professionals.

The teachers' perception of the benefits of working in international schools connected with different views of cosmopolitanism. To some MQ teachers and leaders, working in international schools was a result of empirical cosmopolitanism that Beck and Sznaider (2010) highlighted as a form of cosmopolitanism that forces people to engage in intercultural exchanges because of the lack of basic fulfilment in their countries. In the case of MQ teachers and leaders, I argue that the conception of Beck and Sznaider (2010) of just basic needs could be extended to actually accommodate those citizens who seek work in a country different than theirs not necessarily because they can't meet their basic needs but rather to better their lifestyle conditions. From another side, MQ teachers and leaders who saw in international schooling an opportunity for intercultural exchange connected more with the aesthetic standpoint of cosmopolitanism (Szerszynski & Urry, 2006; Tomlinson, 1999; Urry, 1995) where individuals seek travel in order to better understand the culture and values and ultimately build their diverse identity based on their intercultural experience.

Teachers and leaders' perceptions of international-mindedness, similar to the parents' perception of this concept, revealed different understandings of the concept. However, what I found different from the parents' responses, was that teachers and leaders were closer than the parents in their perceptions of international-mindedness as compared to the IB definition of this concept. Teachers and leaders' perceptions were between perceiving international-mindedness as the act of embracing other cultures and between it being a practice of global engagement. What is important to note is that none of the teachers nor leaders mentioned the multilingualism aspect, which constitutes the third component of international-mindedness as defined by the International Baccalaureate Organization. Another interesting finding was related to the difference I noticed between the expatriate teachers and the Arab teachers in their perception of international-mindedness. While many expatriate teachers saw in international-mindedness a way to bring a piece of their own culture to the school, the Arab teachers' perception was more of a receptive aspect, as they considered international-mindedness the area of expertise of expatriate teachers, on whom they relied to better understand the concept.

The findings from the MQ parents', teachers', and leaders' perception of international-mindedness revealed that international-mindedness is a concept that needs to be revisited in terms of its definition related to intercultural understanding, global engagement, and multilingualism. MQ parents revealed a particular need for this revision of the conceptualization of international-mindedness when they communicated it to be a threat to their cultural beliefs and traditions. From their sides, teachers on three or four occasions referred to international-mindedness as

being a tool to transfer element of their own western culture to a culture that they considered "less-developed". This leads us back to the debate between international-mindedness and westernization (Al Farra, 2012).

2.3 Teachers' and School Leaders' Response

The last research question for this study was related to how MQ leaders and teachers responded to challenges, if any, related to developing students who are internationally-minded. The data analysis evidenced that challenges related to international-mindedness were extant and a source of frustration to teachers, leaders, and parents. The data collected from teachers' and leaders' interviews and focus groups showed that teachers and leaders at MQ faced two main types of challenges, the first was related to the nature of the curriculum, while the second was related to the parents' voice. While parents' involvement in the education of their children was evidenced to positively impact students' success at school (Knopf & Swick, 2007; Sheridan et al., 2019; Smith, Sheridan et al., 2020), in the case of this study, the parents' voice was creating a barrier to learning. In fact, teachers and leaders communicated the constraints that parents put on them in terms of the nature of the curriculum that is being taught. This study showed that as beneficial as the parents' voice could be in education, it could equally create burdens and barriers to the delivery of a curriculum, if it not structured with clear expectations and procedures.

In order to face these challenges, MQ teachers and leaders had already put in place several strategies, that were not planned purposefully, but rather used as a reaction to certain situations. Additionally, teachers and leaders communicated their thoughts and ideas about strategies that they felt could help lessen the frustrations

and make the development of internationally-minded students more attainable at MQ. Overall, the strategies suggested that for international-mindedness to be developed in a context similar to MQ, several factors should be established in order to create a hosting environment that welcomes diversity of cultures and perspectives without creating a threat to the local traditions and beliefs. These findings in fact connect us to the security zone that the empirical cosmopolitanism suggested and that aimed at merging between cosmopolitanism and nationalism, without the exclusivity of either one.

3. Significance and Recommendations

The findings from this research are significant on many levels including their contribution to the literature related to international-mindedness, as well as to the extant work done on cosmopolitanism and neoliberalism.

International-mindedness, as defined by IB, was challenged at different points throughout this thesis. The main question that this work has raised was related to the voice that was reflected in the IB definition of international-mindedness. It was interesting to find how different individuals, even within one context and coming from the same culture, understood international-mindedness differently. Regardless of the diversity of understanding, this research showed that the IB definition of international-mindedness is heavily based on the western culture voice in terms of values and beliefs and that the perspective of intercultural understanding, global engagement, and multilingualism are heavily viewed from a western perspective. The Qatari voice, similar to other less-represented societies, did not seem to exist in the IB definition of international-mindedness, which created major challenges for MQ to develop students who are internationally-minded. Thus,

it is important for researchers in the field to focus their work on a culturally-responsive definition of international-mindedness, that could be situational in terms of being applicable in many contexts regardless of place and time.

This research has also contributed to the extant cosmopolitanism theories particularly those related to cosmopolitanism as viewed from an aesthetic and empirical standpoint. Concerning the aesthetic point of view and taking into consideration MQ parents' perception of international-mindedness, one couldn't but question how the establishment of international schools such as the IB schools aligns with the Qatari political vision of the country. The findings from this research pushed us to interrogate how or if the Qatari government will be open to welcome citizens that have built their identities from intercultural values and beliefs. How could this align with the current semi-constitutional Qatari monarchy that is headed by the Emir who has full control over the country's major decisions? In addition to the appropriateness of aesthetic cosmopolitanism in the context of the Qatar society, this research has also brought light to the empirical standpoint of cosmopolitanism, as defined as a citizen lacking basic needs and thus traveling to another country to meet these needs. In fact, the data from this study suggested that, for teachers, empirical cosmopolitanism should be extended to accommodate another form of citizens who seek relocation to a different country, even when they have full access to their basic needs, hoping to better their lifestyle conditions and simply earn more money.

The significance of this research is also connected to neoliberalism and how the Qatari society might be reshaping its citizens' identity in order to fit the country's need of switching from an oil-based to a knowledge-based economy. In

fact, MQ parents communicated how they see the future success of their children directly connected to their ability to engage in intercultural exchanges, regardless of the fear of having these children lose their Qatari identity. Through its Qatarization initiative and the shift to a knowledge-based economy, Qatar seemed to have sent a clear message to its citizens that what used to shape a successful Qatari citizen has changed widely and that Qataris are now obliged to be more active in their education and career advancement if they seek a good career within the Qatari society.

4. Research Limitation

Despite the significant contribution that this study has brought to the field of international education in general and international-mindedness in particular, I think that a few factors should be signalled as potential limitations to this work. First, concerning the participants, the western teachers' representation was limited to mainly American teachers. Although a few non-American teachers took the questionnaire (less than 10%), they did not communicate any concerns related to developing students who are internationally-minded at MQ, and thus were not selected to participate in the focus groups discussions. Hence, the western teachers' perspective was solely reported from American teachers, which does not in any way? represent the general overall western teachers in international schools in Qatar and around the world.

A second limitation to this study was related to the lack of prior studies related to the implementation of the International Baccalaureate program in Muslim societies. In fact, Al Farra (2012) was a main source that I relied upon to deepen my understanding of the extant challenges that existed in different Muslim societies

when it came to implementing the IB standards and practices. Additionally, the extant literature lacked studies related to the definition of international-mindedness in societies other than the western societies. In fact, the literature related to international-mindedness suggested that its definition was solely established in western countries by western teams or individuals, which prevented me from being able to analyse different perspectives and consequently relate them to the MQ context.

5. Recommendations for Further Research

As I was conducting this research, many questions arose that could be the topic for further academic work. The two main questions that I thought were of a particular relevance included an assessment of the extent to which teachers that taught at MQ or other similar international school display clear features of what is described by IB as an internationally-minded teacher, and a comparative study between MQ context and a school in a different country with a different cultural background.

Concerning the assessment of the teachers' and leaders' level of international-mindedness, my data analysis showed that, in many instances, teachers were promoting westernization rather than international-mindedness. They were seeking to bring their own cultural beliefs and values and impose them on a culture that was usually considered as less developed than their own. Although, I could not give any conclusions about this aspect from my current work, I definitely see a need to further research it and better understand MQ teachers' and leaders' skills and competencies when it comes to international-mindedness, and ways to promote these skills if needed.

The second research project that could be generated from this work is more of a comparative study between MQ and another school in a western country that is also heavily influenced by its students' cultural and religious background, such as a catholic school in the United States of America. The reason I am interested in such a comparative study is because I believe it allows us to compare the development of internationally-minded students in a Muslim culture versus in a Christian school. Will the challenges that leaders, teachers, parents, and even students face be the same in both settings? How is internationally-mindedness perceived by the Catholic school stakeholders compared to MQ stakeholders? Will there be commonalities that we can generalize and convert to theories that could be applicable to a wider population? International-mindedness, as you might have noticed, is a concept that fascinates me and that I think is loaded with political, cultural, historical, and religious bias. It is important for educators across the world to continue researching this concept to ensure that despite globalization and the interconnectedness aspect of today's world, we are helping in preserving all cultures and traditions, rather than westernizing the world and losing the richness of perspectives that diversity could offer us.

6. Reflection

It is important to reflect on the potential for a "clash of civilizations" resulting from my methodology. The concept of the "clash of civilizations" is a controversial one, advanced by scholars such as Samuel Huntington, that suggests inherent conflicts between different cultures, particularly between the "West" and "non-West." However, this binary understanding has been heavily criticized by scholars such as Edward Said, Mahmoud Mamdani, and Lila Abu-Lughod for its lack of

nuance and its tendency to create divisions between "us" and "them." (Said, 1993; Mamdani, 2004; Abu-Lughod, 1991). In the context of my study, which focuses on cultural tensions and concerns with the International Baccalaureate (IB), the decision to only include parents and teachers who reported these issues may have created a skewed view of reality. By focusing on the cultural tensions and concerns reported by parents and teachers in my study on the International Baccalaureate (IB), I may have inadvertently created a skewed view of reality. Specifically, by excluding the perspectives of parents who did not report such issues, I may have exaggerated the extent of cultural clashes and tensions while overlooking other ways in which different cultures can interact and coexist.

According to Pieterse (2009), globalization has resulted in the emergence of hybrid cultural forms that defy easy categorization. He refers to this process as a "global melange" and argues that it has given rise to a new cultural landscape in which traditional notions of identity and culture are being constantly redefined. Letty M. Russell (2006) also notes that encountering the "other" in a globalized world can be both challenging and rewarding. She suggests that embracing hybridity and the mixing of cultural traditions can help to promote understanding and create new forms of cultural expression.

Now that I am taking the time to reflect on this aspect, I think I should have adopted a more nuanced exploration that looks at the ways in which different cultures interact and influence each other. This could have involved looking at examples of hybridity, fusions, negotiations and interconnections between cultures, as well as exploring the ways in which cultures are not fixed and unchanging but rather are constantly evolving and adapting (Bhabha, 1994).

Another way that could have helped me go beyond the Eastern/Western binary would be to have included more perspectives and voices from people from different cultural backgrounds, to ensure that their perspectives and experiences are represented in the study (Said, 2003; Abu-Lughod, 2013). Including diverse perspectives can also help us move beyond the binary and towards a better understanding of how different cultures interact and coexist, such as through the concepts of fusions, hybridity, and melange (Pieterse, 2009; Russell, 2006). This would have helped create a more inclusive and representative view of cultural interactions, rather than perpetuating the idea that there is a fundamental divide between "us" and "them."

It is important to also note that the concept of "culture" is a complex, fluid and multi-faceted construct that can be hard to pin down and study. Therefore, any study that attempts to explore cultural interactions should be done with a critical and reflexive lens, and it should be mindful of the limitations of the concepts and methods used (Geertz, 1973).

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Appendix A

Parents' Questionnaire

Institute of Education

UCL

Developing Internationally-minded Students

Parents Questionnaire

This questionnaire will help the researcher collect data about developing globally-minded students in a private international school in Qatar. As a result of globalization, the number of international schools around the world has increased to prepare students with skills and competences required for their success in the 21st century job market. The raise in number of schools that aim at developing globally-minded citizens through international curricular was also reflected in Qatar. However, little is known about how parents, teachers, and school teachers perceive this international education particularly in the Qatari society. Your input is very valuable and crucial to the success of this study. By giving your opinion, you can participate in the improvement of global-mindedness education in your child(ren)'s school and help the school team better align its principles and practices with Qatar's cultural and religious context.
It is entirely up to you whether or not you choose to take part. We hope that if you do choose to be involved then you will find it a valuable experience. If you choose to opt out of the study, there will be no negative repercussions for you and/or your child(ren).

Child(ren) attending MQ:
Child 1
Age: _____   A boy   A girl   Grade: _____
Child 2
Age: _____   A boy   A girl   Grade: _____
Child 3
Age: _____   A boy   A girl   Grade: _____
Child 4
Age: _____   A boy   A girl   Grade: _____

1. For how many years have you been a parent at MQ?
        €   1

€ 2
€ 3
€ 4
€ 5
€ 6 or more

2. What is your gender?
    € Male
    € Female

3. What is your age group?
    € 20-30
    € 30-40
    € 40-50
    € More than 50

4. What is your level of education?
    € High school diploma
    € Bachelor degree
    € Master degree
    € Doctorate
    € Other- Please specify:

5. Where did you pursue your college studies (if applicable)
    € Qatar
    € United Kingdom
    € United States
    € Canada
    € Other Western Country
    € Other Arabic Country

6. What was the main reason behind your choice of MQ for the education of your child(ren)?
    € International programmes that it offers
    € National and religious educational programmes that it offers
    € School reputation
    € All of the above:_____

7. Are you satisfied with your overall experience with MQ?
    € Yes
    € No

Why or why not?_____

_____

8. Which of the following in your view describes an individual who is globally-minded: check all that apply
    - € An individual who has the knowledge, skills, and competences that allow them to appreciate and respect others from different cultural and religious backgrounds
    - € An individual who feels and acts in a committed and responsible manner toward his country and other countries around the world
    - € An individual who is able to communicate in more than one language including English.
    - € None of the above

9. In light of your understanding of global-mindedness, do you see any conflict between it and between any other values you may hold (for example, your perception of Islamic values)? Please explain

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. If you have any further questions you can reach me at mfrangie@mail.usf.edu.

Appendix B

Teachers & Leaders' Questionnaire

Institute of Education

Developing Internationally-minded Students

Teacher and school leaders Questionnaire

This questionnaire will help the researcher collect data about developing internationally-minded students in a private international school in Qatar. As a result of globalization, the number of international schools around the world has increased to prepare students with skills and competences required for their success in the 21st century job market. The raise in number of schools that aim at developing internationally-minded citizens through international curricular was also reflected in Qatar. However, little is known about how parents , teachers, and school teachers perceive this international education particularly in the Qatari society. Your input is very valuable and crucial to the success of this study. By giving your opinion, you can participate in the improvement of international-mindedness education at MQ and contribute in enhancing its alignment with the parents' cultural and religious beliefs.
It is entirely up to you whether or not you choose to take part. We hope that if you do choose to be involved then you will find it a valuable experience. If you choose to opt out of the study, there will be no negative repercussions for you.

1. Position

Teacher (please indicate grade level) _____

School leader (please indicate specific position) _____

2. Years of teaching/school leadership experience
€   Less than 1
€   1-2
€   3-5
€   5 or more

3. Years of international teaching experience:
€   None
€   Less than 1
€   1-2

€   3-5
€   5 or more

4. Years of teaching at MQ:

€   Less than 1
€   1-2
€   3-5
€   5 and more

5. Do you feel that you have a clear understanding of what the term international-mindedness mean?

€   Yes
€   No

Please explain_____

_____

6. Have you ever observed a tension between the principles of international-mindedness and the cultural beliefs of some of your students' parents?

€   Yes
€   No

If yes, please explain _____

_____

7. Please tell us about your experience with the students' families when engaging your students in learning experiences that aim at promoting international-mindedness?

_____

_____

_____

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. If you have any further questions you can reach me at mfrangie@mail.usf.edu.

Appendix C

Teachers and Leaders' Interview Schedule

Institute of Education

Developing Internationally-minded Students

Teachers and School Leaders Schedule

This interview is expected to take 20-30 minutes. I will start the interview by welcoming the participants and reminding them of the below points:

- Their participation is optional and they can choose to opt out at any point
- Their participation is anonymous and their name will not appear at any point in my study thesis
- The value of their participation to my research
- The purpose of my research and its main points

Then I will ensure all participants have signed the info/consent form and move to start asking my questions:

1. For how long have you been teaching?
2. Why have you chosen to work in international schools?
3. How are international schools regarded in the Qatari community?
4. As you know the development of internationally-minded students is an important aim at this school, how do you think teachers understand international-mindedness? Please explain
5. Please share your thoughts and opinion on the alignment of international-mindedness with your students' parents cultural and religious beliefs?
6. Among those parents who you feel are not comfortable with international-mindedness, what are some challenges that you are faced with?
7. How do you deal with these challenges?
8. (if challenges are mentioned) How would you describe parental support when approaching them to address the above mentioned challenges?
9. How do you think the school handles this kind of conflicts?
10. What, in your opinion, needs to happen in order to help increase parental awareness about international-mindedness?

Appendix D

Parents' Interview Schedule

Institute of Education

UCL

Developing Internationally-minded Students
Parents' Interview Schedule

This interview is expected to take 20-30 minutes. I will start the interview by welcoming the participants and reminding them of the below points:

- Their participation is optional and they can choose to opt out at any point
- Their participation is anonymous and their name will not appear at any point in my study thesis
- The value of their participation to my research
- The purpose of my research and its main points

Then I will ensure all participants have signed the info/consent form and move to start asking my questions:

- For how long have your children been attending MQ?
- What was the main reason behind your choice of MQ for the education of your child(ren)?
- How satisfied are you with the educational programmes at MQ? Please explain
- What do you think the term global-mindedness mean? Please explain
- Please share your thoughts and opinion on the alignment of global-mindedness with your cultural and religious beliefs?

(in case of mentioned conflicts)
- What are some conflicts that you are faced with? Could you please share specific examples.
- How do you deal with these challenges?
- Have you discussed your concerns with the school? How did the school address these concerns?

(in case of no mentioned conflicts)
- Are you aware of other parents that faced/are facing concerns? If yes…
- What are some concerns that they are faced with? Could you please share specific examples.
- How do they deal with these challenges?
- Have they discussed their concerns with the school? How did the school address these concerns?

(in case of non-alignment between global-mindedness education and parental cultural and religious beliefs)

- Why do you choose to continue to enroll your children at MQ despite this non-alignment?
- What, in your opinion, needs to happen in order to ensure that global-mindedness education at MQ is more aligned with your cultural and religious beliefs?

Appendix E

Teachers & Leaders Consent Form

Institute of Education

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Developing Internationally-minded Students (March-April 2020)
Information sheet for Teachers and School Leaders

Who is conducting the research?
My name is Maha Frangieh and I am writing to invite you to take in part in my research project, "Developing Internationally-minded Students". I am currently a doctoral student at the Institute of Education (IOE) at University College London (UCL) and the Assistant Principal at Wellspring Learning Community, Beirut-Lebanon. Although I am a new researcher, UCL IOE has provided me with a well-experienced tutor (Dr. Farid Panjwani) who will guide me throughout this study.

What is the research about?
My research interest is around developing internationally-minded students in a private international school in Qatar. As a result of globalization, the number of international schools around the world has increased to prepare students with skills and competences required for their success in the 21st century job market. The raise in number of schools that aim at developing internationally-minded citizens through international curricular was also reflected in Qatar. However, little is known about how parents, teachers, and school teachers perceive this international education particularly in the Qatari society. This study aims at exploring how these school stakeholders understand, promote, and negotiate the development of internationally-minded students in a Qatari private international school.

How is your participation valuable?
Your input is very valuable and crucial to the success of this study. By giving your opinion, you can participate in the improvement of international-mindedness education at MQ and contribute in enhancing its alignment with the parents' cultural and religious beliefs.

What will happen if I choose to take part?
If you decide to participate in the study, you will be sent a questionnaire to fill out and/or invited for a 45-60 minutes interview conducted during school hours. The interview will include questions such as the overall teachers' understanding of international-mindedness and the challenges IB authorities and schools face when developing students with international-mindedness.
Will anyone know that I have been involved?

You and the admin team at the school are the only ones to know that you have been involved in this study. The thesis will be completely anonymous and your name will not appear at any stage. If any of your words are used in reports or presentations, they will not be attributed to you.

What will happen to the results of the research?

The results of this study will be reported in a 45000 words thesis and submitted to my thesis supervisor (Farid Panjwani), faculty at UCL IOE.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether or not you choose to take part. We hope that if you do choose to be involved then you will find it a valuable experience.

If you choose to opt out of the study, there will be no negative repercussions for you.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information sheet. If you have any further questions you can reach me at mfrangie@mail.usf.edu.

- -

PLEASE **SIGN** THIS FORM **ONLY IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO PARTICIPATE** IN THE ABOVE STUDY.

Having read the statement above with regard to consent for the study, I **do not agree to participate.**

Name: _____   **Date:** _____

Signature: _____

Appendix F

Parents' Consent Form

Institute of Education

🏛 UCL

Developing Globally-minded Students (March-April, 2020)
Information sheet for Parents

Who is conducting the research?
My name is Maha Frangieh and I am writing to invite you to take in part in my research project, "Developing Globally-minded Students". I am currently a doctoral student at the Institute of Education (IOE) at University College London (UCL) and the Assistant Principal at Wellspring Learning Community, Beirut-Lebanon. Although I am a new researcher, UCL IOE has provided me with a well-experienced tutor (Dr. Farid Panjwani) who will guide me throughout this study.

What is the research about?
My research interest is around developing globally-minded students in a private international school in Qatar. As a result of globalization, the number of international schools around the world has increased to prepare students with skills and competences required for their success in the 21st century job market. The raise in number of schools that aim at developing globally-minded citizens through international curricular was also reflected in Qatar. However, little is known about how parents , teachers, and school teachers perceive this international education particularly in the Qatari society. This study aims at exploring how these school stakeholders understand, promote, and negotiate the development of globally-minded students in a Qatari private international school.

How is your participation valuable?
Your input is very valuable and crucial to the success of this study. By giving your opinion, you can participate in the improvement of global-mindedness education in your child(ren)'s school and help the school team better align its principles and practices with Qatar's cultural and religious context.

What will happen if I choose to take part?
If you decide to participate in the study, you will be sent a questionnaire to fill out. Following the questionnaire, you might be invited for a 45-60 minutes face-2-face interview. The interview will include questions such as your choice of MQ for the education of your child(ren), what you think the term global-mindedness means and how it is aligned with your cultural and religious beliefs. The interview will be recorded and transcribed at a later stage for data analysis.

Will anyone know that I have been involved?
You and the admin team at the school are the only ones to know that you have been involved in this study. The thesis will be completely anonymous and your

name will not appear at any stage. If any of your words are used in reports or presentations, they will not be attributed to you.

What will happen to the results of the research?

The results of this study will be reported in a 45000 words thesis and submitted to my thesis supervisor (Farid Panjwani), faculty at UCL IOE.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether or not you choose to take part. We hope that if you do choose to be involved then you will find it a valuable experience.

If you choose to opt out of the study, there will be no negative repercussions for you and/or your child(ren).

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information sheet. If you have any further questions you can reach me at mfrangie@mail.usf.edu.

- -

PLEASE **SIGN** THIS FORM **IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO PARTICIPATE** IN THE ABOVE STUDY.

Having read the statement above with regard to consent for the study, **I do not agree to participate.**

Name: _____   **Date:** _____

Signature: _____

Appendix G

Interviews Participants

Table 3

Interviews Participants- Senior Leaders

Participant	Description	Date	Interview Length
PYP Leader 1	Retired American female principal, has been with MQ for 9 years	19/6/2020	25:19
PYP Leader 2	American female, been at MQ for 11 years, since its establishment	23/6/2020	22:29
PYP Leader 3	Lebanese female, has been with MQ for 2 years now, extensive experience in IB schools	17/6/2020	26:03
MYP Leader 1	Jordanian American male, has been with MQ for 3 years, IB Educators Network (IBEN) member	16/6/2020	27:38
MYP Leader 2	Jordanian female, been with MQ for 8 years, started as a Math teacher	19/6/2020	18:19
MYP Leader 3	American female, been with MQ for three years, has previous IB experience	17/6/2020	17:49

Appendix H

Focus Groups Participants- Teachers & Middle Leaders

Table 4

Focus Groups Participants- Teachers & Middle Leaders

Focus Group Number	Participant	Description	Date	Interview Length
FG1 - Expatriate Teachers	PYP Teacher 1	American female- lived all her life in US before moving to Qatar. Been in Qatar for 5 years. Homeroom teacher	18-6-2020	52:33
FG1 - Expatriate Teachers	MYP Teacher 1	American male, English Language Teacher, has been in Qatar for 7 years	18-6-2020	52:33
FG1 - Expatriate Teachers	PYP Teacher 2	American female, homeroom teacher, has been working at MQ for 4 years and has previous international school experience	18-6-2020	52:33
FG1 - Expatriate Teachers	MYP Teacher 2	American female, Individuals and Societies teacher, been working at MQ for 2 years	18-6-2020	52:33

FG1 - Expatriate Teachers	MYP Teacher 3	American male, has been with MQ for 3 years now. First international job	18-6-2020	52:33
FG1 - Expatriate Teachers	PYP Teacher 3	American male, has been with MQ for 8 years now in different elementary classes as homeroom teacher	18-6-2020	52:33
FG1 - Expatriate Teachers	MYP Teacher 4	American-Lebanese female, has been with MQ for 7 years now, MYP sciences teacher. Has previous experience in international schools	18-6-2020	52:33
FG1 - Expatriate Teachers	PYP Teacher 4	American female, has been with MQ for 10 years now. Homeroom teacher. IB Educator Network (IBEN) member	18-6-2020	52:33
FG2 - Arabic Teachers	MYP Arabic Teacher 1	Palestinian female, born and raised in Qatar, worked at MQ for 9 years	15-6-2020	43:22

FG2 - Arabic Teachers	PYP Arabic Teacher 1	Lebanese female, been with MQ for 10 years now. Has previous experience teaching in IB schools in Lebanon	15-6-2020	43:22
FG2 - Arabic Teachers	MYP Arabic Teacher 2	Jordanian female, born and raised in Qatar, worked at MQ since its establishment, 11 years	17-6-2020	45:39
FG2 - Arabic Teachers	PYP Arabic Teacher 2	Jordanian female, been working at MQ for 3 years. Previous experience with international schools	17-6-2020	45:39
FG2 - Arabic Teachers	MYP Arabic Teacher 3	Palestinian female, been working at MQ for 8 years, first experience in an international school	17-6-2020	45:39
FG2 – Arabic Teachers	PYP Arabic Teacher 3	Jordanian female, been working with MQ for 2 years. Has worked in other international schools in Qatar previously	17-6-2020	45:39

FG3 – Specialist Teachers	Music Teacher 1	American female, has been working at MQ for 11 years now since its establishment	15-6-2020	43:22
FG3 – Specialist Teachers	Music Teacher 2	American male, has been working with MQ for 2 years now. Worked in another international school in Qatar previously	15-6-2020	43:22
FG3 – Specialist Teachers	Art Teacher 1	American female, has been at MQ for 8 years. First teaching experience out of the United States	15-6-2020	43:22
FG3 – Specialist Teachers	Art Teacher 2	American female, has been working at MQ for 7 years, first experience teaching out of the States	15-6-2020	43:22
FG3 – Specialist Teachers	PE Teacher 1	American female, has been working at MQ for four years. Worked in international schools in Asia previously	15-6-2020	43:22

FG3 – Specialist Teachers	PE Teacher 2	American male, has been working with MQ for 2 years now. Worked in Qatar previously with an international school	15-6-2020	43:22
FG7 – Middle Leaders	Middle Leader 1	American-Palestinian male, been with MQ for 10 years now, has previous experience in Gulf countries international schools	16-6-2020	46:13
FG7 – Middle Leaders	Middle Leader 2	American-Lebanese female, has been with MQ for 10 years now. Started with MQ as a Pre-k teacher	16-6-2020	46:13
FG7 – Middle Leaders	Middle Leader 3	American male, has been with MQ for 7 years, started as a math teacher	16-6-2020	46:13
FG7 – Middle Leaders	Middle Leader 4	Indian female, started with MQ 9 years ago as a PYP homeroom teacher. Worked in other international schools in Qatar previously	16-6-2020	46:13

Appendix I

Focus Groups Participants- Parents

Table 5

Focus Groups Participants- Parents

Focus Group Number	Participant	Description	Date	Interview Length
FG4- Female Parents	Parent 1	Parent of two girls one in Grade 8 and one in Grade 6. Girls been at MQ since Prek3	22-6-2020	52:43
FG4- Female Parents	Parent 2	Parent of a girl in Grade 2, and a boy in Pk4	22-6-2020	52:43
FG4- Female Parent	Parent 3	Parent of a Grade 7 girl and Grade 4 boy. Both children attended MQ since PK3	22-6-2020	52:43
FG4- Female Parent	Parent 4	Parent of a Grade 8 girl, a Grade 6 boy, a Grade 4 girl, and a grade 1 boy. All 4 children have been at MQ since Pk3	22-6-2020	52:43
FG4- Female Parent	Parent 5	Parent of a Pk3 girl and a Grade 1 boy. Started with MQ when oldest was in Pk4	22-6-2020	52:43

FG5- Female Parent	Parent 6	Parent of a boy in Grade 2 and a girl in KG. Both children joined MQ in Pk3	25-6-2020	48:13
FG5- Female Parent	Parent 7	Parent of a grade 6 girl and a grade 3 and grade 1 boys. All three children joined MQ in Pk3	25-6-2020	48:13
FG5- Female Parent	Parent 8	Parent of a Grade 8 girl and Grade 6 boy. Have been at MQ for 4 years now	25-6-2020	48:13
FG5- Female Parent	Parent 9	Parent of twin boys in Grade 3 and a girl in grade 2. All 3 children joined MQ when they were in PK3	25-6-2020	48:13
FG6- Male Parents	Parent 10	Parent of a Grade 1 boy. Joined MQ two years ago when the child was in Pk4,	23-6-2020	43.25
FG6- Male Parents	Parent 11	Parent of a boy in Grade 8 and a girl in Grade 4. Has been with MQ for 5 years	23-6-2020	43.25
FG6- Male Parents	Parent 12	Parent of a Grade 8, Grade 6 and KG boys at MQ. Joined MQ 2 years ago	23-6-2020	43.25

FG6- Male Parents	Parent 13	Parent of Grade 8 boy, Grade 5 boy, Grade 2 girl. Member of MQ Governing Body. Children been at MQ since Pk3	23-6-2020	43.25

Appendix J

List of Generated Codes & Categories

Generated Codes and Categories

Code	Category
Sensitive	Challenges
Religion	Cultural Background
Culture	Challenges
Knowledge	Perception
Problems	Challenges
Co-education	Challenges
Politics	Challenges
Same sex marriage	Challenges
Complaints	Perception
Talk about it	Strategies
Lack of Knowledge	Challenges
Parents awareness	Strategies
Bilingual	Strategies
Prestigious	Perception
Citizens of the world	Perception
Exposure	Impact
Hesitation	Challenges
Restrictions	Challenges
Good for them	Perception

Acceptance	Perception
Change the system	strategy
Open-minded	perception
English fluency	Background
Age	Background
Global mindedness	Impact
Boundaries	Challenges
Depth of knowledge	Challenges
Discussion	Strategy
Programme of inquiry	Curriculum
Cultural sensitivity	Background
Voice	influence
Brainwash	influence
Upset	Perception
Giving in	strategy
Censorship	strategy
Adapting	strategy
Power	influence
Loudness	influence
Pick and choose	strategy
Support	strategy
Communication	strategy
Parent involvement	strategy
Language barrier	challenge

Non-negotiables	challenge
Threat	challenge
Value	Background
Diversity	background
Muslim	background
Educate	strategy
Shallow knowledge	challenge
Money	Economic situation
Retirement	Economic situation
Mix of culture	Background
International-mindedness	perception
Prestige	perception
Cultural roadblocks	challenges
Respectful	Behavior
Changing minds	impact
Flexibility	Advantage
Discussion	strategy
Opinion	perception
Dance	challenge
Excuse	challenge
Evolution	strategy
Issues	challenges
Refusal	challenges
Understanding	strategy

Outcast	impact
Concept teaching	Strategy
Disturbing	Perception
Delicate	Challenge
Haram	Challenge
Western music	challenge
Traditions	background
Awareness	strategy
Cultural beliefs	Challenge
Fear	Challenge
Transient nature	Advantage
Innovation	Impact
Travel	Impact
Taboo	Challenge
Restriction	Challenge
Forcing	perception
Repetition	Strategy
Opportunities	Strategy
Collaboration	strategy
Comfortable	perception
Freedom of choice	Curriculum
Parental awareness	strategy
Ripple effect	Strategy
Empathy	perception

Exchange	perception
Miscommunication	challenge
Misunderstanding	Challenge
Different experiences	Background
Transient	Advantage
Same page	Perception
Improvement	Impact
Student agency	Impact
Controversial	Challenge
Anger	Perception
Misconception	perception
Foreigners	Background
Global issues	perception