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**Implementing Character Education and Behavior Improvement in Moroccan
Secondary Schools**

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctorate
degree in English studies**

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my work to the soul of my father, Bouchaib Hassine, (may Allah be merciful on him and grant him Al-Jannah). I'm glad I have fulfilled our dream and I am sure you are happy to see this process through to its completion.

To my beloved mother, Touria Moufakkir, who is always there for me and whom without her unconditional love and care I would have never made it.

To my wonderful husband, Abdellah Adardour, who has been a constant source of support and encouragement during the different challenges of this work. I am truly thankful for having you in my life.

To my little hero Taha, my son, who accompanied me over the course of this study, your little hugs were of a great support.

To my caring family, especially my brother Yahya, who supported me to complete my educational journey, as without their love, encouragements and help, this work would have never been possible.

This thesis is also dedicated to all teachers who have both the desire and dedication to teach children and help them develop their character, then assist them in becoming good members in their communities to make our world a better place to live in.

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Abstract

Character education has recently become an important area of concern and research among researchers and stakeholders in the field of education worldwide. The emergence of character education as area of research, theory, and policymaking has been motivated by a generally noted increase of violence and misbehavior among students in educational institutions, which negatively affects the school environment and school effectiveness as well as students' performance, achievement and success. It has also been driven by the increasing awareness of the fundamental role and mission of education and educational institutions in instilling in learners the values and character traits of citizenship. In this context, researchers, educators, practitioners, policy makers, and policy documents have recently become interested in character education issues and have shown unprecedented concern with the integration of character education in the Moroccan educational policy, programs, and practice. In this context, the research topic of this study is character education and misbehavior in Morocco. The research objective is to investigate the impact of implementing character education on the improvement of students' behavior in Moroccan secondary schools. To collect data, the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview were used to elicit information from teachers and students on their opinions and perceptions of the impact of implementing character education programs and activities on students' behavior improvement. To this end, the semi-structured interview was used to collect data from forty teachers and the questionnaire was administered to four hundred and twenty students to elicit data. This study adopts a quantitative-qualitative approach to data collection and analysis. In this respect, both (SPSS) and (AMOS) programs were used to analyze the quantitative data, while the (NVIVO) software was used to analyze the qualitative one. The data was collected from different secondary schools in different regions in Morocco, namely Agadir, Casablanca, Fes, and Marrakech, Assilah and ElKliaa. This sample has helped to reflect the diversity characterizing the Moroccan society. The most important findings of this study confirm that character education does not constitute a mainstream practice in the classroom and its institutional context. They also confirm that in spite of the individual efforts being done through the implementation of the classroom code of conduct and some occasional extra-curricular activities, these initiatives and practices do not have significant impact on behavior improvement. In this respect, this study suggests the urgent need to integrate effective character education programs in policy making, teachers training, and students' life in the classroom and school contexts. It also suggests the need to set a research and evaluation agenda on character education in general and on the emerging experience of recruiting and training counsellors in Moroccan schools. The findings and conclusions of this study do not claim exhaustiveness, but are rather meant to contribute to better understanding of the issues involved in character education in Morocco and to inform stakeholders in education in this context.

ملخص

أصبحت تربية الشخصية مؤخرًا مجالًا للبحث في مجال التعليم في جميع أنحاء العالم. إن الزيادة الملحوظة بشكل عام في العنف والسلوك السلبى بين التلاميذ في المؤسسات التعليمية يؤثر سلبًا على البيئة المدرسية وفعالية المدرسة وكذلك أداء الطلاب ونجاحهم، فيساهم الذى يراه الشهور تربية الشخصية كمجال للبحث العلمى. في هذا السياق، أصبح مؤخرًا الباحثون والمربون وأصحاب القرار مهتمين بموضوع تربية الشخصية وأظهروا اهتمامًا غير مسبوق بدمج تربية الشخصية في برامج المؤسسات التربوية المغربية. في هذا السياق، فإن موضوع البحث في هذه الدراسة هو تربية الشخصية والسلوك السلبى عند التلاميذ في المغرب. الهدف من البحث هو دراسة تأثير التربية الشخصية على تحسين سلوك التلاميذ في المدارس الثانوية التأهيلية المغربية. لجمع البيانات، تم استخدام الاستبيان والمقابلة الشبه المنظمة لاستنباط تلاميذ ووالداتهم والأساتذة التلاميذ في ما يخص آرائهم وتصوراتهم حول تأثير برامج وأنشطة التربية الشخصية في تحسين سلوك التلاميذ. ولهذه الغاية، تم استخدام المقابلة الشبه المنظمة لجمع البيانات من أربعين أساتذة وتم إجراء الاستبيان على أربع مائة وعشرين تلميذًا للحصول على البيانات. تتبنى هذه الدراسة نهجًا كميًا نوعيًا لجمع البيانات وتحليلها. وفي هذا الصدد، تم استخدام برنامجي (SPSS) و (AMOS) لتحليل البيانات الكمية، بينما تم استخدام برنامج (NVIVO) لتحليل البيانات النوعية. تم جمع البيانات من مدارس ثانوية تأهيلية مختلفة في مناطق مختلفة في المغرب، وهي أكادير، الدار البيضاء، فاس، مراكش، أصيلة والقلعة. ساعدت هذه العينة في عكس التنوع الذى يميز المجتمع المغربى. تؤكد أهم نتائج هذه الدراسة أن التربية الشخصية لا تشكل ممارسة سائدة في الفصل الدراسى وسياقه المؤسسى. كما أن نتائج توكده أنه على الرغم من الجهود الفردية التى يتم بذلها من خلال الإيجابى السلوكى إدماج فى الفصول الدراسية وبعض الأنشطة الغير المنهجية، فإن هذه المبادرات والممارسات ليس لها تأثير كبير على تحسين سلوك التلاميذ. فى هذا الصدد، تشير هذه الدراسة إلى الحاجة الملحة لدمج برامج تربوية الشخصية فى المدارس وتكوين الأساتذة. كما تم اقتراح وضع أجندة بحث وتقييم حول التربية الشخصية وتعيين مرشدين فى المدارس المغربية. إن نتائج واستنتاجات هذه الدراسة غير شمولية، بل تهدف إلى المساهمة فى فهم أفضل للقضايا التى تطوي عليها التربية الشخصية فى المغرب.

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Introduction

1. Background of the Study

This thesis addresses the issue of character education that has become an attractive research area and a priority to policy makers and different society stakeholders. For the sake of shaping better generations, stakeholders should focus on implementing a character education program that is based on the three components of the principal characters, namely moral knowing that is moral knowledge, moral feeling that is the moral sense, and moral action that is the moral conduct.

In this perspective, these three principles that begin with knowing the good thing, then wanting the good, and finally doing the good aim to enable the person to first of all become aware of the meaning of good behavior and acknowledge it, then think critically and ethically about his or her actions, and finally adopt good character traits in his or her behavior such as: respect, caring, trustworthiness, responsibility, tolerance, fairness, compassion and many other values.

In the same line of thought, (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986) claimed that education has a big significance to support human to learn about life (p.9). Therefore, the mission of education is to enable students think critically about their thoughts, beliefs and actions; that is to say it enables them to start reflecting about themselves and try to develop and improve their character. Thus, it is a process that incorporates knowledge, feeling and finally action.

Character education is the way to follow in order to adjust the student's behavior and improve it. As (Schwartz, 2008) claimed, character education is a national movement that encourages schools to create an environment that fosters ethical, responsible and caring young people. This means that the environment or the atmosphere where the learning process takes place is very important; this later has to be safe as well as healthy in order to help students' foster their character and learn from the positive behaviors they see around them.

Through character education, students will gain knowledge as well as essential life skills that will enable them have positive and strong character traits. In an attempt to realize this intention, educators, schools as well as parents have to join their efforts

to come up with various innovations and strategies in order to implement character education. Another thing that requires attention from teachers is the teaching materials that should be designed not only to equip students with knowledge, but also to provide them with the necessary social skills to use in their everyday life. Another important aspect in the implementation of character education is implementing the targeted traits through instructional classrooms activities.

Generally, schools attempt to provide students with a variety of academic subjects as well as skills that aim at helping them develop both their academic achievement and personal character. An effective tool to achieve these goals is implementing character education. Character education is as old as history; it is the process of "Character education is a growing discipline with the deliberate attempt to optimize students' ethical behavior." (Agboola & Tsai, 2012). Thus, it is important to note that character education is also referred to through various terms like moral reasoning, moral, virtues or values education, religious education, and sometimes civic education.

In the same context, (McClellan, 1999) claimed that the principle aim of establishing schools is to inculcate moral values in children. Similarly, (Thomas Lickona, 1989) asserted that, "down through history, in various countries, education has had two great goals: to help young people become smart and to help them become good" (p.6). That is to say, the main aim behind education is to help students improve first of all their character and moral thinking, then, of course, their academic achievement.

In this regard, (McBrien & Brandt, 1997) stated that,

"The goal is to raise children to become morally responsible and self-disciplined citizens. Problem solving, decision making, and conflict resolution are important parts of developing moral character. Through role playing and discussions, students can see that their decisions affect other people and things" (p. 17)

Character education is a competent powerful instrument in the critical way of child and teenager building, always in which schools should play a main role (Berkowitz,

2012). It is an area of research that resulted from numerous studies in the 60's; from moral development research by Kohlberg and Erikson to other studies which their main concern was looking for causes behind students' dishonesty and violence in schools.

In the 1960's and 1970's, there was a big shift in moral education when other approaches emerged such as value clarification, moral dilemma discussions, and decision-making processes that replaced the traditional emphasis on learning right from wrong and acting right (Field, 1996). However, there was a failure in these programs in differentiating between students' personal preferences and moral values.

Hence, one of the most important aims of schools is to develop children's character, intellectually and morally through values-based atmosphere in order to be good moral members in their communities. Consequently, the best way to teach character education is via incorporating its traits throughout the curriculum. The presence of good character traits within the lessons, textbooks and classroom activities counts as a palpable source or basis for students to relate to in the process of learning about the principles of character education; it will help them find something to rely on and go back to whenever they need to adjust or reflect upon their thoughts and behaviors.

In addition to this, teachers play an important role in the process of implementing an efficient program of character education since they are asked to be good role models as well as to provide students with a set of core values and morals but still, parents are supposed to take part of the process too. Accordingly, parents have to cooperate with schools and be involved in the process of implementing good character traits, because every child learns first of all from his parents and most of the time takes them as role models so parents have to behave in a way that enhances their children's good character because both character education and good parenting call for adults who behave in ways that promote the positive development of youth (Berkowitz & Bustamante, 2013).

Back in history, public schools in America adopted the Bible as their one and only source for moral instruction. Then, different opinions emerged over which Bible to adopt in educating children morals. Consequently, character education emerged, more specifically, in the Massachusetts colony where various groups from Europe settled. At that time, it was known as moral education, a new book showed up that is the McGuffey Reader, this later introduced children to numerous morals such as kindness, patriotism, hard work and many others. In brief, moral education took part of public education until the 1960s through stories such as the McGuffey book, teacher modeling, and discipline.

According to (Covey, 1989), there is a shifting of paradigms in America, from a concern for a person's personality to a concern for a person's character. Education is a tool that enables people to develop on all levels through different periods of their life time to become better versions of themselves.

Related to this, (McCabe & Trevino, 1993) examined the causes behind cheating in American universities and the findings of their research resulted in additional one that focuses on character development at the secondary school level (Lathrop, Foss, & Foss, 2005). Afterwards, an increase in nationally developed character education programs raised in the 80's such as the program of Character Education Partnership (Thomas Lickona, 1996b).

By the end of the 90's several states of America were demanding that character education programs should take part in the curriculum, generally with the purpose of teaching respect, honesty, and civic responsibility (DeRoche & Williams, 2001). Besides Lickona's Character Partnership, other programs were used on the national level, namely (Cunningham, 2007); (DeRoche & Williams, 2001).

Today, there are several programs of character education with numerous character traits to implement and adopt. People are now talking about the importance of character and personal integrity (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999). So, education is not only a process of transmitting mere academic knowledge that exists in the textbooks or the curricula, but also a process of instilling ethics, values and good behaviors in

students as the main purpose of education should be building good citizens that are characterized by a healthy and positive behavior.

In the past, education had two objectives, one was to educate people intellectually and the other was to teach them to be morally good. The founding fathers of the United States (Ryan & Lickona, 1992) trusted the idea that character education would help in establishing democracy because students, who are considered future citizens, will develop democratic virtues such as respect for the rights of individuals, respect for the laws, volunteer in community service, and of course they will develop a concern for the common good of the whole country.

Nevertheless, the integration of a character education program into any school subject, like the subject of teaching English as a Foreign language, efficiently needs a good strategy to follow. Language has a primordial role in the development of the intellectual, social, and emotional side of any student. Furthermore, English language classes equip learners with the ability to communicate in their daily lives in reliance with the global needs. Moreover, they enable students to develop their communication competence, and become highly aware about choosing the right time to say an utterance, what to say and how to say it.

In the same line of thought, integrating character education into language learning gives teachers another vision of their pedagogical work, the process of implementing should be planned as a school project. Integrating values in the various aspects of the curriculum, pedagogy and activities. Nevertheless, teachers, separately have the charge to establish the most proper form of character education can be implemented into their classroom activity and the appropriate lesson plan they can follow to successfully deliver the aimed character to their students.

In the Moroccan context, «Madrasas » that were founded in the 13th century, were meant for older children who were brilliant in "Msid" they were venerable universities where young men memorized the Qoran and were taught diverse subjects, namely, the Islamic law or "chariaa", Arabic literature, logic, history and mathematics.

Some of these madrasas are Bou Inania in Fes, Ben Youssef in Marrakech and Abu-al Hassan in Sale, the three religious schools were used to accommodate students of al-Qarawiyyin University, which is considered by UNESCO the oldest continuously operating degree-granting university in the world.

In fact, all these schooling institutions were offering religious education programs, to ensure gratifying Islamic values and morals in the Moroccan society. During the colonial period (1912 – 1956), the French introduced an alternative model of schooling into the Moroccan context, primarily designed to educate personnel to serve in the French colonial administration (Boyle, 2004).

However, the popularity of Quranic schools has not declined because of the absence of moral education in modern public schools. It wasn't until the 20th century that madrasas lost their prestige in Morocco, and other modern universities gained favor.

Today, the degradation of morality and the spread of negative behaviors are distorting the socio moral values among young people, it has reached students from different school levels; namely elementary schools, junior schools, secondary schools, and even higher education institutions.

For this reason, a huge focus should be given to implementing character education programs in all levels as a key point that must be embedded in every student, so as “to counter the Tsunami of this global culture negating Moroccan identity traits and distorting the socio-moral values” (Mansouri, 2011).

In September 2017, the Moroccan council of education, training and scientific research launched a report about the importance of values education as one of the foundations of human life in its individual and social dimensions. It described values education as “one of the major levers of training and qualification of human capital and its ongoing development”. It also stressed the fact that having a successful implementation of values education in Moroccan schools is the responsibility of schools, families, media and many other institutions that are operating in the sectors of education, culture and mentoring.

Some may argue that Morocco does not need an implementation of character education due to the fact that the religion of Islam covers all aspects of the human

life including morality, manners and good behavior. However, values or character education is seen as a necessity for current generations of young people who should have a solid foundation of values and ethics especially in the light of globalization and the effect of media and new technologies on their character and behavior.

2. Research Problem

From my humble teaching experience, I noticed that both school principals and teachers struggle with students' disruptive behavior during the whole school year and this consumes a lot of time and effort that can be exploited in valuable activities.

So, this case study aims at determining how character education affects students' behavior. Even if it can be regarded that some people believe that there is no big importance in implementing character education because of the idea that religion is already playing that role. But, with the spread of technology and the facility of social interaction with different people from various types of cultures who may have different values and moral thoughts as well as the negative effect that social media has on youngsters; an essential need is taking place that is calling parents, educators and stakeholders to consider character education again to be implemented in our Moroccan schools.

In addition to that, the school community has a remarkable impact on both developing and improving students' character. Therefore, everyone is relying on educational institutions to provide students with a considerable amount of academic and moral skills which is not enough. In fact, schools assist students in developing their morality and also help them to foster their character in order to become good citizens that are helpful, independent, successful and caring members in their societies.

Related to this, Kohlberg and Erikson studied the adolescent mind and its need to function in a community (Erikson, 1993; Kohlberg, 1981b). Moreover, programs of character education were developed and implemented based on these behavioral studies, often without clear linkage to resolving specific problems (Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn, & Smith, 2006b).

Another important aspect of character education that is present in various studies (E. Campbell, 1997; Thomas Lickona, 1993; Miller, Rodgers, & Bingham, 2014; Milson & Mehlig, 2002) is the idea that teachers have a huge influence on their student's character in different ways, including, emotional, social, intellectual and behavioral skills because students view most of their teachers as role models who impress them and make them believe in many ideas.

Actually, the teacher may create a moral community, in order to help students respect and care about each other as well as feel valued within the group. After that, setting the rules for a democratic classroom environment is a must, where students are involved in decision-making. Teachers practice moral discipline, using the creation and application of rules as opportunities to foster moral reasoning, self-control and a respect for others, and teaching values through the curriculum by using academic subjects as vehicles for examining ethical values. They use cooperative learning to initiate children to teamwork, as well as they help develop their students' academic responsibility and regard for the value of learning and work.

In brief, the objective behind this study is to investigate the causal relationship between implementing a character education program and student's behavior improvement. In order to achieve this, it is not enough to provide students with reading books full of morals or hanging up posters in which we have quotes that enhance values and good behaviors, but students should be committed to positive and moral behavior as well as they have to be given opportunities to practice the moral actions, they have learned so that they can foster their character.

3. Research Questions and Hypotheses

This thesis primarily aims at investigating the causal relationship between implementing a character education program and student's behavior improvement. Therefore, the research questions that guide the study are:

- How does the implementation of a character education program impact students' behavior?
- How do learning and practicing values at school affect students' behavior?

- How does the use of the curriculum as a tool to teach character traits influence student's behavior?
- How does the modeling of good character traits by teachers impact the behavior of students?

To answer the above questions, the researcher hypothesized the following:

H 1: The implementation of character education in Moroccan high schools' results in students' behavior improvement.

H 1 a: Learning and practicing values at school drives students to improve their behavior.

H 1 b: Using the curriculum as a tool to teach character traits reinforces students understanding and willingness to improve their behavior.

H 1 c: Through modeling positive character traits, teachers inspire their students improve their behavior.

4. Research Methodology

In order to confirm or disconfirm the previously stated hypotheses, the researcher used both qualitative and quantitative approaches to research to triangulate the data. This combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches is the best method to apply in order to answer the questions of the study and come up with a deep understanding of the research instead of using one method alone.

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of implementing a character education program into the Moroccan public school for the sake of reducing violent or negative behavior as well as contributing to students' moral development and behavior improvement. In order to collect the data required for this study, several Moroccan public secondary schools in different regions of Morocco were sampled namely: Al Fath in El Kliia, Homan el Fetouaki in Agadir, Jaber Ibnou Hayyane in Casablanca, Ouadi Eddahab in Assilah, Cadi Ayyad in Marrakech and Imam Ibn Hanbal in Fes.

These high schools were selected from different regions of Morocco in order to guarantee the richness as well as the diversity of the collected data; some schools are even situated in rural areas; thing that is very important because students' behavior differs according to the social setting they were raised in; this implies that students from the north of Morocco may not have the same values compared to students from the south or the east of the country. The same thing concerning students from urban areas contrasted with students from rural ones. There is no doubt that the features of any social setting play an important role in shaping the character as well as the behavior of its inhabitants.

The city of Fes was selected for it is the second largest cities in Morocco and its population has different regional and geographical backgrounds. The city of Agadir was selected for practical reasons. It is also one of the largest cities in Morocco and considered as the centre of the southern provinces of the Moroccan Kingdom. Its population has different ethnic, linguistic, regional, geographical, and socio-cultural backgrounds. Casablanca was selected, for it is the economic capital and the largest city of the country, where economic, social and political activities are more centralized and where different job opportunities are more or less available. Therefore, students would certainly have different socio-educational backgrounds and perhaps have different reasons and motivations for learning the language from students in Assila or Kliiaa, which are small cities, located in the north and the south of Morocco, respectively, and where students come from different socio-educational backgrounds. Marrakech is one of the largest and busiest cities in Morocco. It is also the centre of tourism activities in Morocco and considered as a glocalised Moroccan city. This sample of Moroccan cities, schools, teachers and students has helped to reflect the diversity characterising the Moroccan society.

Moreover, all these selected schools adopt one curriculum, that is the one that the Moroccan ministry of education has set. The education of values is explicitly exposed in the Moroccan national system of education, via many reports and studies, values education is mentioned as "a foundation of human life in its individual and social dimensions". It is described through the official guidelines as "the core of the concerns of the State, society and of the public debate about school,

its missions and its social, cultural and qualifying roles". This guarantees the idea that the Moroccan government is really concerned about the quality of the training that its human capital receives and that will help creating a sustainable development.

In this research, before starting to collect the data, a pilot study was conducted firstly during which the participants were asked about the clarity of all items in the questionnaires. Then, forty students from Agadir, Casablanca and Assilah were given the questionnaire to participate in the pilot study in order to indicate the validity of the questionnaire and to see if some questions are not necessary to include. Some revisions were needed to be done beefier coming up with the final versions of the questionnaires and of course before administering them to the whole number of participants.

Related to this, the researcher conducted the field study during the period of the COVID 19 pandemic, for this reason conducting the survey as well as collecting the data happened to be via the net. The researcher changed the format of the questionnaire into a google form in order to make it reachable to students from different parts of the country, not only the previously mentioned cities. In addition to this, she did the interview with teachers from different regions via telephone calls that were recorded and manuscript later.

Concerning sampling, which is the selection of a sample size from a larger population to survey, this research was done according to web sampling methods, which are also named online surveys. Thus, the researcher chose simple random sampling because it is the most simple and direct approach in order to come up with a random sample. This technique focuses on picking the desired sample size and surveying only that sampled unit. Therefore, through employing this method, the researcher may be confident that the sample is representative of the population that he targets. Moreover, thanks to this technique, there is possibility to come up with appropriate sample statistics and valuate the errors they may contain. So, using a probability-based sampling methodology is very helpful in achieving these objectives.

The participants of this study were selected from different Moroccan public high schools in order to get a broad and at the same time a deep image about students' behavior nationwide. Concerning students, they were all invited to fill in the questionnaire that aims at investigating the presence of character education in Moroccan schools and its impact on students' behavior improvement, so 440 students, from common core, first year and second year of the baccalaureate from the schools already mentioned.

In addition to this, an interview was done with teachers because interviews enable them to express themselves freely and to provide the researcher with the required data. So, forty teachers from different high schools and regions of Morocco were contacted before via emails as well as telephone calls and asked for their willingness to do the interview. This method was used for the sake of gaining a deeper insight into what character education means to them, and also to measure their involvement with this matter.

After collecting the data, analysis was required for both the quantitative and the qualitative one. For instance, the analysis of the quantitative data was principally proceeded by SPSS, that is the statistical analysis software by IBM. Another tool was used in order to help the process of data transcription and transfer into SPSS which is the AMOS software. For the qualitative data, the researcher made use of NVIVO, which is one of the most powerful software tools for gaining deeper insights about qualitative and mixed-methods data.

5. The Rationale and Significance of the Study

From various readings, I noticed that there is a lack of educational research related to the area of character education in Morocco. The review of literature demonstrates that most of the studies in this field took place in the US and other Western countries but only few in Morocco.

This study is significant as it has presented important evidence about the impact that implementing a character education program has on student's behavior improvement. Moreover, it raises the perspectives of both teachers and students towards the amount as well as the form that character or values education takes into Moroccan schools and also provides to high school students. Furthermore, it

explores the level of understanding of character education from both teachers and students.

This study is significant for educators and the stakeholders, as it provides them with valuable information about the present situation of morality, values and character improvement in the Moroccan high schools.

Another contribution of this study is that it will make teachers more conscious about the behaviors they model in front of their students, so it will enhance them to think twice before transmitting any idea or belief to their students, also it will push them to act in an appropriate way that will always impress their students and make them eager to adopt the same behaviors.

Furthermore, this study can also help us understand the challenges that teachers may encounter during the process of implementing character education. Therefore, it will contribute to get rid of some of those obstacles, giving the floor to an efficient character education program to take place smoothly and effectively.

In addition to that, this research will definitely attract the attention of the community to give more importance and to become committed to character education because the aim behind this research is to find out some valuable results that could be helpful for educators, policy makers, administrators and stakeholders to plan and create a suitable framework for an effective character education program that suits the Moroccan culture, traditions, values and religion.

As mentioned before, character education is not a recent issue, it is as old as education itself. (Ryan & Lickona, 1992) claimed that “Wise societies since the time of Plato have made moral education a deliberate aim of school” (p. 6). In addition to this, The Greek root for the word character means “to mark,” which supports the idea that a person’s conduct reflects his or her character (Wynne, 1988). In the past, exactly in during the 1960’s, character education or moral education as called at that time, was the core of the educational system as well as the most important part of teachers preparation programs. Another concept made appearance later which is the “normal schools” or called also the common schools, these schools were designed to train a new breed of teachers for the increasing

number of public schools with the “development of public virtue” a central theme (Glenn Jr, 1987).

However, by the middle of the 1960s, things changed and many people claimed that the united stated public schools no longer shared common values and virtues to teach America’s children. In 1966 Lawrence Kohlberg’s published his theory of moral reasoning which explores the thinking process that occurs when one decides whether a behavior is right or wrong, this resulted in American schools embarking on a journey through values clarification and moral dilemma discussions (Leming, 1993).

Values clarification and moral dilemma discussion dominated education in the United States during the 60’s and the 70’s. According to values clarification approach, the teacher acted as a facilitator in helping each student clarify his or her own values by following a prescribed process that contains seven values.

According to this later, the teacher has not to influence the student and has to keep his personal opinions to himself and by the end respect and accept any values the student decided as the right ones to adopt.

Accordingly, Kohlberg approached in his moral dilemma discussions that the teacher needs to facilitate as well as assist his students in the moral thinking process while they are solving moral conflicts, and make sure that the discussions are happening in a value free environment. The target behind both approaches was the cognitive development of moral reasoning, since they both stressed that teachers have to be objective, not judgmental and were not to moralize (Leming, 1993).

According to (Leming, 1993), the research base for the moral and values education curriculums of this period offered little assistance in planning for character education where changes in student behavior were a central objective. This happened during a period of crisis when the traditional family togetherness was disappearing from the American society. However, the social problems faced by public education during this time, such as violence, racism, teen pregnancy, low self-esteem, and drug and alcohol abuse, were the very problems that character education addressed (Battistich, 2005).

According to a report of the National Research Council conveyed in 1992, the United States was the most violent of all industrialized nations (Thomas Lickona, 1993). In fact, the reasons behind the increase in youth violence that was witnessed at that time, were the raise in the single parent family; which means that the presence of a father or mother was missed in many families, also there was an issue of poor parenting.

In addition to that, there were many cases of physical and sexual abuse of children, the excessive use of drugs and also a new tendency of collecting money, desiring power and declining respect for life. Another contributor to the increase of violence among Americans was the mass media with the spread of tv programs and movies in which explicit violence, weapon use and sex were displayed.

Related to this, (Schaeffer, 1999) mentioned, in his article named 'it's time for schools to implement character education', that the permissibility of guns and the pervasiveness of violence in television, movies, and music play a role and result in today's out-of-control youth, drug abuse, and other social issues.

Similarly, in Morocco, young people seem more and more disconnected and alienated; they most of the time don't have strong and meaningful relationships with their parents or other adults in the family or outside the family, because many of them are exposed to a huge negative influence from the mass media, video games, and the more importantly from the internet. For these reasons, Morocco needs to come up with a new consensus concerning core values that surpasses cultural, political, and religious frontiers.

Moreover, these core values should be responding to the requirements of modern character education such as: respect, caring, responsibility, honesty, responsibility, citizenship and fairness are the basic traits of character education programs that are known internationally. In doing so, there will be a huge positive effect on the violent, dishonest, irresponsible, and negative behavior of the students of today since everything we see today is the result of the absence of a good character implementation.

However, others believe that there is no meaningful link between good character implementation and the decrease in students' negative behavior. In this context, (Black, 1996) claimed that "Kids seldom practice what their schools' character education programs preach" (p. 29). In her research, a small positive correlation between what students learn at school about good character traits and the extent to which they adopt as well as display them inside and outside the school.

Nevertheless, in order to end up with a successful implementation of character education in our Moroccan schools, these later must be familiar with research on child development and behavior before designing and implementing character education programs (Rich, 1991), he also added that "There is no such thing as honest and dishonest children, only honest and dishonest acts" (p. 293). According to his approach, the behavior of a child depends on the situations and circumstances he or she poses through.

As mentioned before, character education can't be effective if we focus on hanging on banners, slogans, and visual aids on the school's notice board. More that, the facts of reading short stories that contain morals or writing essays on values or even reciting those values are not enough to make students adopt a good behavior as well as they will not totally change a student's behavior.

Accordingly, (Ryan & Lickona, 1992) claimed that schools need to do more than concentrate on the cognitive side of character, he stated that schools need to bring students to the emotional side of character, where they feel and commit to virtuous behavior, and to the action side of character, where students change inappropriate behaviors and practice positive moral actions.

Related to this, (Wynne, 1988) claimed that many teachers focus only on how students reason about moral issues rather than how they conduct themselves; whereas they both play an important role in influencing a person's character. On the other hand, society never gives importance to what or how students think, but rather how they conduct themselves within their social environment. For example, a student is judged upon the values he or she displays like politeness, trustworthiness, respect, cleanliness, caring and many other traits of good character.

Accordingly, (Beane & Apple, 1995) stated that students learn values, morals, ethics, and character traits through the normal realities of their daily lives in schools. This means that students learn values and character traits from what they daily observe around them at their school environment.

6. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is composed of four chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the theoretical foundations of the research study. It concerns the literature review which tackles first of all the development as well as the background of character education and its principles, the theoretical frameworks that underpin character education starting from moral development theories to the learner centered approach, also some of the most effective programs of this kind of education, then the implications and obstacles that face its implementation and more importantly the background of character education in Morocco.

The second chapter focuses on the methodology used in this research; which comprises the research design, the settings participants, data collection instruments, procedures of collecting data, and finally the methods of data analysis.

In the third chapter, there is an analysis of the collected data for both the quantitative and the qualitative data of the research. So, concerning the quantitative part of the study analyses the data collected from the questionnaire that is addressed to students through the use of the SPSS and AMOS programs of analysis. On the other side and through the use of the NVIVO software, the qualitative part analyses the semi structured interviews conducted with teachers with open-ended questions. In brief, this chapter presents the findings of the study in relevance to the research questions and the related literature of the topic.

In the final chapter, that is chapter four, there is a thematic discussion of the most important and significant findings of the study as well as its limitations. Moreover, there is a section about the implications for practice, suggestions for further future research, a summary of the discussion and of course the conclusion of the study.

Chapter One

A Review of the Literature on Character Education

Chapter One: A Review of the Literature on Character Education

1. Character Education: Emergence and Definition

1.1. The Emergence of Character Education

Character education is as old as education itself; it is an umbrella term used to describe many aspects of teaching and learning for personal development. Some areas under this umbrella are moral cognitive development, social and emotional learning, moral education/virtue, life-skills education, caring community, health education, violence prevention, conflict resolution/peer mediation, and ethic/moral philosophy. The U.S. Department of Education describes character education as:

"a learning process that enables students and adults in a school community to understand, care about, and act on core ethical values such as respect, justice, civic virtue and citizenship and responsibility for self and others" (Ed.gov, 2006, p.1).

Accordingly, character education helps students learn core qualities and values that help them to respect themselves, appreciate others and seek excellence in all aspects of their lives. In a study by Boyer (1987), he focuses on the need for values/character education in different ways, asking various questions to draw people's attention to the importance of values and ethical life for all.

The most known program of moral education at present is character education (Joseph & Efron, 2005). Moral education is not synonymous with character education, but it is only one possible model for implementing moral education in the public school. This point is dealt with in the following section.

Character education emerged within the colonial period in America, more specifically, in the Massachusetts colony where various groups from Europe settled. At that time, it was known as moral education, meaning education that has as a core target promoting morals instead of teaching merely academic content. (Huffman, 1993) wrote that, "our early schools treated the transmission of knowledge as

secondary to character development. Students needed to be literate in order to read the Bible”. This implies that during that time young students went to schools to become literate to be able to read the most influential book of that time that is the Bible.

Related to this, (Algera & Sink, 2002) noted that, "the Bible served as the primary textbook for reading and the daily lessons reinforced commitment to moral codes of behavior based upon scripture" (p.45); this implies that moral education had as a primary goal making students adhere a certain moral behavior that is in harmony with what the Bible states.

One of the first groups who settled in the colonies was the Puritans of the New England. This group advocated for the learning of the Bible as they believed that it included all aspects of morality. For them, the first responsible about educating morals and modeling them was the family then, of course, the school. Thus, teaching was overly directed by morality and teachers were expected to enhance moral education (Mann, 1957).

This supports the idea that the Puritans viewed the family as the principle provider of moral education. They expected the family to take the primary responsibility for educating the child with moral values, with apprenticeship, schooling, and the church serving as important supplementary institutions (McClellan, 1999). All these efforts were meant to produce children who would be good in the sight of their creator as well as for their families and communities. This implies that in colonial America, public schools had mainly a moral purpose, and were based on christian principles. According to (Galbraith, 2015) school textbooks “contained 100 percent moral and religious content”.

At that time, education had as a fundamental role helping people become good before helping them become smart. The real purpose was absolutely to enhance children develop a set of morals and good behaviors through learning religious content.

Communities believed that a system of education that would instruct their children based on moral virtues and good habits will not only be positive on their personal

live but also on the positive development of the society as a whole. Thus, most of the religious groups in America including the Puritans, Protestants, and Catholics shared similar approaches to the task of developing a child's moral character.

Consequently, parents required their children to tightly adhere those morals and values since, for them, developing children's character stems from the adoption of religious roots. Related to this, (Doyle, 1997, p.43) wrote "From the time of the ancient Greek to sometime in the late 19th century, a singular idea obtained: education's larger purpose was to shape character, to make men (and later, women) better people". During this period of time, education adhered to a direct approach incorporating student discipline, the teacher's example, and the daily school curriculum (Thomas Lickona, 1993). Teachers used to use the Bible as the source for both moral and religious instruction.

In this context, (Noddings, 2005) gave a historical context to education in the early 1800s by noting that, "Public schools in the United States as well as schools across different societies and historical eras were established as much for moral and social reasons as for academic instruction" (p.23). In the same context, (DeRoche & Williams, 2001) indicate that two main targets for educating children and youth are cognitive development related to their academic achievement and character formation, which includes personal values and civic competencies. Thus, character is regarded as a socio-moral competency that includes moral action or behavior, values, emotions, reasoning, identity, and finally the personal basic characteristics.

As the new country developed, many voices started to ask for the separation of church and school. One of the noted figures responsible for the establishment of public schools is Horace Mann. In 1837 Horace Mann, a young lawyer from Massachusetts became secretary of the board created to oversee public schools in Massachusetts. Mann called this education system common Schools. As a trial to encompass the diversity of the different ethnic groups settled in America, Mann had the belief to "use education to fashion a new American character out of a maze of conflicting cultural traditions. His tool was the common school" (Mann, 1957, p.54).

This was an effort to produce a school system that would gather most of the school age population, thus creating a common culture. Accordingly, the transition from church schools to public schools lasted almost 100 years (Mulkey, 1997). From the end of the 18th century and early part of the 19th century was the transition phase as (Ryan, 1993) stated that the early educational pioneers understood that a very diverse and multicultural America was needed. Moreover, they believed that the school would help students understand what being good meant, and teach the habits needed for having a democratic citizenship.

However, the encounter of some controversies with the Bible and doctrine choices have led educators to change the reference and use the McGuffey Readers which became a fundamental textbook for schools across the country.

William Holmes McGuffey is a teacher that contributed in the early American character education movement. He used his instructional experience and love for the field of education to develop a specific system for teachers to use in the development of student reading. Students learned to read, while gaining content information and acquiring moral growth, through the use of various forms of literature. McGuffey felt the need to understand each student on a personal and compassionate basis, his book assisted students in visualizing morality in practice also making connections to materials and events that they saw in their everyday lives.

As pointed out in the previous paragraph, the McGuffey readers “retained many favorite Biblical stories but added poems, exhortations, and heroic tales” (Thomas Lickona, 1993, p.23). In addition to containing stories from the Bible, as well as larger than life stories of heroes, poems, and universal truths to develop students into good citizens. It also taught values of frugality, cleanliness, honesty, hard work, dedication, patriotism, and obedience (Field, 1996). Obviously, the nineteenth-century textbooks were clear on civic virtues (Levy, 2000). They promoted love of one’s country, love of God, duty to parents, honesty and hard work. All these characteristics were integrated in the textbooks to train young people morally so as to become a strength for their country.

The 1980's saw an increase in nationally developed character education programs like The Character Education Partnership (Thomas Lickona, 1996b). By the late 1990's states were legislating the addition of character education programs into curriculum, generally with the purpose of teaching respect, honesty, and civic responsibility (DeRoche & Williams, 2001). This belief did not change until the nineteenth century when the common culture and traditions were threatened by an influx of immigrants who came to America with diverse religions and cultures (Leming, 2001).

The arrival of people coming from different countries such as: Ireland, Germany, and Italy, as well as people from different religious backgrounds such as Jews and Muslims into the New World, created a new multicultural society, because every group was trying to establish its own moral school to raise up their children on a strong foundation of morality and good manners.

Consequently, educators started thinking about moral education again which was not easy to be accepted by all as it indicated religious education, (Kreeft, 1986). As a result, the term religious education was replaced by character education, which means the development of good individuals with good habits. In other terms, fostering students' character by teaching them good morals to adhere in their daily life.

However, In the late twentieth century, it was recognized that schools were ignoring moral education. Consequently, many unpleasant incidents happened in different schools such as shootings that took place at schools and that left many injured and killed students. Then, voices started to be heard again advocating for moral education and accusing education as the cause for all behavioral problems among young people. For the same reason, educators started expressing their concerns towards morality and tried to solve their problems through following two approaches, that will be discussed in the following section about values clarification and cognitive developmental moral education.

Furthermore, character education will help draw teachers away from strict textbook teaching and ready-made lessons, it will give them the opportunity to focus on each

student individually. This type of education strives on making every student a rational and ethical human being. Instead of only focusing on the textual information and core subjects, character education will make students view their own personal values and become aware of how their actions affect people in their environment.

Thus, by teaching children core values in character education, students will learn how to respect themselves which will hopefully decrease negative behavior in schools and help to mold students into good citizens throughout character education programs. In sum, character education is something very ancient that has been existing since the creation of schools as pointed out in this section on the development of character education starting from the eighties arriving to the twentieth century. Obviously, there are various approaches for teaching character education that will be presented and discussed in the following section.

1.2. Defining Character Education

The implementation of character education seems condemned to fail without a clear and a deep understanding of the word character and its interrelation with the development of moral reasoning. It sounds then appropriate to start with the definition of character that will lead to adequate understanding of character education, and will ensure a successful implementation of it in the future.

Character is derived from the Greek word « charaktêr » that refers to a mark impressed upon a coin. In a general sense, this word means the distinctive nature of something, or in others words, the accumulation of qualities that discern one person from another. The character of a person points to its permanent mark of stability and to its organizing principle that integrates behavior, attitudes, and values. It is a set of psychological characteristics that impact the behavior of a person.

There have been various attempts to define precisely and concisely the word character. One of them assumes that it is a “body of active tendencies and interests” that makes one “open, ready, warm to certain aims and callous, cold, blind to others” (Pietig, 1977). Many others believe that character refers to the set of qualities that can be used to differentiate between people.

Nevertheless, in philosophy, the term character is typically used to refer to the particularly moral dimension of a person. For example, Aristotle most often used the term “ēthē” for character, which is etymologically linked to “ethics” and “morality” (Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2015).

Character then may be defined as “ a complex set of psychological characteristics, formed in part by growth in cognition that enables a person to act as a moral agent ” (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004, p.45). To put it differently, it is a set of psychological characteristics that affect the person’s ability and inclination to function morally, to do the right thing or not to do it. (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999) have defined people of good character as individuals who know the good, love the good, and do the good. In other words, knowing the good involves the assimilation one can have about the good and the bad, which infers the way a person would act in a certain situation, analyses it then takes the good decision about it. Loving the good includes living with a set of moral feelings that guides the person to adhere the good and escape the bad. Doing the good is the final step that comes after a moral recognition of what is good and a possession of moral emotions that lead the person to do the right thing after considering thoughtfully the conditions.

This means that, to own a good character is not a simple matter but it is a whole process. (Baumrind, 1992, p.15) explained it, “to plan their actions and implement their plans, to examine and choose among options, to eschew certain actions in favor of others, and to structure their lives by adopting congenial habits, attitudes and rules of conduct.”

(Hunter, 2008) defines character as the amalgamation of three elements: moral discipline, moral attachment, and moral autonomy. He suggests that character is a fusion of those three moral factors, and that it is not only influenced by the individual differences in being aware of and assimilating moral norms but also with different social and cultural factors that determine individuals moral behavior or more specifically character. “It would be nice if there were consensus on what is meant by the term character, but unfortunately, that is not the case” (Berkowitz, 2002, p.78). In common language, we use the term character to refer to a person’s goodness.

As an example, we can say that this person has a character, or in another situation shows a lack of character. In both cases, the implication is that we are referring to some enduring characteristic of the person, although that is not always the case, the person's lack of character may be out of character for him/her, for example a person refraining to argue could be taken as a sign of weakness from other while for him it is a sign of strength and self-control.

The picture is even muddier when we examine how the term character is used technically. Some do not systematically distinguish between moral and nonmoral character, whereas others either restrict their definitions to the moral domain or systematically separate moral from nonmoral aspects of character. Even when these distinctions are made, the criteria often differ; e.g., Nucci considers the moral domain to comprise universals, however, Lickona makes the difference between universal and non-universal morality. For some, character is pure personality, whereas for others it is mainly behavioral. Many exclude cognitive functioning from their definitions of character. Some are comprehensive in their definitions, others not; some specific, others fairly global.

It seems evident that both character and moral behavior should be accepted as interrelated. An individual with a good character must have the ability to know the good, desire it and without any doubt do it and act it out. Nucci proposed that morality necessitates that the individual must behave in ways that are coherent with his moral judgment. This means that the person's own moral understanding of different matters has to be demonstrated in his sense of personal responsibility and behavior.

That is why defining character is a quite complex matter. One can denote various concepts such as: habits, traits, and virtues as three interdependent but connected foundations of moral character. Consequently, character as a complex constellation of psychological dimensions of a person. Thus, defining what psychological characteristics affect moral functioning is meant to contribute in understanding the moral person, or more specifically moral anatomy.

This later means the psychological components that make up the complete moral person. There are seven parts to the moral anatomy: moral behavior, moral values, moral personality, moral emotion, moral reasoning, moral identity, and foundational characteristics.

Moral character, as mentioned before, is an illustration of certain personality traits called virtues that dispose one to habitual courses of action. Habits and traits carry a heavy semantic load in the history of psychology that complicates their being used in the context of character education with much conceptual clarity. Virtue is a notion derived from ethics but has very little traction in psychological science unless it is translated into terms such as “habits” and “traits” that are themselves larded with conceptual implications that are controversial. In sum, this emphasizes that building a character depends partially on the individual’s moral development.

On the basis of the discussion above, it becomes obvious that defining character is not an easy task. Though, it defined at many times as a complex psychological concept that entails the capacity to think about right and wrong, experience moral emotions like guilt, empathy or compassion, also engage in moral behaviors such as sharing, donating to charity and simply telling the truth, believe in moral goods, demonstrate an enduring tendency to act with honesty, altruism, responsibility, and other characteristics that support moral functioning.

The Character Education Partnership was launched in March 1993, as a national coalition committed to putting character development at the top of the nation’s educational agenda. Members include representatives from business, labor, government, youth, parents, faith communities, and the media.

The eleven Principles of Effective Character Education are the cornerstone of CEP’s philosophy on effective character education, they serve as guideposts that schools and others responsible for youth character development can use to plan and evaluate their programs. Each principle shed the light on vital aspects of character education initiatives that should not be overlooked in program implementation.

The Quality Standards provide more specificity by including two to four items to address what each principle should “look like” when implemented (Tom Lickona, Schaps, & Lewis, 2007).

Accordingly, programs that adopt character education should as a first principle promote core ethical values as the basis of good character. Secondly, the school has to define “character” comprehensively to integrate thinking, feeling, and doing. This means that students are allowed to explore and express their feelings and experiences as they relate to the core values. Thirdly, the school uses a comprehensive, intentional, and proactive method to character building, it creates a plan for character education that may be taught in class, sports, meetings, and co-curricular activities. As a fourth principle, a caring school community should be created by incorporating numerous activities such as cross-age mentoring, cooperative learning, peer mediation, and anti-bully programs.

After that, the school provides students with leisure time for moral action to make them engage in positive and responsible action through activities such as student body governance and service-learning projects.

The sixth principle claims that the school should offer a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all students, creates their character, and supports them to succeed, in other words, it has to challenge students academically via activities such as providing engaging content, critical thinking exercises, and experience- based projects.

In addition, fostering students’ self-motivation is the school responsibility, this latter should foster a culture of self-motivation by recognizing students’ character and presenting opportunities for them to excel and even help create the behavioral norms and rules. Another standard is about considering the school staff as an ethical learning community that shares responsibility for character education and effort to adhere and release the same core values that guide the students.

Furthermore, the school fosters shared leadership and long-range support of the character education initiative, it involves stakeholders (i.e., faculty, parents, students, community members) in the feedback process by implementing a

committee or task force and demonstrating clear lines of support for character education initiatives.

Tenth, the school engages families and community members by opening up communication, creating leadership roles for parents and community members, also supporting other initiatives involved in the character-building process such as after-school programs.

Finally, the last principle deals with the regular assessment of the school culture and climate, the functioning of its staff as character educators, and the extent to which its learners manifest best character (Tom Lickona et al., 2007).

These principles help to explore the general ideas that give direction to practices, each principle outlines important aspects of character education initiatives that should not be neglected in the program implementation. An effective character education program should be based those principles and at the same time impacts the curriculum, the extra-curricular activities, the prosocial relationships, the classroom communities and more importantly the staff development. In short, the eleven principles of effective character education propose fundamental guidance for educators and community leaders to maximize their character education outcomes and ensure the efficiency of the program.

2. Theoretical Framework

Before examining various programs available to school systems and state education boards, it is important to understand the need to teach character in high school. The goal is to know what outcomes we desire in young adults (respect, integrity, and community responsibility), how these relate to the specifically stated core values, and, lastly, how we teach these behaviors.

By examining developmental principles outlined by behavioral psychologists, practitioners such as teachers and administrators know what level of moral interaction children are capable of attaining. This information justifies specific program characteristics as appropriate, because we know that children understand the underlying need for them.

These characteristics derived from studies of successful character education programs (Cunningham, 2007; Pirkle, 2013). The most important theoretical studies concerning students and their ability to rationalize integrity and community come from Kohlberg and Erickson.

Specifically, two very different approaches to understanding moral development have gained wide-spread attention in recent years, according to (Tappan, 1998). He defines these two approaches as the cognitive-developmental approach and the character education approach. In the cognitive-developmental approach, students pass through specific stages that mark changes in underlying structure of moral thought.

Joseph and Efron (2005) note that this approach can be linked to the “just community” world. Students form a democratic community and foster a sense of collective responsibility when asked to deal with moral dilemmas that arise in their community.

On the other hand, the character education approach is much more traditional and sticks to teaching children a core set of values, often by using stories or narratives (Tappan, 1998). However, Tappan (1998) feels that neither of these widely debated approaches to moral education is entirely effective on its own, but rather a Vygotskian socio-cultural perspective would successfully combine the best elements from both approaches.

2.1. Moral Development Theories

Character is a collection of attitudes and behaviors an individual act out according to his own moral reasoning. It is what makes each one of us unique and original within the society. It is the link that gathers both critical thinking and moral reasoning, and it is this fusion that makes us act in the best way possible in different life situations. In brief, it refers to the best we can be intellectually, socially, ethically, and emotionally.

However, a convergence of personality psychology and trait theory would instead assume character to be plural and made up of having virtues, strengths and dimensionality. Complicating the matter even further, one’s “character” is also

embedded in and influenced by one's setting and situation. A person can be a character or can have character or have their character shaped by his/her environment.

(C. Peterson & Seligman, 2004) state that character strengths are the psychological mechanisms that drive the virtues. In other words, virtues are traits that are considered cross culturally and historically to be morally good like humanity, justice, honesty and respect are all virtues which are valued positively by philosophers and religious thinkers alike. For example, the virtue of wisdom can be achieved through the strength of one's creativity, curiosity and open-mindedness.

Character strengths are similar in that they involve acquiring and using knowledge. (C. Peterson & Seligman, 2004) also focus on situational themes and the habits that lead people to manifest strengths of character in varied circumstances acknowledging that people both bring and take different things from the environment and varied situations.

According to (C. Peterson & Seligman, 2004), the study of character had at one time been very important to the field of psychology. That is until Gordon Allport, one of the main personality trait theorists of the twentieth century explicitly banned the term "character" from psychological academic discourse, believing it was better suited to philosophy than psychology. However, John Dewey, Allport's contemporary, disagreed and believed that character and virtue were topics to be included in the study of psychology and the use of empirical methodology could inform philosophical discussions of character. Further more, Edward L. Thorndike a behavioral psychologist wrote extensively on character and its cultivation. He believed that one's environment and setting was crucial in shaping one's character and that morality/character could be quantified in the same way that intelligence could.

Erik Erikson offered one of the first examples of a psychologically informed categorization of character strengths with developmental precursors (C. Peterson & Seligman, 2004). According to Erikson, all people pass through a set of stages.

Once a stage is successfully completed the person develops a character strength which allows him/her to enter the next stage. Maslow also offered a scheme which could be recast as a classification of virtues and strengths. Maslow's personality theory is based on a hierarchy of human motivation characterized by basic needs that when met lead to self-actualization. He theorized that until the basic physiological needs were met, people would not be motivated to accomplish the higher leveled needs.

Accordingly, Piaget developed a pioneering analysis of how children's cognitive development and stage development influenced their reasoning about morality and behavior. Kohlberg continued this work but was interested in moral reasoning and not moral behavior (C. Peterson & Seligman, 2004). In fact, Kohlberg believed that morality moved through stages and was constructed by children rather than acquired from parents, teachers and/or other agents. Kohlberg acknowledged that his theory of moral psychology had philosophical implications (L. Nucci, 2006).

In addition to this, positive psychology refocused the discourse toward the positive aspects of human development and experience and is characterized by three aspects: subjective wellbeing, positive character and positive institutions. For our purposes, the focus on positive character "includes the personality traits and interpersonal skills needed for optimal development" (Benninga et al., 2006b, p.692).

The perspective presented by (Berkowitz, Sherblom, Bier, & Battistich, 2006) labels character as a socio-moral competency. Its definition is multi-faceted and psychologically based, incorporating moral functioning identified as moral action, moral values, moral personality, moral emotions, moral reasoning, and moral identity. It is a complex set of psychological traits that develop over a person's life span but most specifically throughout childhood.

Therefore, childhood is the ideal time for emphasis on character development, with the family as the primary, initial and predominant locus of impact. As Nucci notes, "Evidence that children at all points in development are capable of evaluating actions and social norms in moral terms means that educators may engage students in critical moral reflection at all grade levels"(L. Nucci, 2006, p.79).

So far, ethical approaches to character have maintained that all human behavior has moral significance and character growth and development is demanded of individuals. Each individual one's character is a personal set of psychological traits fostered through interactions within one's social realm. This view supports the idea that children's moral reasoning, behavior and traits can be influenced by their environment.

2.1.1 The Cognitive Developmental Approach

The origins of this approach return to the theory of Piaget, Dewey and Kohlberg which is founded on critical thinking, problem-solving and other cognitive methods in dealing with social issues.

To start with, Piaget's approach is related to the way that children think rather than the way they act, which means his theory is concerned with moral thinking and judgment rather than moral behavior. He coined his theory as a result of observing a game played by children; he used to watch children playing and to act ignorantly to be able to ask them questions about the rules of the game he observed (Piaget, 1932). According to him, observing that game can allow to discover the whole culture of those boys through the way they understand the rules of the game and especially the way they interact with each other while playing.

In addition to this, Piaget believes that moral development occurs in two stages. The "stage of moral realism" and the "stage of autonomous morality". In the first stage, children's behavior is characterized by autonomic obedience to rules without reasoning or judgment. This means, children view parents and all adults in authority like teachers for example as omnipotent and follow the rules without thinking critically about them. In this stage of moral development, children judge acts as "right" or "wrong" in terms of their consequences rather than in terms of the motivations behind them.

During the second stage of moral development, children judge behavior and start changing the strict and inflexible notions of right and wrong, learned from their parents or teacher. are gradually modified. Following Jean Piaget's cognitive development approach, Kohlberg believed that the aim of moral education was to

stimulate students' development of moral judgment. In his research, Kohlberg proposed dilemma discussion and the Just Community School as an effective approach to moral education. Kohlberg's dilemma discussion encouraged students toward a higher stage of moral reasoning through peer discussion and the interactive exchange of ideas.

One of the best known of Kohlberg's stories is the Heinz dilemma in which which he used to ask people to explain their choice if they were put in similar situations. On the other hand, Kohlberg's Just Community Schools had for the purpose to create a moral atmosphere through the practice of democratic governance, and the building of community solidarity.

In his theory, Lawrence Kohlberg demonstrates that a child's moral development has six stages within three levels (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989). Kohlberg develops his theory by extending Piaget's theory of moral reasoning development in which he divides moral development of children into six stages within three levels in which each level has two stages.

Kohlberg asserts that moral development is an ongoing process that continues throughout the lifespan. He also highlights the importance of "moral dilemmas" for the development of the moral levels. Hence, schools, including, principals and teachers should thrive to help students develop their moral sense. (Kohlberg, 1981a) stated that: Principals help guide decision making and ensure that teachers develop a sound moral system by being good role models to young people, assess conflict situations, gain valuable attitudes and values, and assist students in implementing appropriate behaviors in adverse peer situations (p. 11).

Generally speaking, Piaget's two stages of moral development were the basis for Kohlberg's six stages. Kohlberg's theory includes three levels of moral reasoning. The three levels that Kohlberg described are Level 1: Pre-Conventional morality, Level 2: Conventional Morality, and Level 3: Post-Conventional morality. Each of these levels are divided into two stages, for a total of six stages (Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2007).

During these stages the child develops from obeying the rules just to avoid punishment to evaluating and judging actions according to what serves his/her needs, then to acknowledging the importance of being nice to others. After that, comes stage four and five where the person start thinking of society as a whole while making judgments and respecting the rules to maintain social order.

Finally, in stage six, the person respects universal ethical principles and abstract reasoning the whole community follows. Kohlberg was interested in moral reasoning more than moral conclusion which was considered as a defect in his theory later.

While Kohlberg discussed evaluation as a judgement to actions, Dewey believed that valuing and evaluation are two different concepts. He defines valuing as a personal attitude toward something, as an illustration to this, people could esteem something with an uncritical attitude. On the other hand, he proposes that evaluation is a process to critically appraise a value within a specific situation. People could value many things, but the important thing is to decide which value to follow in a particular situation.

According to Dewey, core ethical values need to be judged in a pragmatic sense while virtues are habitual behaviors which show high moral standards; virtue of character is a habit of behaving in a certain way (Caspary, 1991). Dewey did not object to teaching certain virtues but believed that humans could accomplish more “impossible” things if they developed certain virtues.

To sum up, valuation which is the process of estimating each value within a specific situation with a critical perspective, was more important because we cannot solve problems with the same familiar patterns of thought. A new problem might require us to deliberate about what action should be taken to accomplish a specific goal. Therefore, character education should provide students opportunities to deliberate about core ethical values and apply the virtue of critical evaluation to a specific situation. (Liu, 2014)

Furthermore, (Dewey, 1996) claims that each virtue “cannot be given a fixed meaning, because each expresses an interest in objects and institutions which are

changing” (p113). For him, virtues depend on the influence of both social and physical environments. Which means that each virtue may show different moral effects according to different social environments. We may not separate the concept of each virtue from the concrete situation. Moreover, virtues are not isolated from each other. On the contrary, different virtues act together in different situations.

Another assumption of character education is that students can learn moral knowledge through reward, or punishment. Character education usually teaches character through literature such as in the example of the McGuffey readers books. But for (Dewey, 1996) “When knowledge of bacteria and germs and their relation to the spread of disease was achieved, sanitation, public and private, took on a moral significance it did not have before” (p144).

According to him, to gain moral knowledge is not fulfilled by learning what the main moral principles were, but the act of deciding which moral principle is relevant to a particular social situation. For Dewey knowledge is a product of scientific inquiry and so is the case with moral knowledge. Therefore, character education should add more moral problem solving in its practice.

In summary, Dewey’s concept of moral inquiry and moral deliberation is not as easy to teach as the six moral stages of Kohlberg’s. Nevertheless, the concept of moral deliberation provides a basic foundation for Kohlberg’s moral development as well as for character education.

2.1.2 The Moral Psychological Theory

The moral psychological theory is based on the consideration that children’s character or moral education is related to the learning of moral virtues. This theory claims that we need to engage our children in activities that make them think critically about moral and ethical questions, inspire them to become committed to moral and ethical actions, and give them ample opportunities to practice moral and ethical behavior (Verly, 2010).

Thomas Lickona has defined character education as “the deliberate effort to help people understand, care about, and act upon core ethical values.” (Thomas Lickona, 1991) In his book, *Educating for Character*, Lickona emphasizes that schools should

help students understand core values such as honesty, responsibility, respect and courage.

Moreover, he asserts that “When we think about the kind of character we want for our children, it’s clear that we want them to be able to judge what is right, care deeply about what is right, and then do what they believe to be right—even in the face of pressure from without and temptation from within.” (Thomas Lickona, 1991)

In this way, character education should emphasize the importance of learning values through (VIN) ‘values in action’ (Thomas Lickona, 1991). In one of his studies, educating the moral child, he asserts that:

Character has three interrelated parts: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior. Good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good—habits of the mind, habits of the heart, and habits of action. We want our children . . . to judge what is right, care deeply about what is right, and then do what they believe to be right—even in the face of pressure from without and temptation from within. (p. 51)

According to his perspective, many elements should be taken into consideration in order to make values effective for example caring for the emotional human aspect (empathy, respect, honesty, self -discipline). Furthermore, owning certain skills to communicate with others properly, such as carefully listening to others.

More importantly, having the will to act upon those good values, and finally, responding ordinarily which means having an inner response to any situation in an acceptable manner. In other words, it is the head-heart-hand approach, which aims to impart knowledge while for example teaching values, developing reasoning skills and responsible decision making, also inculcating values through promoting reflection on thoughts, feelings and behavior, and finally motivating students to take the right actions.

Another important matter according to Lickona is, character education is based on shared objectives and significant ethical values, such as caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility and respect (Thomas Lickona, 1996b).

This means that, parents, teachers and other members of the community are all key players that share the responsibility to implement an effective and efficient character education program by supporting and enhancing positive character. Nevertheless, it could be presumed that schools committed to character education should share ethical values and at the same time ensure that students, teachers and other school employees are modeling them as well as using them as the heart of their communication.

It seems evident, then, that whenever and wherever character education takes place, must provide many and varied opportunities for young people to act—to live out their developing values and ideals, and to reflect on what they value in light of their lived moral experience (Ryan & Lickona, 1992, p.20).

Related to this, Lickona introduced Character Education Holistic Approach (Thomas Lickona, 1993), which explains that every aspect of the school contributes to the right implementation of character education. This approach is divided into two dimensions: classroom strategies and school wide strategies.

Classroom strategies comprise various components. First of all, the teacher should act as a role model and a mentor to provide his students with care, because the caring atmosphere encourages children to act ethically, and build strong relationships with their teachers, so the role of teachers is modeling the right behavior and providing students with clear instructions and strategies that will foster their ethical learning.

Second, encouraging peer culture and creating an ethical learning community in which students assist each and share mutual care and respect. Consequently, when students practice ethical manners daily, it becomes something habitual that will by time become part of their character. Third, students should understand the moral behind each rule or regulation. They have to acknowledge the good or the bad behind each of their behaviors.

Another important tip for teachers is to ask students help them with the discipline of the classroom, so they feel the responsibility of keeping the classroom disciplined all the time. Fourth, the classroom should be a democratic environment where

students feel valued and respected, as well as a place where they can share decisions and responsibility together to make it the best place for learning.

Another important strategy is using the content of the curriculum as a means of teaching character. This would reinforce the students understanding of morality and love for goodness all the time and through all subjects. Moreover, the teacher can provide students with cooperative learning sessions in which they will develop their academic knowledge as well as their team work techniques. Developing a conscience of craft is a very important strategy as well, students have to own a habit of doing their best in everything they do be and be responsible toward their academic success, in such a case, teachers should be good role models.

Related to this, teachers should encourage students to ethically reflect through different tasks, for example research, discussions and reading. While doing these tasks, students will develop their moral reasoning, thus, they will become able to explain why certain things are good while others are bad and they can make the right moral decisions accordingly. Closely related to this, (Thomas Lickona, 1993) asserts that, “character education must be approached comprehensively to include the emotional, intellectual and moral qualities of a person or group” (p. 7).

Finally, teaching conflict resolution is an important component in classroom strategies in which students can listen, understand each other and express their opinions with tolerance and open-mindedness. This strategy is primordial not only for children to solve their problems in the classroom but also for their reallife situations.

The second dimension of the approach is about the school wide environment. (Berkowitz, 2002) claims that “Effective character education is not adding a program or set of programs to a school. Rather it is a transformation of the culture and life of the school.”

It is fundamental to create a whole school culture based on morals and ethics, because living in a positive and ethical culture would definitely encourage students to develop good character easily as all people around the school show a good level of ethics and morality.

In addition to this, students have to be aware of the fact that caring is not only for their classroom peers, but also to everyone they meet or interact with. They should understand the importance of caring about others and having the desire to help them. In this sense, schools should provide students with opportunities of community service in their schools to develop the sense of helping those who are in need.

Furthermore, and for this program to be effective, parents and communities must be encouraged to contribute in the building and developing of students' character. Schools should involve parents who are the primary ethical educators of their children in planning and in the implementation of character education. In addition to the active participation of the whole community, including youth organizations and media which help in enhancing and fostering good character.

(Leming, 1993) noted in one of his studies that there is sound progress in students' achievement whenever there is a positive school climate. Similarly, (Williams, 2000) found that the teachers who participated in his study agreed that three aspects are necessary for developing students' character, including having teachers as their role models, conducive classroom and school climate and an atmosphere of mutual respect. (pp. 32-40)

In a different study, (R. L. Peterson & Skiba, 2000) explained that students' success is directly related to the parental involvement and cooperation between the school and the parents. (pp. 155-174). Certainly, schools can not function effectively without the active involvement of parents in their system to help ameliorate their children's characters as they are the basic source in building and fostering good character traits in their children. Another important contribution to this issue is (Stott & Jackson, 2005) study in a particular school where a plan was prepared for the students' character development.

The educators planned a kind of comprehensive guidance that fulfills the philosophy of the school. The study proved that within the school's positive atmosphere, teaching certain values and concepts such as being responsible and showing respect to others is influential. The project was immensely successful and

students proved that they become better people, able to face difficult situations in life and capable of solving their problems by the usage of what they have learnt at school. (pp.156-160)

Similarly, (Bulach, 2002) believes that for any character education program to succeed, it should be comprehensive; covering all aspects of the children's daily life, including, school's culture, teachers, parents and the whole community. As emphasized in the previous paragraphs, this section aims to shed the light on Lickona's holistic model which gives an importance to building a positive school culture where students' character can be developed and fostered continuously.

Furthermore, based on Lickona's comprehensive model, (Tom Lickona et al., 2007) have developed eleven principles of effective character education, for the sake of helping in evaluating the efficacy of character education programs at school. The principles are summarized as follows; the first suggests that a basis for effective character education a promotion of core ethical values and supportive performance values is needed.

The second is about defining character to include thinking, feeling, and behavior or in others words head, heart and hand. The third urges using a comprehensive, intentional, and proactive approach to character development. The fourth, enhances the importance of creating a caring school community. The fifth, insists on teachers to provide students with opportunities for moral action.

The sixth, proposes to include a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character, and helps them to succeed. The seventh, calls of fostering students' self-motivation. The eight, talks about the responsibility that the school staff share as a learning and moral community for character education and attempts to adhere to the same core values that guide the education of students. The ninth, fosters shared moral leadership and long-range support of the character education initiative. The tenth, engages families and community members as partners in the character-building effort. The eleventh and the last, assesses the character of the school, the school personnel functioning as character educators, and the extent to which students manifest good character.

Consequently, the implementation of these principles would be very helpful in evaluating the efficacy of character education in any school.

To sum up, character education includes the application of a holistic approach that enhances core values which help develop morality in students' character; this latter must be supported by students, teachers and the whole community, then of course integrated into all aspects of the school's scenarios, including classrooms, playgrounds and even transportation means.

(Thomas Lickona, 1989) affirms that, to strengthen students' moral side, they do not only need to know the right, but also to understand it, feel it and have the desire to do it. This means that students have to build their own ethical knowledge through encountering different situations that will enable them to think morally about values they have learnt such as honesty, respect, trustworthiness and others, then feel those values and apply them in real life situations.

2.1.3 The Approach of Values Clarification

The approach of values clarification is based on a theory in which students can choose any moral alternative without any interference from their teacher. It claims that values must not be imposed but chosen freely by students. The teacher's role, according to this approach, is to facilitate the way for students to choose their values freely according to their own moral reasoning with of course, weighing the consequences of each alternative they have chosen. Advocates of this theory claim that students are able to distinguish between right choices and wrong choices depending on their moral reasoning and not on their teachers' guidance, it asserts that students develop, through this approach, high capacities of moral reasoning so they can judge which values are better than others.

On the other hand, teachers in this approach are neutral and they are not allowed to direct students to any personal or community value. simply, this approach means that all values are acceptable and they do not have any wrong or right and teachers are only facilitators for values and for moral dilemmas (Thomas Lickona, 1991).

By the middle of the 1960s, many people considered that public schools in the United States no longer shared common values to teach America's children. In

1966, with the publication of Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral reasoning, American schools embarked on a journey through values clarification and moral dilemma discussions (Leming, 1993).

During this period of time, values clarification and moral dilemma discussion overpowered the education programs in the United States. In values clarification, the teacher acts as a facilitator while helping each student clarify his or her own values by following a prescribed seven-step valuing process, the steps include choosing freely; choosing from alternatives; choosing after thoughtful consideration of the consequences of each alternative; prizing and cherishing; affirming; acting upon choices; and repeating (Raths, Harmin, & Simon, 1987, p. 199–200). In addition to this, the teacher never attempts to influence the student and retains his or her personal opinions. Thus, after the valuing process, the student opts for a specific value and his decision should be respected by the teacher. Similarly, Kohlberg's moral dilemma discussion claims that the teacher has to facilitate students' reasoning, assist students in resolving moral conflicts, and ensure that the discussions took place in a value free environment.

However, both values clarification and moral dilemma discussion did not deal with behavior. In fact, according to (Leming, 1993), the research base for the moral reasoning and values clarification curriculums of this period provided little assistance in planning for character education where changes in student behavior were a central objective. Briefly, both approaches were not sufficient for implementing good character, and more importantly, they underestimated the school's role as a moral socializer instead of urging them to help children understand the core values, adopt or commit to them, and then act upon them in their own lives.

2.2. The Socio-Cultural Theory

It was during the post-revolutionary period of the 1920s that Vygotsky began his quest for a new psychology to bring together a unified notion of the way in which students learn and develop (Holland & Valsiner, 1988).

The sociocultural approach of Vygotsky suggests that cultural development passes through two levels, first the social level then the individual level. It clarifies the way that children develop their characters academically and morally taking into account the differences between cultures. According to Vygotsky, learning is a social procedure that firstly takes place in societies then integrates into the person's intellectual structure as a result of interaction with others. This means that all learning was first accomplished through the language that flows between individuals. Accordingly, language and action, for Vygotsky, were tools of mediation for learning.

Since language is part of students' cultural heritage, speaking helps to reorganize students' thinking as they interact with others. This leads extra development of language and action. (Wink & Putney, 2002) argued that this belief is the 'cornerstone of the difference that Vygotsky made in conceptualizing how 'students think, learn, and develop' (pp. 28, 29).

It is possible to deduce that every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (inter-psychological) and then inside the child (intra-psychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals (, p.57Vygotsky, 1978).

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

In this context, Vygotsky's model refers also to Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which describes what a child can do independently and his real potential when he gets help and guidance from others. This implies that the environment in which the child lives an also people that surround him including his peers, parents and teachers can affect his character development, especially if they are more capable so they can act as guides or modals for him.

As pointed out before, according to Vygotsky, much important learning by the child occurs through social interaction with a skillful tutor or mentor. The tutor would model behaviors and provide verbal instructions for the child. Vygotsky refers to this as cooperative or collaborative dialogue (Vygotsky, 1978).

After, receiving the instructions, the child looks for understanding the actions or instructions provided by the tutor which can be a parent or a teacher, then internalizes the information, using it to guide or regulate their own performance. This process is called scaffolding, (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976) define scaffolding as a process "that enables a child or novice to solve a task or achieve a goal that would be beyond his unassisted efforts" (p. 90). It is, therefore, an effective way of supporting the needs of the learner and giving them direct opportunities to achieve success in an activity that they would previously not have been able to do alone.

Similarly, Vygotsky developed the "zone of proximal development" which captures those functions or abilities which have not yet matured, but are in the process of maturing and can only be accomplished with assistance (Tappan, 1998), or in other words, scaffolding.

Another meaningful contribution to Tappan in this context is that "Moral education entails a process of guidance, it is a dialogue-rich environment, filled with guidance and modeled behaviors that can be seen as the most successful way to implement character education in a school" (Tappan, 1998, p.67).

Therefore, students are guided and assisted in their efforts and thus their new forms of moral thinking become internalized personal. It is the guided practice of practical activities that leads to students' internalization of moral thinking (Tappan, 1998).

2.3. The Social Cognitive Theory

This section is concerned with the Social cognitive Theory of Bandura which explained how people acquire and maintain certain behavioral patterns, while also providing the basis for intervention strategies (Bandura, 1997). In order to understand the level of character development of students in the schools, it is a must to determine how teachers regard and implement character education into the curriculum. One of the main assumptions of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory

(1986) was that learning is a triadic reciprocity between the environment, personal factors, and behavior.

In sum, the theory provides a framework for understanding how people actively shape and are shaped by their environment. In particular, the theory details the processes of observational learning and modeling, and the influence of self-efficacy on the production of behavior.

Generally speaking, people are social beings who can prosper only in society, relational virtues of tolerance, civility, respect, justice, and fairness, in addition to self-oriented virtues, play an important role in shaping behaviors so an individual is acceptable to society.

Harvard professor Rick Weissbourd wrote (Benninga et al., 2006b), “The character development of a student does not depend primarily on explicit character education efforts but on the maturity and ethical capacities of adults with whom they interact” (p. 11). Subsequently, the process of children interacting with adults may they be parents or teachers, develop and shape their own character virtues.

This is what Bandura called observational learning, the process through which people observe and imitate models they encounter in their environment, an that enables them to acquire information in a fluent and a quick manner. For example students who spend nearly eight hours a day, five days a week in school, they are inevitably affected the most by teachers, and this is why character education is primordial.

Similarly, (Slavin, Lake, & Groff, 2009) claim, “We will never greatly improve students’ character development in schools without taking on the complex task of developing adults’ maturity and ethical capacities” (p. 54). Therefore, the best support students can receive to develop their character is to help their teachers manage the stresses of their profession and increase their capacity for reflection and empathy towards their students.

In the same context, (Noddings, 2002) argues that the teacher (and any other caring adults in the school system) must model for children, show care for others, and

provide opportunities for discourse among students in order to reach common understandings for others. More specifically, Bandura suggests that:

Observational learning occurs through a sequence of four processes: (a) attention processes that determine whether the child pays attention to the modeled behavior; (b) retention processes that determine what a child remembers of the modeled behavior; (c) behavioral production processes that determine how what was seen is incorporated in one's own behavior; and (d) motivational processes determining the attractiveness of the modeled behavior to the child (Bandura, 2001, p.37).

Furthermore, Bandura hypothesizes that observational learning is not related only to the adoption of new good moral values and behaviors, but also may enforce or weaken existing values. For example, a child's moral thinking and development may differ according to the content offered within the environment.

To conclude this section, it is interesting to note that in the social-domain theories, moral reasoning is developed in accordance with the child's interaction with socializing agents in different social settings (L. P. Nucci, Turiel, & Encarnacion-Gawrych, 1983).

Children construct different forms of social knowledge, including moral knowing as well as other types of social knowledge, through their social experiences with adults and peers. (L. P. Nucci, 2001) argues that the moral judgments of children do not stem directly from institutional social systems, but from traces inherent in social relationships, including experiences that entail damage to others, the violation of some rights, and conflicts between opposed claims. In brief, the theory details the processes of observational learning and modeling, and the influence of self-efficacy on the production of behavior.

2.4. The Learner-Centered Approach

The learner-centered approach is an approach that positions the learner as an equal partner in the teaching-learning process. (Newble & Cannon, 1989) explain that "Learner-centeredness is both a concept and a practice in which learners and teachers are equal parts of learning and teaching processes" (pp.15-16).

The objective of the learner-centered approach is to develop the child as a member of society (McLachlan, Flear, & Edwards, 2018). In addition to this, it has to provide a pedagogical framework for the teacher to meet the needs and interests of the child. The child is the center of the teaching and learning environment. Within this ideology, the student needs are met and not those of the teacher, staff and the wider community (McLachlan et al., 2018).

Moreover, learner-centeredness provides learners with a sense of autonomy and skills to process information, solve problems, make decisions and become responsible for their own learning. Therefore, it assumes that learners go through experiences that foster their autonomy and develop their responsibilities. More specifically, the needs of the learner are the main core of the learning process.

In addition to this emphasis, the primary aim of learner-centeredness is to make the learner responsible for his/her learning, to make the learning process more effective. In learner-centered classrooms, students feel responsible for their learning, they also contribute to their learning by bringing to their classroom experience in terms of their perceived needs, motivations, past experiences, background knowledge, interests and creative skills.

Certainly, students are not blank sheets that need to be filled with academic knowledge, but rather active individuals who have to contribute in constructing their own knowledge. Closely related to this (OUAKRIME, 1991) notes that “learners need to have some air in their lungs; that is they should be autonomous, independent and responsible learners” (p. 91)

Many education systems are based on the authoritarian style of teaching and “only when the teacher’s authority recedes can the learner be thrown back on his own resources.” (McLEAN, 2012) added that “teaching is not so much a process of cramming outside knowledge into the learner’s mind as drawing out the knowledge that each of our students has within him” (pp. 270-272). This implies that in learner-centered classrooms, the teacher organizes learning activities with meaningful themes which are relevant to learner’s daily life situations, he also aids learners improve their critical thinking.

In addition to this, he creates opportunities for them to make choice of their own projects at the same time he gives them the freedom to work at their own pace. Another tool, is that the teacher provides students with opportunities for collaborative learning, varies the use of instructional strategies and methods to make them fit student needs, then encourages shared decision making, and more importantly encourages learner autonomy and responsibility (Meece, 2003, p.113) .

Similarly, McLean suggests that there is a “clear need for the content of language-teaching materials to involve the learner to relate to his needs, interests, and moral concerns” (McLEAN, 2012, p.271). This enhances the importance of the reliability of materials used in the classroom and their role in the success of the learning process.

In the same context, Kisserli added that materials needed for a learner- centered syllabus must be “comprehensible (...) appealing to learners, challenging, varied and authentic.” He also advises that the mere focus on classroom materials is not enough and that learners have to find outside- classroom materials. “This search for materials best suited for them will increase their sense of self-directed learning” (KISSERLI, 1991, pp. 38-39).

In brief, promoting the learner centered approach in teaching is a desirable educational outcome necessary for the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process. Unlike traditional approaches, the learner-centered approach gives great importance to the learner as a central part of the teaching-learning process. This approach enables students to become active learners that are responsible for their own learning, and also empowers their own choices based on their learning needs and interests.

3. Effective Programs of Character Education

For many generations, social scientists have studied the development of humans from childhood to adulthood. Behavioral theorists (B. Hart & Risley, 1995; Kohlberg, 1958) and others claimed that students understand the distinction between self and others by adolescence. Furthermore, they made the deduction that students, at this age, are attracted to social groups for mutual advancement. Within

these social groups, students have the opportunity to learn the importance of academic and personal integrity.

Relying on these developmental theories, (D. Hart & Carlo, 2005) concluded that school based character programs needed to reflect community values. In fact, the aim of these programs is to supply adolescents with models that they can utilize when encountering conflicts either at home, school or any other environment. In the following sections, I will discuss three programs that are mostly used worldwide.

3.1. Lickona's Character Education Partnership

The most widely used program in America is Lickona's Character Education Partnership program (Thomas Lickona, 2009). As a result, institutions that adopt it in whole or in part showed an 89% decline in suspensions and an 87% improvement in state reading and math scores (Stedje, 2010).

The following eleven principles below serve as criteria that institutions can use to plan or evaluate a character education program. (Thomas Lickona, 1996b) suggested 11 principles:

- 1 - Character education promotes core ethical values as the basis of good character.
- 2 - "Character" must be comprehensively defined to include thinking, feeling and behavior.
- 3 - Effective character education requires an intentional proactive and comprehensive approach that promotes the core values in all phases of school life
- 4 - The school must be a caring community.
- 5 - To develop character students need opportunities for moral action.
- 6 - Effective character education includes a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners and helps them succeed.
- 7 - Character education should strive to develop students' intrinsic motivation.

8- The school staff must become a learning and moral community in which all share responsibility for character education and attempt to adhere to the same core values that guide the education of students.

9 - Character education requires moral leadership from both staff and students.

10 - The school must recruit parents and community members as full partners in the character-building effort.

11 - Evaluation of character education should assess the character of the school, the school staff's functioning as character educators, and the extent to which students manifest good character.

The program promotes core ethical values such as respect and responsibility. According to it, the school is the agent of change within the community, of course with the active cooperation of students, parents, teachers, and administrators, whom involvement is essential to the success of the program.

3.2. The Character Counts Program

The second program is the character counts which was developed by The Josephson Institute for Ethic. The program was praised by president Obama on National Ethics Day in 2012 (Obama & Panetta, 2012). Unlike Lickona's program, Character Counts is based on the six core values and its principal target is to develop respect within oneself and also towards others, thing that leads to better academics and reduced relational disciplinary issues like fighting and personal crime.

During the period between 2004-2006, Character Counts claimed a 47% decrease in suspensions and a 61% increase in honor roll members at schools that used their program (Barrett, Bradshaw, & Lewis-Palmer, 2008). Furthermore, another used program, particularly in California and Maryland, is the Smart and Good schools which was sponsored by the Josephson Institute and incorporated moral development along with performance achievement (Davidson, Lickona, & Khmelkov, 2008).

Similarly, Smart and Good Schools promote ethics through creating an ethics team within the school, fostering self-assessment of development goals, and declaring the relationship between character and academic success.

Related to this Davidson stated that “Character education ... stands at the very center of schooling; it is not conducted as an ancillary or even parallel sequence with academic instruction...” (Davidson et al., 2008, p.84). In the same book, Davidson identified four key roles for integrating character into academic life:

- Students need a work ethic and self-discipline to achieve their best academic work (Integrity).
- Students develop these traits through active and rigorous coursework (Respect, Integrity).
- Students need a sense of fairness and respect in the classroom (Respect).
- Students develop these traits through feedback and interaction with peers and adults (Community).

In brief, through these character education programs, students are taught to behave a good way with themselves first then with others. The programs are more effective when implemented throughout the course of the school day because it provides students with opportunities to apply what they have learned about character education in the school and also at home. Therefore, character education programs should be integrated into all subject areas, in order to help teachers, parents and school counselors, work together as a team to reinforce the curriculum and make it effective.

3.3 The Montessori Model

Numerous character education models have been set to help teachers and students on their mission to build a caring environment of self-character. One of them is the Montessori model developed by Maria Montessori. This latter thought that the most intriguing problem that faces humanity is the way of educating a child.

Maria Montessori observed that the origins of a child's character surfaces within the first six years of life (Vardin, 2003). Montessori states that the environment in which a child is exposed to will influence his or her future character development.

A child's true personality will evolve naturally with the help of providing the child with "productive activity" that teaches right from wrong (Vardin, 2003). (Pring, 2001) defines these activities as "strands of truth, correctness, validity, appropriateness without which there would be no struggle to improve, no searching for the most precise account, no refinement of one's feelings as they are embodied in one's best endeavors" (p. 103).

In this context, Montessori claims that by giving importance and practicing positive behaviors, negative traits such as laziness and disorder will be replaced by traits such as sociability and discipline (Vardin, 2003). Therefore, Montessori applies her method of character education in a classroom setting in order to be able to observe children's engagement in a positive environment and with one another. Consequently, she identified seven important virtues cultivated as a result of her teaching method. First of all, she observed that concentration was the basis for a child's character development and social behavior.

In this method, the given environment offers multiple materials and activities for a child to choose from, which enables (Vardin, 2003) "to engage deeply and concentrate, helping them to form and shape their character" (p.33).

One virtue which very important in the process of shaping character is perseverance, it is highlighted through the teaching strategy of scaffolding and repetition where the "child learns to start and complete an activity which is an important trait for future careers" (Vardin, 2003, p.33).

In addition to perseverance, patience and respect follow next on the list of observed virtues in which the child learns to deny personal impulses and wait for his or her turn. Helpfulness is another virtue that takes place naturally in the Montessori classes since it gave older children the opportunity to help younger ones, in this context Montessori affirmed that "goodness must come out of reciprocal helpfulness" (Vardin, 2003, p.34).

Furthermore, responsibility is learnt through team work, where students have the duty to accomplish a group work activity while keeping the classroom organized, these kinds of activities promote voluntary obedience that arises not as a result of fear or authority, but rather from a wiliness to recognize adult's superiority. The final virtue is self-discipline, it emerges when the child is placed in an environment with vigorous activity, free will, and working with others.

As a conclusion, character education programs, such as the Montessori Model of Education, teaches children at an early age the important virtues of good character through fostering moral thinking and action in students that will surpass any time period or textual information learned, yet these qualities must be nurtured by trained and passionate individuals. This method have as an aim not only making good students but also creating good human beings. Good character qualities will surpass any time period or textual information learned, yet these qualities must be nurtured by trained and passionate individuals.

4. Implications and Obstacles

4.1. The Implementation of Character Education and School Environment

The school climate or environment has a great impact on the success of the implementation of a character education program.

“We reap what we sow. When we have children, we sow more than biological seeds. We also plant the seeds of moral development.... The best way to teach values is for (adults to) exhibit them... who can blame children for refusing to imitate us if we pretend to virtue when we have it not?”
(Weiner, 1995, p. 19)

This means, to implement successfully character education in an environment, it has to be a dialogue-rich environment, filled with guidance and modeled behaviors, in this way it can be said that character education is successfully implemented in a school.

In the same context, (Bulach, 2002) claims that, "Students have to talk about each character trait and its implications, but they also have to see the behaviors modeled by the people in their daily environment" (p. 81). This engages the parents as the primary and most important moral educators of their children, and also the school which has a primordial role to play, cooperating with parents in this effort and also with teachers who act as caregivers, models and facilitators, treating students with love and respect, setting a good example, supporting positive behavior and correcting negative actions.

According to (Hardman & Smith, 1999), "Rules can serve as a powerful tool in developing and promoting positive interactions" (p. 178). Here, it is interesting to point out that teachers and administrators must work together to promote prosocial behavior and instill strong character in their students. After setting the rules, teams of teachers, staff members, and community members must focus on the tiered system and design interventions for each level (Muscott, Mann, & LeBrun, 2008).

In fact, the teacher may create a moral community, in order to help students, respect and care about each other as well as feel valued within the group. After that, setting the rules for a democratic classroom environment is a must, where students are involved in decision-making.

Teachers practice moral discipline, using the creation and application of rules as opportunities to foster moral reasoning, self-control and a respect for others, and teaching values through the curriculum by using academic subjects as vehicles for examining ethical values. They use cooperative learning to initiate children to teamwork, as well as they help develop their students' academic responsibility and regard for the value of learning and work.

Moreover, teachers may as well encourage moral reflection through reading, writing, discussion, decision-making exercises and debate, and they teach conflict resolution to help students learn to resolve conflicts in fair, non-violent ways which will have a positive impact not only on their academic achievement but also on their daily life.

Related to this, (N. Campbell, 2004) studied nine teachers in four diverse urban school settings, her overall objective was to develop an understanding of the moral and ethical complexities of educational practice as well as teachers' interpretations of these complexities. Data collected through personal interviews with the teachers as well as visits to the schools demonstrated that "Often teachers' actions of a moral and ethical nature are not planned or consciously executed, however, teachers can articulate with depth and intention what they hope to achieve morally and ethically in their classrooms and how they hope to facilitate it" (p.425).

As described before, the daily acts of character education in schools are largely spontaneous, but teachers can still perceive and explain them within a moral framework. Unprompted teachings in variations of the "Golden Rule" were abound in classrooms along with the mutual feeling that if teachers show respect to their students, then students will start respecting themselves (N. Campbell, 2004).

In fact, teachers strive to be seen modeling by the same principles they want their students to adopt. Pearson and Nicholson claim that good character needs to be taught from a "do as I do," not simply a "do as I say," perspective. (Pearson & Nicholson, 2000).

For this reason, to make this perspective meaningful a comprehensive character education program should be a collaborative effort of administrators, teachers, counselors and parents" (Pearson & Nicholson, 2000). Teachers may become overwhelmed if they feel that the hard task the moral development of students lies solely on their shoulders. Pearson and Nicholson are convinced that it is through the collaborative efforts of the school community that character education can be implemented to the fullest.

In addition, (Bulach, 2002) claims that, "Everyone in the school community should be involved and the process and progress should be evaluated" (p.81). For this reason, it is important to take into account, while implementing a character education program, that schools are just a part from a larger community, thus, there should be an observation to know the characteristics that are valued, present or lacking in the student body before proceeding to the implementation.

Similarly, school-based character education programs need high support from all stakeholders in the community such as: educators, parents, community leaders, youth service groups, businesses and faith and charitable groups. In this context, (Tom Lickona et al., 2007) state that when a comprehensive approach to character education is used, a positive moral culture is created in the school, a total school environment that supports the values taught in the classroom. This is accomplished through the leadership of the principal, school-wide discipline, a sense of community, democratic student government, a moral community among adults and opportunities to address moral concerns.

In brief, schools, parents and the community cooperate as partners and foster caring beyond the classroom by using inspiring role models and opportunities for community service to help students learn to care by giving care. Furthermore, strategies implemented for a successful character education program should account for the egocentric nature of primary students as well as the socio-centric characteristics of students in the upper-elementary grades, claim (Pearson & Nicholson, 2000).

Suggestions to empower committed administrators, teachers and counselors are given by (Pearson & Nicholson, 2000) to promote the achievement of character education that serves the students and school community and retains that collaboration is the key to success.

As part of a school-wide approach, administrators should look to create focus groups of parents and teachers, hold school assemblies, utilize morning announcements, newsletters, recognition programs, staff development programs, hall displays and school and community projects. Teachers can work toward developing classroom rules, using positive language, being conscious of phrasing choices, direct instruction, learning partners, appreciation time, mentoring, journal writing, cooperative activities, literature-based discussions, class meetings and parent links. Counselors can help facilitate teachers' efforts in several ways including: consulting, developing behavior management plans, classroom guidance activities, parent education, conflict resolution and individual and small-group counseling (Pearson & Nicholson, 2000).

Another strategy for integrating moral education into academic content areas is academic service-learning. In order to assign students with a service-learning project, the teacher according to (E. L. Brown & Howard, 2005) could be providing a resume writing service to unemployed homeless. In this case, students would be directly practicing writing and vocational skills, and at the same time, facing ethical issues about government responsibilities toward the homeless, poor, or abused. In this case, the benefits of moral education abound both academically and behaviorally for students.

In addition to this, integrating character education into the curriculum stays an intriguing matter. (Aitken et al., 2005) claims that "Effective character education is not an addition to an already crowded curriculum, but rather uses existing curriculum, the school culture and the relationships within the school to define and model good character"(p.1). This relates to what psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg calls the hidden curriculum in education that is the school culture and relationships (Yüksel, 2005). In his research related to school culture, (Bulach, 2002) found that, "Students are more likely than teachers to know what goes on in bathrooms, hallways, and buses, or when teachers' backs are turned" (p.80).

The hidden curriculum of the school environment provides the framework for students' moral development, though it is often overlooked. Much attention is placed on the formal curriculum for moral development: textbooks and other educational materials. It is, however, the creation of a moral atmosphere or culture that can most profoundly affect the moral development of students at school (Yüksel, 2005).

4.2. The Role of the Teacher as a Character Educator

The role of the teacher in English Language Teaching Classrooms is not only about teaching the linguistic structure of the language but more than that the teacher has a main role as a character educator. The way the teacher inculcates the character traits through been a role model in teaching good character traits and moral virtues to the students.

Character education builds on what already happens in schools, and most teachers see character cultivation as a core part of their role. Considerations of character, of the type of person students hope to become, should be the core of teaching and education; and the virtues acquired through experience by students are in the first place under the guidance of parents and teachers who serve as role models.

Similarly, by (Harmer, 2004) a good teacher is the one who has personality and doesn't hide it from the students so that she or he is not only a teacher but a person as well and it comes through the lesson. This means that any teacher is in the first place a human being, not just a robot explaining the lessons. The teacher has a character, and that character has to be shown to his/her students; the way she or he acts in front of the students play a crucial role in building students' character. In brief, students like teachers who have good personality traits and strong character, they imitate those teachers.

In the same context, in order to be a good teacher, one needs to be or to do some efforts to become: a person of good character who also exemplifies commitment to the value of what they teach, to own character and integrity is more important than having a personal style in class, and it is no less important than the mastery of the subject content and techniques of instruction. For that reason, teaching a subject with integrity includes more than helping students to acquire specific knowledge or skills.

Effective teaching is underpinned by first of all ethics, then language that enables the school community to have discussions upon character so that it spreads all subjects teaching and learning. It also models commitment to the forms of excellence or goodness inherent in the subject matter: the qualities of craftsmanship, artistry, careful reasoning and investigations, beauty and power of language, and deep understanding made possible by the disciplines. This commitment is crucial for students to learn the value of what is taught and learned, to come up with work that is good and personally meaningful. According to (Lumpkin, 2008) a teacher's integrity is observed by the students and they evaluate the character of their teacher based on how they are treated and taught. There are five major moral virtues that teacher can model in classroom for the students which are honesty, trust, fairness,

respect and responsibility. In relation to this, she explains these five points as follow.

First of all, honesty, the teacher displays the trait of honesty by always telling the truth and acting in an honorable way which includes fulfilling the promises and commitments such as maintaining the confidentiality of the student records and marks. This also implies not lying, cheating or stealing as teachers fulfill their professional responsibilities. As an illustration to this, when the teacher promises the students about submitting the assignment in certain time and will give the feedback of students' work in given time, she or he has to make it happen, it is a simple model that teacher can give to the student to filling up honesty as character to the students.

Second, trust, a honest person is with trusting. Trust is a belief in others that develop whenever people fulfill their promise or commitments. For example, while giving students marks; the teacher should have their own grading rubric, so that every single assessment that they do and the students' achievement can be well recorded, when the students asking their point, teacher can explain where it comes from, thus the student will fully trust this teacher. Third, fairness, claims that all students have the same opportunities to meet the standards in tests and receive an appropriate grade; it is related to the trust of the students to their teachers. When the teacher has his own grading rubrics and assessing the student in the same way, teachers will have an explanation to give when the students ask about their achievement, but although the students have same opportunity to get a good grade, it still depends on how well the students are trying to get the best. In other words, the students still have the possibility to receive a different grade.

The next is respect. Respect means the teachers care for the students as unique individuals. Developing a respectful sense of community within the class is vitally important. The teacher who models respect will always appreciate each individual student, even when the behavior of some may be less than worthy of this respect; he or she must not forget that they are the model to follow, and disrespectful students will by time imitate their positive behavior.

The last virtue is responsibility. Teachers demonstrate responsibility by being morally accountable for their actions and fulfilling their duties. Responsible teachers are well prepared for each class and provide prompt and constructive feedback to students to help facilitate the learning process. This way, they will definitely gain their students respect and trust.

Similarly, from the Islamic educational point of view, moral or character education is more important than any secular education. In this kind of education, teachers are always considered as students' role models, and students show respect to their teachers as to their parents. According to one of the most influential Islamic scholars Al-Ghazali, who mainly focused on the education of character and virtues.

The view of Al-Ghazali about moral education was based on the reciprocal activity between the teacher and the learner; he believed that moral education becomes effective when students take their lessons to heart and put them into practice in their own lives. Teachers are considered as both moral exemplars and moral guides to their students. Al- Ghazali defined morality as a stable state of the soul which drives a person to attain good habits and perform good works that benefit both the person and society (Alavi, 2008)

However, many teachers find it difficult to address ethical issues in the classroom. Although many teachers possess a strong interest in moral issues, they are not always adequately trained to reflect critically upon and convey moral views to their students in a sophisticated way. In short, implementing character into education, especially into English language learning is needed and has to be integrated into curriculum, lesson plans and also to the teaching and learning materials. Thus, the role of the teacher as a model in teaching character and moral virtues has to be valorized, for the reason that the first thing that students easily imitate in classroom is their teacher.

4.3. Classroom Strategies and Activities

Classroom strategies are one effective way to integrate character education, and an opportunity for the teacher to ameliorate students' behavior as well as guarantee their engagement. Some of these strategies are dealt with in the present section.

4.3.1. Cooperative Learning

According to (Lie, 2002) cooperative learning is a student-centered, instructor-facilitated instructional strategy in which a small group of students is responsible for its own learning and the learning of all group members. Students interact with each other in the same group to acquire and practice the elements of a subject matter in order to solve a problem, complete a task or achieve a goal.

There are numerous models of cooperative learning that can be used by the teacher in classroom activities, such as “Inside Outside Circle” which is an activity that equips the student with an opportunity to share with their classmates in the circle, this will help foster students’ respect towards each other. Through this experience, the feeling of unwillingness to share and cooperate with certain students among the class will fade away.

Another activity that is also useful to build students’ character is “make a match », according to this activity, the students have to find their partner which share the same topic with them, no matter who is their partner, each pair has to be honest in showing their topic and trust each other in matching their idea. This will teach the students how to be honest, trustful and fair.

More importantly, classroom activities that the teacher chooses, have to be appropriate with the material that will be delivered. They must take part in the lesson plan and function as a booster for students to grasp unwittingly the character traits desired.

4.3.2. Role-Plays and Classroom Discussions

To begin with, integrating role-plays and discussions in the classroom can be effective to sharpen critical thinking and develop an appreciation of ethical aptitudes (Rosnow, 1990). This implies that using role-plays into the classroom to tackle a particular subject from the curriculum tend to motivate students’ active engagement with ethical issues, and boosts students’ critical, analytical, argumentative and verbal skills.

However, this role-play activity should be done in an enjoyable and non-threatening way (Douglas & Johnson, 2010). This means that, students are exposed to ethical dilemmas through different situations, then they are given time to discuss with each other or in groups while the teacher is constantly monitoring them and more importantly respecting their reactions and judgements whether positive or negative.

At the end of the discussions, students should be able to understand their own ethical assumptions, and compare them with the acceptable norm. At the end of the activity, students will be able to understand any bias that can distort the ethical standpoint or be convinced in eliminating any ethical ambiguities that may exist in their minds (Rosnow, 1990).

4.3.3. Decision Making

The action of making a decision is a difficult one, that is why, the teacher should initiate his/her students to the idea that before making a decision, one should consider prior understanding about reasoning and human beliefs in order to improve his/her abilities to decision- making. (Peirce, 1877) claimed that the entity of reasoning is to find out, from the consideration of what we already know, and something else which we do not know.

This means that the validity of any decision is purely based on a fact and not merely on thinking. Pierce added that reasoning is good if it is a true conclusion from true premises, and not otherwise. Both effective reasoning and ineffective reasoning are possible, and such fact of reasoning is the foundation of the practical side of logic (Peirce, 1877).

Related to this, (Chowning, 2005) proposed ways in which teachers can play a primordial role in encouraging students' personal decision-making through initialing their students to different skills, such as how to listen respectfully to the positions of others, overcome prejudices, and communicate opinions reasonably on matters that differ from their sentiments or views. As mentioned before, the action of decision making necessitates a wide scope of other types of knowledge which always include values and personal knowledge, environment, technology, ethics, civics, politics, laws, economics, public policy and ecology (Riera et al., 2002).

Furthermore, the basis on which the decision is founded is very important because students, when contributing in the decision making process, they give priority to values over scientific evidence since values are more important in culture and hence influence their decision-making process on most socio-scientific issues involving them (Aikenhead, 2005).

Similar to this latter, (Peirce, 1877) described the difference in decision making about belief and doubt. He claimed that students give priority to values over scientific evidence because values are embedded in the students' culture, and they find doubts in scientific evidence. This implies that, when encountering this situation, students tend to eliminate the doubts to attain a calm and relaxed state of mind that influence their decision-making process.

Therefore, in the process of decision making, students apply what they have already learned about analyzing and more importantly selecting the data that supplies them with valuable information which they will use to decide. Further definitions of decision-making were proposed in the research of (Sadler, Chambers, & Zeidler, 2004) which was based on students' responses. In this latter, students were provided contradictory reports about the status of global warming, and were asked to read the reports and answer the questions set by the researchers.

As a result, (Sadler et al., 2004) found that nearly half (47%) of the students lacked adequate conceptions of scientific data (data confusion and data recognition) presented to them. This entails that some students had the ability to recognize data but not to describe its significance while others could not even differentiate among data, unfounded opinions and predictions. In short, according to these observations, moral development is an important factor when talking about the strategies of decision-making.

4.3. Students' Engagement

Student engagement is increasingly viewed as one of the keys to addressing problems such as low achievement, boredom and alienation, and high dropout rates (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). Accordingly, students who are engaged tend probably to perform well on standardized tests and are less likely to drop out of

school. That is why, the conditions in which the learning process takes place may or may not lead to student engagement.

In order to implement character education the school staff must become a learning, caring, and moral community in which all share responsibility for character education and attempt to adhere to the same core values that guide the education of students (Tom Lickona et al., 2007). Thus, student engagement is a condition to come up with an effective character education program, it is defined to comprise student thinking, feeling, and behavior. Moreover, it has to promote a challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, helps them to succeed, and aims to boost students' intrinsic motivation. Accordingly, schools should provide opportunities for students to act morally and acknowledge appropriate moral responses.

Therefore, cultural differences may create ethical disagreements, for this reason Students should be inspired to "learn and practice science for negotiating within and without familiar settings and situations" (Zeidler, Sadler, Simmons, & Howes, 2005, p.56). This implies that different cultural backgrounds may give rise to some confusions. For this reason, teachers have to choose concisely the issues that stimulate debate and discussion without the raise of cultural gaps. For example, students may be asked to debate and discuss a current issue (e.g., brain drain, global warming...).

Finally, schools that provide opportunities for students to learn autonomously and with, and to develop their sense of competence, "students are more likely to be motivated, to engage and succeed" (Zepke & Leach, 2010). In other words, students engage when they act as their own learning responsible agents, while working hardly to attain targets that they had set before.

4.5. Obstacles on Implementing Character Education

Numerous obstacles are found in teaching morals and implementing character education into the curriculum. Character education focuses on moral concepts, manners and civility, and shapes students' personality, values, attitudes and habits in their development (Benninga et al., 2006b). Since character education takes a

broad approach, it often blurs the line between moral concepts and other non- moral related concepts.

Disagreement is also found within character education on the place of morality (Benninga et al., 2006b). The most serious obstacles confronting character education are: (a) clarifying what character and character education are, (b) identifying which forms of character education are effective and for what outcomes, and (c) developing focal expertise in teacher training institutions (Berkowitz, 1999).

In this context, six major obstacles have been identified in the pre-service teacher training in character education. The obstacles are: disagreement on what character is; and what constitutes character education; perceptions of limited space in pre-service curricula for character education training; limited scientific data about which character education elements are effective and for what outcomes; where the expertise and resources are; and, mixed or contradictory feelings about the appropriateness of educating for character (Berkowitz, 1999).

In fact, this ideology is becoming predominant in modern societies, and questions are being raised from individuals, groups, and institutions about the legitimacy of the educational institutions to engage in character education (Berkowitz, 1999).

In the past when society was influenced by religion, such opposition in teaching morals and character education was not appointed. Families, societies and religious institutions had the authority to teach character and morals, and religion was the only potential source of morality, values and ethics. However, the majority of contemporary surveys show that society prefers the schools to actively participate to build character of the youth contrary to the opposition found in teaching character education (Berkowitz, 1999). Similarly, in democratic societies the school's role is to develop moral citizens, and focus on moral and character development, teaching of civics and development of citizenship skills and dispositions (Benninga et al., 2006b).

Another important matter the application of role model which has profound impact in teaching morality and implementing character education. Although teachers are considered to be the role models in character education, however, many teachers

find it ambiguous in understanding as to how modeling can be an effective contributor to students' moral and character development, some others lack positive qualities, thus become bad models for their students.

(Sanderse, 2013) stated that role modeling is rarely used as an explicit teaching method because a very small number of students acknowledge their teachers as role models. Therefore, he added that "if role modeling is to contribute to children's moral education, teachers need to understand why the modeled traits are morally significant and how students can acquire these qualities" (Sanderse, 2013, p. 67).

Although character education programs have proven to demonstrate many benefits, (Revell, 2002) indicates that students do not always positively receive such programs. In her research, younger children were often unaware that character education was a discreet subject, most likely viewing it as something integrated into storytelling and normal classroom activities. Older students were more likely to question the role and effectiveness of character education programs and identified distinct curriculum related to this aim. They often felt that character education should occur in the home with their parents and that they were patronized by character education efforts in school.

5. The background of Character Education in Morocco

5.1. Character Education and Religion

Values are the heart of the character; they are the engine that drives people's behavior. Core values are considered as fundamental components of any religion and it is the case of Islam which is the official religion of Morocco. Islam gives a high importance to the way we conduct ourselves, in addition to how we behave and what decisions we choose in various situations. Good character is a very important part of being a Muslim. We should always try to be the best version of ourselves. In addition to this, the primary mission of the coming of the Prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h., namely perfecting morality (moral-character noble). It is clear we can see from the words of the Prophet p.b.u.h which means: "I was sent to perfect moral glory" (Narrated by Ahmad). In other words, educating a person's character I can be seen as the core target of our religion.

Similarly, behaving in a good way and having the right belief are of similar importance in Islam. In fact, doing good in practice is the proof of having the right belief in the heart. This is why the Holy Quran speaks of true Muslims very often as "those who believe and do good deeds". Both the Quran and the Holy Prophet have told Muslims that the best among them is that person who shows the best behavior towards other people.

In relation to this, Abu Huraira reported, The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "The best of you in Islam are those with the best character" (Ibn Majah, 2007, no. hadith 4217). In another Hadith, Aisha reported, The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said that "the most complete of believers in faith are those with the best character and who are most kind to their families" (Tirmidhi, 2003, no. 2612). Thus, to be a good Muslim is related with having a good character and more importantly being good towards others.

The term character is actually similar to the term of "al akhlak" in Islam. In this context, (Abdullah, Salleh, Mahmud, & Ghani, 2010) claim that "alkhuluq" that is the singular from "al akhlak" is embedded in the nature of the soul, which arise the actions without preceded by thinking and reflection (p.109). The nature of the soul is actually embedded in the nature or character. The nature and character is esoteric level, while the behavior and actions that arise from the nature is the external and visible. The behavior and actions that emerged rise automatically, instantly, without thought and contemplation. If the behavior is good, it mirrors a good nature and character of people, and vice versa bad behavior that seems, in fact it is a reflection of the bad character.

Behaviors or actions that appear is sometimes called as moral. Since the action or behavior is an instance or a result of the character in the soul, then that should be well educated, of course, is the aspect of the character. This is the origin of the term "character education" which in Islam is worth the "noble akhlak education". (Ismail, 2016). To conclude, Islam is a religion that valorizes good character traits and urges its people to be good members within the society.

5.2. The History of Character Education in Morocco

5.2.1. Religious Education and Morality

Historically, traditional Quranic schooling "Msid" was the only form of education available to children in Morocco in the past. Moroccan children used to receive informally a Muslim education at their homes through memorizing various passages of the Quran, as well as learning how to speak and behave in a way that is convenient with Muslim values and "chariaa", which concerns the rules and regulations that are derived particularly from the Quran and the Hadith.

However, when children reach a schooling age, they are sent to "Msid" which is an annex to the local mosque or a small- or medium-sized room provided for the "fqih" by the community (Wagner & Lotfi, 1980). This was considered as a preschooling phase for children, and the main goal from this education was memorizing the Quran.

Furthermore, «Madrasas » that were founded in the 13th century, were meant for older children who were brilliant in "Msid" they were venerable universities where young men memorized the Qoran and were taught diverse subjects, namely, the Islamic law or "chariaa", Arabic literature, logic, history and mathematics. Some of these madrasas are Bou Inania in Fes, Ben Youssef in Marrakech and Abu-al Hassan in Sale, the three religious schools were used to accommodate students of al-Qarawiyyin University, which is considered by UNESCO the oldest continuously operating degree-granting university in the world.

As discussed above, all these schooling institutions were offering religious education programs, to ensure gratifying Islamic values and morals in the Moroccan society. It wasn't until the 20th century that madrasas lost their prestige in Morocco, and other modern universities gained favor.

5.2.2. Modern Education and Character

During the colonial period (1912 – 1956), the French introduced an alternative model of schooling into the Moroccan context, primarily designed to educate personnel to serve in the French colonial administration (Boyle, 2004). However,

the popularity of Quranic schools has not declined because of the absence of moral education in modern public schools.

Until today, the formal acquisition of character education does not exist in the educational system except for some sporadic traces in educational syllabi of private schools. The major shortcoming of these syllabi, however, is that they are imported from France, Morocco's ex-military colonizer and present neo-colonizer (Mansouri, 2011)

In fact, character education is not present formally in the curriculum, or through lesson plans, yet it is transmitted unconsciously via advice that the teacher gives his students for example when they encounter an issue or even when they are doing group work, or sometimes through some lessons that tackle citizenship and youth qualities. In his article about character education in Morocco, (Mansouri, 2011) claimed that:

"The major goal of the programs would be to counter the Tsunami of this global culture negating Moroccan identity traits and distorting the socio-moral values. I believe that schools should design their own character education programs and educators should take part in that process. They are the tools of implementation and success. Many effective character education programs either recommend staff development or offer it as an option. If staff do not know how to implement it, they will likely implement it ineffectively".

On the other hand, some may argue that Morocco does not need an implementation of character education due to the fact that the religion of Islam covers all aspects of the human life including morality, manners and good behavior. However, moral education is seen as a necessity for current generations of young people who should have a solid foundation of values and ethics especially in the light of globalization and the effect of media and new technologies on their character and behavior. (Boyer, 1987) clarified that there is an urgent need for the learning of moral/character education. He added that it would be a disaster if values are put on the fringes while they should be prioritized.

In brief, morality is a key element in education, since it helps to create a healthy environment where education will successfully take place. It is also a motivation for both students who feel at ease in their school and also for teachers that will do their best to give all what they know unconditionally.

5.3. EFL and Character Education

To begin with, the integration of a character education program into any school subject, including English as a Foreign language, effectively needs a lot of efforts. Language has a primordial role in the development of the intellectual, social, and emotional side of any student.

English language classes equip learners with the ability to communicate in their daily lives in reliance with the global needs. Moreover, they enable students to develop their communication competence, and become highly aware about choosing the right time to say an utterance, what to say and how to say it.

Integrating character education into language learning gives teachers another vision of their pedagogical work, the process of implementing should be planned as a school project. Integrating values in the various aspects of the curriculum, pedagogy and activities.

Nevertheless, teachers, separately have the charge to establish the most proper form of character education can be implemented into their classroom activity and the appropriate lesson plan they can follow to successfully deliver the aimed character to their students.

The primary issue that comes up related to this is how to integrate the character education into language learning activities. Integrating character education into language learning activities should take into account the principles of language learning (Adi, 2011, p.405). Those principles are; (1) the learner-centered principle, (2) the active involvement principle, (3) the immersion principle, (4) the focusing principle, (5) the socio-cultural principle, (6) the awareness principle, (7) the assessment principle and (8) the responsibility principle.

Trying to explore these principles, Vale, D., Scarino, A. and McKay in (Adi, 2011) discuss them as follow; The learner-centered principle means every class will be composed at individuals each with their own mix of variable such as the following, cognitive, affective and social maturity (p.406).

Therefore, it can be of a good help to plan for a small group instead of planning for a large number of students which are broadly based on the common learner difference. The active-involvement principle claims that students learn how to use language purposefully and to engage directly with the activity where they will gain knowledge, principles, attitudes or habits. Another principle is the one of immersion, it concerns the environment in which the learner stands, it is full of different spoken and written language forms such as: teacher talk, other classroom talk, audio and video types, specially-prepared written information and reality ad written texts from outside the classroom.

In addition to these, there is the principle of focusing, it states that in order to bring about an effective communicative ability in the relatively limited tie that is available in school language learning, learners are in the obligation of focusing on language form as well as on the skill and strategies that will help them cope with a restricted language resource. The socio-cultural principle explains that language do not exist in a vacuum, is deeply relied to the culture which it reflects, in relation to this it is important to valorize the cultural experiences and their contribution to the learning.

Moving to the awareness principle, it concerns the language awareness activities that can enable learners to become aware of the roles of language as a means of approaching other people, ideas and ways of thinking. Moreover, there is the assessment principle; it underlines the importance that learners have to be provided with regular and appropriate feedback about their progress, at the same time it is essential that the feedback given to the learners is realistic. Besides, the responsibility principle implies that school learning, including language learning, should provide learners with the insight and skills to enable them to take responsibility for their own learning, to learn how to learn and more specifically, how to learn a language.

To conclude, by taking into consideration these principles, it can be presumed that effective character education may be integrated into the teaching of English as a foreign language because good character is not constructed automatically but it is developed over a period of time through the process of teaching/learning. Furthermore, it is also integrated through habituation where the teacher models the good character in front of his/her students, as well as by designing relevant learning material and finally, by organizing resourceful classroom activities where all student take part and model the targeted behaviors.

5.4. The Official Guidelines for ELT and Character Education in Morocco

The education of character is an emerging issue in Morocco. Through the Royal speeches, we can note that “anchoring the rule of law, institutions and the close relationship between democracy, human and environmental development, along with that of fostering civic values by focusing on the role of school in promoting values education” is given high importance as it is the core of the educational new vision.

This vision of giving the school the mission of fostering the student’ character via promoting values education comes as a response to the continuous degradation of the environment and climate change, wars and armed conflicts, growing xenophobia, intolerance, violence and religious or ideological conflicts. Indeed, these happening changes are global and spread in different societies, that is why new programs and lifestyles are needed.

The implementation of a character education program may help correct social problems (Williams, 2000). When the moral education of children is neglected by parents, the school should take over the responsibility of teaching students the values that are not being taught at home. Moreover, when character education is implemented in a school, "it creates caring, moral communities that help children from at risk homes focus on their work, control their anger, feel cared about, and become responsible students" (Thomas Lickona, 1996b, p.343).

In addition to this, teaching morals to children encourages them to become responsible citizens because through studying and adopting character traits, students learn to be good citizens; those who "do good to others and do not harm others, function well in society and live by its laws and norms, and take responsibility and do their very best" (Thornberg, 2008, p.55). As mentioned before, the National Charter of Education and Training, defined "structuring principles of the education system pertaining to Islam as a religion founded on values of tolerance and moderation, citizenship, the quest for knowledge and innovation and ultimately to the spirit of initiative". These are very similar to the principles of character education but more influenced by citizenship education.

More specifically, schools and teachers are always blamed when students fail « to display an "ethical" or "moral conduct" (Mansouri, 2011). People have the tendency to exclude the responsibility of external factors such as parents and society as a whole. Likely, (Mansouri, 2011) claimed in his article about character education in Morocco that "education is a by-product of the school on the one hand, and society and culture on the other ".

Similarity to character in the official guidelines for ELT can be noticed in the part discussing learner autonomy. This latter suggests a complete shift of the roles both teachers and learners should play in the classroom, this implies that the teacher is no longer considered as a superior or director of the classroom or as source of knowledge that should be poured into the heads of the learners, his/her status does no longer emerge from his hierarchical authority, but rather from the good relationship that he or she maintains with his/her students. According to learner autonomy, the teacher is viewed as an agent of change, a facilitator of learning and also as an adviser. In short, these roles are similar to the teacher's roles in character education, both methods regard the teacher as facilitator and encourage the cooperation of learners with their teacher in the learning process.

5.5. The Concept of Values

The process of teaching values is a quite complex one for teachers. The dilemma of choosing which values to teach and which ones to avoid in the curriculum, in

addition to the existing confusion between teacher' values and parents' values and which ones should be implemented to come up with students of good character.

In her book about models of character education, (Williams, 2000) described the important role of schools in implementing character education, she highlighted the meaning of applying universal values by “creating schools that foster ethical, responsible and caring young people by modeling and teaching good character through an emphasis on universal values that we all share” (p. 1).

Similarly, (Thomas Lickona, 1991) suggests that there are two points that should be clarified when talking about universal values:

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

This implies that the choice of values is very important, they should be appropriate with the student environment, for this reason, Lickona talked about universal values, or values that are shared globally such as: respect, fairness, trustworthiness...etc. Although the list of “common moral values” might differ among communities, there is, nonetheless, a “core” and a “large overlap in the content that emerges” (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999).

In this regard, numerous advocates call for the implementation of universal agreed values (N. Campbell, 2004). Bell claimed that it is crucial to have universal values otherwise “we are left with no way to condemn cannibalism, physical torture, wife beating, child abuse, slavery, murder, or genocide if they are part of the habitual practice and cultural traditions of a group” (p. 18).

According to the ancient Greeks, there are nine core virtues that should be available in good character. These virtues are wisdom, justice, fortitude, self- control, love, positive attitude, hard work, integrity and humility (Thomas Lickona, 2003). In short, these values are basic and very essential to all societies for the simple reason that they spontaneously drive to the success of both the individual and eventually the society.

5.5.1. Values Education in the Moroccan National System of Education

The education of values is explicitly exposed in the national system of education, through many reports and studies, values education is mentioned as a "foundation of human life in its individual and social dimensions". It is described through the official guidelines as "the core of the concerns of the State, society and of the public debate about school, its missions and its social, cultural and qualifying roles". This ensures the idea that the state is really concerned about the training and qualification of its human capital for the sake of a sustainable development. The superior board of education, training and scientific research reports about values education:

"The Council adopted a holistic approach to values education covering psychological, behavioral, social, civil, cultural and environmental elements. It also included aspects related to language, knowledge, and skills. Special attention has been given to technological media due to the central place they have come to occupy in the lives of younger generations".

According to the report, there have to be a development in pedagogical methods used in the classroom, also to ameliorate the networking system inside the school (teacher, student, administration and parents), as well as between the various education, training and research institutions and the community, in order to promote values and ensure a successful social development.

In this regard, the Moroccan educational system is facing paramount challenges. First of all, the mission of qualifying human capital and effectively contributing to its development through assuring the acquisition of appropriate competencies, values and behavioral abilities that are tied to values education. Moreover, to ensure the continuity for values education, the educational system has to be able to create and improve a "reference model integrated and coherent with other school functions (teaching, learning, training, supervising, and research) ".

As mentioned in the previous sections, the role that the teacher plays in the character educational process is very important, because this latter is regarded as a

model to imitate, that is why, it is necessary that he/she benefits from a qualified training to make sure that the implementing process is efficient. Similarly, the report concerned with values education stressed this idea through claiming the necessity "to ensure quality training for educational actors, all profiles included, particularly in the field of values in the general, but also the school system of values, which targets both learners and educational actors".

However, there exist many difficulties in the process of implementing this kind of education in the Moroccan educational system. According to the superior board of education, training and scientific research « the plethora of values education programs, together with the lack of coordination and accumulation of learning outcomes » can be a real obstacle to the effective integration of values. Furthermore, "gaps between the objectives of the curricula and the reality of pedagogical practices", or even the wrong use of pedagogical methods to cover certain values may create an "incompatibility and a weak coherence of values in school subjects".

Finally, "the scarcity of partnerships between school and its environment regarding the programs and activities related to of values education", as mentioned before, the school environment play a significant role in the implementation process, without a healthy, cooperating surrounding, the effective implementation of values would not be possible.

5.5.2 Values in the Moroccan Strategic Vision of Reform 2015-2030

The report of the Strategic Vision of Reform 2015-2030, gives an importance to the Moroccan school and place it at the core of the social project. It determines the mission of values education as the principle function for "creating schools that are based on equity and equal opportunities, quality and individual and social promotion".

This vision aims to set a new Moroccan school based on three major pillars: "equity and equality of opportunities, education quality for all and the promotion of individuals and society". This demonstrates the importance given to the role that plays the school and particularly the student, who is viewed as a future citizen that

have to be trained to attain "sustainable human development and ensure the right to education for all". In addition to that, the report emphasizes the "necessity of granting youth an opportunity to master languages, knowledge and skills fully in line with the requirements of the times and with the national and religious values of the Moroccan society".

In relation to this, the vision of the reform "is based on the constitutional constants of the Moroccan nation: the Muslim religion ... values of moderation and tolerance ...", which means that high importance is given to the values ingrained in students and the impact of these values on the development of the student character, thus on the environment that surrounds him/her. For this reason, "the strategic vision proposed by the Council emphasizes the need to perpetuate and reinforce the constants, the religious and national values of our country" and this, can be achieved through an efficient implementation of character education.

5.6. Character Education and Citizenship

In recent years, research has proven a direct correlation between character education and citizenship since they both aim at the development of moral or pro-social characteristics. (E. L. Brown & Howard, 2005) claimed that, "Many educational theorists agree that moral education in schooling prepares the next generation of democratic citizens" (p.44). Similarly, "The most popular outcome identified for character education programs among the public, and the impetus for the development of many of them, is direct influence of children's behaviors" (Begley, Zdenek, & Schochor, 2007, p.74).

Related to this, (El Karfa, 2007) indicates that:

"Civic education is more than the simple inclusion of lessons about human rights in history, language, and Islamic Studies classes. Rather, it is the act of recognizing the student as a full human being in all aspects of teaching and learning, with the ultimate goal of creating autonomous and responsible individuals who can make decisions for themselves." (p. 39)

This means that civic education is not only about teaching students merely civic values, but also, creating a whole school culture that is based on those values and that contributes in shaping the student's character as a whole.

In another study of students studying in public schools in Chicago, (Revell, 2002) noted that younger children tend to describe a citizen using words such as "nice," "good," and "honest." This implies that these children recall the values taught during character education lessons and compare them with the behavior they observe. Furthermore, Revell noticed that teenagers viewed factors like the law, employment, and education as very important factors that contribute to good citizenship. Thus, according to (Revell, 2002), "successful character education was indeed the way to gain citizenship in America." (p. 425).

In their research, (Davies, Gorard, & McGuinn, 2005) tackle the idea that character education and citizenship education are separate entities, proposing, as a reason, that a decent society should be concerned with both issues of character and citizenship. However, both fields are mutually correlated to the principles of moral education. The only difference is that character education is just one part of the large field of citizenship education. In the same context, (A. Holden & Iveson, 2003) say that in order to effectively meet the needs of citizenship education, educators must go beyond teaching right from wrong and good behavior.

Another difference is, character education aims to alleviate the fear of reduced morality among young people, (A. Holden & Iveson, 2003) propose that citizenship education goes further by addressing a perceived breakdown of community involvement and an acknowledgement that young people are becoming out of touch with mainstream politics. Therefore, we can deduce that citizenship education is based on social and political frameworks, while character education is concerned primarily with morals. In this way, we can say that both character and citizenship education can be seen as responses to crises in the climate and culture of today's society (A. Holden & Iveson, 2003).

According to (A. Holden & Iveson, 2003, p.156), the strands of citizenship education have been identified as: social and moral education, community

involvement, and political literacy. Besides aiming to educate young people to be active members of society, Citizenship education also urges them to stay well-informed and to participate on many levels in their communities. (C. Holden, 2004) discussed her recent research in two primary schools, in which she discovered that teachers felt they had adequate programs in place for social and moral development, but noted that they neglected teaching about community and topical, political issues, the two subsequent statutes of citizenship education.

As discussed in the previous sections, both parents and teachers feel very comfortable with the teaching of character education in school, however, when speaking about teaching citizenship they both feel hesitant about the teaching of political issues. (Kristjánsson, 2004) proposed that citizenship education may overly politicize moral education beyond good reason, teaching only political literacy and specific democratic social skills.

Nevertheless, teachers would possibly find solutions to extend character education programs to include good citizenship. This is not to say that teachers should simply look for easy-to-use resources that are labeled "citizenship" (Davies et al., 2005). With the target of creating good citizens who can reflect on moral and social issues, participate in discussions and reach informed decisions, teachers can use critical discussions in the classroom as springboards into such topics (Kristjánsson, 2004).

According to (Davies et al., 2005), classic literature, mentioned as an approach to integrating character education lessons, can prove beneficial for exploring key ideas about democratic society, as well as providing direct moral guidance, especially in primary education, the activity of circle reading provides a good starting point for discussion of social and moral issues linked to citizenship. (A. Holden & Iveson, 2003) proposes that circle time transform into a "thinking circle", providing teachers and students with a specific setting in which to discuss current and past moral issues.

In short, character education plays an important role in supporting citizenship education. As mentioned by Calvin Coolidge, the 30th American president (1872-1933) Character is the only secure foundation of the state. It helps facilitate the

development of attitudes conducive to civic and political participation. However, having the knowledge and skills is not enough, one must gain an understanding of political institutions and processes, for example one have to be able to critically engage in a discussion about political ideas and messages while having an independent mind.

This issue has been an aching one in the Moroccan context, as the example of the Moroccan Association of Character Education which has been concerned with implementing character education through many events and activities. In this respect, Professor Bouchaib Zahawi, The founder president of MACE, declared in his welcoming message on the webpage of the association that; in the past parents used to inculcate values, that are the foundations of human life, before any other knowledge, but now, these values are ignored. The vision of the association is implementing character education through six pillars, namely: respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, trustworthiness and citizenship through sharing and caring to build a great nation. According to many workshops that the association animates via MATE and MORCENET events, this latter urges the audience to discover their personality type and reveal how can their personality traits affect all aspects of their life. In addition to that, "challenging workshops where participants give and take so as to share and care " are organized to demonstrate the importance of sharing in life.

Another important contribution of this association is, proclaiming the integration of philosophy, psychology and sociology into the Moroccan high school program in order to come up with a crystal-clear idea to try to integrate character education in Moroccan schools as there is no consensus in schools of what virtues should be taught or how they should be taught.

5.7. The Effects of Character Education on Students' Behavior

According to previous research, character education encourages students to behave conscientiously, and instills in them strong moral values (Thomas Lickona et al., 1998). As mentioned in the first section, Lickona describes good character as knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good. In the same context,

(Bernardo, 1997) claimed that teaching good character imparts in students several moral qualities, including both thoughtful decision-making and moral reasoning.

In addition to assisting students in their development of decision-making skills, character education had another effect on students that is guiding them emotionally, for example students who benefit from a CE program gain consciousness, self-respect, empathy, self-control, and humility. In addition to these traits, (Thomas Lickona et al., 1998) suggested that students develop moral competence, including the virtues of listening and cooperating, will to make judgments and act upon decisions, and moral habit.

According to (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2008) from the Center for Ethical Education at the University of Notre Dame:

Social and emotional learning programs pave the way for better academic learning. They teach children social and emotional skills that are intimately linked with cognitive development (p. 5).

Two recent studies, one in New Hampshire and one abroad, found that schools in which building student character was a priority showed improved academic outcomes (Muscott et al., 2008). In the age of accountability, character education becomes an even more important part of schooling.

5.7.1 Violence in the Moroccan School

In relation with the previous section that dealt with negative behavior, this section will tackle the problem of violence which is one of the most common disruptive behaviors in the Moroccan school. Nowadays, everyone is wondering what are the reasons behind this spreading phenomenon and how to cut it off. In his article about school violence in Morocco and the need for a true reform, (El Kaidi, 2017) talked about many cases of violence in the Moroccan school:

"A teacher knocked out by his own student in the classroom," "a female teacher was stabbed by her raging student," "a teacher brutally attacked and seriously injured by his own students" "a teacher was punched on the nose

by a student, profusely bled.” These headlines have become commonplace these days on the front pages of Moroccan newspapers and news outlets."

According to these cases, the student is the one who practices violence against the teacher. Psychologically speaking, adolescence is a delicate period in the lifespan of a human being. During the period of teenage, the student is subjected to what is called identity crisis, which Erikson defines as "a time of intensive analysis and exploration of different ways of looking at oneself". This implies that at that stage the student becomes confused, trying to determine his role and prove his/her personality within the society; this includes their position within the family, school and friends. Accordingly, the student if exposed to violence factors, the probability that he or she will engage in violent behavior increases. Obviously, violence leads to violence.

Another important factor that leads to the deterioration of the educational system and the appearance of such issues is the unsuccessful educational reforms. However, "the failure of the Moroccan school to meet the expectations of a 'growing economy' and a society longing for progress and sustainable development has always been blamed on teachers" (El kaidi, 2017).

In fact, the Moroccan school focuses on the cognitive aspect of students and give little importance to the affective one, unfortunately, this has led to the kind of students our schools produce today.

In brief, Morocco's public school have become a place where dramatic violence scenes are taking place, therefore, the state should come up with new innovative curricula that are gratified with character traits that urges to adopt positive values such as: respect, trustworthiness, fairness, responsibility, caring and citizenship.

5.7.2. Behavior Management

Behavior management is a challenging issue that all teachers encounter in their classrooms, it consumes a lot from both their time and energy. Some teachers have naturally a strong personality and managing techniques while others don't. Thus, it is very essential for an educator to evolve his/her behavior management methods and make them fit each student separately, and a whole class generally.

Students' misbehaviors such as disruptive talking, chronic avoidance of work, clowning, interfering with teaching activities, harassing classmates, verbal insults, rudeness to teacher, defiance, and hostility (Reed & Kirkpatrick, 1998), of course, the frequency and severity of these behaviors differ from classroom to another. Therefore, disruptive behaviors in the classroom create an unpeaceful environment where intolerance and stress reside, all these factors consume from the energy of the teacher and makes him/her spend more time and effort on managing the classroom instead of teaching. Nevertheless, student misbehaviors not only retard the smoothness of teaching process but also research findings have shown that school misbehavior lowered academic achievement and increased delinquent behavior (Weerman, Harland, & van der Laan, 2007).

In previous research, different terms have been used to describe disruptive behaviors of students. For example, (Stewart et al., 1998) described student misbehavior as disciplinary violations in school, for instance, tardiness, vandalism, fighting, stealing, and drinking on campus. Thus, when these behaviors are displayed in a place where regulations forbid them, either in school or in classroom, they are regarded as misbehaviors or misconducts.

However, these misconducts, even considered as ones, they may not be rule breaking but simply inappropriate or disturbing in the classroom environment. For example, daydreaming in class, not completing homework, talking in class, lesson disruption, bullying, and rudeness to the teacher are named as "problem behaviors" (Ho*, 2004), or "disruptive behaviors" (Ho & Leung, 2002).

To elaborate more, these misbehaviors are defined as activities "that causes distress for teachers, interrupts the learning process and that leads teachers to make continual comments to the student" (Arbuckle & Little, 2004). This means, any activity which disrupts the teacher and interrupts the process of teaching and learning. That is to say, the term "problem behavior" was used to refer to all externalizing behaviors that violate explicit rules or implicit ones, disturb the classroom, and stumble the process of teaching and learning.

In order to evaluate teachers' perceptions of classroom problem behaviors, many scales have been developed. In the United Kingdom, (Houghton, Wheldall, & Merrett, 1988) used ten items to explore behavior problems among primary school students, including: eating, nonverbal noise, disobedience, talking out of turn, slowness, unpunctuality, hindering others, physical aggression, untidiness, and out of seat. Moreover, (Houghton et al., 1988) also used these behaviors to measure secondary school students' behavior problems, with a replacement of eating with verbal abuse because they found that teachers did not perceive eating as a problem behavior among secondary school students whereas verbal abuse was a more relevant behavior problem.

In relation to this, the cultural relevance of the scales used to measure disruptive behavior may differ from a country to another, or even with the same country if there are subcultures. For instance, (Ho & Leung, 2002) adjusted (Houghton et al., 1988) to their cultural values through subjoining six student behaviors' commonly reported by local teachers in Chinese school settings, namely, verbal abuse, forgetfulness, non-attentiveness, gambling, reading other materials, and doing other things. Thus, the element of culture is very important when trying to adopt a program of character education, one has to take into consideration the specifications of the local culture, then adapt the program to it.

In addition to this, many research findings showed that, among various types of student problem behaviors, "talking out of turn," "hindering others," and "idleness" were commonly reported by secondary school teachers as the most frequent and troublesome misbehaviors in the United Kingdom (Houghton et al., 1988). Accordingly, "talking out of turn" was rated by both primary and secondary school teachers as the most frequent and troublesome misbehavior, followed by "non-attentiveness" and "forgetfulness"—two other typical students' disruptive behaviors in Hong Kong classroom (Ho & Leung, 2002).

To sum up, teachers have as one of their primary responsibilities; helping students to learn. However, it is impossible for learning to take place in chaotic environments that are caused by disruptive behavior of students. Every day, teachers are challenged to both create and more importantly maintain a positive,

productive classroom atmosphere in which learning takes place. What makes things easier for them is mastering the rules of behavior management, detecting students with disruptive behavior and trying to adapt the right character education program.

5.7.3 Behavior Improvement

The last benefit of character education that is going to be discussed in this chapter, is the decrease in negative behavior, or in other words behavior improvement. Disruptive behavior can waste a great deal of teaching time in the classroom, leading to feelings of frustration in teachers and an increase in both academic and personal failure among students. Thus, implementing character education will help teachers avoid sending a student to the principal's office. Accordingly, the Character Education Partnership (2012) discusses the successes of National Schools of Character:

"They see dramatic transformations; prosocial behaviors such as cooperation, respect, and compassion are replacing negative behaviors such as violence, disrespect, apathy and underachievement" (p.2).

This character program allows students to adopt values that are skillful at resolving conflict without resorting to physical violence. For this reason, if we teach students not only to solve problems on paper but also to solve problems with peers, then we are providing them with the tools to be successful (Thomas Lickona, 2003). As mentioned in previous sub-sections, in order to come up with an effective implementation of character education, teachers and administrators must provide students, not only with a character-oriented curriculum, but also with real life situations, in which they can apply what they have learnt, it is only by doing this, we can say that we have a character-based education.

5.8. Benefits of character education

5.8.1. Students' perspective

It is certain that character education has a positive impact on students and helps them succeed, the knowledge and skills taught in moral education can prepare students for high-stakes tests as well (E. L. Brown & Howard, 2005). In the process

of fostering students' character, schools may reap additional benefits from the character education implementation. "Social and emotional learning programs pave the way for better academic learning. They teach children social and emotional skills that are intimately linked with cognitive development" (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2008).

(Bulach, 2002) believes that "If students practice behaviors associated with forgiveness, sympathy and kindness, bullying behavior should decrease" (p.79). Bullying is known to be one of the major causes of increased violence in Moroccan schools, it has a damaging effect on students, mentally, emotionally, physically, and academically.

Through a successful character education program, an improvement in student behavior and school climate should occur and this result should trickle into an improvement in academic achievement and test scores (Bulach, 2002).

According to research, character education encourages students to behave conscientiously, and instills in them strong moral values (Thomas Lickona et al., 1998); (Lasley & Biddle, 1996); (Bernardo, 1997). Moreover, (Thomas Lickona et al., 1998) describes good character as knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good. This implies that teaching good character imparts in students several moral qualities, including both thoughtful decision-making and moral reasoning (Bernardo, 1997).

Another positive side of character education is; it guides students emotionally; emotional qualities inherent in character education are conscience, self-respect, empathy, self-control, and humility. In addition to these characteristics, students develop moral competence, including the virtues of listening and cooperating, will to make judgments and act upon decisions, and moral habit (.Thomas Lickona et al., 1998). Therefore, character education assists students in their development of decision-making skills.

As mentioned before, students can benefit in multiple ways from a successful character education program implemented in the school as far as it includes a broad range of concepts such as positive school culture, moral education, just

communities, caring school communities, social- emotional learning, positive youth development, civic education, and service learning.

Eventually, these approaches promote the intellectual, social, emotional, and ethical development of young people, moreover, they share a commitment to help young people become responsible, caring, and contributing citizens within their communities. Thus, educating the mind and promoting ethical values that lead to success for individuals as well as for society. (Thomas Lickona et al., 1998).

As mentioned in the previous paragraphs, character education is beneficial for students in many ways:

- It helps them develop qualities like justice, diligence, compassion, respect, and courage and understand the importance of using them in daily life.
- It fosters character development through the tackling of ethical issues throughout the curriculum.
- It creates a positive and healthy climate through engaging students, teachers, administration personnel, parents, and communities.
- It enables students to solve conflicts fairly by taking the right decision. Thus, creating safer schools where there is no intimidation, no fear and violence and no bullying.
- It does not only cultivates minds, but also nurtures hearts.
- It trains students to work on themselves to become productive citizens within their communities.
- It creates a culture of character that makes the environment healthier and full of challenges for students, thing that will urge them to strive for excellence.
- It ensures a safe environment where children feel secure because of respect, responsibility and compassion.
- It makes both adults and students understand, engage in, care about, and act on core ethical values such as respect, justice, citizenship, fairness, and

responsibility for developing first of all oneself then for communicating with others in school and as part of a larger community.

5.8.2. Parents' Perspective

Parents are the primary moral educators of their children; however, the school has a role to play, working with parents in this attempt. Public schools should develop character education programs while cooperating with parents and community. Consciousness of the benefits of character education for parents and families should be an important part in any program of character education. (Royal & Baker, 2005) found that character education programs typically do not address the moral development status of parents, a troubling fact considering the importance of parental influence in early childhood.

In their research, (Royal & Baker, 2005) claimed that "intervention programs that enhance the moral judgment of parents also have potential to enhance the moral development of their children" (p.226). The target behind such programs is to help parents better understand the development of their children and also respond to their children by taking morality into consideration.

Furthermore, the cooperation of parents and their children in these programs may make them achieve a high level of moral development. However, there needs to be a balance between the right of families to develop their own values and the right of educators to teach shared values of the larger community (Royal & Baker, 2005). Therefore, integrating parents into character education programs can prove to be highly beneficial toward enhancing students' character development.

Another assumption of (Bulach, 2002) was that the character traits deemed desirable by a school system are often in the eyes of the beholder. This means that, certain character traits may be affirmed by a particular community member while they are not valued by citizens of another community. The same can be said for parents, as (Royal & Baker, 2005) observed that parents from different cultures follow different parenting styles and values and may object to limited character education programs. Despite such obstacles to the success of character education, the civic purpose of public education reigns true (Hiatt-Michael, 2006)

In sum, to come up with a comprehensive program, it needs broad support from all stakeholders in the community, educators, parents, community leaders and youth service groups. According to Lickona, when a comprehensive approach to character education is used, a positive moral culture is created in the school (Pala, 2011). This success is achieved only through the leadership of the principal, a school-wide discipline, a sense of community, democratic student government, a moral community among adults and opportunities to address moral concerns.

In this regard, parents and community members work together to enhance caring beyond the school by using inspiring role models and opportunities for community service to help students learn to care by giving care.

5.8.3 School Climate

Another benefit of character education is creating a positive school climate. In a report of the National School Climate Center, having a positive school climate can have direct effects on many aspects of the school life. For instance, the decrease of the dropout rate, the reduction of school violence, and an increase in academic achievement.

School climate refers to the quality and character of school life and is based on patterns of students', parents', and school staffs' experiences of school life (National School Climate Center, n.d.). In addition to this, it includes norms, goals, values, relationships, how teaching and learning occur, and how the school is organized (National School Climate Center, n.d.). In fact, we tend to relate the healthy classroom environment as well as the positive school climate to the increase in academic achievement and also to youth amelioration.

Furthermore, (Battistich, Solomon, Watson, & Schaps, 1997) claimed "when a student's needs for safety and belonging are met, it can result in the student becoming affectively bonded with and committed to their school" (p.62). This implies that when the basic needs of the student such as safety, are met, this latter may have the opportunity to think about other needs like school achievement.

Another assumption of (Battistich et al., 1997) is that students will be more inclined to identify with and behave in accordance with the school's expressed goals and

values, simply, they will gain a sense of belonging and responsibility, thus they will act in accordance with the school laws.

Similarly, (Okaya, Horne, Lamig, & Smith, 2013) linked the promotion of moral character through a CE program with a reduction in bullying behaviors. In brief, having a peaceful and healthy school climate would definitely affect students positively, it will make the image clearer for them, because instead of wasting time in conflicts, they will think about their personal development.

5.8.4 The Teacher-Student Relationship

To begin with, the time that students spend with their teachers is more than the time they spend with their parents, for this reason, the relationship between teachers and students is very important to the development of their characters. In their research, (Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos, 2011) claimed that improving students' relationships with teachers had positive, long lasting impacts on academic and social development. As mentioned before, in character education programs the teacher plays an important role since he is considered as a model to follow, thus if he is a good model, students will develop positively both in their academic and moral achievement.

In the same context, when teachers develop positive relationships with their students, which often happens through intentional modeling and instruction of specific relational character skills, students feel supported in their academic endeavors, tend to enjoy school more, and get along better with peers (Hamre & Pianta, 2006). In fact, when students feel supported by their teachers, they spontaneously develop more interest in school, moreover, this leads to more positive relationships with peers and school environment, as well as increased academic achievement.

Another assumption from the research of (Hamre & Pianta, 2006) proposes that explicit instruction for students regarding regulation of feelings fosters relationship development and can provide students an opportunity to explore difficult situations and emotions in a safe and supportive environment. In this way, students will learn

and practice how to control their feelings and more particularly how to manage them.

Accordingly, these relationships should be targeted as part of the school character program in order to boost students' feelings of competence, safety, and connectedness. Similarly, (Klem & Connell, 2004) proposed that students who perceive their teachers as creating a caring and structured learning environment are more likely to report engagement in school, and high levels of engagement were associated with higher attendance and without any doubt high academic achievement.

5.9. Problems of Implementing Character Education in Morocco

According to the discussion above, there is an invisible presence of character education in the Moroccan school. Even if not apparent, Most of Moroccan teachers and administrators use it. However, there exist some constraints that hinder the effective implementation of a concrete and clear character program. In this context, (Bulach, 2002) suggested that the common obstacles to the effective implementation of character education in schools are: teacher commitment, teacher sense of efficacy, student acceptance of programs, lack of nurturing of character at home.

In fact, these obstacles have been already mentioned in previous sections, for instance the importance of teacher and administration commitment to the program of character education. Since both of them are considered as models to be followed, thus they must ensure their adoption of character traits or values and behave according to them. Another important step is training. The training of teachers comes up in much of the literature of character education. Most researchers agree that if character education in school is important then teachers must be trained for it. Therefore, there is no character-based training in Morocco, except in few workshops organized by Mate or Morcenet teachers' associations.

Another obstacle that may encounter this implementation is, students' acceptance of the program. The mission integrating the character train and making students involved is already mentioned in the section about student's involvement.

In this case, students should adhere the called for values and adopt them in different life situations. The target here is to make from student, responsible individuals that do “the right thing despite outside pressure” (Barlow, Jordan, & Hendrix, 2003, p.34). Furthermore, the school plays an essential role in nurturing students’ character, however there must be a parallel work at home. As mentioned before, the family should prepare the character bases in their children before sending them to school.

Morocco is knowing an obvious deterioration in values, due to many changing factors such as: globalization, social media etc. Unfortunately, these have declined the fostering of positive character traits among Moroccan youth. To sum up, awareness of these obstacles is half the solution. In order to change positively and contribute in the sustainable development of the country, and for a better Morocco, everyone should feel concerned with this issue. For instance, teachers have to commit to these character education programs’, students have to accept them and families have to cooperate for a comprehensive implementation.

This chapter has been devoted to the definition, emergence and principles of character education as well as the most relevant models and theories of this issue. It also discussed some effective programs used worldwide to implement character in schools. Then, it dealt with the major constraints imposed on its implementation in the Moroccan context. At last, it explored the background of character education in Morocco. The next chapter is about research methodology adopted to conduct this study.

Chapter Two

Research Methodology

Chapter Two: Research Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the research approach and the methodology of the present study. It also describes how the research was conducted, the participants, the instrumentation used, how the data were collected and recorded, as well as how the data were analyzed, and finally how the trustworthiness of the data was assured.

To collect the required data, it is fundamental for the researcher to apply a proper research design in order to attain the research objectives. The study used a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods which is called mixed-method approach (N. V. Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006). The epistemological and ontological assumptions underpinning this approach are corresponding to the pragmatic perspective, which concentrates on the research problem, and so, implements pluralistic methods to clarify it (Morgan, 2007). Thus, the theoretical foundations of the methodology of this study are explained in this chapter.

This study focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both qualitative and quantitative data as a method (N. Ivankova, Creswell, & Plano Clark, 2007). In the same context, Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) stated that the notation quad + qual “indicates that both quantitative and qualitative methods were used at the same time during the research, and both have equal emphasis in the study” (p. 41)

Similarly, this study is composed of semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions and a survey that is based on Likert scale questions because the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches “provides a better understanding of the research questions of this study than either approach alone” (N. Ivankova et al., 2007). Further to this, there is a description of the population and the research sites that were selected to participate in this study as well as the procedures applied in data collection and data analysis and finally methods that assure the validity of the study.

In addition to this, the use of a mixed method, that is to say, qualitative and quantitative methods together gives the research the generisability of the quantitative results and the richness of the qualitative findings (Greene & Caracelli, 2003).

Thus, a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative methods is adopted to conduct this study, employing a triangulation design (Hanson, Creswell, Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005). This means that the amalgamation of both quantitative and qualitative approaches is the best method to apply in order to answer the questions of the study and come up with a deep understanding of the research instead of using one method alone.

Accordingly, the application of a mixed method in this study rises from the idea that neither qualitative nor quantitative methods can give a full picture of the issue (R. B. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007) of investigating a topic of moral development. Therefore, mixed methods can give the researcher a profound understanding of the meaning behind the phenomenon. In addition to this, combining qualitative and quantitative methods together strengthens the validity of the data and provides a full analysis.

In this context, the mixed method approach joins the qualitative and the quantitative approaches together to result in a strong research method where approaches are combined in an interrelation for a deeper understanding. (N. Ivankova et al., 2007) described the mixed methods research as:

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

In others words, a mixed method is a way of collecting, analyzing, and combining both quantitative and qualitative data in one study to help understand a research problem (Hanson et al., 2005). Similarly, (Yin, 2003) suggested "multiple sources of evidence to be utilized to provide a variety of experiences and additional data techniques resulting in more accurate documentation" (p. 101). Likewise, numerous studies have recommended mixed method research as a useful method to have a better understanding of the topic of interest (Brewer & Hunter, 1989; Howe, 2012; Patton, 2002).

Another important matter is the data collection technique, this latter needs both numeric information such as the responses to the questionnaires in addition to text information such as interviews and document analysis (Creswell, 2003). In this context, many quantitative researchers advocate the use of qualitative research beside the quantitative research to enhance validity and reliability of the study (D. T. Campbell & Fiske, 1959).

The purpose of this case study is to investigate the impact of implementing a character education program on students' behavior improvement. In this regard, it explores the following questions:

- How does the implementation of a character education program impact students' behavior?
- How do learning and practicing values at school affect students' behavior?
- How does the use of the curriculum as a tool to teach character traits influence student's behavior?
- How does the modeling of good character traits by teachers impact the behavior of students?

In this study, there is a harmony between the findings of the quantitative inquiry and the ideas of the qualitative part, because they explain figures and implications that are produced quantitatively. In other words, this investigation works on matching the research questions with the instruments and data analysis methods appropriate for each question.

Therefore, the study explores, in addition to the impact of implementing a character education program on students' behavior, the role that schools, teachers and parents play in promoting children's moral and character development. The rationale for conducting this study is that the results can be useful in spreading awareness at the school environment also they can facilitate in the process of planning, implementing and developing students' moral and character development at schools.

In addition to understanding the challenges that teachers face in teaching character education, it will also help in overcoming them, allowing character education to take place easily and effectively, and more importantly it will aid in changing student's negative behavior.

So, this study takes the form of sequential mixed methods in which data is collected quantitatively firstly by distributing a questionnaire destined to students, then by qualitative data collection by means of semi structured interviews. In addition to these, valuable documents related to character and moral education are collected.

In brief, this study aims to answer the research questions using suitable instruments and data analysis methods through keeping in mind the research purpose in order to choose the right approach. Even if researchers might advocate and adhere to a specific research tradition, it is sensibly wise to consider 'fitness for purpose' as the 'guiding principle' because different research paradigms are suitable for different research purposes and questions (Louis Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2002).

In order to investigate the impact of implementing a character education program on students' behavior. The researcher used both quantitative and qualitative methods of research as well as document analysis to analyze any available policy related to character education in the Moroccan official guidelines for ELT as well as in the Moroccan strategic vision of reform 2015-2030 that all Moroccan public schools, including the targeted ones in the research, apply.

Along with this, the method of analysis used in this research is supported by the literature review as well as the theoretical framework, for this reason, the researcher reviewed different studies that tackle the same topic using either the same or different methods of analysis like, a study by (Chapman, 2011) who attempted to

gain more understanding of the most efficient practice of character education in a middle school.

In this regard, Chapman's case study used qualitative methods, such as interviews, participant observations, field notes, and document analysis. Consequently, his study revealed that the teachers are in need of training and they need to act as active role models for their students. Moreover, it also disclosed that teachers should share the responsibility of implementing an effective program of character education with the help of administrative staff in order to assure its success.

Similar to this, another study that supports the study of Chapman in using a qualitative method is a study by (Lucas, 2009) who examined how teachers think about character education in the middle schools in rural areas. This latter based his study mainly on qualitative method using semi- structured interviews in order to gather its data. Consequently, he discovered that even the school is implementing a good program of character education and the teachers have shown their interest towards character education and recognition of its importance, they could not give a specific definition for character education.

Another qualitative study by (Ricketts, 2008) was conducted a study in a primary school, Ricketts asked teachers about their perspectives on character education after using a specific program on five elementary school teachers regarding their teaching of character education. Therefore, the latter study demonstrated that all teachers agreed on the key role that teachers play in teaching the targeted values. Otherwise, there are separate opinions about what should be present in the curriculum, why values should be taught and how they should be taught.

Accordingly, (Davin, 2007) investigated the perceptions of parents and the teachers of character education in schools located within poor communities. His research adopted a quantitative method using teacher and parents' questionnaires to collect their perspectives towards character education in these schools. In his research, he explained that the use of quantitative method has been of a big help to him in finding some areas of consensus between teachers and parents.

Furthermore, another quantitative study by (Jakubowski, 2013) used a non-experimental method in order to collect the data through developing a survey to investigate the perspectives of teachers towards character education in different secondary schools. Similar to this, in his research (Griggs-Drane, 2009) focused on the practices of character education in a secondary school in Virginia and used a mixed method in collecting the data during two phases of the study.

Consequently, the study demonstrated that there is a deficiency in both the awareness and the engagement of the principals, in addition to the inconsistency in the practices of the character education between schools.

2.1. Theoretical Foundations of Research Methodology

As emphasized in the introduction of this chapter, selecting a research design which suits the research's assumptions is very important. The researcher should clarify the philosophical paradigm as well as the reasons behind choosing a certain approach for the study. (Kreuger & Neuman, 2006) explained that a paradigm is "a general organizing framework for theory and research that includes basic assumptions, key issues, models of quality research, and methods for seeking answers" p.81. in the same context, (Willis, Jost, & Nilakanta, 2007) claimed that: "A paradigm is a comprehensive belief system, world view, or framework that guides research and practice in a field" (p.8). In other words, a paradigm can be identified as a group of beliefs and views that influence a researcher's selection of the method of conducting his/her research and the interpretations of the findings according to a particular discipline (Bryman, 2008).

Similarly, a paradigm provides a conceptual framework for exploring and understanding a research. In this regard, (Burrell, 1979) stated "To be located in a particular paradigm is to view the world in a particular way" (p. 24). Another definition of paradigm was proposed by (Patton, 1990) who termed it as a "world view" (p. 37). This means that a paradigm determines how the researcher perceives the world, as well as how the beliefs that he/she holds can reflect the way the research is designed, and finally, how the data is both collected analyzed, and presented.

According to (Patton, 1990) it is important to recognize one's own paradigm because it allows one to identify one's role in the research process, determine the course of any research project, and distinguish other perspectives. The field of educational research is mainly concerned with exploring and understanding social phenomena that are linked to the education.

According to (Dash, 1993), this type of research concerns educational questions that can be investigated in a satisfactory manner; the methods, which enable such satisfactory investigation; and the utility of results emanating from such an investigation. Theoretical research questions in education emerge from different conceptions and interpretations of social reality, different paradigms have been evolved to determine the criteria according to which one would select and define problems to inquire. In the same context (Kuhn, 1962) characterized a paradigm as an integrated cluster of substantive concepts, variables and problems that are attached to corresponding methodological approaches and tools that are used in the research process.

In the past century, different paradigms have emerged because of the remarkable changes in social sciences research. Generally, there are now four commonly used research paradigms used in the verification of theoretical propositions. According to (Creswell & Garrett, 2008), there are four specific paradigms: post-positivism, constructivism, emancipatory and pragmatism. Post-positivism is a scientific research paradigm which investigates patterns of behavior; it is usually adopted to examine theories.

Therefore, it is generally used in natural sciences research as it promotes the quantitative method. On the other hand, constructivism is known as a paradigm that underpins qualitative research, it claims that individuals' lived experiences are important to construct subjective meanings. The third paradigm is the emancipatory one, it is related to action agendas used to facilitate the change and the empowerment of the social situations of specific individuals or groups.

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

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

Accordingly, pragmatism which is the fourth paradigm, discusses that “the knowledge claims arise out of actions, situations, and consequences rather than antecedent conditions” (Creswell, 2003, p.24). So, in order to combine quantitative and qualitative research together has been accepted as a new paradigm in which its philosophical principles should not be violated (Morgan, 2007).

Pragmatism is used to tackle the research problem and make use of all possible approaches that can help understand it; it can be considered as a philosophical paradigm that supports the use of mixed method research by the use of pluralistic approach for the best understanding of the research problem (Morgan, 2007).

In this regard, many researchers claim that pragmatism can be considered as a philosophical foundation of the mixed methods. (Greene, 2008) describes pragmatism as “leading contender for the philosophical champion of mixed methods arena p.8”. Thus, this study has adopted a pragmatist paradigm, making use of a mixed method approach which focuses on the pragmatic value of each approach, also which answers easily the research questions through using a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Thus, the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods together provides the research with the generisability of the quantitative results and the richness of the qualitative findings (Greene & Caracelli, 2003). This means that the images, texts and narratives in the qualitative research findings can provide the numerical findings with meanings and clarifications (Hanson et al., 2005).

Therefore, in conducting this study a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative methods is adopted by employing a triangulation design. The combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches is thought to best answer the study’s main questions and provide a deeper understanding of the research rather than using one method alone (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989).

Similarly, mixed methods are applied in this study, because in such a case of investigating a topic of moral development, neither qualitative nor quantitative methods can give a full picture of the issue (R. B. Johnson et al., 2007).

Furthermore, this latter enables the researcher to gain a deep understanding of the meaning behind the target phenomenon. Moreover, combining qualitative and quantitative methods ensures the reliability and validity of the data and gives a full analysis. In this context, the mixed method approach joins the strings of qualitative and quantitative studies together to come up with a strong research method where approaches are closely interrelated for a thorough understanding.

In addition to this, the mixed method is a way of collecting, analyzing, and combining both quantitative and qualitative data in one study in order to help understand a research problem (Hanson et al., 2005). (Yin, 2003) proposed various sources of evidence to be utilized to provide a variety of experiences and additional data techniques resulting in more accurate documentation (p. 101).

Along with this, many studies have recommended mixed method research as a useful method to have a better understanding of the topic of interest (Brewer & Hunter, 1989; Howe, 2012; Patton, 2002).

In addition to this, (Creswell, 2003) confirmed in his studies that the data collection needs both numeric information such as the responses to the questionnaires in addition to text information such as interviews and document analysis. In addition to this, even some of the quantitative researchers advocate the use of qualitative research beside the quantitative research to enhance validity and reliability of the study (D. T. Campbell & Fiske, 1959).

Related to the discussion above, the quantitative findings of this study support the ideas of the qualitative part since they explain figures and implications that are produced quantitatively. Moreover, this research aims to making the research questions, the instruments and the data analysis methods appropriate for each question. So, the research tackles the impact that the implementation of a character education program has on the improvement of students' character as well as the role

that this latter plays in reducing the violent, dishonest, irresponsible, and disruptive behavior of today's students.

The rationale for conducting such a study is that the results can be helpful in spreading awareness at the school level and they can assist in planning, implementing and evaluating students' character development at schools as well as reduce negative behavior. Another contribution is helping teachers adopt the right attitude while teaching and facing different challenges, it will also help in overcoming them, allowing character education to take place easily and effectively.

2.2. The Role of the Researcher

In this section, my role and responsibility as the researcher of this study is discussed. To start with, the purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of implementing a character education program on students' behavior improvement in Moroccan schools. As a researcher it is important to mention that I have a reasonable experience in teaching in Moroccan schools, private and public ones for more than ten years.

At the present time, I am working as a teacher of English language in a public secondary school in the region of Souss Massa, more specifically, in a small city named 'ElKliaa', 25 km far from Agadir. This later is very known by its high rate of crime and violence, for this reason, working in this city has inspired me to tackle this subject of character education and do my best in investigating the current situation of moral and character education of the students in Moroccan public schools.

As mentioned before, working in a place like 'ElKliaa' was the spark of this study which resulted in a desire to gain knowledge and to contribute in the amelioration of the Moroccan public school. Five years ago, when I started working there, I noticed that students are very violent towards each other either verbally or physically.

As I always felt that, in addition to my role as a teacher, I am also responsible for my students' wellbeing and morality. In addition to the fact that teaching values has

always been one of my ultimate interests. I took the decision to investigate this matter.

As mentioned above, and as a result of this situation, I started as a researcher, mainly in this area, thinking about the implementation of character education into Moroccan public schools and the role that it would play in improving students' behavior, because character education is one of the best solutions for the educators to use in order to reinforce their students' character and contribute to its amelioration. Moreover, the fact of working in a Moroccan school provided me with an opportunity to be close to students, thus, to be more understanding of their problems and concerns. It also made it easier for me to gain daily experience on the situation and observe the behavior of students in such kind of schools.

Therefore, when I joined the PhD program, I had a clear vision of the topic that I wanted to search for, even if the particulars of my study were discovered after I read a book written by Dr. Lickona (1983) in which this later discussed the way to follow in order to raise children with good character, spotting the importance of implementing character education and its benefits for improving character. Consequently, this study investigates the impact that implementing a character education program would have on students' character and moral behavior.

To conclude, while doing this research, I considered myself as an insider since I have gained some experience in these Moroccan public schools, and so, I am aware of the way these students behave as well as conscious about the nature of problems that take place in the school environment. On the other hand, I viewed myself as an outsider too, because the sample of this study consists of others Moroccan schools from different regions of the country to avoid the possibility of showing any bias to the school I am working in.

2.3. Research Design

As emphasized in the previous section, the present research is a study that investigates how the implementation of a character education program impacts students' behavior as well as if the violent, dishonest, irresponsible, and disruptive

behavior of today's students is the result of the absence of good character implementation.

Therefore, it is necessary to apply the appropriate research design for attaining the research objectives. According to (Yin, 1994), the case study research is characterized by three conditions: the type of research questions posed, the extent of control and access to behavioral events, and the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events. In this regard, (Yin, 1994) claimed that "how" and "why" questions are explanatory in nature and typically lead to the use of case studies, histories, and experiments.

Accordingly, this study explores "how" character education impacts students' behavior and therefore meets the first condition. The second condition described by Yin is the extent of control over and access to behavioral events. Experimental research typically exerts a great deal of control and manipulation of behavior, whereas there is little control of behavior in both historical and case study research.

Consequently, there was no control or manipulation over behavior in this study; therefore, it met the second condition described by Yin. This researcher tried to observe how students behave and how they perceived the impact that character education program has on their behavior, then how teachers perceived student behavior and the influence of the character education program again.

Finally, the third condition that was described by Yin is the degree of focus on contemporary events as opposed to historical events. In this research, what was studied is a contemporary event. Related to this, the researcher studied student behavior at schools where the character education was very inconsiderable and where negative and violent behavior presides. Thus, it met the third condition cited here.

In this regard, (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996) claimed that case study research has four main characteristics. The first characteristic is the study of phenomena, or programs, by focusing on specific instances or cases; this study focused on the impact that implementing a character education program has on students' behavior.

Similarly, this study focused on the behavior students but also the perceptions of both students and teachers. The third characteristic is the study of the phenomenon in its natural context; this study was conducted at different Moroccan public schools where students and teachers were questioned. Finally, the fourth characteristic is the representation of the emic perspective; accordingly, this study focused on the perceptions of the students, and teachers rather than the researcher's perspective. The case study methodology fit the requirements of this research, which are to investigate the impact that character education has on students' behavior. (Stake, 1995) claims that the "first obligation" (p.4) in the case study research is to develop and understand in a complete way the case that we want to study.

Related to this, (Yin, 2003) states that this bounded system can be studied with one of the three types of case studies which are: exploratory, explanatory and descriptive case studies. Concerning the first type, that is the exploratory case study, it is used most of the time to define the framework of a future study. "In this type of case study, fieldwork and data collection are undertaken prior to the final definition of study questions and hypotheses" (Yin, 2003, p. 6).

Moreover, the second type which is the explanatory case study, looks to define how and or why an experience is happening or taking place, it aims at suggesting "clues to possible cause-and-effect relationships" (Yin, 2003, p. 7). The third type is the descriptive case study, this one is used to develop a document that fully illuminates the intricacies of an experience (Stake, 1995). This implies that they are often used to present answers to a series of questions based on theoretical constructs (Yin, 2003).

According to (Yin, 2014), case study research provides a prominent advantage compared to other methods because of its focus on a wide range of evidence ranging from questionnaires and interviews to documents and artifacts. The researcher here, have chosen a mixed approach because she wanted to make her research concrete a real by using different sources of evidence in the expectancy that the data converged in a triangulated manner.

In the same context, the case study design provided a complete method of research, in the sense that it includes a theoretical design, data collection strategies, and unique methods of data analysis (Yin, 2014). For this reason, the researcher chose a case study design for the sake of achieving the perspectives of different participants regarding how they felt about the implementation of a moral or a character education program in school.

The principal aim of this study, that concerns the impact of implementing a character education program on students' behavior, was best addressed by the case study design. This approach gave an opportunity to the researcher to examine an unlimited number of sources of data collection. Similarly and according to (Yin, 2014), there are numerous types of case studies that can be executed. The present study utilized a descriptive case study design because one of the objectives of every case study research is to first of all develop an understanding of the subject matter that is in this case character education. Then, to answer questions based on the theoretical part of the research.

To sum up, the results of this study may be used by teachers, administrators and the ministry of education in order to gain a better understanding of character education, then of course to see the impact this later can have on students' behavior. Thus, they may then use this insight in the future to improve the behavior of students and create a generation that will contribute to the development of the country.

2.4. Setting

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of implementing a character education program into the Moroccan public school for the sake of reducing violent or negative behavior as well as contributing to students' moral development and behavior improvement. In order to collect the data required for this study, several Moroccan public high schools in different regions of Morocco were sampled namely: Al Fath in El Kliaa, Homan el Fetouaki in Agadir, Jaber Ibnou Hayyane in Casablanca, Ouadi Eddahab in Assilah, Cadi Ayyad in Marrakech and Imam Ibn Hanbal in Fes.

These high schools were selected from different regions of Morocco in order to guarantee the richness as well as the diversity of the collected data; some schools are even situated in rural areas; thing that is very important because students' behavior differs according to the social setting they were raised in; this implies that students from the north of Morocco may not have the same values compared to students from the south or the east of the country.

The same thing concerning students from urban areas contrasted with students from rural ones. There is no doubt that the features of any social setting play an important role in shaping the character as well as the behavior of its inhabitants.

Moreover, all these selected schools adopt one curriculum, that is the one that the Moroccan ministry of education has set. As already mentioned in the literature review, the education of values is explicitly exposed in the Moroccan national system of education, via many reports and studies, values education is mentioned as "a foundation of human life in its individual and social dimensions".

It is described through the official guidelines as "the core of the concerns of the State, society and of the public debate about school, its missions and its social, cultural and qualifying roles". This guarantees the idea that the Moroccan government is really concerned about the quality of the training that its human capital receives and that will help creating a sustainable development.

2.5. Participants

As mentioned before, this study aims at investigating the impact that character education may have on students' behavior, for this reason the participants of this study were selected from different Moroccan public high schools in order to get a broad and at the same time a deep image about students' behavior nationwide. Concerning students, they were all invited to fill in the questionnaire, so 440 students, from common core, first year and second year of the baccalaureate from the schools already mentioned in the previous section. For teachers, forty teachers from different high schools and regions of Morocco were contacted and asked to do the interview. More details concerning the participants are discussed in the following sections.

2.5.1. Teachers

In this paper, the researcher has an interest in Moroccan public schools where we have a large number of students from different social backgrounds and in which all of the teachers are Moroccan.

Thus, considering the fact that the researcher is a teacher in these schools, many of her colleagues accepted to participate in this research and saw no harm in answering the interview questions. Therefore, 40 teachers were interviewed through phone conversations to gather the required qualitative data of the study regarding their perspectives on the teaching of values or traits of character education for the students and the impact this will create on the students' behavior improvement.

So, teachers included in the interviews were teachers of English, so as to avoid translation and guarantee the obtention of the real meaning of their ideas. Their years of experience with the school ranged from one year to seventeen years. All of the teachers were interviewed via telephone calls that were recorded because of the COVID lockdown.

Since the 1960s, teacher education has downplayed the teacher's role as a transmitter of social and personal values and emphasized other areas such teaching techniques, strategies, models, and skills (L. Nucci, 1987). This means that, an image was created about effective teachers that correlates to their skills and academic achievement. Consequently, the word effective was linked to students' scores on standardized tests that include only academic skills, while intellectual processes or students' moral development was neglected (Huitt, 2004).

In this regard, (Calderhead, 1996; Pianta, Cox, Taylor, & Early, 1999; Watson, 2003) described teaching as an intensely psychological process as well as they believed that a teacher's abilities to maintain productive classroom environments, motivate students, and make decisions depends on their personal qualities and the ability to create personal relationships with their students. Nevertheless, the attitudes of teachers have a huge impact on their teaching and student achievement.

In the same context, (Richardson, 1996) claims :

"Attitudes and beliefs are a subset of a group of constructs that name, define, and describe the structures and content of mental states that are thought to drive a person's actions" (p.102).

Therefore, the relationship between teachers and their students should be based on mutual trust, respect and other values discussed in the paper. In the same context, (Gourneau, 2005) conducted ,as a professor, a qualitative study at the University of South Dakota during three years, the study included 210 undergraduate students who wrote essays about a teacher who had made a positive or negative impression on their lives, afterwards, students got into groups and cooperated in order to come up with a list of the five most desirable attitudes and actions of teachers.

According to her study, the attitudes chose were: a genuine caring and kindness of the teacher; a willingness to share the responsibility involved in the classroom; a sincere sensitivity to the students' diversity, a motivation to provide meaningful learning experiences for all students; and an enthusiasm for stimulating the students' creativity (Gourneau, 2005, p.45).

As a conclusion, effective teachers generally care, like, accept, and value their students and more importantly the effective attitude employed by teachers ultimately can make a positive difference on the lives of their students (Gourneau, 2005).

2.5.2. Students

The students' sample represents Moroccan adolescent students who are fourteen to twenty-two years old, studying in Moroccan public high schools. The researcher chose these students to participate in this study because teenagers usually face various social obstacles during the stage of adolescence, thus, they need to be guided and assisted to develop the right positive moral character.

Accordingly, during the period of adolescence, the process of identity formation continues to help in constructing one's self and mainly one's moral identity. (Damon & Gregory, 1997) cited that moral beliefs play an important role in one's moral identity formation and one's sense of identity. Related to this, (Colby & Damon, 2010), "goals and social influences are at the center of moral commitment"

p.168. This implies that the moral commitment or action develops for each individual at a specific age and gets influenced by his or her social environment.

However, it is important to consider both moral identity and moral action while implementing character education for teenagers because it is at this age that people develop a sense of self. Teenage is a critical period in every individual's life, it is at this stage that a person constructs moral beliefs that will guide him or her through their lifetime. Thus, moral beliefs are the basis of moral action, they are the key that foster one's traits of good character.

In this regard, there are many studies about the moral and character development of adolescents (D. Hart, Atkins, & Ford, 1998; D. Hart & Carlo, 2005; Park & Peterson, 2006). Several studies had as a main focus the cognitive and social development of adolescents such as the cognitive and affective development research done by (Steinberg, 2005). While other studies tackled only the positive development of adolescents (Lerner, Dowling, & Anderson, 2003).

However, in this study Four hundred forty student filled the questionnaire in which there were different questions regarding values that are present at their schools and in their textbooks, as well as their teachers' involvement in teaching these values and at the end some negative behaviors they may notice in the school environment and finally the possibility to change these behaviors through an efficient program of character education.

2.6. Research Instruments

The data of this mixed method study was collected from a variety of sources including, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The rationale behind using both qualitative and quantitative approaches in this study is to triangulate the research data and to provide the study with a thorough and a deep insight. In addition to this, in this study the researcher explored all the available documentation as well as the experience of the participants in an effort to contribute to the understanding of the explored phenomenon to strengthen the validity of the research (N. Denzin, 1970).

As mentioned before, the questionnaire that was used for this research was given to students in order to investigate the presence of character education in Moroccan schools and its impact on students' behavior improvement.

In addition to this, an interview was done with teachers because interviews enable them to express themselves freely and to provide the researcher with the required data. This latter was used for the sake of gaining a deeper insight into what character education means to them, and also to measure their involvement with this matter.

2.6.1. Qualitative Method of Research

Qualitative research is “an empirical research where the data are not in the form of numbers” (Punch, 1998, p.4). This means that the qualitative researcher is concerned with understanding people's experiences in context (Van Manen, 1990).

In addition to this, (Patton, 2015) stated that while the purpose of quantitative research is generalization, the “logic and power of qualitative purposeful sampling derives from the emphasis on in-depth understanding of specific cases” (p. 53).

So, the qualitative research method remains in using in-depth interviews like the ones used in this study, these are based on the grounded theory approach or also called the constant comparative method of analysis by (Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In fact, the grounded theory is a method of research has a main objective that is exploring new information as well as generating new theories.

Related to this, (Patton, 2015) also added, “Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling” (p. 264). As it is the case in this paper, the researcher is concerned with understanding the impact that character education will create on students' behavior from the students' point of view. Therefore, a qualitative research method, which assisted me to explore those experiences and allowed the students in the targeted schools to share their views and experiences, was deemed appropriate.

In this regard, (Hitchcock, Hitchcock, & Hughes, 1995) claimed that “social behavior in natural setting is the main concern of qualitative approach” (p.12). This implies that the principal objective of qualitative research is investigating people’s spontaneous behavior in a natural setting, then analyzing it for getting a deep understanding. Thus, (Sherman & Webb, 2004) suggested that :

“Qualitative research is an attempt to understand not just the shape of ethnical system but the methods in which those systems are experienced by everyone’s, in order to provoke intelligibility and include one individually and intersubjectively in deliberate searches of purpose.” (p.4)

Similarly, (Keegan, 2009) described qualitative research as all of the materials that are taken from the research audio recording, notes, drawings and directly (the data) are next researched and described; p.9.

This means that qualitative research is a descriptive one since it :

“looks at individuals, groups, institutions, methods and materials in order to describe, compare, contrast, classify, analyze and interpret the entities and the events that constitute their various fields of inquiry.”(Louis Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013, p.205).

Therefore, qualitative research differs from quantitative research by the following characteristics. First of all, in qualitative research data are collected in the form of words rather than numbers. Secondly, the research is conducted in natural settings rather than in laboratories and other artificial locations. Moreover, the focus in qualitative research is on the process rather than the outcome. The participant’s perspective the ‘insider’ or ‘emic’ view is emphasized in qualitative research (J. H. McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Murphy, Dingwall, Greatbatch, Parker, & Watson, 1998). In brief, the main purpose of qualitative research is to evolve deeply descriptions of personal actions and experiences that are embedded within the individual’s particular environment.

(Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) stated that qualitative approach is used to reveal the meaning of the people’s experiences to disclose their live world. This means that it enables the researcher “to study selected issues in depth and in detail” (Patton,

1990, p.13). In addition to this, qualitative research offers a comprehensive picture of social phenomena or human realities and situation (Creswell, 2003; Patton, 2002; Stake, Denzin, & Lincoln, 1998). This helps to “understand the social world using its participants’ point of views” (Bryman, 2008, p.366).

In the same context, the qualitative approach is used in this study because it facilitates the process of getting information or having a clear image of the teaching and learning process of public schools in Morocco through close examination. In addition to the way people think, their perception, reflection and assumptions regarding the ideas of the world around them are measured in qualitative research (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996). In Addition to this, the qualitative method has been used as “a powerful tool in order to understand teaching and learning process in recent years” (R. B. Johnson, 1997, p.4).

In addition to facilitating the way to reach information, qualitative research enhances and enriches data and descriptive information about any specific issue and permits “thick and rich description” about any context (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This implies that this research method makes it easier to get a large number of documents about teaching and learning situation of primary schools in Morocco, as well as it emphasizes on the inductive approach and focuses on the exploratory process of the research.

So, employing qualitative research methods to data gathering and analysis has significantly increased in popularity over the past two decades (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In the same context, (N. K. Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) stated that “Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality.... They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning” (p. 8).

As mentioned before, when using a quantitative method of research, the representations are symbolized numerically while in the qualitative method of research, representations of the world are primarily linguistic (Heppner, Kivlighan Jr, & Wampold, 1999). For this reason, (Heppner et al., 1999) added that:

“Consequently, qualitative researchers want to study behavior in context and might even go so far as to contend that it is the interpretation of the context that is the essential process to be studied” (p. 246).

This type of research investigates people’s experience and give it the major focus. Thus, when applying a constructivist approach within a qualitative method of research, it permits the researcher to understand the “how-and sometimes why- participants construct meanings and actions in specific situations” (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012, p.130).

Nevertheless, sometimes the researcher is required to “sustain a fair amount of ambiguity” through flexibility and openness towards the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p.5). This means that, it is extremely important that the researcher keeps an eye on everything as he sees it for the first time, this method is very helpful in making the researcher come up with new and surprising results.

In addition to this, qualitative research suits this study in terms of precision, because the process of leaving the data talk for itself goes back to the qualitative method of research. Given that qualitative methodology uses context, individual experience, and subjective interpretation, generalizability is not possible, nor is it a goal (Heppner et al., 1999). This enhances the idea that the qualitative method is very precise.

Concerning this study, the qualitative method offers a high level of validity, since

“The research team uses consensus to construct their interpretation of the data, trying to set aside their biases so that they fairly describe what the participant has reported” (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997, p.197).

In short, the qualitative approach contributed, in this study, to the incorporation of all the participants in the research process as well as helped in the examination of students’ character development. So, this approach played an important role in investigating the impact that character education has on students’ behavior improvement.

2.6.1.1. The Interview

(Lindlof & Taylor, 2017) claimed that interviewing is “a discursive practice where meaning is co constituted within a particular type of social relationship” (p. 178). This implies that interviewing is a technique that tackles authentic experiences with values. As a method of research, it is most consistent with people’s ability to make meaning out of language (Seidman, 1991). Though, (Kvale, 1996) claimed that the interview technique must be based on an interest in understanding others experiences and the meaning they make of those experiences.

Accordingly, to develop a unified understanding the researcher needs to put observations into the research context. The interviews with teachers gave me a chance to verify, validate and analyze information in order to achieve efficiency in data collection. So, using a semi-structured interview is very effective in terms of unveiling misunderstandings immediately, because both parties in the interview have more flexibility and fluid conversation in which they explore meaning, thus, the data that we come up with is extensive.

Thus, meaning is co-constituted as interviews are “not neutral tools of data gathering but active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results” (Atkinson, 2005, p.830).

Similarly, (Brenner, 1985; J. Brown & Canter, 1985) stated that interviews are particularly appropriate for understanding the social actor’s experience and perspective. Another particularity of semi-structured interviews is that the main questions are scripted but the follow-up and areas of interest are explored. This means that the interviewer and informant validity “takes precedence over reliability” (Seidman, 1991, p.56).

“Qualitative interviews examine the context of thought , feeling and action and can be a way of exploring relationships between different aspects of a situation...a powerful way of helping people ... articulate their tacit perceptions” (Arksey & Knight, 1999, p.9). The limitations of qualitative interviewing involve loose structure, small sample groups and open questions which limit the comparability of

responses and the need for shared understanding of the language and concepts discussed.

2.6.1.2. The Semi-Structured Interview

Through the use of interviews, the researcher assumes that the participants of this study will discuss their perspectives towards implementing a character education program in Moroccan public schools openly enabling the researcher to investigate the impact of this implementation on Moroccan students' morality and behavior improvement. (Borg, 1993) claimed that this method is the form of "direct interaction between the researcher and subject that can be adapted at any time in order to obtain the fullest responses from the individuals being studied" (p. 113).

The semi-structured interview offers a great deal of flexibility because it formed of a series of questions that are asked to participants but that can be modified or expanded as the interviewing situation requires, so it provides the researcher with the ability to probe the participant for additional details.

As mentioned before, interviews are an important qualitative tool to collect data. They help guide the researcher through the interview process. According to (Louis Cohen et al., 2013), 'the interview is a soft instrument for data gather, allowing multi-sensory transmits become utilized: verbal, non-verbal, talk and heard' (p. 349) . In this research, the researcher adopts semi-structured interviews to support the data that is gathered from data transcription.

The semi-structured interview is an interview type in which the researcher has already prepared the guiding questions, the format of the questions is open-ended questions, and the interviewer is given a chance to elaborate his/her answers in investigative way (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003, p.45). When conducting the interview, the researcher uses audio-recording. According to (Nunan, David, & Swan, 1992)

“there are some strengths or benefits of employing audio-recording when doing interview. The first is that the actual language can be preserved. Second, the process of interview will be natural. Third, the contribution of

the researcher can be recorded. The last is that data can be reexamined after the interview process.” (p.153)

In this research, the interviews were audio-taped, transcribed then regrouped into themes and also sub-themes, these classifications were used to identify the correlations between the responses of from one side the participants and the other side the theories that were already mentioned in the theoretical part of the thesis.

So, the research adopted semi- structured interviews at the preferred location and time of the participants to be used as a phonological qualitative method to collect qualitative data. Before the interview takes place, participants were given a consent form (see Appendix) and a brief of what the research is all about as well as their rights. They were also informed that anonymity and confidentiality is guaranteed for them.

In the same context, and according to (N. Ivankova et al., 2007) criteria of the importance of selecting a suitable interviewee for the interview, forty EFL teachers who work in public high schools were selected to enable the researcher to have a deeper insight about the presence of character education in the Moroccan school as well as to investigate the impact that character education will have on Moroccan students' behavior improvement. So to make sure that the researcher does not forget any response or any note made by the interviewees, the recording of the interviews were transcribed into writings within few days.

In addition to that, the researcher asked the interviewees for further clarification and explanation where appropriate and as mentioned before the transcriptions were categorized into themes to be ready for analysis.

In brief, the aim from an interview in a qualitative research is gaining a deep understanding of the researched matter and also obtaining full information about it. In this regard, (Louis Cohen et al., 2013) claimed that:

The purpose of interview to appraise or describe a somebody in many honor, to choose or publish a staff, to influence therapeutic arrange, as in the psychiatric interview, to try or improve hypotheses, to take data, as in review

or observational events, and then to model answers' reasons, as in threshold interviews. (p. 351)

So, the interview took place through asking some questions. The researcher conducted the interview with English teacher from different regions of Morocco (mentioned above). The interview is presented orally, via a telephone call because of COVID 19 restrictions, and the interviewees that are teachers answer the questions orally as well. The researcher used this type of interview, the semi-structured interview, because it is a form of interview that is flexible allowing new ideas to be brought up and guaranteeing the validity of the obtained data.

2.6.2. Quantitative Method of Research

The quantitative method is a form of inquiry that investigates a particular issue, based on testing a theory, measured with numbers and analyzed using statistical programs. The aim behind using a quantitative method is to determine if the hypotheses that were drawn are true or not. In fact, there are many advantages of this research approach, one of them is the use of such statistical data as a tool for saving time and resources. In this regard, (Bryman & Bell, 2001) stated that "quantitative research approach is the research that places emphasis on numbers and figures in the collection and analysis of data" (p.20).

The method of quantitative research is counted as a scientific approach of data collection. This implies that, when the researcher uses statistical data for the research descriptions and analysis, he gains a lot of time and effort in describing the results of his or her research. Thus, data that "consists in numbers, percentages and measurable figures, can be calculated and conducted by a computer through the use of a statistical package for social science SPSS which save lot of energy and resources" (Gorard, 2001, p.3).

In addition to this, the use of scientific methods for data collection and analysis gives us the possibility to make generalization. Accordingly, (L Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011) claimed that "the study of problem-solving instruction in secondary school science education within one particular area or zone can be reflective of the wider society in terms of samples, contents and patterns" (p.243).

Moreover, another advantage of quantitative research method is "replicability, because this research approach basically relies on hypotheses testing, the researcher need not to do intelligent guesswork, rather he would follow clear guidelines and objectives" (Lichtman, 2013, p.4).

In the same context (Shank & Brown, 2007) added that "using this type of research tool is conducted in a general or public fashion because of its clear objective and guidelines , and can therefore be repeated at any other time or place and still get the same results" (p.27).

Nevertheless, the quantitative approach gives opportunity for the use of control and study groups. In fact, through the use of control groups, the researcher may see right in dividing the participants into groups. For example:

"he or she may provide them with the same teaching outcomes, but while utilizing different teaching methods, with, of course, keeping in mind the factors that he or she is interested in researching. By the end of the course, the taught groups can be gathered and the researcher can then test the problem-solving ability of the students and be able to access the teaching method that best impacts the problem-solving abilities amongst the students" (B. Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p.34).

So, quantitative research method is the process of collecting and analyzing numerical data that can be used to make predictions about some issues, test causal relationships between variables and also generalize the research results to wider populations. Related to this, (Denscombe, 1998) describes quantitative research as "researcher detachment" research approach (pp.173-176).

This means that the researcher is considered as a complete outsider in his or her research, this can be regarded as a strength of quantitative research approach from one hand, yet from the other hand it can be regarded as a weakness to the research.

To sum up, this researcher-bias issue during the processes of data collection and data analysis disappears completely when the researcher is not in direct contact with the participants. That is to say, when the researcher collects his data via an electronic tool such as a telephone, the internet or even handouts questionnaires.

Therefore, when making use of these tools, the objectivity of the researcher will not be compromised and most importantly this way will guarantee respondents anonymity (Creswell, 2009, p.4).

The questionnaire is a tool that is used to collect data quantitatively. In this study, a one self- completion questionnaire was designed using the Likert scale method. This questionnaire includes various items that were adjusted from previous instruments, in addition to newly created items to fit the purpose of the research. They were addressed to students for the sake of measuring the implementation of character education in the Moroccan public high school as well as investigating the impact this later would have on students' behavior improvement.

The questionnaire started with demographic information to be able to describe the participants' backgrounds, followed by a section about the implementation of character traits or values inside the schools through the curriculum and the teachers' involvement, then, the last section was about the impact that these character traits have on students' behavior improvement. The data that was collected from the answers of the questionnaires was analyzed by the researcher using the SPSS program.

In order to measure the impact that character traits have on students' behavior, a questionnaire was adapted from the surveys which are based on the Eleven Principles of Character Education Effectiveness (Tom Lickona et al., 2007). As a recap of what have been mentioned in the literature review, these principles promote developing core ethical values that a person needs to become a good human being and at the same time make use of complementary performance character qualities which give the person the possibility to act morally in every situation he or she confronts. Moreover, according to the eleven principles, character is defined to include thinking, feeling, and behavior, in others words, thoughts, feelings and actions.

Furthermore, creating a caring school community and creating opportunities for students to act morally are also among these principles. Another important principle is providing an academic curriculum that develops the learners character, and helps

them to improve their behavior maybe by helping students foster their self-motivation and of course engaging the school personnel as a learning and moral community that assumes the responsibility for implementing character education and adopts the same core values that guide the education of students in its attitude. Nevertheless, integrating the students' families and community stakeholders as active members in the process of implementing character education is essential to the success of this latter.

Accordingly, in the questionnaire of this research, there are 41 statements that were designed to solicit the participants' perception about the values they notice at school and if they can help them improve their behavior. The answers were based on the Likert Scale as following: Never = 1, rarely = 2, sometimes = 3, usually = 4, always = 5; the researcher also used the following answers: strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, slightly disagree = 3, slightly agree = 4, agree = 5, strongly agree = 6.

Concerning the items, the first one is about gender and the second is about age. Then the participants move to answer the items that are related to the implementation of character education in the Moroccan high schools, for example item 4 is about learning and practicing values at school, then item 5 is about the inclusion of character traits in textbooks and finally item 6 is about teachers acting as role models in the school environment.

The last variable tackles students' behavior improvement, this one includes many items that demonstrate the impact that character traits or values may have on students' behavior and more importantly how the impact would be on students' behavior.

2.6.3. Document analysis

As mentioned in the previous section, document analysis is an effective tool that provides the researcher with a reasonable amount of reviewed data, it is a systematic way used to review the content, whether it is a printed or electronic, of a document and evaluate it, it is also used as a means of triangulation. (N. Denzin, 1970) claimed that "it is important to strengthen your data by the usage of 'the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" (p. 291).

In this thesis, documents associated with character education in the targeted schools are analyzed, in addition to all policies and teachers' plans related to CE. The rationale for the use of document analysis as a method for data collection in this study is to enhance other qualitative data as a way of triangulation.

According to (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) in order to analyze documents, the researcher have to examine and interpret the data to gain more understanding and to increase the empirical knowledge about the issue. Therefore, the method of document analysis is efficient to use when producing "a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility" (Eisner, 1991, p.110).

So, document analysis is a process that is systematic through which the researcher can review and evaluate any type of document either printed or electronic. Similar to other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This implies that this method of document analysis is often used hand in hand with other qualitative research methods such as questionnaires or surveys and observations as a means of triangulation.

In fact, any researcher that is using qualitative research method has to investigate using different sources of evidence in order to attain a full image of the issue through using different data sources as well as methods. These sources include interviews, participant or non-participant observation, and physical artifacts (Yin, 1994). Through using these different types of sources thus triangulating data, the researcher attempts to provide 'a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility' (Eisner, 1991, p.11).

Through triangulating data by combining data gathered from different methods research, the researcher is enabled to reinforce the findings of his research, therefore, reduce the impact of potential biases that can show up in any research. Related to this, (Patton, 1990) claimed that triangulation helps the researcher guard against the accusation that a study's findings are simply an artifact of a single method, a single source, or a single investigator's bias.

As a conclusion, this study used the mixed-method approach that join both quantitative and qualitative research techniques as well as document analysis. Similar to a study by (Rossman & Wilson, 1985) who combined quantitative and qualitative methods, they used surveys to collect quantitative data and also utilized open ended, semi structured interviews with reviews of documents as the primary sources of qualitative data. Combining all these methods enables us to have a deep and full insight about the matter we are researching.

2.7. Data Collection Procedures

As mentioned before, because the researcher is a teacher of English in the Moroccan Ministry of education, she was enabled to have contact with many teachers as well as students from different parts and regions of the country. So, she was willing to move out in order to hand out the questionnaire as well as do the interview in schools in the cities of Fès, Casablanca, Marrakech and Agadir. But it happened to be impossible with the Coronavirus lockdown. Therefore, the researcher changed the format of the questionnaire into a google form in order to make it reachable to students from different parts of the country, not only the previously mentioned cities.

In addition to this, she did the interview with teachers from different regions via telephone calls that were recorded and manuscript later. Based on the fact that this study has adopted the mixed method approach in order to answer the research questions with the main objective of investigating the impact that implementing character education has on students' behavior improvement, a quantitative tool is used to collect data quantitatively via questionnaires and qualitative ones are utilized through doing semi structured interviews.

Data collection procedures changed because of an unusual circumstance that is a new human coronavirus called severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) was identified in late 2019 in Wuhan, China, resulting in a pandemic (Organization, 2020). This later, resulted in the vital need for physical distancing and isolation in order to avoid contamination. All school, universities and shops closed to survive this pandemic, only hospitals and some greedy shops

were left open in order to respond to the need of citizens. In addition to this, many job contests, doctoral and master's defense presentations were cancelled.

Related to this, the field of research has known an important shift because field research which includes human interactions has come to a standstill during this pandemic. Due to these circumstances data collection techniques changed from relying on real life meetings and face to face interactions to virtual ones through the use of mobile phones or computers; several applications were used to guarantee the continuity of communication or more specifically human interactions such as zoom meetings which enables researcher to come up with meaningful data while working from home.

Even if one the best data collection methods may be face to face interviews, mobile phone ones still remain an excellent alternative. During this pandemic, people experienced many tough restrictions like travel ones and lockdowns, many isolation measures were taken in order to limit the spread of COVID-19. Thus, researchers who conduct face-to-face fieldwork in social studies through the use of interviews, focus groups and participant observations.

Consequently, they were faced with the challenge of postponing their data collection phase or reconsidering other methods in order to pursue their research. So, after exploring different methods to pursue my research, I have used mobile phones for research data collection because of the numerous advantages of this technique.

2.8. The Sample

As mentioned before in this chapter, the researcher conducted the field study during the period of the COVID 19 pandemic, for this reason conducting the survey as well as collecting the data happened to be via the net. Thus, sampling; which is the selection of a sample size from a larger population to survey, in this research was done according to web sampling methods, which are also named online surveys.

In general, surveys are meant to collect information about a certain population. However, it is very unlikely for any researcher to survey a whole population, that is why there exist many types of sampling.

In this study, the researcher chose simple random sampling because it is the most simple and direct approach in order to come up with a random sample. This technique focuses on picking the desired sample size and surveying only that sampled unit.

Therefore, through employing this method, the researcher may be confident that the sample is representative of the population that he targets. Moreover, thanks to this technique, there is possibility to come up with appropriate sample statistics and evaluate the errors they may contain. So, using a probability-based sampling methodology is very helpful in achieving these objectives.

Nevertheless, there are several online survey softwares that are even free, thing which is good for survey researchers. Thus, conducting surveys, as in all forms of data collection, requires making some adjustments concerning the amount of data that will be collected and the accuracy of the collected data. More importantly, these adjustments the research makes implicitly or explicitly when choosing a sampling method for collecting data may be very difficult and sometimes tricky to understand.

To elaborate more on this, there are many types of surveys; for example, longitudinal surveys, the researcher can recruit panel members for this specific effort. However, for individual surveys, a number of companies maintain panels of individuals, pre-recruited via a probability-based sampling methodology, from which sub-samples can be drawn according to a researcher's specification (Scherpenzeel & Toepoel, 2012). So, concerning online surveys based on probability samples, the sample is generally picked through the telephone or the postal mail rather than the web or just e-mails.

In addition to this, pre-recruited Internet panels are able to add to the speed of online surveys and at the same time enables the researcher to gain time since he or she will not pass through the recruitment process normally required which is very

long. Thus, this type of surveys may be very interesting to researchers who aim to conduct an online survey which depends upon a sample that is representative for the whole population of the Internet.

On the other hand, there exists several disadvantages for the pre-recruited panels. First of all, researchers have to be conchs about the fact that long-term panel participants may respond in a different way to survey questions than first-time participants will do. Another matter to consider is the nonresponse, in this regard, (Couper, 2000) claimed that ‘... in theory at least, this approach begins with a probability sample of the full (telephone) population, and assuming no nonresponse error permits inference to the population...' (p. 465).

As a conclusion, this section focused on the issues and challenges that face sampling for online surveys. Of course, every survey type, including online surveys, has its own strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, the importance of these strengths and weaknesses depends on the researcher’s aim and more importantly the objective of the study itself. For this reason, it is crucial to select an appropriate sample for the research; a sample that is able to provide the targeted data in order to easily attain the research objective.

2.9. Data Analysis

In order to start the analysis, the researcher derived the collected data from transcribed tape recordings of the interviews and questionnaire responses. Then, to investigate the impact that implementing a character education program will have on students’ behavior improvement, the accumulated data that is collected from all responses of the questionnaires is changed into numbers to be entered into the SPSS program for analysis so as to produce charts, tabulated reports, descriptive statistics and other statistical tests.

In this regard, (Merriam, 1998) claimed that:

“...the investigator is the primary instrument for gathering and analysing data and, as such, can respond to the situation by maximizing opportunities for collecting and producing meaningful information” (p. 20).

So, regarding the qualitative methods of collecting data, this later usually produces large amounts of data that have to follow a specific method in order to be analyzed efficiently. Therefore, (N. Ivankova et al., 2007) recommended that the researcher has to deal with “the data through several steps of reducing the data ultimately develop[ed] a description of the experiences about the phenomenon that all individuals have in common-the essence of the experience” (p. 94).

Similarly, (dan Biklen, 1982) claimed that “Working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others” (p.145).

Therefore, the interviews were analyzed in a deep way so as to find out the main themes from which they were derived to develop a full understanding of the researchable matter. Related to this, (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) pointed out the importance of searching for patterns; "always grouping like with like" (p. 9). Similarly, "incidents, events and happenings are taken as or analyzed, as potential indicators of phenomena which are thereby given conceptual labels" (p. 7).

Thus, in this research, the similar data were combined together into groupings to find out the relationships between them because the interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded for further analysis. So, the transcription included quotes taken from the responses of the interviewees. In short, the analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative parts of the study are presented quantitatively and qualitatively in the next chapter. Therefore, different themes and numerous tables are provided accordingly and of course the suggestions and recommendations come after the analysis of the collected data.

2.10. Pilot Test

Pretesting or pilot testing is the stage in survey research when the researcher tests survey questions or the questionnaire on 10% of the target population for the sake of evaluating the reliability and validity of the survey instruments before handing them in to the whole research sample. In fact, the piloting test is viewed as

necessary in any questionnaire of research as well as it is known to be primordial for improving the data collection and the research quality as a whole.

Nevertheless, it is believed that “A pilot study is often used to pre-test or try out (Baker, 1994, pp 182-183). It can be considered as “small scale version or trial run in preparation for major study” (Polit & Beck, 2009, p.467).

Therefore, in this research, before starting to collect the data, a pilot study was conducted firstly during which the participants were asked about the clarity of all items in the questionnaires. Then, forty students from Agadir, Casablanca and Fes were given the questionnaire to participate in the pilot study in order to indicate the validity of the questionnaire and to see if some questions are not necessary to include. Some revisions were needed to be done beefier coming up with the final versions of the questionnaires and of course before administering them to the whole number of participants.

In fact, the questionnaire pretest is an efficient method in order to detect problems that may exist in a questionnaire. (Converse, Jean McDonnell, & Presser, 1986) proposed that a pretest is a small pilot study to determine how a questionnaire can be improved to minimize response errors, such as a respondent misinterpreting a question. This implies that each item or question will be pretested according to an acceptable level of response variation and also respondent interest.

Moreover, we can pretest the whole questionnaire in order to examine if the vocabulary used is appropriate, also we can see the order of questions and how much time it takes to fill the questionnaire. Through exploring these details, the researcher is enabled to refine his or her survey and identify the problems that can affect the reliability and validity of their questionnaire; thus it helps them to change and modify the questions or items of the survey in order to minimize response errors. So, pretesting provides an opportunity for researchers to revise their data collection procedures and make sure to ask appropriate questions that do not make the participants confused because of their ambiguity.

In spite of all these advantages of the piloting test, many researchers still neglect to pretest the questionnaires of their research and by doing this they run the risk of

later collecting invalid or even incomplete data. In short, The practice of pretesting is highly regarded as an effective technique for improving validity in qualitative data collection procedures and the interpretation of findings (Bowden, Fox-Rushby, Nyandieka, & Wanjau, 2002; K. M. Brown, Lindenberger, & Bryant, 2008; Debbie Collins, 2003).

2.11. Translation

Translation is one of the most important tasks that the researcher has to do in order to guarantee the reliability and validity of his/her work. In this paper, the researcher translated the questionnaire that was handed to students since it cannot be granted that all students participating in the study are able to understand the English language vocabulary used there. To ensure this comprehension, the researcher worked hard to translate the requested meaning into Arabic language.

In addition to this, she asked an Arabic language teacher to revise the questionnaire and correct the grammatical mistakes if any. As a matter of fact, translation from one language to another means to get the same meaning rather than translating word by word. Thus, even if the researcher masters the two languages, she has to be very careful with the translation, of course with paying attention to the difference between the two cultures of Arabic and English and the importance of semantic equivalence across the two languages. In this regard, (Temple & Edwards, 2002) assumed that “Translators must constantly make decisions about the cultural meaning which language carries”, (pp. 2-3).

Therefore, to make sure that the translation of the questionnaire is accurate, and conveys the same meaning as the source language, the researcher herself as a bilingual person translated the questionnaire and asked an Arabic teacher to give help by reviewing the translated version and correcting it. Moreover, to double check, the translated version of the questionnaire of students was reviewed again by a second teacher who mastered the two languages, he revised and compared the questionnaire in both languages then approved it.

Nevertheless, concerning the qualitative part of the study that is the interview, questions asked for teachers were not translated into the Arabic language since all

the participants were teachers of the English language, so, they were able to completely understand the questions as well as to express themselves well while responding using the English language. The only concern for the researcher was the questionnaires that were handed to students.

In brief, (Crystal, 1991) defined translation as a process where “the meaning and expression in one language (source) is tuned with the meaning of another (target) whether the medium is spoken, written or signed” (p. 346). Therefore, translating the questionnaire is an important step for ensuring the validity of the survey. For this reason, the researcher or the translator must have as an objective to develop a translation that “ask the same questions” (Harkness, 2003) in order to ensure the validity of the translation.

2.12. Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are critical components of any research to be described as valid and reliable. To guarantee the reliability of the results in any study, different instruments used to produce the same results. (Joppe, 2000) identified reliability as the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability. In other words, if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable (p.1).

In the previous section, there was mentioned that this research used mixed methods of quantitative via a questionnaire handed out to students and then qualitative through an interview done with teachers. To discuss the validity and reliability in the quantitative part while collecting, analyzing and interpreting data, readers should be aware of the procedures that have been taken through the use of variables and statistics (Merriam, 1998).

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

considered dependable” (Merriam, 1998, p.222). Moreover, the triangulation in the qualitative approach using different methods increases the reliability.

Further to that, reliability in a way englobes in its meaning something that is repeated. Thus, (Merriam, 1998) stated that researchers should strive for consistency and dependability, especially when examining qualitative results. So, sometimes the reliability of a research depends on the stability of the conditions and procedures that were used through the process. For example, in this research there was no face-to-face interaction between the participants that filled the questionnaires so this ensures that it was done individually and that there was no influence or bias on the responses.

Furthermore, the measure of validity are namely two things which are content and criteria. To start with, content validity implies that the researcher is measuring what he or she claims to be investigating or exploring. Therefore, there is always benefit behind setting multiple rounds of questionnaires since this will increase the focus of both the researcher and the participants on the correct aspects of the study. Similarly, (Bond, 2004) comments that:

“validity is foremost on the mind of those developing measures and that genuine scientific measurement is foremost in the minds of those who seek valid outcomes from assessment” (p. 179).

This implies that, validity is considered as the core of various assessment forms that are reliable and accurate. Related to this, (Messick, 1989) added on validity that “...a test is valid for measuring an attribute if (a) the attribute exists and (b) variations in the attribute causally produce variation in the measurement” (p.6).

In addition to this, validity is a complex concept that is still evolving because it depends on the inferences that researchers draw from the results of the assessment. This means that the results or the effects of the inferences made by researchers have to be appropriate and suitable. In the same context, (Messick, 1989, p.6), added to this that ‘inferences are the hypotheses, and when these inferences are validated it amounts to these hypothesis-testing’ (p. 6).

Therefore, validity is also regarded as some evaluative judgements that are based on the inferences of assessment results or test scores, so when we make the correct interpretations, we will end up having positive actions based on the inferences we have made earlier. So, it is essential that these evaluative judgements are correct and surely reflect the truth. Thus, we cannot validate the assessment results or the test scores, as we validate the inferences about the test.

In addition to this, (Messick, 1989) claimed that “...what is to be validated is not the test or observation device but the inferences derived from the test scores or other indicators...” (p. 5). This implies that it is not appropriate to make a judgement that a test is valid because only inferences about the test are valid or not. To clarify more; every inference is regarded as an interpretation made by an individual about a test or assessments results. Another important matter is the accurate description of the researched issue being, this latter had to be through findings. However, if this is not the case, then the level of validity is questioned according to many researchers (Graziano & Raulin, 2000; Messick, 1989).

Generally speaking, validity is regarded as a concept that forms a single entity. For example, when several researchers examine one particular research study and by the end, they end up with a common conclusion, in this case the validity of the research will be agreed upon. On the contrary, if there is an external validity, the results of the drawn conclusions may be generalized to other situations and other studies.

In the previous example, we have just discussed two types of validity but still, many other kinds of validity exist. Moreover, validity is not represented by numerical values, it is regarded as a “matter of degree”, as claimed by (Linn & Gronlund, 2000, p.75). More importantly, the validity of assessment results can be considered as high, medium or low, or ranging from weak to strong (Gregory, 2000).

So, validity simply means that the inferences made are “...conclusions derived from empirical evidence bearing on score meaning...” (Messick, 1989, p.6). Moreover, validity is represented on a degree scale and not a specific value and has always a particular purpose, this means that it is not valid for any objective but has to be for particular one.

As discussed above, there are many types of validity but still, construct validity is regarded as the most important one of them since it is the basis of any other type of validity and from a scientific point of view is seen as the whole of validity (Mislevy, 2007).

On the other hand, a research is said to be reliable when different researchers may use the same research within the same conditions and having the same results. This means that, reliability gives an image on consistency and replicability over time. Another meaning of reliability is, the degree to which a test is free from measurement errors, because the more measurement errors occur the less reliable the test is (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; J. McMillan & Schumacher, 2001; Neuman & Dickinson, 2003).

Related to this, (Maree & Fraser, 2004) wondered to what extent would the same test produce the same results if it was administered to the same children under the same conditions. This wondering enables the researcher to come up with reliable comparisons. In fact, reliability is quite related to the number of errors found in the assessment, this means that when the number of errors increase unreliability increases too. Consequently, reliability is regarded as a very important factor in the assessment process, and is defined as an aspect that adds to the validity of the research.

In the same context, (Messick, 1989) adjusted the basic definition of validity and claimed that reliability is unified with validity in its whole. So, he included reliability as one of the types of validity and stated that it has an important contribution in the overall construct validity. Similarly, (Messick, 1989) added :

“Hence, construct validity is a necessity in the validation not only of test interpretation but also of test use, in the sense that relevance and utility as well as appropriateness of test use depend, or should depend, on score meaning.” (p. 8)

This implies that construct validity is primordial for both test interpretation and also for test use. Thus, a test must be relevant as well as enable the researcher to use it in a reliable manner.

In brief, reliability is concerned with the consistency of the method used in the research while validity is concerned with the accuracy of this latter. In others words, reliability is another term for consistency, for example; if a person takes the same personality test numerous times and each time receives the same results then the test is reliable.

However, a test is judged to be valid if it measures what it is supposed to measure, for example; if the results of the latter test proposed that an introvert person was in fact extrovert then the test would be called invalid.

2.13. Ethical Considerations

When conducting any research, researchers should be knowledgeable of all ethical issues whether before, during or after (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The issues that are discussed in this section are the ones concerning the confidentiality and anonymity of the research participants, it is very important to provide subjects with a high degree of confidentiality while conducting any type of research, either qualitative or qualitative.

Most of the time, researchers pledge participants in their research that any information or discussion happening between them will be kept in strict confidence. In order to guarantee that this happens, researchers have to systematically change each participant's real name to a pseudonym or to just a number when reporting the data. Nevertheless, sometimes changing every detail is not possible, otherwise the data will be distorted.

Thus, changing the names of locations, stores, or streets, related to a description of certain characteristics about an individual, may make it possible to discover a subject's identity (Morse & Richards, 2002). Consequently, this uncertainty about what to keep and what to omit as information that can reveal the identity of a research participant may result in making people hesitant and doubtful about cooperating in future research. Therefore, researchers have to make sure during the process of collecting and analyzing data to be very careful about how they discuss their subjects and the settings (Hessler, 1992). For these reasons, it is essential to

assure confidentiality through the use of an informed consent form that has to be sent and most importantly approved by all participants.

Related to this matter, and during the quantitative part, that is the questionnaire, the researcher contacted many teachers from the cities she included in the sample, explained the topic and the procedure she has to follow in order to attain the research objectives, then sent each of them an informed consent form that shows that participants take part in the research as matter of their own choice, and that the research is free from any element of fraud or any other type of similar unfair inducement or manipulation. Thus, the participants among teachers and students were informed about the intention of the study and the way. The researcher sent an email requesting them to participate in the questionnaire through a consent form. In addition to this, they were assured that their responses are going to be kept anonymous and their names will not be mentioned in front of anyone without their consent.

In addition to this, the researcher explained the research topic at the beginning of each interview, then asks the participant if he or she understands the vocabulary used then if they are still willing to take part in the interview. When the participant accepts and completes the interview, this action serves an implying consent in the absence of a signed consent paper. As a matter of fact, interviewees were informed that they can choose to leave or stop an interview at any time without being asked for any clarification for their action. In addition, a letter of information and a consent letter were provided to participants prior to their participation whether in questionnaire or interviews. The collected data were kept in a secure locked place, so confidentiality was guaranteed for all participants to make it easy for them to uncover their views freely.

This chapter has been addressed the research methodology, particularly, the sample, participants and data collection procedures. The next chapter is concerned with the data analysis and interpretation of the obtained results.

Chapter Three

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Chapter Three: Data Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter is concerned with the findings of the research, it suggests a view of the impact that would create implementing a character education program on students' behavior improvement in the Moroccan high schools. The researcher chose as an approach for the study a mixed method approach in which she combined both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques through the use of different instruments, namely questionnaires, document analysis and interviews.

In order to answer the research questions, analysis was required for both the quantitative and qualitative data. For instance, the researcher used Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) as well as AMOS to analyze the quantitative data; that is the questionnaire. On the other hand, qualitative data were analyzed using NVivo which is one of the most powerful softwares for gaining deeper insights about qualitative and mixed-methods data. As mentioned earlier, this investigation is guided by the following main questions:

1. How does the implementation of a character education program impact students' behavior?
2. How do learning and practicing values at school affect students' behavior?
3. How does the use of the curriculum as a tool to teach character traits influence student's behavior?
4. How does the modeling of good character traits by teachers impact the behavior of students?

3.1. Quantitative Analysis

This section reveals the quantitative data that the researcher collected from the questionnaires. In order to investigate the impact that the implementation of character education has on students' behavior improvement, the researcher decided to address students from different public high schools in Morocco via a questionnaire in order to perceive their understanding of character education and also to measure the impact this latter has on the development of their moral character.

Therefore, this section proposes an analysis for the questionnaire’s findings, the analysis was principally proceeded by SPSS, that is the statistical analysis software by IBM. Another tool was used in order to help the process of data transcription and transfer into SPSS which is the AMOS software.

This section includes first of all a descriptive analysis which provides descriptive statistics about the profile of students who filled the questionnaire. The second subsection deals with the reliability of the measurement scales under what is called the exploratory analysis, then finally the researcher will test the validity of the scales while considering the interactions between the different variables of the model in the confirmatory analysis.

3.1.1. Descriptive Analysis

This questionnaire was administered to students from six different Moroccan high schools. However, we were only able to collect 424 reliable and complete observations, after eliminating questionnaires with missing responses and those considered to be with no return. Thus, we obtained a response rate which is satisfactory.

3.1.1.1. Representativeness of Students by Age

Table 1: Representativeness of students by Age

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	14-18	355	83.7	83.7	83.7
	19-22	69	16.3	16.3	100.0
	Total	424	100.0	100.0	

The results displayed on the table above show that our sample is represented in majority by the age group of 14 to 18 years at 83.7%. Followed by the 19 to 22 age

group, which represents only 16.3% of the students, so 335 students out of 424 are between the age of 14 to 18 years old. This implies that most of the respondents are teenagers and this, for sure, would have an effect on their way of responding.

3.1.1.2. Representativeness of Students by Gender

Table 2: representativeness of students by Gender

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Male	143	33.7	33.7	33.7
	Female	281	66.3	66.3	100.0
	Total	424	100.0	100.0	

Concerning the representativeness of students by gender, displayed in the table above, the research sample is represented by female students at 66.3%; 281 female students answered the questionnaire. On the other hand, male students presented 33.7% of the sample, which means that 143 out of 424 students who responded the questionnaire were males.

3.1.1.3. The Meaning of School

Table 3: The meaning of school according to students

		Number	Percentage (%)
Meaning of school	a place where I study	386	91.3%
	a place where I broaden my knowledge	321	75.9%
	a place where I improve my character	303	71.6%
	a place where I learn values	301	71.2%

As mentioned in the literature review, it is very important to understand the meaning and importance of character education. From the table above, we can deduce that the majority of students (91.3%) view school as a place where they study, or a place where they broaden their knowledge (75.9%). This means that most of students see their schools as places where they fulfill their academic achievement, no more.

However, a lower number of students said that schools is a place where they improve their character and learn values. This implies that students are not aware of the importance of learning and practicing character traits or values at school, and more importantly they ignore the meaning of character.

3.1.2. Exploratory Analysis of Measurement Scales

Before testing the underlying assumptions of the thesis model, it is necessary to test the reliability of the measurement scales, as well as the items used to measure the concepts studied. The study of the reliability of the measurement scales is based on the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and the inter-item correlation significance as you can note in the table below.

3.1.2.1. Including Character Traits in Textbooks

Table 4: The variable of including character traits in textbooks

Variable	Number of Items	Inter-Items Correlation Significance	Cronbach's Alpha	KMO & Bartlett	AVE
Including character traits in textbooks	6	0.000***	0,84	0.881 ***	56 %

***: Significant at 1% level

The first variable in the chart concerns including character traits in textbooks, it is represented through six items which are: respect, honesty, trustworthiness, citizenship, caring and responsibility. According to the chart, all the items of this variable are correlated significantly at the level of 1%. These results confirm a very good reliability of the measurement scale used to measure the concept. In addition to this, the Cronbach's Alpha test shows a satisfactory value of ($\alpha_{\text{cronbach}} = 0,84 \geq 0,70$) which shows a strong internal consistency.

Moreover, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) that is specified in the table above is a test that is used in research to determine the sampling adequacy of data that are aimed for Factor Analysis use. Most of social researchers use Factor Analysis in order to be sure that the variables they have used are appropriate to measure the particular concept they want to.

However, Bartlett's test for sphericity aims at comparing the correlation matrix to the identity matrix. This means that this test examines the possibility of having some redundancy between variables that can be summarized with some factors. Therefore, interpreting the statistic of the KMO & Bartlett test is relatively straightforward because it is good when it is closer to 1, and this is the case with this variable with a representation of 0.881.

Finally, the AVE or in other words the average variance extracted which is a tool that tests the validity of the scales while considering the interactions between the different variables of the model reveals a percentage of 56,49 %, thing that is significant since this one should be higher than the highest squared correlation with any other variable.

3.1.2.2. Teachers Acting as Role Models

Table 5: The variable of teachers acting as role models

Variable	Number of Items	Inter-Items Correlation Significance	Cronbach's Alpha	KMO & Bartlett	AVE
Teachers acting as role models	6	0.000***	0,92	0.923 ***	72,9 %

***: Significant at 1% level

The second variable tackles the fact that teachers act as role models in front of their students, this variable includes six items, namely: respect, honesty, trustworthiness, citizenship, caring and responsibility. The chart demonstrates that all the items of this variable are correlated significantly at the level of 1%, which confirms a very good reliability of the measurement scale used to measure the concept. Concerning the Cronbach's Alpha test, it gives a satisfactory value of ($\alpha_{\text{cronbach}} = 0,92 \geq 0,70$) which proves a good internal consistency. For the KMO and Bartlett test for sphericity, it is significant at 0.923 to 1%. After all, the average variance extracted shows a good percentage of 72,9 %.

3.1.2.3. Learning and Practicing Values at School

Table 6: The variable of learning and practicing values at school

Variable	Number of Items	Inter-Items Correlation Significance	Cronbach's Alpha	KMO & Bartlett	AVE
Learning and practicing values at school	12	0.000***	0,92	0.950***	55,35 %

***: Significant at 1% level

The third variable discusses the processes of learning and practicing values at school. This variable involves twelve items, including: respecting everyone around like teachers, classmates and administrators, helping other students even if they are not friends, being sensitive to people's feelings, abiding by the rules of the school generally and the classroom specifically, being a reliable person, returning borrowed things, telling the truth, being sincere with teachers and classmates, taking responsibility of one's actions and not blaming others, thinking before acting, volunteering in school community service projects and finally taking care of the school environment (green space, walls, desks).

The table above shows that all the items of this variable are correlated significantly at the level of 1%, which confirms a very good reliability of the measurement scale used to measure the concept. Concerning the Cronbach's Alpha test, it gives a satisfactory value of ($\alpha_{\text{cronbach}} = 0,92 \geq 0,70$) which proves a good internal consistency. For the KMO and Bartlett test for sphericity, it is significant at 0.950 which is very close to 1%. Finally, the average variance extracted shows a good percentage of 55,35 %.

3.1.2.4. Students' Behavior Improvement

Table 7: The variable about students' behavior improvement

Variable	Number of Items	Inter-Items Correlation Significance	Cronbach's Alpha	KMO & Bartlett	AVE
Student's behavior improvement	11	0.000***	0,79	0.837 ***	46,91 %

***: Significant at 1% level

The fourth variable tackles students' behavior improvement. This variable involves eleven items stressing the improvement in behavior that may occur if certain values are implemented within schools, like including: respect students will respect everyone in return, with caring bullying will decrease, implementing fairness will enable students to solve conflicts fairly by taking the right decision, stressing trust will improve students' self-confidence and enhance building strong relationships with their teachers, honesty will help diminish the problem of cheating in exams, with the practice of citizenship we will have not only good students, but also good citizens.

Then added that, the school climate will be positive and healthy with the implementation of values and will help students understand the importance of using them in daily life in order to improve their character. The last item in this variable concerns students' opinion about the impact that learning and practicing values at school will have on their behavior.

The table above shows that all the items of this variable are correlated significantly at the level of 1%, which confirms a very good reliability of the measurement scale used to measure the concept. In addition to this, the Cronbach's Alpha test gives a satisfactory value of ($\alpha_{\text{cronbach}} = 0,79 \geq 0,70$) which guarantees a good internal consistency. Concerning the KMO and Bartlett test for sphericity, it is significant at

0.837 which is very close to 1%. Finally, the average variance extracted shows a good percentage of 46,91 %.

3.1.2.5. Students' Misbehavior

The fifth variable concerns the frequency of student's negative behavior in schools. It includes ten items that describe common negative behaviors that are observed at schools, like: disrespect towards each other, disrespect towards teachers, indifference towards others feelings, bullying, not adhering the school laws, lying to escape punishment, being unjust while solving conflicts, writing on their desks and on the walls. Moreover, not respecting the school green space and finally, not volunteering in community service clubs or activities.

From the chart above, it can be observed that all the items of this variable are correlated significantly at the level of 1%, thing that confirms a very good reliability of the measurement scale used to measure the concept. Furthermore, the Cronbach's Alpha test gives a satisfactory value of ($\alpha_{\text{cronbach}} = 0.85 \geq 0,70$) which ensures a good internal consistency. For the KMO and Bartlett test for sphericity, it is significant at 0.903 which is very close to 1%. Finally, the average variance extracted shows a good percentage of 54,74 %.

In brief, all the variables were correlated significantly at the level of 1%, as well as showed satisfactory values of the Cronbach's Alpha that were superior to 0,70 and finally all of the variable had an average variance extracted that is superior to 50%.

Table 8: All variables and their measurement scales

Variables	Number of Items	Inter-Items Correlation Significance	Cronbach's Alpha	KMO & Bartlett	AVE
Including character traits in textbooks	6	0.000***	0,840	0.881***	56 %
Teachers acting as role models	6	0.000***	0,920	0.923***	73 %
Learning and practicing values at school	12	0.000***	0.920	0.950***	55 %
Student's behavior improvement	11	0.000***	0,790	0.837***	47 %
Student's misbehavior	10	0.000***	0.850	0.903***	55 %

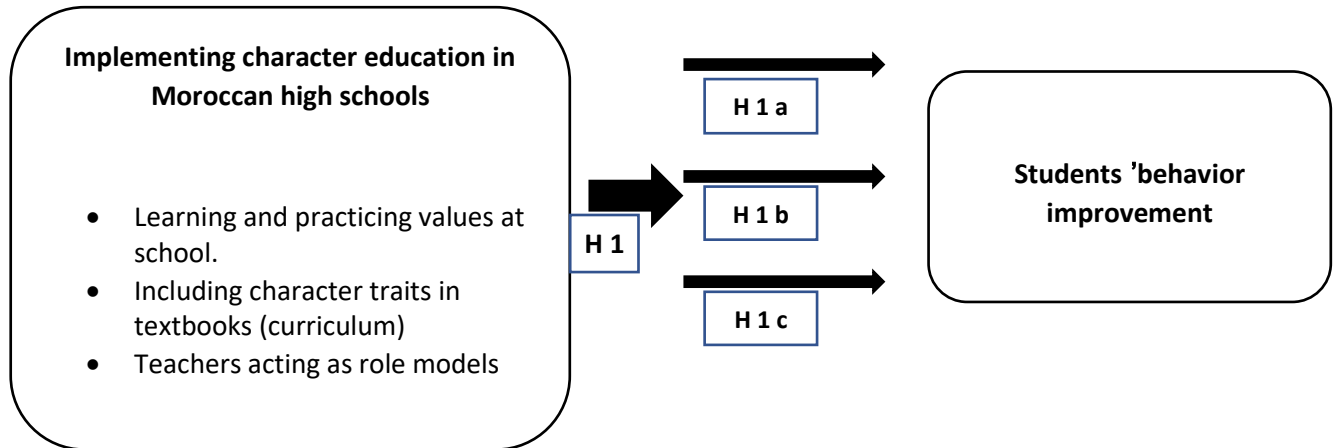
***: Significant at 1% level

3.1.3. Confirmatory Analysis

After studying the reliability of the measurement scales for each construct separately, we will then test the validity of the scales while considering the interactions between the different variables of the model. Thus, this section discusses the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the research.

The conceptual model designed in this research was performed to test the relationship between character traits or values students learn at school and their behavior improvement (see the schema below).

Schema 1: The Conceptual Framework Model



In order to make our model more efficient, we added a second relationship including the student misbehavior. In fact, the researcher believes that the character traits and values students learn at school must reduce or correct their negative behavior, resulting in behavior improvement. Furthermore, when the research added the gender variable, she found that the results of both genders were different. Consequently, she designed another model in which female and male students were regarded separately.

Moreover, to estimate the structural model of the study, a linear structural relationship method (LISREL) was used, based on the maximum of likelihood. The research model validity test shows the following results:

Table 9: The structural model validity

	Indices	Values	Sig
Fit Indices	GFI	0.992	> 0.8
	RMSEA	0.036	< 0.09
	RMR	0.015	Lowest value
Baseline Comparaisons Indices	CFI	0.998	> 0.8
	TLI	0.971	> 0.8
Discrepancy Index	CMIN/DF	1.534	1<CMIN/DF<5
Default model	Chi-square = 12.268 Degrees of freedom = 8 Probability level = 0.000		

According to the model validity test, it is presumed that the research' model shows a good fit quality. For instance, the Goodness of fit index is higher than 80% and equal to 0,992, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation fit index is lower than 9% and equal to 0.036, the Root Mean Square Residual fit index is at its lowest value that is 0.015. Moreover, for the baseline comparison indices, the Comparative Fit Index shows a value that is superior to 80% and equal to 0.998, the Tucker-Lewis Index is also higher that 80% and equal to 0.971. Finally, the Discrepancy Index shows a value of 1.534 which makes it significant since it is between 1 and 5. All these results are significant and show a probability level of 0.000.

3.1.3.1. Model Estimation for Male Students

Concerning male students, the relationship between variables' estimation is represented in the following table:

Table 10: The regression estimation weight

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Students' Behavior Improvement	<---	Character education In Textbooks	0.24	0.58	0,408	0,683
Students' Behavior Improvement	<---	Teachers acting as role Models	0.28	0.65	0,430	0,667
Students' Behavior Improvement	<---	Learning and Practicing Values at School	0.49	0.62	0,800	0,424
Students' misbehavior	<---	Character education InTextbooks	-0.95	0.58	-1.635	0,102
Students' misbehavior	<---	Teachers acting as Role Models	-0.17	0.65	-0,257	0,797
Students' misbehavior	<---	Learning and Practicing Values at School	0.234	0.62	3.795	***
Students' Behavior Improvement	<---	Male students	-0.396	0.101	-3.902	***
Students' misbehavior	<---	Male students	0.68	0.101	0,671	0,503
Students' Behavior Improvement	<---	Age	-0.14	0.129	-0,112	0,910
Students' misbehavior	<---	Age	-0.123	0.128	-0,957	0,339

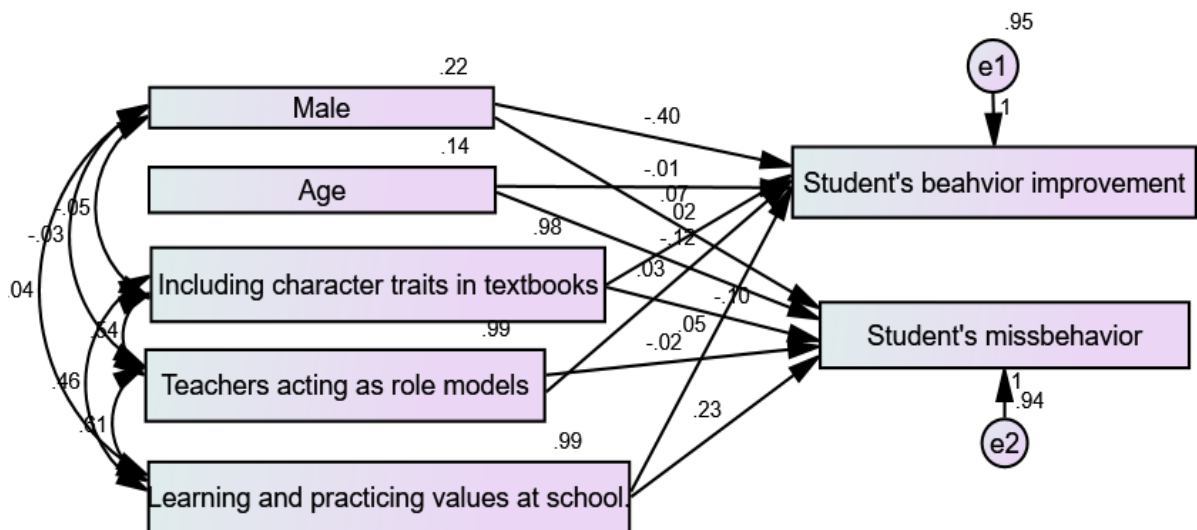
***: Significant at 1% level

The results show that the relationships between variables were not significant except for learning and practicing values at school and its impact on the student misbehavior. The results show that when learning and practicing values at school increases by 1%, students' misbehavior increases too by 23% for both genders (male and female students). However, what is interesting in these findings is that when the number of male students increases in schools by 1%, the students'

behavior improvement decreases by 40%, and these results were significant at the level of 1%.

As mentioned before, the most interesting result here is the one concerning the interrelation between the number of male students and the decrease in students' behavior improvement. This implies that when the number of male students is high at a certain school, it impacts students' behavior improvement negatively, maybe because, in general, male students misbehave more than female ones. Consequently, this hinders behavior improvement.

Schema 2: Model estimation based on male's character



3.1.3.2. Model Estimation for Female Students

Concerning male students, the relationship between variables' estimation is represented in the following table:

Table 11: The regression estimation weight

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Students' Behavior Improvement	<---	Character education In Textbooks	0.24	0.58	0,408	0,683
Students' Behavior Improvement	<---	Teachers acting as role Models	0.28	0.65	0,430	0,667
Students' Behavior Improvement	<---	Learning and Practicing Values at School	0.49	0.62	0,800	0,424
Students' misbehavior	<---	Character education InTextbooks	-0.095	0.058	-1.635	0,101
Students' misbehavior	<---	Teachers acting as Role Models	-0.017	0.065	-0,257	0,797
Students' misbehavior	<---	Learning and Practicing Values at School	0.234	0.62	3.79	***
Students' Behavior Improvement	<---	Female students	0.396	0.101	3.924	***
Students' misbehavior	<---	Female students	-0.068	0.100	-0.674	0.500
Students' Behavior Improvement	<---	Age	-0.14	0.129	-0,112	0,910
Students' misbehavior	<---	Age	-0.123	0.128	-0,957	0,339

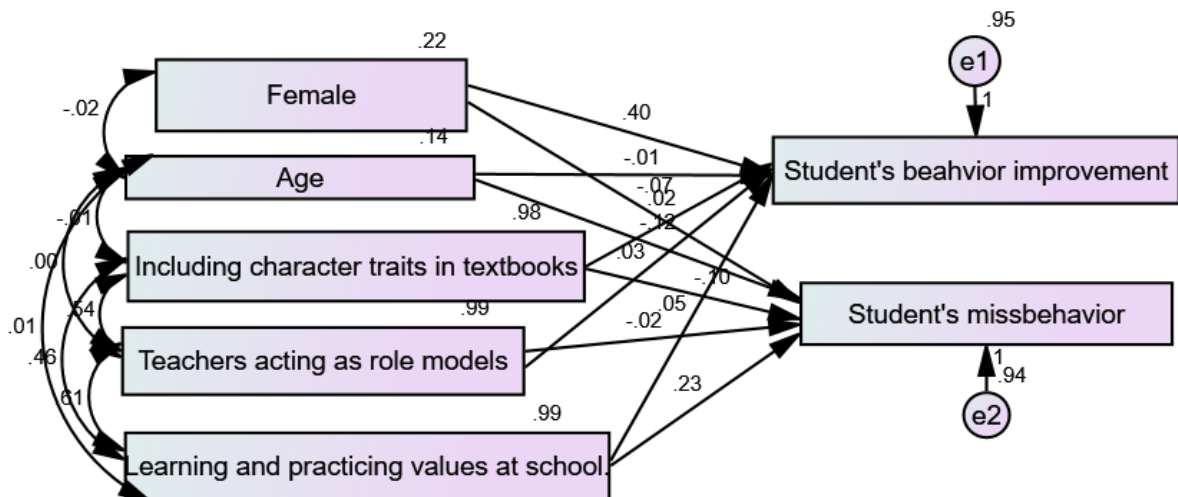
***: Significant at 1% level

The results show that the relationships between variables were not significant except for learning and practicing values at school and its impact on the students' misbehavior. The results show that when learning and practicing values at school increases by 1%, students' misbehavior increases too by 23% for both genders (male and female students). However, unlike males' findings, females' ones suggest

that when the number of female students increases in schools by 1%, the students' behavior improvement increases by 40% too, and these results were significant at the level of 1%.

As mentioned before, the most interesting result here is the one concerning the interrelation between the number of female students and the increase in students' behavior improvement. This implies that when the number of female students is high at a certain school, it impacts students' behavior improvement positively, maybe because, in general, female tend to behave well and give more importance to morals and values. Consequently, their presence helps behavior improvement.

Schema 3: Model estimation based on female's character



In addition to the causality effect, we tried to study the covariance between the explanatory variables. For instance, the relations between those variables are represented in the following table:

Table 12: The explanatory variables Covariances

Explanatory Variables			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Character education In Textbooks	<-->	Learning and Practicing Values at School	0,459	0.53	8.648	***
Teachers acting as Role Models	<-->	Learning and Practicing Values at School	0,607	0.57	10.692	***
Character education In Textbooks	<-->	Teachers acting as Role Models	0,535	0.55	9.758	***
Character education In Textbooks	<-->	Male students	-0.047	0.023	-2.035	0.049
Teachers acting as Role Models	<-->	Male students	-0.030	0.023	-1.324	0.186
Learning and Practicing Values at School	<-->	Male students	-0.036	0.023	-1.574	0.115

*** Significant at 1% level

The covariances that exist between explanatory variables were significant for three relationships as demonstrated in the chart above. According to the findings, students' learning and practicing of values and good character traits at school increases when their teachers acting as role models and presence of character education in textbooks increases as well.

In fact, according to the findings displayed in the chart above, it can be said that the relation between learning and practicing values at school and teachers acting as role models is even stronger with a percentage of 60%. The same can be said for teachers' role modeling and the presence of character traits in textbooks (53%). Therefore, based on these results, a conclusion can be made concerning the important role that teachers play in this process, they are key contributors to and effective implementation of character education. However, character education that is present in Moroccan textbooks doesn't have the same effect as teachers, because the strength of the relation is less than 50% (45%).

To sum up, from the obtained findings, it can be deduced that all the hypotheses were rejected because all of them didn't have significant results. This may be explained in several ways, but I think the most accurate one is that it is due to the non-effective implementation of character education in Moroccan schools.

3.2. Qualitative Analysis

This section discusses the collected data from the interviews that the researcher did with forty teachers from different public high schools in Morocco. Because “data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data” (C. Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 112), the researcher selected NVIVO software for data analysis since it is used for the analysis of unstructured texts or audios like interviews for instance.

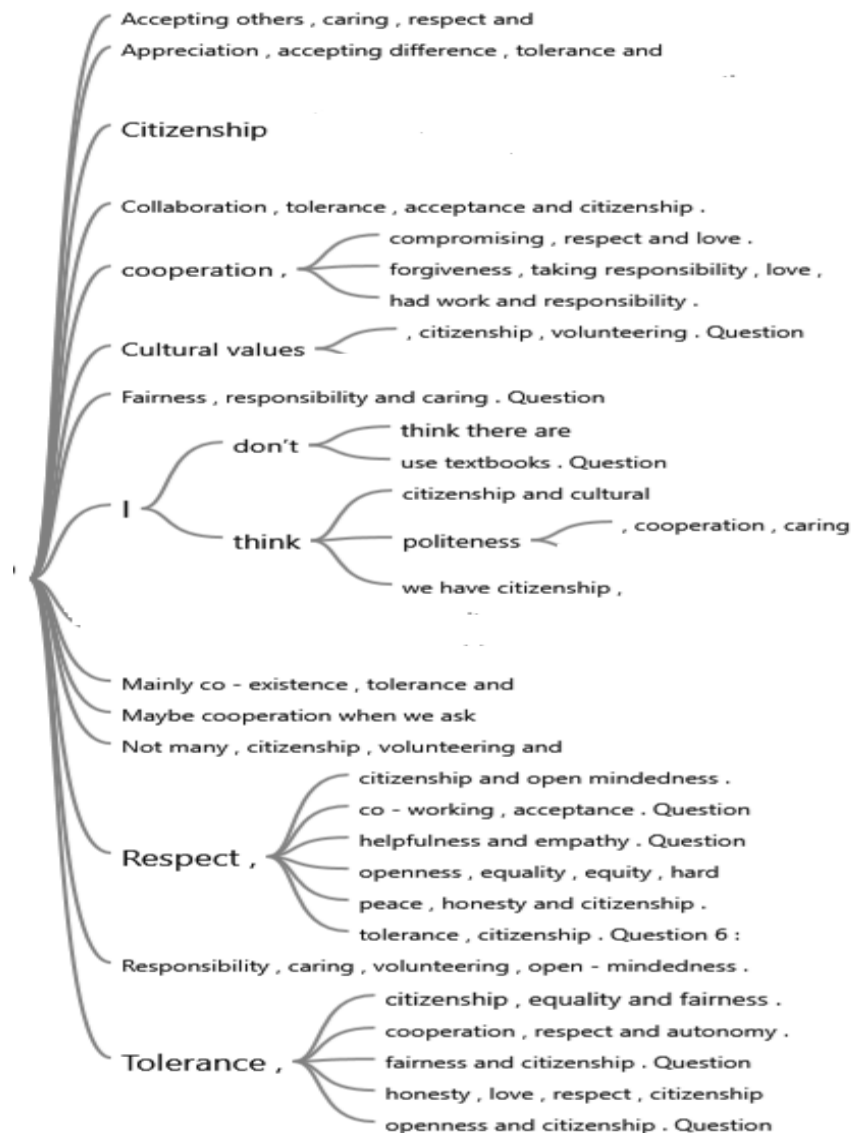
As mentioned in the previous chapter, various Moroccan schools were selected for this study because they outline a rich environment for collecting data related to the research purpose. In addition to this, even the curriculum taught in those schools is the same, there is difference in the social characteristics of each region where the schools are located so it gives the researcher an opportunity to get a diversification in the responses as well as in the results.

Concerning this part, forty teachers from different schools were interviewed in order to answer the research questions through getting their opinion and insight concerning the implementation of character education in our schools, the strategies that may help this implementation succeed and finally the impact that this implementation may have on students' behavior. In the following section, the researcher will discuss the NVIVO results according to the literature she has already mentioned in the beginning of this paper.

3.2.1. Implementing Character Education

In this section, the researcher will display the answers of teachers in regard of the action of implementing values or character traits in the Moroccan schools. This section is divided to three parts, the first deals with teachers' ideas about values and which ones they think should be implemented in schools, the second tackles the Moroccan curriculum or more specifically the textbooks and the values they

Word tree 1: Character traits present in Moroccan textbooks



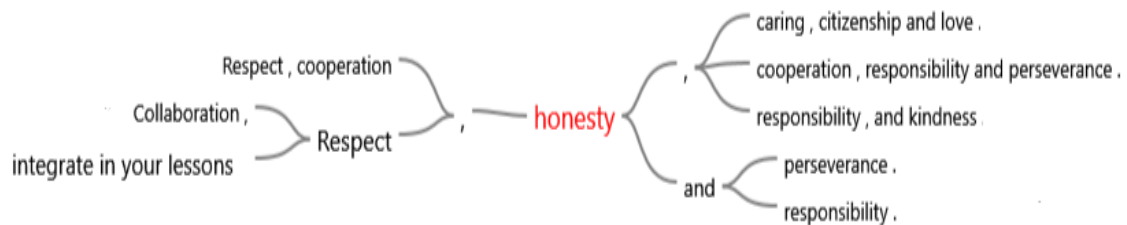
According to the mind map, most teachers stressed the presence of citizenship, tolerance and cultural values in textbooks. From these three traits, others values can be derived like love, empathy, caring, cooperation, volunteering, tolerance, co-existence, responsibility, hard work, forgiveness, peace, equity and many others.

Another important point that can be deduced from the mind map is that some teachers answered that there are no values included in textbooks, thing which pushes us to think about the reasons behind this answer. Some others said that they

accepting others' ideas and beliefs, being kind and training oneself to become a good citizen for his or her country.

Nevertheless, there are also other traits that were not repeated a lot but that are very important like students have to learn to think critically in order to shape their own way of thinking and build a strong personality, also some teachers stress love, perseverance, reliability, peace, productivity and compassion in their classes because they see that instilling these traits would be very fruitful and would definitely aid them to create a healthy classroom environment.

Word tree 2: Character traits that teachers integrate in lessons



From the mind map, it can be noticed that NVIVO chose the trait of honesty as a core to the other traits according to the redundancy of the word in the interviews. Another observation that can be made here is that all the traits of character education are already present in our schools but in term of values, teachers said that they integrate respect and collaboration in their lessons, they also added that caring, love, kindness, and perseverance are all important traits they always stress and try to instill in their students for the sake of creating good future citizens.

3.2.2. Strategies Used to Implement Character Education

As mentioned in the review of literature, there are many ways to implement character education in a school. In this section, the researcher will show the results she got from teachers' answers regarding this issue.

First of all, she will investigate the way teachers integrate the values they have already mentioned in their classrooms, then she will explore how they manage to both establish and maintain these good character traits in the school environment. Thirdly, she will examine their suggestions about ways to improve students'

Moreover, there are some verbs in the word cloud that concern the attitude of the teacher towards his/her students, for example teacher have to care about their students, they also have to be respectful, patient, positive, loving and they should promote and stress good character traits, urge their students to improve their behavior and finally react positively to them.

However, to get an additional overview of the answers, the NVIVO proposes this mind map:

Word tree 3: Strategies to implement character traits

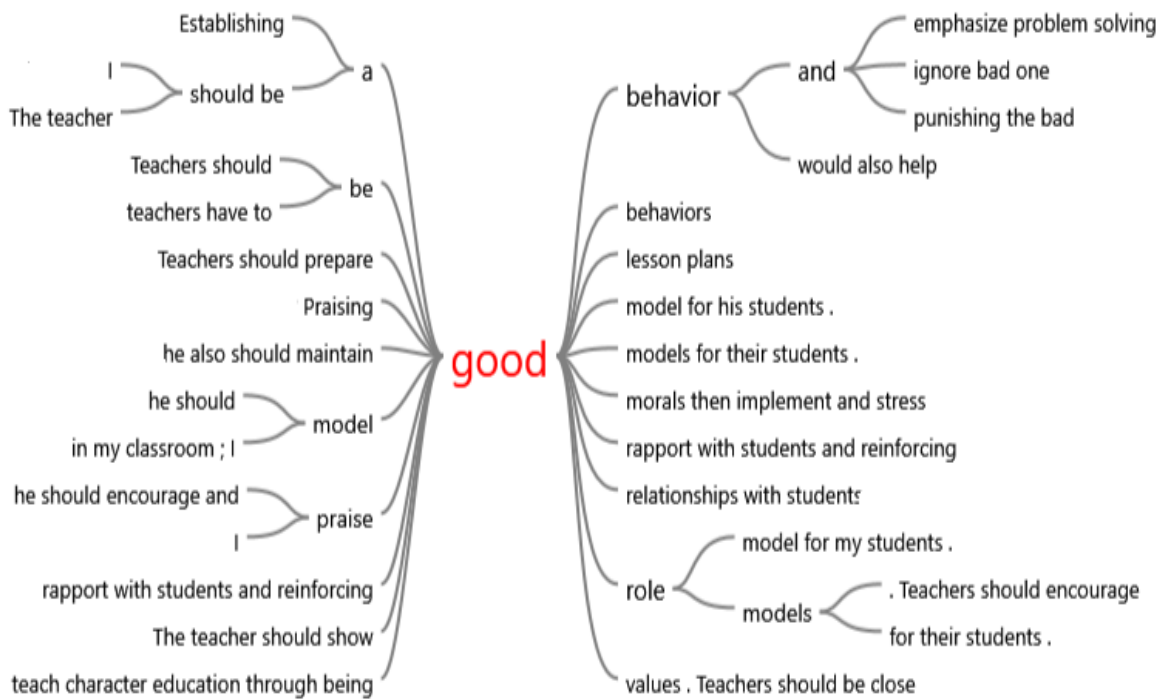


The first method displayed in the mind map is that teachers should role model the values they want their students to adopt, because most of the time students imitate their teachers and consider them as their idols. The second method is working on dialogues and reading texts that promote values like cooperation, caring, reliability, fairness etc. Thirdly, urging students to engage in class discussions or group work because this will enable them to practice good character traits. All these strategies will help students acquire and adopt good character traits.

3.2.2.2. Strategies for Establishing and Maintaining Good Character

Establishing and maintaining good character in the classroom is not an easy matter, teachers spend too much time and effort to keep a good and healthy environment in their classrooms, while trying to achieve this, they try many strategies as shown in the mind map below.

Word tree 4: Strategies for establishing and maintaining good character



As displayed in the mind map above, the core is the word good which means that teachers first of all have to tend to positivity rather than negativity. This implies that in order to establish a good behavior in the classroom, teachers should ignore bad behavior, emphasize problem solving and more importantly praise good behavior. Another answer was that teachers should prepare lessons plans where students are kept busy and where there is no left free time for them.

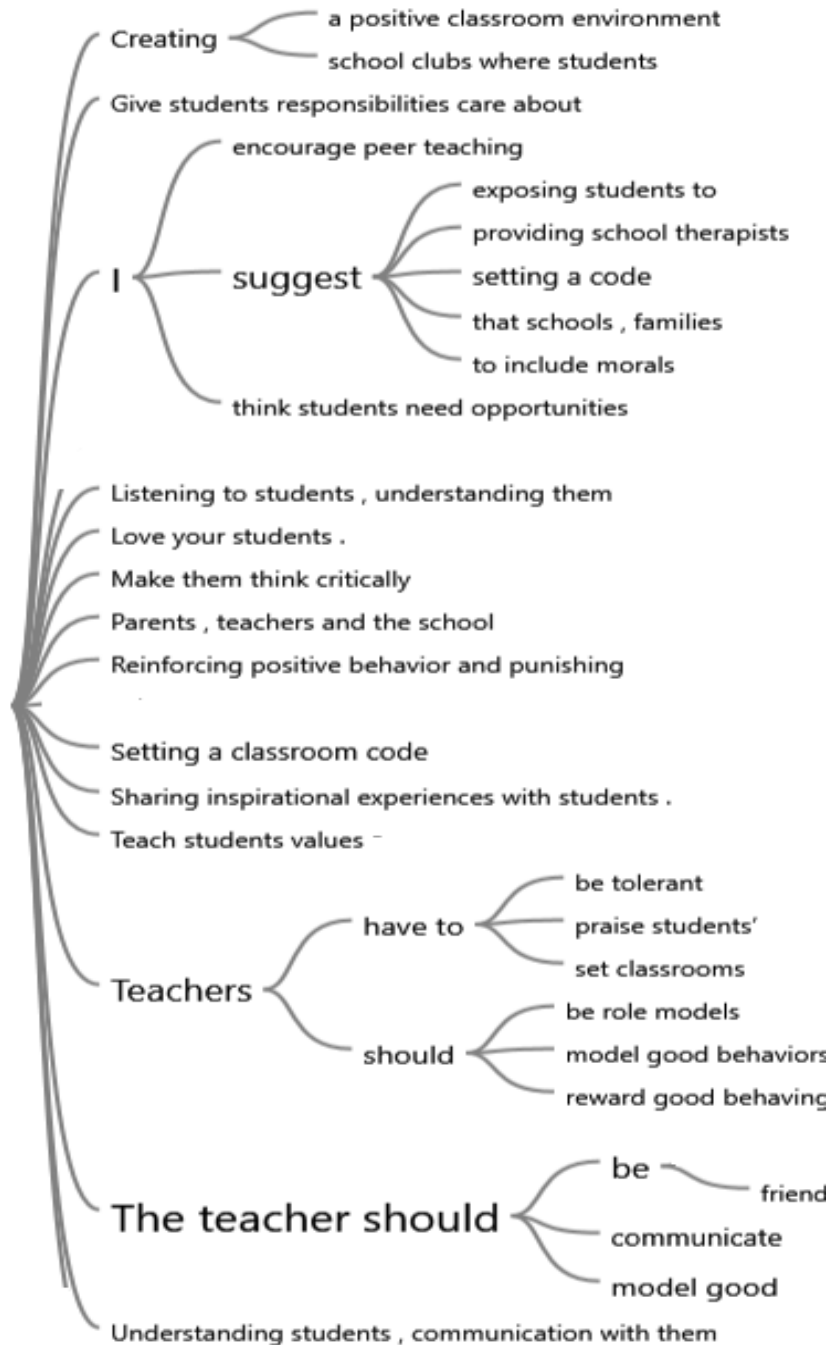
Another important point is that teachers should be good role models for their students, they should model and stress good character traits, show their students how to behave then reinforce those behaviors. So, teaching character education should go through being good role models for students.

In addition to these strategies, teachers have to build strong relationships with their students, they should establish a good rapport with them so that they can influence them morally. In brief, being a good role model, praising and reinforcing good behavior and establishing a good rapport with students are strategies that teachers named to be effective for establishing and maintaining good character traits in the classroom and the school environment in general.

3.2.2.3. Improving Students' Behavior

This part concerns ways that teachers suggest for improving students' behavior. One of the most difficult challenges for teachers is trying to change some students' negative behavior into a positive one. The mind map below demonstrates suggestions from teachers so as to attain this objective.

Word tree 5: ways to improve students' behavior



According to the mind map, most respondents suggested that teachers should be friendly with their students, communicate with them and be good role models for them. Communicating, listening and understanding your student are essential steps for creating trustful relationships with them, teachers should love their students, be tolerant with them and praise their positive behavior and find solutions for changing the negative one.

The second strategy agreed upon is that teachers should model good behaviors in front of their students. Because exposing students to good character traits will make them think critically about their own character and develop a personal opinion about it, then maybe adopt it in the future. Thus, being a good role model for your students will create a positive impact on their moral attitude.

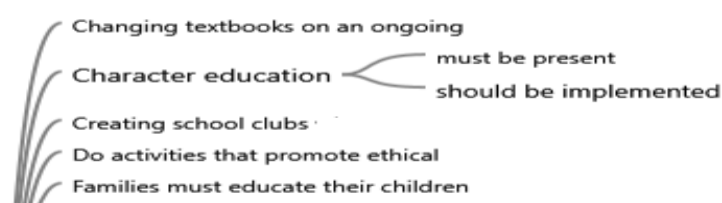
Concerning the classroom, teachers need to set a code of conduct at the very beginning of the school year. Including morals and values in lesson plans is also a good idea. Moreover, creating a positive classroom environment is substantial for improving students' behavior, providing students with opportunities where they can care or take the responsibility is very efficient. For this reason, creating a school club that promotes good character traits is primordial since most of students love extra-curricular activities and demonstrate a big interest in engaging them.

Lastly, teachers said that parents and all stakeholders should take part in the process of developing students' character to the better, so as to create a harmonious environment where all people share the same moral and values and more importantly act in the same moral way.

3.2.2.4. Strategies for a Successful Implementation of CE in Moroccan Schools

To end up this section, this part outlines the most efficient strategies to adopt when trying to implement character education in the Moroccan public schools. The mind map below demonstrates teachers' suggestions related to the matter.

Word tree 6: Strategies for a successful implementation of CE



Being a good role model for students is the most essential strategy displayed in the mind map, because it has a direct impact on students' behavior inside and sometimes outside the school environment. For this reason, many teachers called for the necessity to receive trainings that aim at giving them effective tools to implement character education successfully.

While responding to this question, teachers stressed the importance of implementing character education and the benefits this latter has on students' behavior improvement. For that, they suggested creating school clubs in which students can express themselves freely and interact with others to develop their moral character.

Moreover, integrating activities that promote ethical behavior is very helpful in instilling good character traits in the students' behavior.

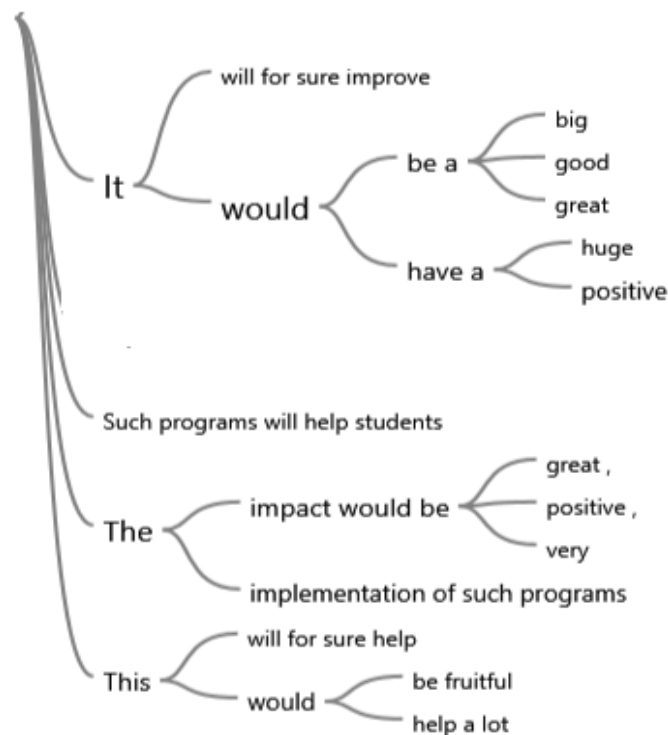
Another issue discussed by teachers is the necessity to change textbooks on an ongoing process to make them fit today's requirements. Furthermore, textbooks must include ethical lessons that promote moral behavior. Classroom activities are also a good resort teacher may use in order to promote these values either through speaking, listening or via cooperative learning.

Finally, many teachers claimed that parents have to be the prior source of values and morals for their children. Families must provide a basic moral education for their children in order to initiate them to moral behavior, parents have to act as good role models for their children to create a good impact on their attitude, it is only through joining efforts that character education would succeed, because at that case children/students will find a resemblance between what they see at school with what they live at home, so it would be easy for them to adopt a behavior that is morally acceptable.

3.2.3. The Impact of CE on Students' Behavior

This section is about the impact that character education has on students' behavior. Implementing character traits in schools has for sure an impact on the behavior of its students, teachers answered this question according to their experience in this subject, the word cloud below shows their responses.

Word tree 7: The impact of character education on students' behavior

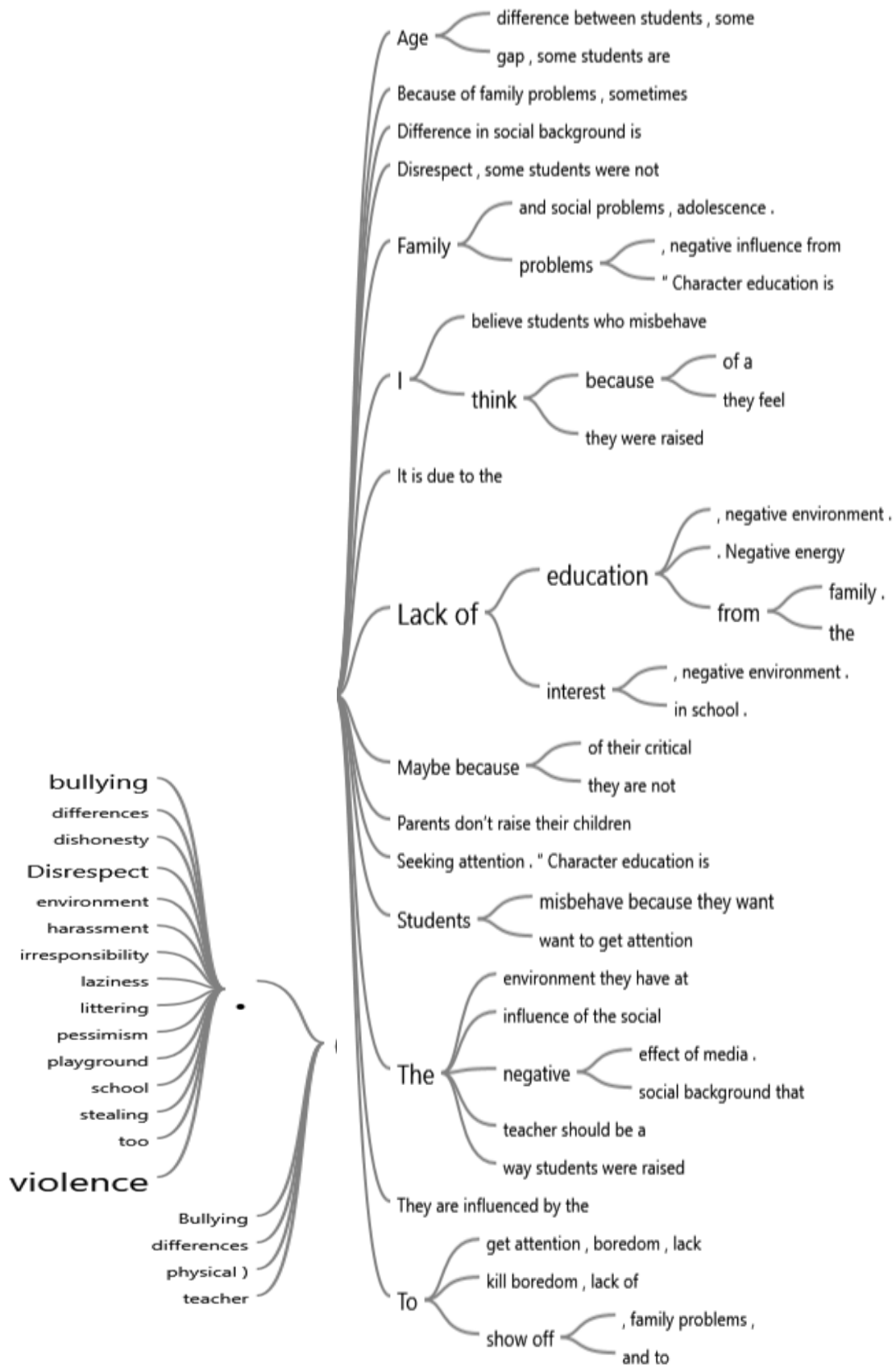


The mind map above provides us with an overview of the answers which are very similar. Teachers answered that the impact of implementing a program of character education would be great, positive, good and fruitful. They responded that it will for sure help students a lot improve both their character and behavior.

3.2.4. Further Analysis

During the interviews, the researcher asked some questions to get further information about the subject, including asking teachers about negative behaviors they witness in their classrooms or in the school environment in general. Moreover, she seized the opportunity and questioned teachers about the reasons that push students to behave in a negative way. At the end, she asked them about the obstacles that may prevent the implementation of character education into the Moroccan school. The following parts display the results found from these inquiries.

Word tree 8: Causes of students' misbehavior



The mind map above gives a general overview of the teachers' answers. On the left side, there are numerous negative behaviors that teachers witness in the school environment such as: bullying, disrespect, dishonesty, stealing, laziness, irresponsibility etc. Whereas on the right side there are possible reasons behind students' negative behavior.

As mentioned before, lack of education and sometimes of interest in school or in a specific school subject may be reasons. Moreover, familial and social problems can have a very bad effect on the child psychological state then behavior. Most teachers claimed that many misbehaving students are coming from an environment that is very poor in values, they said that these students didn't receive enough basic education at home that is why they are disrespectful.

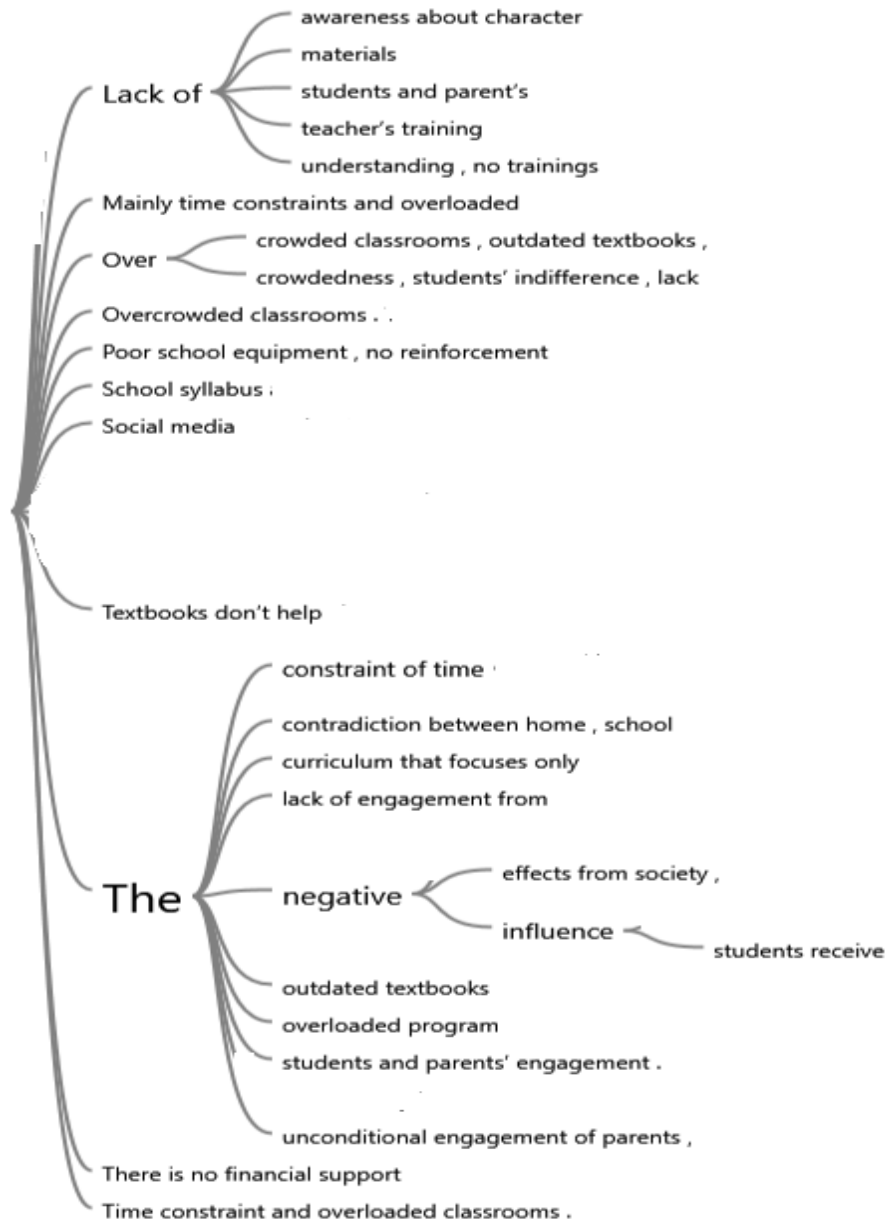
In addition to these factors, teachers talked about the problem of age gap that exists between students studying in the same level, this gap creates many problems between students like bullying, communication gap etc. Nevertheless, seeking attention can be a reason to negative behavior, some students misbehave because they need to get some attention or sometimes to show off in front of their classmates.

3.2.4.2. Obstacles for Character Education in the Moroccan School

It is very common that whenever we want to implement a new program in an institution, we face obstacles. This is the case here, while implementing character education in schools, it is normal that some obstacles will appear. This is what the researcher asked the interviewees and here are their answers.

manage the number of students and include them in the learning process and this consumes a lot from their time and energy. All these obstacles are clearly organized in the mind map below.

Word tree 9: Obstacles of implementing character education



According to the mind map, the first lack that hinders implementing character education is the lack of understanding of the matter and the lack of awareness about it from teachers, parents and students. Then, comes the lack of time, materials and trainings for the benefit of teachers. Moreover, during the interviews, some teachers discussed the problems of over-crowdedness, overloaded and especially outdated textbooks, and students' lack of interest in school.

Another important obstacle discussed by teachers is the absence of an unconditional engagement of parents, this means that parents are sometimes not concerned with what their children learn at school, more than that, they sometimes contradict what their children learn there, and this creates a confusion for students and makes it more difficult for them to choose which behavior to adopt. In addition to the non-engagement of parents, teachers talked about the negative influence students get from society and media. In brief, when implementing character education, one has to take into account all these obstacles and try to solve them for the sake of attaining a successful implementation of the program by the end.

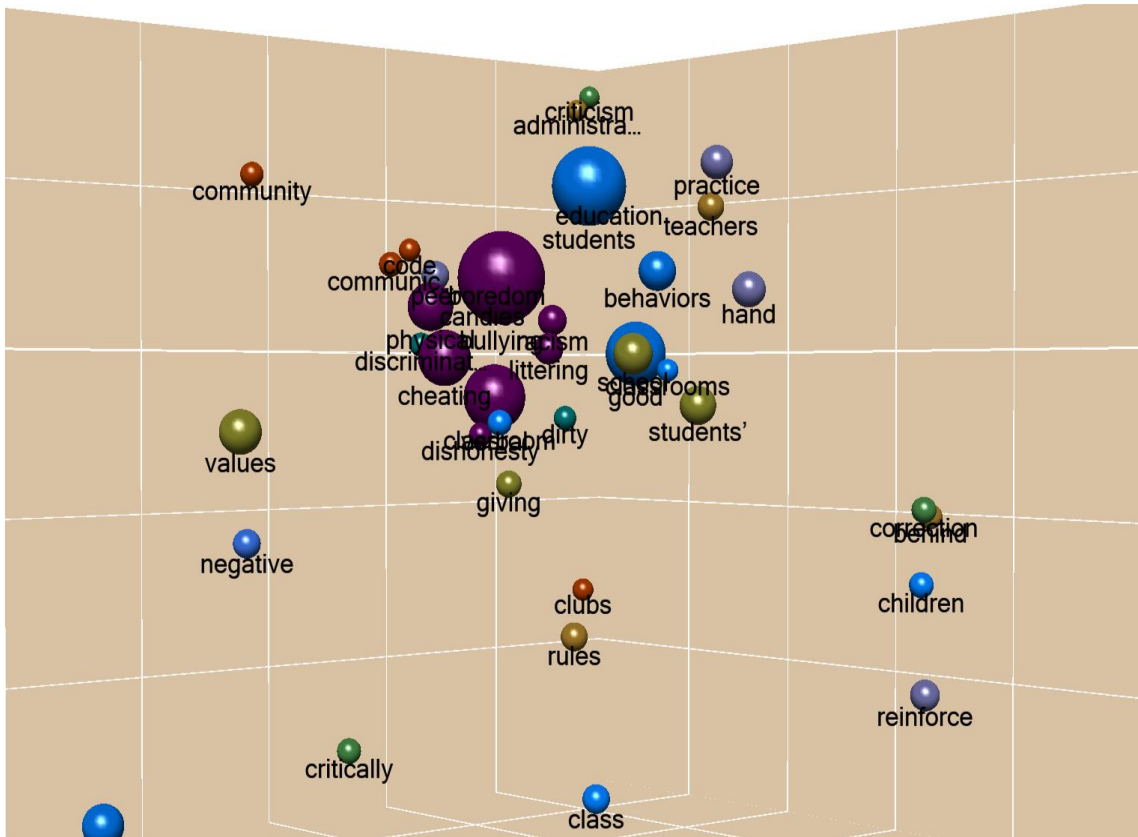
3.2.5. Cross Analysis

The objective of the cross analysis is to cross the variables in order to deepen the analysis and obtain more relevant results, making it possible to gain in readability. This makes it possible to better understand the interactions that exist between the various variables studied.

3.2.5.1. Strategies for Behavior Improvement and Negative Behavior

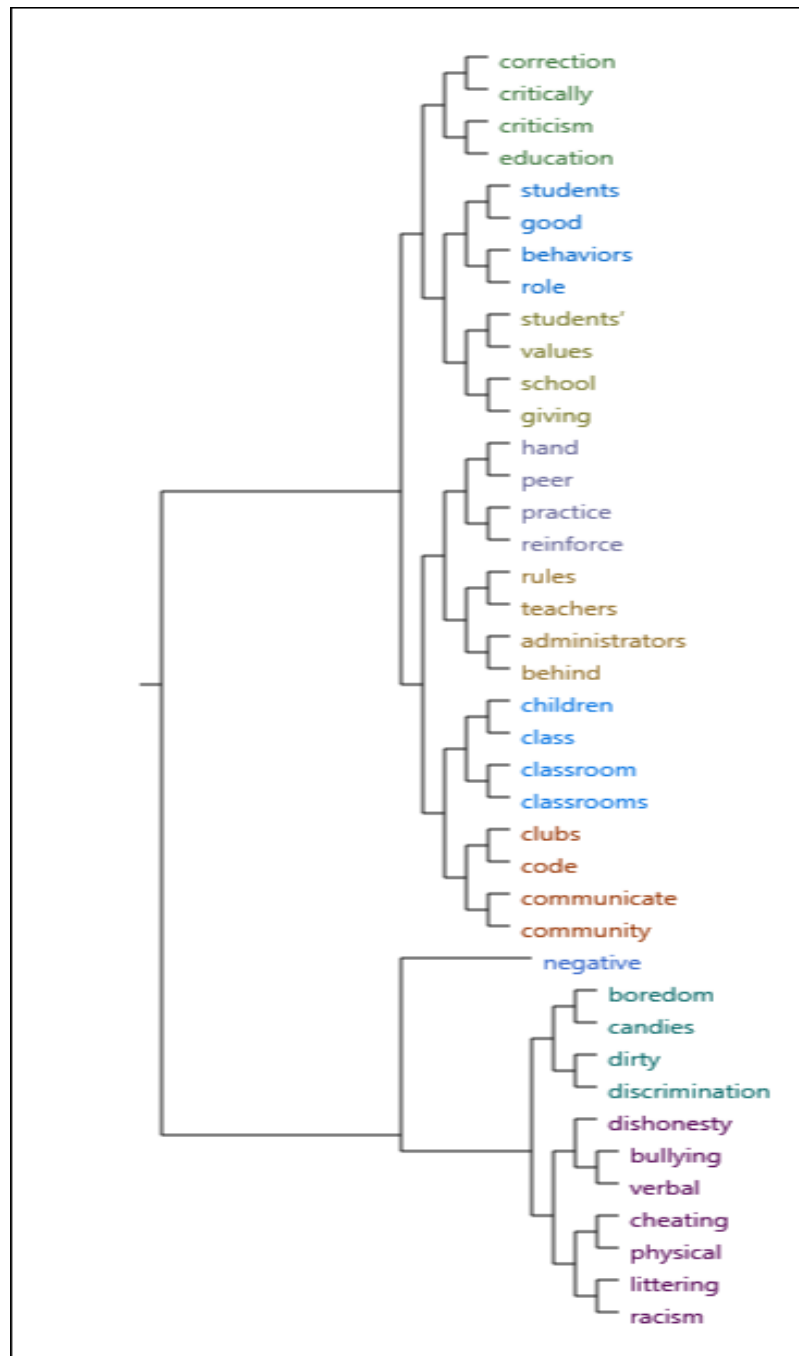
To start with, there is no doubt that there exists a link between strategies that teachers may implement in order to improve their students' behavior and the already existing negative behavior of students. The NVIVO shows us this relation in terms of importance and distance between different components of the variable as it can be noticed in the word frequency query below.

Diagram 1: Strategies for behavior improvement and Negative behavior



In order to better understand the diagram because it is normally in a 3D format, the following mind map contains all the words that this diagram contains, and more importantly the words are grouped into themes.

Word cluster 1: Strategies for behavior improvement and Negative behavior



According to the cross analysis, there is an interaction between the two variables which are the negative behavior of students in schools and the strategies used to make them improve their behavior. The most significant ones here are the words in orange namely: creating school clubs, setting a code of conduct, communicating with students and volunteering in school community service and their interaction with the words in purple which refer to students' negative behavior such as:

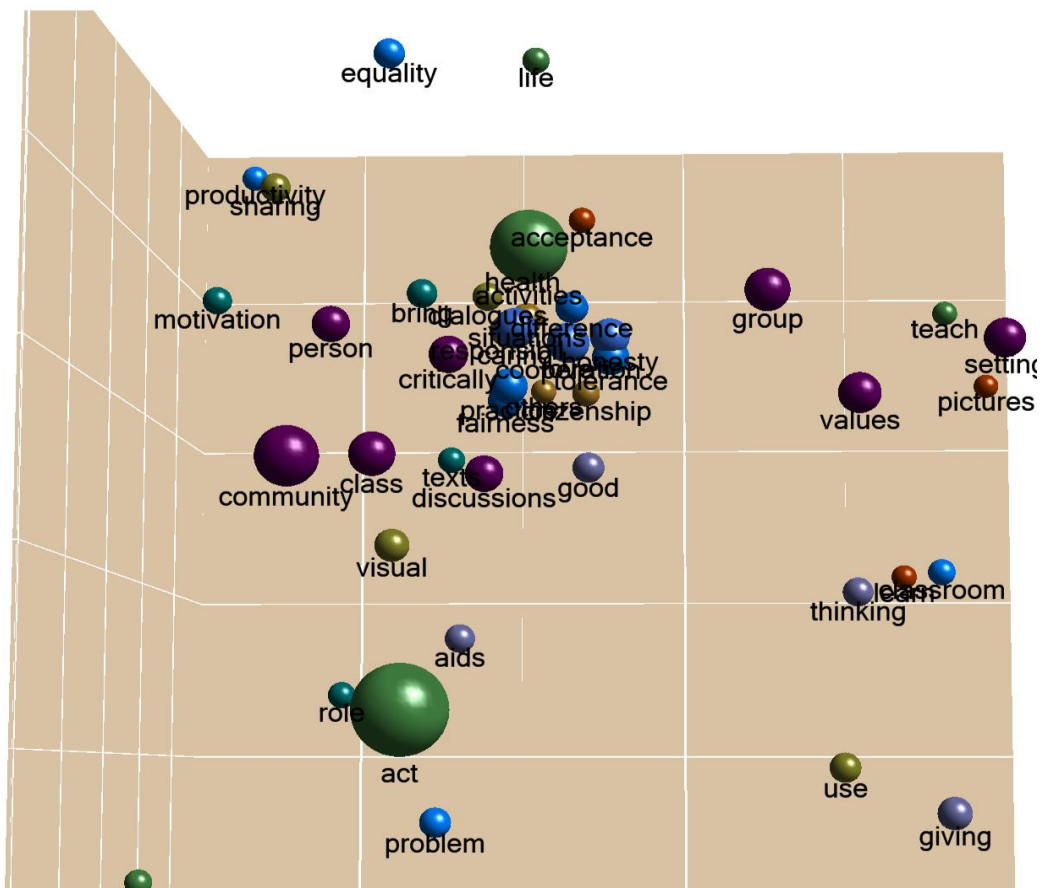
dishonesty, bullying, verbal violence, cheating, physical violence, littering and racism.

As the diagram shows; bullying, cheating and physical violence are the most prominent negative behaviors that are noticed by teachers in the school environment. On the other hand, the most used strategies to ameliorate students' behavior are setting a code of conduct at the beginning of the school year and communicating with students while creating schools' clubs and volunteering in community service clubs are still very far from the objective.

3.2.5.2. Character Traits and Strategies Used to Implement them

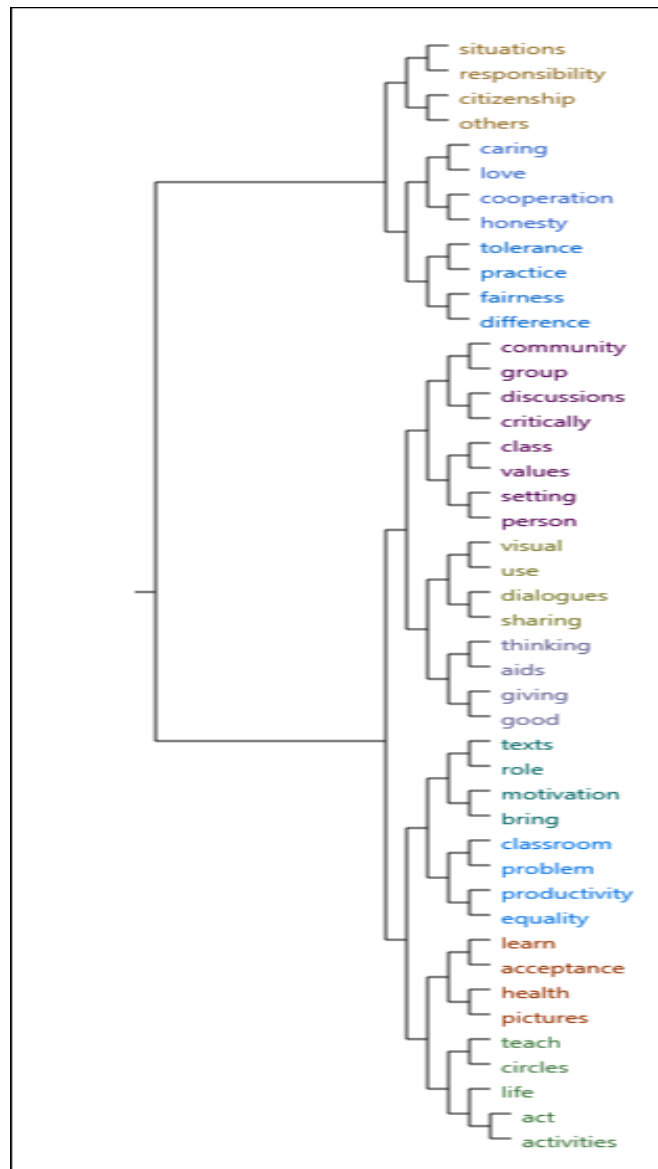
The second cross analysis concerns the way teachers implement character traits or values in their lessons and the character traits that are already implemented in the Moroccan schools as it is displayed below.

Diagram 2: Character traits and strategies used to implement them



In order to better understand the diagram because it is normally in a 3D format, the following mind map contains all the words that this diagram contains, and more importantly the words are grouped into themes.

Word cluster 2: Character traits and strategies used to implement them



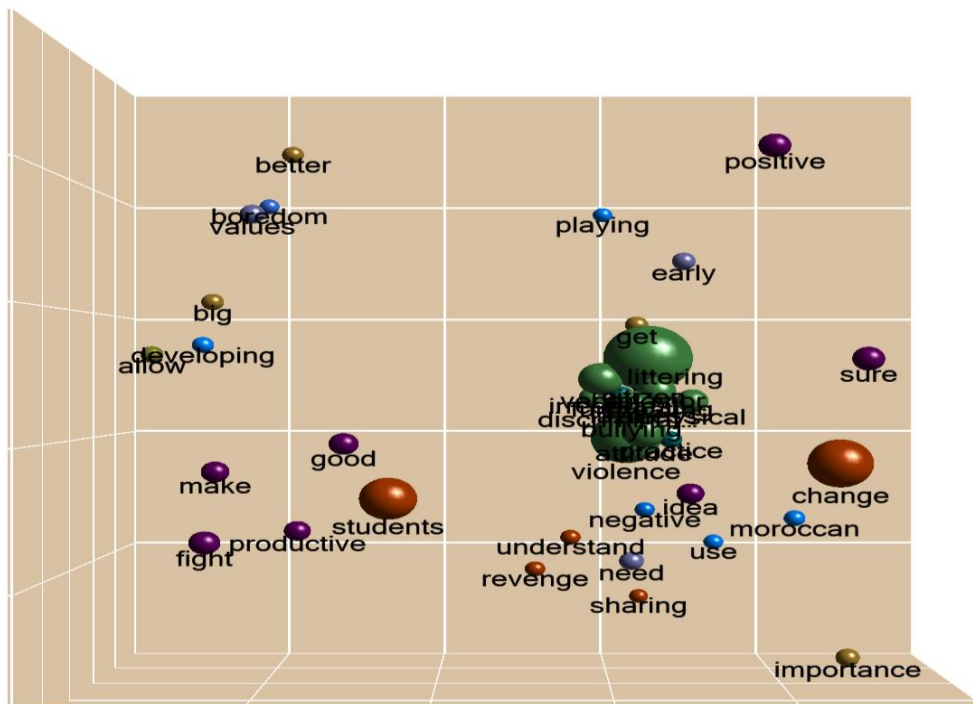
According to the cross analysis, there is an interaction between the two variables which are values implemented in schools and the strategies used to implement them. The most significant ones here are the values in blue namely: love, caring, tolerance, citizenship, cooperation, honesty, fairness, accepting difference and their interaction with the other words which refer to strategies’ teachers use to instill those values in their students.

Teachers claim that there are some values that are already implemented in their classrooms such as: fairness, tolerance, cooperation, love, caring and accepting difference. For the strategies that the diagram shows as efficient and well working, there is implementing values through classroom activities and teachers acting as role models, for the other less redundant strategies we have using dialogues, class discussion and reading texts.

3.2.5.3. The Impact of Character Education on Student’s Behavior

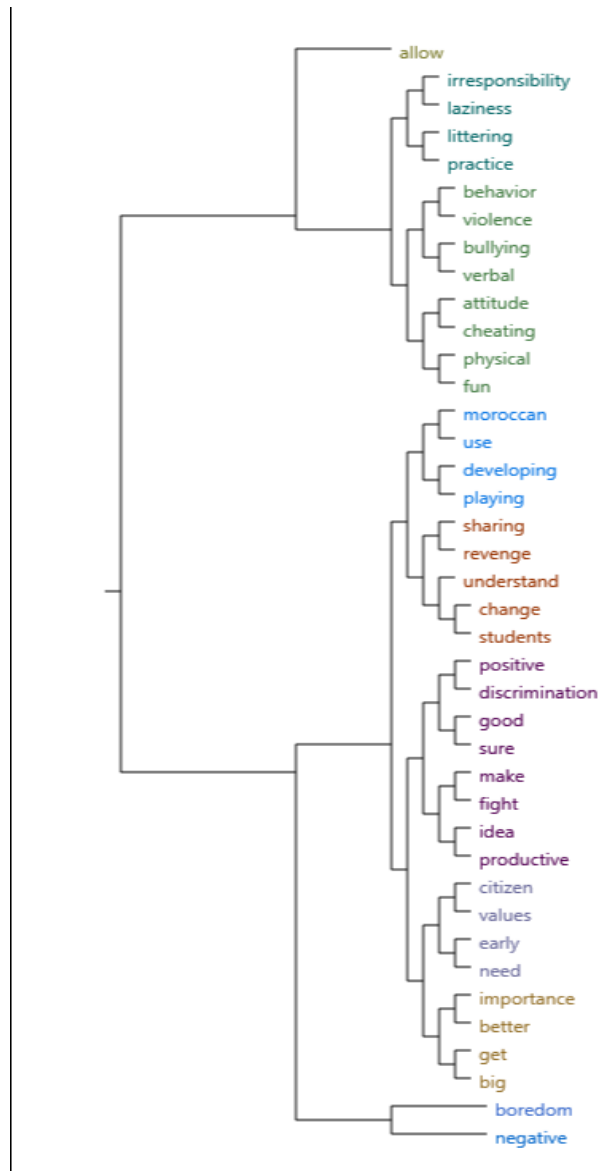
The last cross analysis tackles the aim of the research which is investigating the impact of implementing character education on students’ behavior.

Diagram 3: The impact of character education on student’s behavior



For the sake of a better understanding of the diagram since it is in a 3D format, the following mind map contains all the words that this diagram contains, and more importantly the words are grouped into themes.

Word cluster 3: The impact of character education on student’s behavior



According to the cross analysis, there is an interaction between the two variables which are the impact of implementing character education and students' behavior. So, for students' behavior we have plenty of different positive and negative ones and it can be noticed that the negative behaviors are more redundant than the positive ones, we can see big spots of violence, bullying, cheating, irresponsibility and littering. Then, for the impact we can see many adjectives describing it like: better, good and positive.

3.3. Summary of the Results

This study applied the mixed method, employing both qualitative and quantitative methods of research. Therefore, the researcher had a good amount of data. In the quantitative part, the research questions were addressed to high school students studying in different public Moroccan high schools in order to investigate their perception regarding character education and the way it can impact their behavior. The following section discusses this point.

3.3.1. Students' perspective

The researcher had surprising results from the students' answers. To start with, the majority of students (91.3%) said that school is a place where they study, or a place where they broaden their knowledge instead of a place where they develop their character or learn values; this, in fact, may imply that students do not grasp the meaning and importance of character education, for them school is a place where they can only develop academically.

Moreover, both male and female students agreed upon the idea that when learning and practicing values at school increases by 1%, students' misbehavior increases by 23%, which is very surprising. This result may be explained in several ways; it is possible to relate this result with the ineffective implementation of character education in these schools. According to their responses, students ignore the meaning and importance of character education, so they were not integrated in the implementation process, they were not given a say in the situation, and as it is known, teenagers rebel against anything that they feel imposed on them.

Another result which is interesting concerns the number of males in a school and its relation with the improvement of behavior. From the results, interestingly, when the number of male students increases by 1%, students' behavior improvement decreases by 40%. So, we can say that as much as male students we have in a school, behavior improvement decreases, maybe because male students tend to misbehave more than female ones. From my humble teaching experience, I can say that most of misbehavior issues I personally witnessed in my classroom was from male students rather than female ones.

On the other hand, for female students, findings showed that the increase of 1% in the number of female students in a school results in the increase of students' behavior improvement at 40%, which is the opposite to male students' results. In my opinion, we can explain this relation by the fact that most of the time female students tend to behave well and are the ones interested in developing their personalities and character traits, also females care more about others' feelings and are more sensitive while interacting with others.

Furthermore, results concerning the covariances existing between variables showed that the teacher is the core of the character learning process. Both learning/practicing values at school and the presence of character education in textbooks' success depends on the role of teachers in modeling good character traits, as the increase in their role modeling goes in parallel with the increase in students' learning and practicing values at school as well as grasping the meaning of character traits present in textbooks.

This emphasizes the important role that teachers play, when teachers are good role models for their students, they encourage them to adopt good character traits and make them grasp the meaning of them. I personally believe that students observe the behavior of their teachers and sometimes imitate it, also adopt some of their teachers' thoughts, beliefs and morals.

Another significant covariance is the one between the presence of character education in textbooks and the process of leaning and practicing values at school. I think it is logic, because if we have a good implementation of character education in textbooks, students will learn appropriately those traits and adopt them whenever possible.

3.3.2. Teacher's perspective

Unlike the quantitative results, the qualitative findings that concern teachers' interviews were different. Teachers agreed upon the necessity of implementing character education in Moroccan schools in order to improve students' behavior. The majority of them said that teaching values and good character traits in schools is even more important than teaching academic content.

Moreover, most teachers said that they do integrate values while teaching in order to help their students have good manners and create a healthy classroom environment where learning takes place. However, they all talked about the textbooks as outdated and not adapted for teaching character as they contain only few units that stress the importance of values like citizenship and tolerance.

Nevertheless, teachers gave examples of negative behavior they witnessed in the school environment and agreed that with a proper implementation of character education, the behavior of students may improve and this of course through employing various strategies such as: modeling good character traits, creating school clubs, encouraging group work, engaging students in service learning and more importantly engaging them in school life. In brief, teachers agree upon the idea that character education is not properly implemented in our schools, for this reason, we cannot witness its positive impact.

This chapter has been devoted to explore the data analysis and the interpretation of the obtained results. It started with the quantitative analysis which concerns the questionnaires' results, then, tackled the qualitative analysis that is related to the interviews' findings. By the end, a summary containing an interpretation of the whole results has been given. The next chapter is concerned with the discussion as well as the implications of the study's results.

Chapter Four

Discussion of the Results and Implications

Chapter Four: Discussion of the Results and Implications

Introduction

Education is the basis of the development of any country. It is not only meant for transferring academic knowledge, stated in the curriculum, but also instilling ethics, values and good character traits in students in order to form good future citizens. In fact, the main purpose of education is to humanize people, to make them care and share with others, to prepare them for the real life beyond the walls of their school.

Character education is a learning process that provides students with , first of all, an understanding of ethical values such as respect, responsibility, caring, trustworthiness, honesty and citizenship, then makes these students reflect upon the values before adopting them and behaving according to them. Consequently, if everyone behaves according to a set of values he or she has already thought about and adopted, we will end up by having attitudes, behaviors and actions that are ethical and healthy, then communities that serve the development of their society.

In fact, character education enables schools to create a safe, caring and integrative learning environment for every student as well as helps academic achievement. It also fosters character traits that aid students to be good citizens in the future and successful people in the workplace. Therefore, it is a whole process that scaffolds the student while forming his/her character, guides them while learning good character traits and provides them with opportunities to act morally.

This chapter discusses the impact of implementing a character education program and student's behavior improvement through discussing the findings related to the following research questions:

- How does the implementation of a character education program impact students' behavior?
- How do learning and practicing values at school affect students' behavior?
- How does the use of the curriculum as a tool to teach character traits influence student's behavior?

- How does the modeling of good character traits by teachers impact the behavior of students?

In order to answer these research questions, the researcher did the following:

First of all, a triangulation of a mixed methods approach was applied in order to help the researcher get deep insights of the issue through the use of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was filled by four hundred and twenty students from these high schools: Al Fath in El Kliala, Homan el Fetouaki in Agadir, Jaber Ibnou Hayyane in Casablanca, Ouadi Eddahab in Assilah, Cadi Ayyad in Marrakech and Imam Ibn Hanbal in Fes, in order to ensure the diversity of the data. Concerning the interview, the researcher interviewed forty teachers from different cities all over the country.

Secondly, the results of the research were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively in chapter three. The researcher used SPSS and AMOS softwares to analyze the quantitative data while making use of various types of descriptive analysis. On the other hand, she used the NVIVO software to facilitate the analysis of qualitative data because it helps in organizing and structuring the collected data that is, in this case, the transcripts of the semi-structured interviews.

In this chapter, the researcher will go through the research questions by discussing the perspectives of students and teachers concerning the implementation of character education in schools and its impact on students' behavior. This implies the implementation of character traits in textbooks, the engagement of teachers in the implementation process and their role in modeling good behavior and finally, the impact that this implementation will have on the behavior of students.

In brief, in this chapter, the major results will be discussed thematically in relation to the reviewed literature and organized according to the research questions. Moreover, the final section of this chapter will discuss the implications for practice, recommendations, and limitations of the study, suggestions for future studies and of course the final conclusion of the study.

4.1. A Thematic Discussion of the Results

In this section, there is a thematic discussion of the research findings covering different previous sections that are related to the research questions exploring the impact of implementing character education on students' behavior improvement in Moroccan public high schools. First of all, the researcher will discuss, according to the research' findings, the issue of understanding the meaning and the importance of character education, the presence of this later in textbooks, its impact on students' behavior and finally the role of teachers that is acting as role models for their students.

4.1.1. The Importance of Implementing Character Education

According to the qualitative analysis, most of teachers believe that they do implement character education in their classes. They also agreed that character education is an important aspect in the teaching process for all students, it helps them develop a good character and prepares them to become effective citizens in their society.

Similar to this, a study conducted by (Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn, & Smith, 2006a), ensured that teaching character education in schools helps in developing and nurturing students' character, not only in the way they deal with their peers at school, but also as members of their wider community. So, this result is supported by the studies of (Cordes & Brannon, 2008) that focuses on the importance of teaching character education to students.

Nevertheless, many of the interviewed teachers were unfamiliar with the term character education, this means that there is a lack of knowledge about this term as many of them recognized character education under the name of values education as mentioned in the Moroccan official guidelines. In this regard, (Ryan & Lickona, 1992) claimed that the lack of understanding of character education can make teachers avoid it. This implies that teachers who do not understand the process of character education as they didn't receive any training in this regard cannot implement it successfully.

In fact, this lack of knowledge about character education is discussed in the part concerning obstacles to character education. Since one of the obstacles that can prevent schools from embracing character education is that teachers haven't been prepared for this task. (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999, pp.152-153) claimed in this regard that:

“There are stirrings within the teacher education community to give character education greater prominence, the great majority of teachers are very unsure of what they can and should do as character educators, and this is the case in our schools”. (pp.152-153)

Related to this, two of the interviewed teachers said that teaching character traits does not take part of their tasks and thought even that they are not allowed to teach students values. Therefore, teachers should be aware of what is expected from them as educators and especially role models, they need a program to follow in order to work effectively on instilling the same character traits among students. Therefore, the variance in understanding and having a common definition of character education was observable in the interviewees' responses.

For this reason, the ministry of education have to provide trainings for teachers about character education, so that, a common language exists among teachers in order to communicate the same understanding (Serna, Nielsen, Mattern, & Forness, 2003). This will definitely create consistent applications of character education activities in different schools in Morocco that will target the adoption of the same character traits.

In fact, when the meaning of character education is not clear for teachers, they fail to teach it effectively because “no one can successfully teach specific knowledge, skills, and virtues to students if he or she has not learned them.” (El Karfa, 2007, pp.41-42). Therefore, this can result in an unwanted impact on the morality of students because they were not taught character education in the appropriate way. Moreover, most of teachers said in the interview that the main aim in Moroccan schools is the academic achievement of students, and not their morality or character development.

In this research, the definition of character education by Thomas Lickona (1991) was applied. This latter defines character education as everything that takes place at school and has an effect on the students' character. Accordingly, when trying to implement character education, teachers should think about everything that takes place at the school environment, they should grasp that character education incorporates all the aspects of the school life; these should all respond to the prerequisites of instilling a good character so that they result in the targeted impact. Related to this, (CEP, 2007) states that the aim behind character education is teaching students to understand, care about, and act upon core ethical values all the time. This is not the case in Moroccan schools since in the results part, a high rate of negative behavior is noticed.

Another important point is that all the interviewed teachers talked about character education as something that is separate from the lesson or curriculum. They considered activities held for the sake of promoting students' character and other educational tasks two separate things. They ignored the fact that every activity that takes place at school should support good character implementation and behavior improvement. As a matter of fact, teachers do not understand that teaching character can be integrated into every aspect of the school life (curricular and extracurricular activities). The findings of the interviews revealed that some teachers believe that they do not have enough time to teach character education; they are not aware of the fact that character education can be included in everything that takes place inside the classroom or outside it. According to character education literature, integration is considered by several researchers as an influential strategy of teaching character (Bulach, 2002; Sánchez, 2005).

Related to this, (Thomas Lickona, 1991) believes that teaching character education should be comprehensive. This means that, character education should cover all the aspects of the school life and has to be implemented by everyone in and out the school. This implies that, all teachers have to contribute in implementing character education no matter what their subject areas are. In fact, using a comprehensive approach to character education will contribute in building a school culture that is based on morality in which character traits are enhanced and instilled in all students

by all those who work at school, namely teachers and administrators. Everyone present at school should understand that he or she have to model good character traits within the school environment in order to help students adopt them. In this regard, in one of the interviews, a teacher said that teaching character traits does not take part of his chores, and that teaching values and ethics is the responsibility of the teacher of Islamic education. In general, the sampled schools lack a character education school culture in which everything and everybody model and promote good character traits character.

Both teachers and students clarified through their responses that their schools do not clearly stress the importance of good character traits and this situation resulted in having different negative behaviors as well as numerous discipline problems. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding and a proper implementation of character education may not take place while there is still a lack of understanding among teachers of the term character education.

So, it is essential that the Moroccan ministry of education set a clear and comprehensive definition of the term in order to have an agreement upon the definition and more importantly the strategies to apply in the teaching of character education. According to (Berkowitz et al., 2006), character education has different methods that teachers should learn to use to be able to teach character effectively. This implies that, teachers should be aware of the different techniques used to implement good character.

As a conclusion, in this research, most of the interviewed teachers showed interest in taking part in character education implementation, but still not all of them are aware of its real significance, how it works and more importantly the role they play in shaping students' moral character. For this reason, many of the interviewed teachers stressed the importance of providing them with trainings that aim at making them understand the meaning of character education and the effective ways to implement it.

4.1.2. Textbooks and Character Education

As discussed before in the section about data analysis, most teachers agreed upon the presence of citizenship, tolerance and cultural values in textbooks; they said that

these values can be derived from reading texts and conversations, still they do not take part of the lesson objectives.

However, textbooks are an elementary tool that can be used effectively in order to implement character education traits and makes students adhere them, (Harmer, 2004, p. 182) states in this regard that the majority of teachers around the world use the textbook to help students and to provide structure and direction for teachers in teaching. Therefore, textbooks serve as a tool to engage students in learning and practicing the subject matter they contain.

From the above discussion, it can be deduced that before designing textbooks, the cognitive and moral development of students must be considered. Through understanding their moral and cognitive development, it would be easier to design textbooks that are appropriate with the age and the development of students, this will facilitate the inculcation of these character traits and the adoption of these later from the students.

According to the Moroccan textbooks, each textbook tackles the school subject it is used in, so, textbooks are designed to develop students' academic knowledge. In the care of the English language textbooks, teachers said that they are rich of values such as citizenship, tolerance and other cultural values. So, in Morocco, studying at school concerns merely the academic achievement of students, not their personal or character development. While in this case, textbooks should reinforce the assimilation of character traits.

Related to this, (Fitzpatrick & McConnell, 2009) claimed that professors view textbooks as a key component of the "delivery/acquisition system" (p.2). In fact, textbooks communicate ideas and concepts; they play the role of a basis that gathers information to be learned as well as a source of reference for students. Therefore, it is assumed that that the ideas and concepts presented in textbooks should be considered primordial; thus, they enhance students' learning.

Another important point that can be deduced from the collected data is, some teachers answered that there are no values included in textbooks, that textbooks are designed to transfer academic knowledge; for example, concerning English

language textbooks we have grammar, vocabulary, reading, functions and writing. In this regard, (Harmer, 2004) claimed that the most important aspect of textbook use is for teachers to try to engage students with the content they are going to be dealing with.

Therefore, teachers and students should normally use textbooks as resources that provide the main source of character traits, guidance and practice. Lysa (2013) stated that textbooks can be used as a teaching material to implement character education values to the students. Thus, it is involuntary that textbooks have the power to influence students positively to change and more importantly improve their character because of the grasped values.

Further to that, others interviewed teachers said that they do not make use of the textbooks, but they adapt new material to work with so they have no idea about what the textbooks contain. In fact, this lack of use of textbooks is a real problem, because teachers consider textbooks as an outdated material that need to be changed and updated to fit the requirements of today.

In brief, textbooks are a primordial tool in the process of teaching-learning and what is more important how they are used and employed, some teachers try to see beyond the general objective of the lesson in order to instill values that a text or an assignment contains, and some others keep their focus on the mere objective of the lesson that is reading, writing, listening or speaking.

That is why, the ministry of education should design textbooks that are adapted to the objectives of character education and more importantly provide trainings for teachers to help them grasp the importance of character education first, then train them to know the strategies they should employ to implement character education successfully.

4.1.3. Teachers Acting as Role Models

In the previous chapters and through the literature, the importance of role modeling in building students' character is mentioned several times. Similarly, in this research all the interviewed teachers believe that role modeling good character traits is a primordial step in shaping and improving their students' character. According

to their responses, teachers said that they do their best to show ethical manners through their interactions with their students.

In relevance to Lickona's comprehensive model of character education, teachers should be good role models for their students; they have to show them respect, love, fairness and others values in order to create a healthy and democratic atmosphere. In other words, teachers should set good examples to be followed and imitated by their students. For example, they should teach them problem solving and critical thinking, so they can help students take the right decisions in different life situations they may encounter.

(Berkowitz & Bier, 2004) claimed that one of the most successful ways to become a good role model is adopting inclusion, which means that teachers integrate or include their modeling of good traits into their teaching. In fact, role modeling values is an important duty that teachers should adopt in their teaching. In this regard, (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2008) stated that the "literature leaves little question that observing pro social models can have powerful effects on children" (p.193). Therefore, there exist numerous studies that emphasize the role of modeling values and ethics in class as an influential way of building and promoting student's character (Javidan et al., 1995; Ibarra, 1999; Gibson, 2003).

However, when we discuss the qualification of teachers and their readiness to model good character traits for their students, the findings of this study revealed that teachers haven't received any training that qualifies them to be aware of importance of character education and what character traits or simply values they should forge in their students' character and this creates a huge confusion. In an international level, various studies related to the teacher preparation and qualification, stated that trainings provided for teaching character are minimum and not adequate (Milson & Mehlig, 2002). In addition to this, (Jones, Ryan, & Bohlin, 1999) maintained that "despite widespread support for character education....it is not currently a high priority in the curriculum of teacher education" (p. 17).

Related to this, (Romanowski, 2005) claimed that for any character education to be effective, teachers should be trained before being involved in teaching. Accordingly, based on their responses, most teachers talked about the lack of

trainings related to the matter, and added that values are mentioned in few official documents but never emphasized in the meetings with inspectors or during trainings, the focus is always on the academic achievement of students. Therefore, because of the lack of trainings, teachers have little experience that qualifies them to be teaching and modeling good character traits that will help students improve their character.

Going back to the literature of character education, it is mentioned that what teachers usually receive by their organizations of how to present a lesson cannot be considered as training to teach morality and character (Howard, 2005; O'sullivan, 2005). However, in order to qualify a teacher in becoming a good role model for his/her students, (Schwartz, 2008) said that teachers of good character should have seven qualities in order to be a role model that can be emulated by his/her students:

“Teachers must show obvious moral concern and care for others; display actions that indicate a commitment to the intellectual or emotional development of others (students); have congruence between the individual’s moral statements, understanding and actions; demonstrate self-reflection and reasoning skill; regulate their own behavior and emotions in accordance with the social good of others; and demonstrate empathy and perspective-taking” (p. 64).

So, in the case of Moroccan schools and according to research it seems that there is a real need for teachers training; because not all teachers are good role models for their students, since after all teachers are human beings who can have either good or bad character traits. In the same context, (Durand & Carr, 1991) stated that “Teachers might as well, be weak, spiteful, vain and greedy thereby qualifying as bad teachers” (Durand & Carr, 1991, p.34). This emphasizes the fact that teachers should be aware of what character traits should be modeled exactly, rather than reflecting their individual or personal values, which can be right and sometimes wrong.

However, “in order to demonstrate certain traits, they should be identified as morally desirable” (Carr & Steutel, 2005, p.5). This implies that teachers should receive some training that tackles implementing character education in order to

make sure that they teach and model good values and character traits that will help students foster and improve their character. It is not a spontaneous process, (L. Nucci, Drill, Larson, & Browne, 2005) clarified that teaching positive traits needs the teachers to have certain abilities and skills that help them succeed in presenting the desirable traits. As it was emphasized through the responses of teachers, it is obvious that there is a lack in the training of teachers to help them act according to the principals of character education and be influential role models for their students.

Moreover, (Berkowitz, 1999) claimed that “teacher training in character education requires teacher educators who are familiar with this knowledge and are committed to furthering effective character education” (p. 4). Nevertheless, there is still a confusion about who has the duty to implement values, according to the interviews and the questionnaires, some of the teachers believe that character education is the responsibility of parents while others said that it is the duty of Islamic education teachers. So, a deduction can be made, not all teachers are aware of the fact that their role is influential in helping students forge their character and improve their morality.

Another important character education principal is the importance of whole-staff’s involvement in the the process. This means that, everyone present at school is concerned with matter and has the responsibility towards implementing it. Similarly, (Thomas Lickona, 1996a) comprehensive theory implies that character education is based on shared objectives and significant ethical values, which means that it is a shared responsibility between parents, teachers and the whole community, which can not be observed in all Moroccan schools.

Concerning the reasons behind this, two of the interviewed teachers think that caring for children’s morality and character is the duty of the parents only. Secondly, some of the teachers believe that there is not enough cooperation between teachers and parents for the sake of the morality and character development of children/students; parents are not involved in activities that are held by the school. This result is related to (David Collins & Henjum, 1999) study in which they found that there was a lack of presence of certain groups of parents in the school and most

importantly, their exclusion from participating in any decision making that takes place at school.

In addition to this, (Lazar & Slostad, 1999) stated that teachers' beliefs about the importance of parental involvement are highly affected by the culture, and the school practices. For this reason, schools should recognize the importance of the parents' involvement in order to strengthen the cooperation between schools and parents for the sake of promoting children's character.

Another reason is that most of the teachers complain about the big number of the students they teach in every class, for them it is a problem, because they can not have enough time to care about all their students' character in addition to teaching their academic knowledge. So, they ignore the fact that they have to care for their students, academically, socially and emotionally all the time and they don't have to separate teaching any subject from developing their students' character.

Further to that, and according to the results that the students' questionnaires revealed, the acting of teachers as role models enhances two things; first of all it encourages students to learn and practice values at school, which means that as much as teachers model good character traits, students learn and practice more those character traits or values. Secondly, when teachers act as good role models for their students, they help them grasp the values present in their textbooks easily.

Related to this, Lickona's comprehensive model (1991) assumes that teachers play a key role in teaching values and conflict resolution in the classroom, it tackles the importance of teachers acting as role models and reflecting good behaviors, it stresses the fact that teachers have to care about morals and help students instill core values by modeling them practically through their daily interactions with students. For this reason, teachers should create a healthy environment in their classrooms.

As a conclusion, from the data analysis in the previous chapter, it can be observed that almost all teachers talked about role modeling and said that are good role models for their students. However, the question is, what are these teachers modeling? Their choices of traits are different, as seen in the teacher's interviews, they indeed agree upon some core values but still disagree on others. That is why, there should be a unified program of character education that is recognized by all

teachers and that promotes the same character traits. Finally, providing trainings for teachers is a must because it is the only way we can make sure that they will implement the same values or character traits in the most appropriate way that will result in the success of this process.

4.1.4. Strategies to Implement Character Education

During the interviews, teachers were asked about strategies they use to implement values, their answers were various. Teachers were also asked about their suggestions to improve students' behavior. There was a consensus that there are some behavior polices which foster good behavior, such as setting a classroom code of conduct, rewarding good behavior and sanctioning negative one to ensure that students do their best to improve their behavior. On the other hand, teachers agreed that no clear rules or regulations were provided to the teachers in terms of character development or morality.

In this regard, teachers emphasized the fact that what one can observe in those schools regarding students' character development is a result of personal efforts provided by some teachers who are interested in this area of character development. In addition to this, some teachers clarified that although they set a classroom of conduct at the very beginning of the school year, the application of this code of conduct is not at its best. Some teachers do not abide by its regulations; thus, there is no consistency in the implementation of this code of conduct. Consequently, there is a large number of behavioral issues within classrooms and schools in general as well as there exists nothing concerning a clear and understood program of character education, so teachers are confused about what is expected from them.

Moreover, the interviewees were asked to describe the way they implement values in their classrooms and what strategies they make use of. While answering these questions, most teachers agreed on setting first of all a classroom code of conduct that promotes the adoption of good character traits such as respect, responsibility, cooperation, caring and many other values. After setting a code of conduct, teachers stressed the importance of using group work as much as possible while doing classroom activities because group work, pari work and classroom discussion

reinforce values of cooperation, respect, caring, responsibility, honesty and many other character traits that are essential for shaping a good character.

In addition to this, when students work in groups, they not only learn good character traits, but also it is an opportunity for them to practice those traits and maybe adopt them in future situations they may encounter. “The best forms of character education also involve students in honest, thoughtful discussion and reflection regarding the moral implications of what they see around them, what they are told, and what they personally do and experience.” (Eric Schaps, Esther F. Schaeffer, and Sanford N. McDonnell, *op.cit.*)

Related to this, many teachers said they opted for class discussions because they enable them to discuss morals and to develop students’ critical thinking skills, in fact these group discussions convey many experiences that engage students in deep and meaningful reflection about the character they are at present and the character they want to be in the future, so it pushes them to think about their character development, which is very interesting.

Another important idea, here, is that teenagers are eager to find opportunities in which they can discuss their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs. Many teachers in the interview discussed the importance of creating a strong relationship with students and making them feel that you care for them. (Thomas Lickona, 1989) indicated that “ the quality of a teacher’s relationship with students is the foundation of everything else a teacher may wish to do in character education” (p. 66).

This strong relationship would enable any teacher to have open students that are not shy to express their thoughts, that discuss their beliefs without any fear of judgement, it is at this stage only, a teacher may have influence on his/her students and help their forge their own character.

Further to this, community service learning was another effective approach that some teachers talked about and that facilitates the completion of academic goals via doing community service activities. Service learning encompasses activities like volunteering in social actions like visiting retirement houses, orphanages or helping people in need, it also includes doing actions that concern the environment like planting trees, cleaning public spaces and organizing sensitizing campaigns.

All these community service actions help students practice valuable and practical skills like organizing, caring, collaborating, and developing problem solving as well as decision making techniques, which is a very important tool that will assist them throughout different life situations they will encounter. Through experiencing these activities, students will develop good character traits like showing respect, taking responsibility, empathy, cooperation, citizenship, and perseverance.

So, service learning is considered as a makeover to students' personality and character. In fact, activities that are concerned with community service is often related to health, poverty, social issues, or sometimes caring about the environment. However, there exist other service-learning activities which involve students in helping other students, for example via mentoring and peer tutoring; like making brilliant students help weak students in some school subject through mentoring them while doing exercises or in school projects, this will create a very strong bond among students and will help in decreasing bullying a lot.

As discussed in the previous section, the teachers play an important role in shaping students' character. All the interviewed teachers stressed the importance of modeling good character traits for our students. Students sometimes imitate what their teachers do, so teachers must be good role models for their students. (T. Lickona, 1997) claimed that:

“Teachers serve as moral models demonstrating a high level of respect and responsibility inside and outside the classroom and modeling moral concern by taking time to discuss morally significant events from school life and moral events, adults cannot teach character unless they display character.”
(pp 66-67)

This implies that, in order to teach character, one first has to own this character, for this reason, it is primordial that teachers first of all display good character traits in their trail to implement character education. Creating a healthy and positive atmosphere for students is also an important condition in order to help students improve their character. The environment in which students are, has a big influence on their thoughts, attitudes and behaviors.

That is why, it is a must that teachers, administrators and all the school personnel offer a healthy environment for students in which everyone is engaged to demonstrate good character traits. By doing this, students' anxiety will diminish and their willingness to share and care will definitely increase. As we say, positivity is contagious.

To sum up, Moroccan teachers are aware of the strategies that may help their students develop morally, and they are very enthusiastic about employing these strategies and making them successful. However, many teachers stressed the importance of parent's engagement in the process of implementing character education. Teachers claimed that parents have to be the prior source of values and morals for their children, that they have to provide a basic moral education for them in order to initiate them to moral behavior, because it is only through joining efforts that the character education' implementation will succeed.

4.1.5. Impact of Character Education on Students' Behavior

There has recently been an increasing concern about the deterioration of values in the public educational system. Families, educators, policy makers and stakeholders are concerned with the physical, emotional, and mental health of students in an environment where incidents of violence are becoming more and more current. Whenever there is a violent event among students or between students and teachers, questions are raised about the reasons behind these negative behaviors. (Bulach, 2002) said in this regard that "Many school officials seek reasons for the increase in violence and negative behaviors in public schools" (p.79). However, educators think that character education may be an effective solution to the problem.

Character education has a great impact on the behavior of students, that was the answer of most of the interviewed teachers. According to this study, implementing character education in Moroccan public schools would be a huge step on the way to ensuring students' behavior improvement. Related to this, teachers said that the impact would be good, great, positive and many other words they employed to stress that implementing character education will definitely help students improve, develop and ameliorate their character.

As mentioned before, in Moroccan schools, the term character education is not used, that is why most teachers asked for a definition of the term before starting the interview. Going back to the official documents related to education in Morocco, we can find the term values education which is broader in comparison to character education. However, both promote the same values or character traits, also they both emphasize the need to perpetuate and reinforce these traits in order to have a morally good future generation.

In this regard, (Mansouri, 2011) claimed in his article about character education in Morocco that:

“The major goal of the programs would be to counter the Tsunami of this global culture negating Moroccan identity traits and distorting the socio-moral values. I believe that schools should design their own character education programs and educators should take part in that process. They are the tools of implementation and success. Many effective character education programs either recommend staff development or offer it as an option. If staff do not know how to implement it, they will likely implement it ineffectively.”

This implies that, without a clear vision about an effective program of character education, the implementation of this later is condemned to fail. On the other hand, its effective implementation would be of a great help to change the actual schools' situation, from schools where different aspects of negative behavior exist to schools where a healthy climate resides.

So, while answering this question, many teachers called for a real implementation of character education into every aspect of the school life like including character education in the school code of conduct, in textbooks, in school clubs and community service-learning clubs, in the behavior of all people working at school in order to witness the real impact of this implementation, which all teachers judged as positive and helpful to improve students' character.

Related to this, (Thomas Lickona, 1996a) stated that schools “must have an adequate theory of what good character is, one which gives schools a clear idea of their goals. Character must be broadly conceived to encompass cognitive, affective,

and behavioral aspects of morality.” So, it is a must that schools have a clear idea about the program, then it will be easier for them to “must help children understand the core values, adopt or commit to them, and then act upon them in their own lives”. (p313)

To conclude, character education is not the responsibility of teachers and administrators only, but also parents should take a prior role in this process and contribute effectively to their children’s character development, in addition to all stakeholders and community members. In this regard, (Stone & Dyal, 1997) declared that it is the duty of everyone to work together for the benefit of children to develop their morality, he said "Let us orchestrate opportunities which help our students become better human beings" (p.22).

Similar to this, (Pearson & Nicholson, 2000) added that “character education often falls into the school's hands. The school, along with parents or guardians must help children identify core values, adapt and commit to those values, and then put them into practice within their own lives (p. 243).

Therefore, teachers, school administrators and parents should join their efforts, work collectively and more importantly keep a good communication panel while at the same time model positive behavior in front of their children/students. In addition to this, transmitting ethical values through textbooks to foster children’s morality is also a great initiative. Moreover, schools should create a culture of good character; this means that they should implement character education in every aspect of the school life.

Nevertheless, this engagement of all teachers, administration staff, parents and all members of the society in the process of students’ character development is not yet present in our schools which creates many deficits that delay the success of the program. (Thomas Lickona, 1997) claims that:

“Character education efforts must be truly comprehensive in order to be commensurate with the seriousness of the moral problems that confront us. In the long run, this means that all groups that touch the values and character of the young must come together in common cause to elevate the character of our children and, ultimately, of society as a whole” (p. 61).

In brief, according to previous research, implementing a comprehensive character education has produced clear academic, behavioral and cultural progress (J. C. Marshall, Caldwell, & Foster, 2011). In the present research, findings revealed that schools in which the questionnaires and the interviews were done, are in need of implementing character education in textbooks, in extracurricular activities, they also need to encourage students and engage them in community service or voluntary work in order to practice the values they learn. Another thing which these schools lack is providing character education trainings for teachers as well as sensitizing and engaging parents in the implementation process, so they can ensure the success of this implementation.

4.2. Implications

This section focuses on some implications and suggestions that may contribute to practice guidance and that draw on the results obtained from the data analysis, interpretation and discussion of the results. Character education is essential for the well-being of students, teachers, parents and the society as a whole, that is why awareness should be increased among all stakeholders, teachers and parents, about the positive effects of teaching character.

In this regard, schools should create a whole school culture that contributes in improving students' character, because fostering students' character is more significant than teaching them academic content. Moreover, it is essential to create a school culture that helps students shape and improve their character and that enable them to face various life situations. Related to this, (Adams, 2013) claimed that:

“Before you get to academics, college- going, and rigorous courses, you have to build a school culture... Children start with learning to dream (discipline, responsibility, enthusiasm, accountability, and maturity). By high school, it becomes dream big, with bravery, integrity, and grit added” (p. 3).

In the context of Moroccan public high schools, teachers lack sufficient training and supervision on this matter, they ignore how to deal with character education and what is exactly asked from them. Therefore, providing trainings on character education is a must, teachers have to grasp the meaning of character first, then the

traits they have to model and instill in their students, also different strategies that will help them fulfill this process successfully.

Related to this, it is necessary for teachers be trained in order to recognize their roles in the implementation process and to be aware of what is expected from them as teachers. Another important detail here, is that Morocco is a very rich country in terms of culture, in Morocco, there are numerous subcultures, so, depending on the region where a teacher's work, he/she has to be conscious of their students' culture and values. Thus, attending workshops to be well qualified culturally and socially is primordial to teach students character education.

Furthermore, teachers should be well trained to cope up with the whole process of the character education program implementation. In addition to this, they also should grasp the instance of the program that is being implemented within their schools as well as recognize the materials and resources that are available for them.

In brief, providing professional development for teachers about the program of character education is the most effective way to ensure that teachers are properly trained and consistent in their practice. More importantly, one of the implications is the lack of the understanding of the meaning of character education. Some teachers believe that they do not have enough time to care for their students' character or about their behavior improvement.

They believe that teaching character is an extra task to the curriculum they teach, and that it is not possible to imply it. So, for them teaching character education is just an extra work that needs more time and effort. Another result of the lack of understanding of the meaning of character education is that we have different ways and strategies of teaching it, depending on individual points of views of teachers, which is very confusing and problematic.

Another important implication is that lesson plans are not promoting morals and character traits. For instance, teachers of all school subjects should design lesson plans that aim to improve and foster the character of their students. Moreover, lesson plans should be used as a key tool to teach good character traits by including them into the teaching of different subjects and not only subjects that relate to the Islamic religion like Islamic education.

In this context, school clubs and extra-curricular activities should have a large contribution in this process. It is without any doubt that these activities are very efficient in instilling good character traits, boosting students' self-confidence and scaffolding them in the process of forging their own character. Teachers have to create opportunities for students, through the use of activities, to be responsible toward others at the school, to act as role models and to care about others around them.

School clubs may have different objectives, for example older students can help younger ones academically by assisting them while doing exercises or school project, this will make them feel important, will boost their self-confidence and will make develop a sense of responsibility and adhere school service-learning activities to feel as active members at their schools.

In this context, students should have a say in issues that are related to their school life. While instilling good character traits, it is important to make students practice decision making, as mentioned in the literature review, decision making is an essential character trait that students have to foster to be able to encounter different life situations. For this reason, teachers and schools' principals have to provide their students with opportunities where they can have their say and take decisions that are related to their school environment.

In addition to this, schools' clubs may be considered as a free and open space where students are encouraged to discuss moral issues and behaviors to make them more conscious and aware about those issues and how to behave in different life situations. Moreover, school clubs also include working on creative projects that not only foster good character traits and promote positive behavior, but also encourage critical thinking which is a very important skill to own. So, by doing all this, teachers help students relate what they learn to their real-life situations, providing them with opportunities to share their experiences with others and learn from them.

In this line of thought, schools should give more importance to cooperative learning which enables students to develop their social behaviors within the larger community. Thus, either inside or outside the class, cooperative learning helps students be part of a group in which they care for the group learning rather than

one's own learning (Leming, 1993). No matter which activity we are working on, cooperative learning is always a good strategy to use in order to make students give the best of themselves and at the same time learn the most effectively possible.

Furthermore, findings from this study suggest that the role of parents in their children's character development is basic, so schools should keep a constant communication with parents as well as create some opportunities for them to be engaged with some activities that schools organize for their children like volunteering as an example or any other activity that concerns service learning. Another important point concerning parents' engagement in character education is that parents also need to receive some training in terms of character implementation, schools have to promote these trainings in order to make sure that both parents and teachers are aware of the importance and the benefits of character development.

In this regard, (Kohn, 1990) stated that parents should promote their children's good character as children tend to act as their parents. So, developing children's character needs the cooperation of both parents and teachers (Sewell & Hall, 2003). For these reasons, it is essential to engage parents in the process of character implementation while planning and giving them the chance to model positive behavior for their children whenever possible to make sure that students grasp these character traits and adopt them in future situations.

To sum up, this section has briefly presented some implications that have been drawn from this research and its findings. This last chapter has also presented both qualitative and quantitative analysis of the collected data on the impact of implementing character education for behavior improvement in Moroccan high schools. In the next section, the researcher will discuss the conclusion of the study as well as some of its limitations.

4.3. Conclusion, Synthesis and Summary of the Thesis

As the father of progressive education Francis W.Parker said “ the end and aim of all education is the development of character”. That is why, it is a huge responsibility to contribute in shaping future generations who are not only equipped

with academic knowledge and skills but, more importantly, equipped with values and good character traits. Therefore, teachers, parents, school personnel and all community stakeholders should show a full engagement in the process of modeling and instilling good character traits into our students.

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact that character education has on students' behavior. Even if some teachers said that there is no big importance in implementing character education because of the idea that religion is already playing that role. Unfortunately, this idea can be applied on the Moroccan old generations, when there was no technology, no internet and no social media, people were very attached to each other, moreover, they used to learn and understand values and life skills from the experiences of the elderly.

Therefore, parents and grandparents used to be the first teachers of their children in terms of character traits and morals. Then, other family members and neighbors also contributed in the shaping of those children's behaviors and character. However, with the spread of technology and the facility of social interaction with different people from various types of cultures who may have different values and moral thoughts as well as the negative effect that social media has; especially on teenagers. An essential need is taking place that is requires parents, educators and stakeholders to consider character education again to be implemented in Moroccan schools.

Consequently, this research examined the impact that implementing a character education program has on students' behavior. The rationale for selecting this specific topic is that the results can be useful in spreading awareness at the school environment also they can facilitate in the process of planning, implementing and developing students' moral and character development at schools. In addition to understanding the challenges that teachers face in teaching character education, it will also help in overcoming them, allowing character education to take place easily and effectively, and more importantly it will contribute in changing students negative behavior.

Several studies worldwide were conducted to investigate the process of character education and character development from different perspectives. However, in the

case of Morocco, it is without any doubt there are many studies conducted in different areas related to education, still, the researcher didn't find enough resources concerning character education apart few articles. Therefore, there is a gap in the field of character education in Morocco that has to be given interest.

This study has as a theoretical framework the moral psychological model by Lickona (1993) that follows a comprehensive approach, which implies that everyone present at school should adopt and promote moral values and good character traits, also everything that takes place at school should be guided toward character development. Moreover, it is also influenced by the socio-cultural approach by Vygotsky (1978), which emphasizes the influence that social interaction has on the development of one's moral character. Besides, other theories related to character education were discussed in the literature review in order to give the reader an overview on the literature related to character education.

The research questions in this study focused on investigating the impact of implementing character education on students' behavior. In order to answer the research questions, a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative approaches were used. The choice of employing a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative methods enabled the researcher to explore the research questions in a deep way. Concerning data collection, the researcher used different instruments, including questionnaires to 425 students, and semi-structured interviews for 40 teachers, in addition to document analysis that was used to analyze the available ministry of education documents that are related to character education.

After the data was collected, statistical analysis was undertaken, the researcher used the SPSS and the AMOS programs to analyze the quantitative data in order to come up with precise results. Then, for the qualitative data, the researcher used the NVIVO program which aims to analyze unstructured texts or audios such as interviews for gaining a detailed overview about the respondents' answers.

As mentioned before, promoting students' character development is the responsibility of all community members, everyone is required to engage in the process of enhancing good morals and fostering good character traits in students. This encompasses stakeholders, educators, administrators, all those working in

schools, and more importantly parents and the surrounding community. This research examined the impact that character education has on students' behavior. As discussed in chapter 4, the results of this study can be summarized as follow:

1. Moroccan high schools lack a well-planned program or framework of character education with clear guidelines that will help teachers and school staff both model and promote unified character traits to ensure their students' character improvement as well as provide a peaceful and healthy environment for them.
2. Not all teachers and students grasp the meaning and importance of implementing values or character education in all schools' subjects.
3. Values and good character traits are not integrated effectively in the curriculum itself.
3. There are no trainings about implementing character education, so we cannot make sure that teachers are qualified for teaching and modeling good character traits.
4. Teachers, administrators, parents, stakeholders and all members of the community care more about the academic achievement of students rather than their character improvement.
5. Male students tend to display negative behaviors more that female students.
6. The fact that teachers model good behaviors contributes in making students engage more in understanding values present in textbooks and adopting them in real life situations.

Reflecting on the results, it can be noticed that there isn't an effective implementation of character education among Moroccan public high schools. That is why, deliberate constructive steps should be taken into consideration to adjust the situation, filling all the gaps and providing all the necessities in order to end up with an effective implementation of character education that will result in students' behavior improvement.

In the same line of thought some conclusions can be drawn from the results discussed so far, it appears that with a proper implementation of a character education program in Moroccan public high schools, students' behavior will

improve. In order to achieve this, all results demonstrated that the teacher is a primary factor for behavior improvement, through his/her modeling of good character traits, he/she will aid students to learn character traits from textbooks easily then practice them in daily situations they encounter.

Moreover, using effective strategies like including group work, promoting soft skills and encouraging community service learning will all provide opportunities for students to forge their character through the daily practice of values like caring, empathy, cooperation, responsibility, respect, acceptance, trustworthiness etc. Another deduction that can be made from the findings is that both teachers and students are not aware of the importance of implementing character education, and this is the result of the non-proper implementation; that is why the ministry of education should implement an effective program of character in all aspects of schools not only in official documents.

In the same context, trainings should be provided for teachers and school principals to make them grasp the essence of the program, moreover, character traits have to be present in all school subjects' textbooks, lastly, school clubs should support the matter through projects that allow students to practice values and soft skills in order to forge their character.

Furthermore, the commitment of parents and all community stakeholders is a must. Parents constitute the first source of learning for their children; thus, they have to instill in them values, morals and good character traits from the very beginning of their childhood. Many teachers claimed that the source of students' negative behavior is the lack of education from home and also the negative influence they get there. Another source of negative influence is the environment in which the students live, their neighborhood or house surroundings so their community. For these reasons, the integration of parents and community stakeholders is very necessary to the success of the program.

In addition to this, when we talk about the negative influence, we have to talk about media or more specifically social media. Nowadays, everyone has a smartphone where applications like Facebook, Instagram or Twitter are becoming blurry. These social media platforms have a very negative influence on teens' behaviors.

Teenagers of today are addict to these applications, they check them out all day long, adopt behaviors and thoughts from them and imitate what their favorite social influencers do, which is very dangerous and threatening. In brief, this study findings gave us an overview about the actual moral situation in Moroccan public secondary schools. It cleared up many of the blurry perceptions about what needs to be done in order to successfully implement a program of character education in our schools that will help improve students' behavior.

In spite of these results and implications, this thesis doesn't claim exhaustiveness. Because there are a number of limitations that I encountered during data collection and analysis. The first one is that the results of this study are based only on Moroccan public schools that have a common curriculum, therefore, some Moroccan private schools that teach different curricula may bring about different results; especial schools that use the Montessori model. However, if the study compromised different schools like public and private ones; it would allow to make a comparison between these schools, which may enlarge the results of the study. The second limitation is the lockdown because of COVID-19 that the country and many others in the world knew at that period of time. It was very challenging for me, as a researcher, to find volunteers for the semi-structured interviews with the teachers as well as with the questionnaires addressed to students. Some teachers refused to do the interview claiming that they were too busy because of online classes, others apologized for not sharing the questionnaires with their students because simply these later did not attend online classes. Finally, the interviews were conducted through telephone calls because of the lockdown, this may have affected how teachers responded to the questions.

In spite of these limitations, this study would hopefully contribute to further research because it has advanced some issues and interpretations that may illuminate the way for future studies on character education. It may also to better understanding of the issue, inform policy makers and improve practitioners' awareness of some questions involved in character education in general and character education in English language classrooms in particular.

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Appendices

Appendix A

(Informed Consent Form – Interview)

You are being asked to take part in a research study that concerns implementing character education for behavior improvement: Moroccan high schools as a case study.

This study is being conducted by CREDIF laboratory under the supervision of Professor Abderrahim ElKarfa. The principal investigator is Rajaa Hassine. Any questions about this study or comments about your rights as a study participant may be directed to the researcher at rajaahassinee@gmail.com.

I am asking for your voluntary participation since it is very important to conduct this research and I appreciate taking from your time to help.

You will be asked questions that concern first of all your opinion about implementing values and character traits in your classrooms, then about strategies you use to implement them as well as your opinion about the impact those values may have on your students' behavior improvement. At the end, you will be asked about obstacles that may hinder a successful implementation of character education and ways to overcome them.

Your responses will be kept confidential by the researcher. No individually identifying information will be reported. Names, dates, and locations will be suppressed and pseudonyms will be used.

Your participation is voluntary. You do not have to provide any information that you do not wish to provide, or answer any questions that you prefer not to answer. If, at any time, you decide not to continue, you may simply say so and the interview will be terminated.

By signing below, you indicate that you have read and understood what is being asked of you, and that you consent to participate.

Participant approval :

Appendix B

(Informed Consent Form – Questionnaire)

You are being asked to take part in a research study that concerns implementing character education for behavior improvement: Moroccan high schools as a case study.

This study is being conducted by CREDIF laboratory under the supervision of Professor Abderrahim ElKarfa. The principal investigator is Rajaa Hassine. Any questions about this study or comments about your rights as a study participant may be directed to the researcher at rajaahassinee@gmail.com.

I am asking for your voluntary participation since it is very important to conduct this research and I appreciate taking from your time to help. In the questionnaire, you will be asked to respond a series of questions based on a Likert scale as following: Never = 1, rarely = 2, sometimes = 3, usually = 4, always = 5; the researcher also used the following answers: strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, slightly disagree = 3, slightly agree = 4, agree = 5, strongly agree = 6.

Your responses will be kept confidential by the researcher. No individually identifying information will be reported. Names, dates, and locations will be suppressed and pseudonyms will be used.

Your participation is voluntary. You do not have to provide any information that you do not wish to provide, or answer any questions that you prefer not to answer. If, at any time, you decide not to continue, you may simply quit the online form.

By signing below, you indicate that you have read and understood what is being asked of you, and that you consent to participate.

Participant approval :

Appendix C

(Interview)

Question 1: How long have you been teaching?

Question 2: As an educator, what is the meaning of ‘school’ according to you?

Question 3: How do you feel about teaching values in your classes?

Question 4: What values, do you think, should be learned at school?

Question 5: Which values are present in the textbooks you are using?

Question 6: What are the values that you integrate in your lessons?

Question 7: Would you please describe how you implement values in your classroom?

Question 8: What strategies should a teacher establish and maintain to stress good character in his/her classroom?

Question 9: What would you suggest to do in order to improve students’ behavior?

Question 10: Would you please cite examples of negative behavior you witness in the school environment?

Question 11: In your opinion, why do students misbehave?

“Character education is a learning process that enables students to understand, care about and act upon core ethical values such as respect, caring, trustworthiness, honesty, fairness, citizenship, and responsibility towards self and others”.

Lickona, T. (1996). Eleven principles of effective character education. *Journal of moral Education*, 25(1), 93-100.

Question 12: How do you view the impact of implementing character education on students’ behavior?

Question 13: According to you, to what extent is character education implemented in the Moroccan school?

Question 14: From your point of view, what are the obstacles that may prevent a future implementation of character education in the Moroccan school?

Question 15: What strategies do you suggest for a successful implementation of character education in the Moroccan school?

Appendix D
(Questionnaire)