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How Can a Role-Modelling Character Education Programme Be Developed in Saudi Arabia and What Are the Barriers/Enablers in Feasibly Implementing It?

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Introduction

This paper aims to introduce a section of a prospective PhD thesis, on which I am currently working, on entitled: *How can role-model character education in Saudi Arabia be developed and what are the barriers/enablers to feasibly implementing it?* The final data collection and analysis phase of the doctoral study is threefold: firstly, it uses a qualitative approach to explore whether character education, and more specifically role- model character education, can affect pupils' moral development based on the cultural context. Secondly, it proposes to explore how such education could be developed, in the relevant Saudi context, to increase efficacy. Thirdly, it aims to identify and argue for the best methods to implement it, considering the contextual cultural, pedagogical and policy-related barriers and enablers of.

A qualitative study looking into the feasibility of a character-education project in Saudi Arabia was conducted. The methodology of each phase was based on the findings of the previous one, leading eventually to the research questions listed below:

RQ1. What are the barriers and enablers in implementing a role-modelling character education in Saudi Arabia?
RQ2. What are the best methods to developing an effective role-modelling character education programme in Saudi Arabia?

However, due to the nature of this paper, only findings relating to the second question will be explored to look at what would be considered the best pedagogical approaches to a role-modelling character education within a specific cultural context, hopefully providing useful data for educators and researchers to gain a better understanding of the benefits and drawbacks of using particular approaches with role models in education and, more generally, how culture can influence the development of character-education projects.

Background

Recently, there has been a great interest in how moral exemplars could have an impact on moral character in schools, (Kristjánsson, 2006; Han, Kim, Jeong & Cohen, 2017; Croce and Vaccarezza, 2017; Osman, 2019) and one of the main reasons role modelling is believed to help in moral development is due to the emotions elicited by being exposed to role models or exemplars. Various scholars have explored this field theoretically such as with admiration (Zagzebski, 2015) or emulation (Kristjánsson, 2006), and empirically with elevation (Algoe & Haidt, 2009), admiration (Schindler, Windrich & Menninghaus, 2013) or inspiration (Thrash, Moldovan, Oleynick, & Maruskin, 2014), and they have found certain emotions could lead to the motivation of acting morally and thus emulating the exemplar. Lickona (1991) considers moral character to having three essential and interrelated components: moral knowing, moral feeling and moral action, which could also be termed cognitive, affective and behavioural, and

Aristotle's emulation *(zēlos)*, also focuses on emotion, reasoning and behaviour because as Kristjánsson (2006) explains based on Aristotle's conceptualisation, a *cognitive* element is required to comprehend the admirable qualities, an *affective* element to ensure children's emotions are triggered when exposed to role models, and a behavioural one involving the actual moral action.

By combining these theories, the present author previously concluded that witnessing moral excellence could trigger a positive emotion (admiration/elevation) or a negative emotion (emulation) or a process (inspired by), and through these emotions, either naturally or with guidance, an individual could reach the stage *inspired to* (Thrash et al.) which is the motivation to act upon these feelings. The motivation then allows one to emulate the exemplar, and by taking an Aristotelian view, the emulated moral thought or action could be repeated and learnt through habituation, which could eventually lead to some level of virtuosity, later to be harnessed and refined through the guidance of the young person's budding phronesis. This is not provided here as the ultimate solution to the question of what psycho-moral processes are at work in all role modelling experiences, but it could provide one potential route to learning to be good through learning from moral exemplars. (Osman, 2019).

When looking into who young children consider to be their role models, most studies have shown parents are the most significant ones (Bucher, 1998; Bricheno & Thornton, 2007; Hendry, Roberts, Glendinning & Coleman, 1992; Hurd, Zimmerman & Xue 2008; Ruggeri, Luan, Keller, & Gunnerman, 2018; and Yancey, Grant, Kurosky, Kravitz-Wirtz & Mistry, 2011) following close proximity role models such as siblings, grandparents and friends. However, they do all bring to light different causal factors, which attests to the fact that age group, gender, and to some extent culture, can affect who young people identify as a role model, how much the role model can affect them, and how it can influence specific elements such as emotional well-being, health-risk behaviour and academic engagement. Surprisingly, in a few of the studies mentioned, teachers were the least recognised role models in children's lives, even though many of the role-modelling education research focuses on the importance of teachers acting as moral models for the students to learn from (Fallona, 2000; Sanderse, 2012; Rose, 2004; Kindeberg, 2013). Although no studies have been conducted in the Middle Eastern region, the general thrust of the results should still be taken into consideration when creating a role-modelling character education programme in that part of the world. For example, what is generally known about Middle Eastern cultures would indicate that a successful moral role-model there would also be part of the family, as strong familial relationships are an important element of their culture, and furthermore a role model would be expected to have some Islamic virtues that the Prophet Muhammed presented such as kindness, generosity and a high respect for others, as the Saudi Vision 2030 says 'families are the key building block of a society, protecting it from social breakdown across generations...one of the defining characteristics of the Kingdom is its adherence to Islamic principles and values' (p.28, n.d.).

Most of the research and studies conducted on role-modelling has not been in the Middle Eastern region, so the question is how would a role-modelling programme work in Saudi Arabia? Character education, which is labelled as Citizenship Education in the region, has received an increased interest over the past decade with several conferences in the GCC based on this. In Saudi Arabia, according to Alharbi, citizenship education is integrated in social studies, and for

secondary school has its own separate subject, but the focus is more on values that develop their national identity rather than on how they can be good global citizens. He says the three main deficiencies with CE in the country is its content, aims and teacher training. In addition to pedagogy as it focuses on a more traditional lecture type class, causing learners to take a more passive role. (2017). This does convey a gap in the arena, but not necessarily a closed one as the region has shown an interest in role-modelling by creating a national campaign called *How to be a role-model? (Kef nkoon qudwa)*, and this encourages all kinds of leaders: parents, teachers, imams (heads of mosques) and government and private officials to act as role models for their society (Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, 2019). Although there is a lack of moral values presented in this campaign, the Saudi Vision 2030 says 'We intend to embed positive moral beliefs in our children's characters from an early age by reshaping our academic and educational system' (p.28, n.d.).

A role-modelling character education programme was created for schools in Saudi Arabia within this doctoral study (Osman, 2019), however, the results from the pilot, and then case study showed it would be more useful to conduct an exploratory study on peoples' beliefs and opinions on how the programme should be developed and implemented within the country, for greater efficacy.

Methods

Study Design

The research project started with a pragmatic epistemology by using a mixed-method approach to find the best possible answers to the research question. However, the results from the first stage showed a more explorative approach is required prior to testing an intervention to better understand the educational culture in Saudi Arabia therefore leading it to a more interpretivist epistemology with a qualitative methodology. This seemed to be the most appropriate as it could provide a more in-depth understanding of people's views in the region, on role-modelling character education, as well as their experiences regarding character education within the current educational system. Furthermore, a qualitative content analysis was conducted rather than grounded theory as a new theory was not the aim of the research, but rather describing meanings (Drisko and Maschi, 2015), and this was done through one-on-one semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

Sampling

This stage of the research required various sampling techniques, and at first a *sample universe* was placed, according to Robinson (2014), which included one inclusion criteria which was that participants had to be involved in the educational system in Saudi Arabia. A heterogeneous group was chosen to increase diversity and therefore generalisability. Prior to recruitment a sample size of approximately 20 was set as it seemed to be a realistic and practical number for a single researcher as well as enough to provide sufficient data, and, as expected, saturation was reached after 75% of the interviews were conducted. Purposive sampling was then done as various participants with different roles were preferred to provide a wider perspective and more generalisable results (Robinson, 2014). The groups included students, teachers, parents as well as consultants and/or curriculum developers. The recruitment methods changed throughout as it

started with communicating with school organisations, and when that stopped being effective, online advertising was done, followed by snowball sampling, which involves participants referring others (Robinson, 2014). *Table 1* (*see appendix)* displays the participants, their code names and their characteristics.

Data Collection

Interviews were conducted with the adults, and focus groups with students, as focus groups with adolescents can be a useful method to understand their experiences and insights since they feel more comfortable around peer audiences than adult ones (Kennedy, Kools and Krueger, 2001). All the focus groups were in person, while the interviews were a combination of face to face interviews and phone calls depending on participants' preference. The locations included homes, offices and schools, again based on participants and/or their guardians' preference, and all the data was audio recorded and collected by the researcher. The interviews/focus groups were conducted in Arabic, English, or both depending on what the participant was most comfortable and fluent in. English and bilingual recordings were transcribed verbatim by the researcher and Arabic ones were given to a professional transcription service to save time, but were then re-checked by the researcher.

Data Analysis

As mentioned, a qualitative content analysis was conducted, which Drisko and Maschi, describe as analysing any kind of content through coding and categorisation (2015). Although it can be similar to grounded theory in that it uses open-coding, qualitative content analysis differs as it can be deductive, inductive or both as well as explorative and descriptive (Bengtsson, 2016), which this project does since some themes were predicted from the results of the previous case study. Interview questions were based on the topics in *flowchart 1 (see appendix)*, while the coding process took an inductive approach as it was open to new themes. Data analysis was an ongoing back and forth process that started during data collection, and the coding process, shown in *Tables 2 and 3 (see appendix)*, was based on Graneheim and Lundman's coding system (2004). The analysis was done manually as interviews were transcribed in different languages, and the researcher was familiar with the data. Before reaching the final result, however, the researcher needed to go through several stages to reduce the number of words and make the data meaningful, and this involved first getting familiar with the text, finding various meaning units, then through interpretation they were combined with other meaning units to make sub-categories and themes without losing its meaning (Bengtsson, 2016).

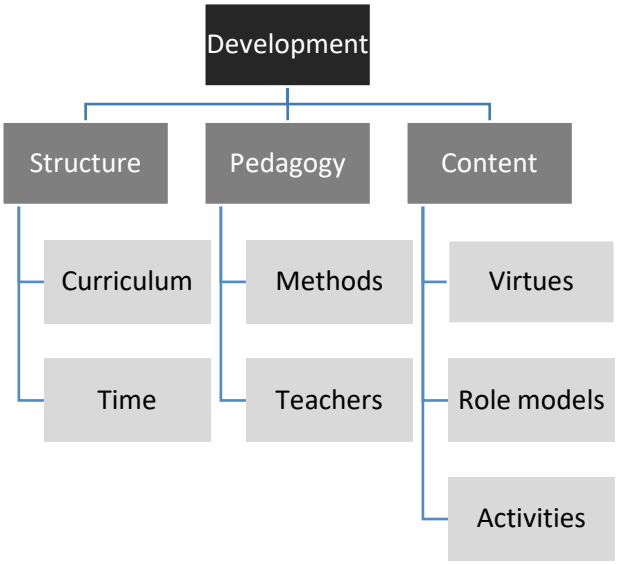
As there seems to be limited research on how to conduct translations when the data is in more than one language, finding the most effective technique was a challenge. Even though there is no right answer, quite a few studies, such as van Nes, Abma, Jonsson and Deeg's study (2010) suggests the translation process should be delayed as much as possible because language is the medium in which information is interpreted in qualitative research and language differences could 'result in a loss of meaning and thus loss of the validity' (p.314). Although Santos Jr., Black and Sandelowski (2015) recommend early translation when there are many researchers so they all have access to the data, they did find meaning was lost in translation. Since the present project has an individual researcher who is bilingual and conducted the interviews in both languages, it seemed more appropriate to analyse all the data in its original source language with the same coding process, and only translate the quotes required to present the findings. This

therefore minimises the risk of meaning being lost in translation before the analysis stage begins.

Findings

The themes explored are conveyed below *(Flowchart 2)* to answer the research question: *how should an effective role-modelling character education programme be developed in Saudi Arabia?*

Flowchart 2. RQ2 themes and categories



The findings will be presented through a funnel vision as it looks at the overall structure of how the programme is expected to be within a school and narrowing it down to the actual content. The quotes or part of the quotes which are between parentheses have been translated from Arabic to English by the researcher, while the code at the end of each quote refers to which key informant said it, and their details can be found in *table 1 (see appendix).*

Structure

As the first category, *structure,* focuses on the programme from a wider perspective, many of the participants discussed the idea of a character education curriculum more than a role-modelling one. The two sub-categories found under structure were *time* and *curriculum* and this involved descriptions or opinions on when to conduct such a programme and for how long, as well as where or how it should be placed in the existing curriculum.

Curriculum

There were different perspectives on how such a programme should be set up in the curriculum, whether it should be taught as a separate subject or caught within the school and be situational, or embedded in all academic subjects. Although the focus groups did not discuss the curriculum as much, 9 out of 17 of the adult participants including parents, teachers and curriculum developers, agreed the programme should be embedded into the curriculum, and therefore taught within academic subjects.

"My wishful thinking is to have something embedded throughout, through all subjects, because I think if you embed it, uh, (like) you will have more impact." (C3)

Furthermore, a few participants rejected the idea of this programme being taught separately for various reasons. Firstly, workload from other subjects, were mentioned a few times, particularly Arabic, Islamic and social studies, as these are a requirement from the government whether the school is private or public. Secondly, the way in which these subjects are taught are thought to be old-fashioned pedagogical approaches, thus adding another subject may be rejected by the students. Thirdly, several participants said the nature of the subject should not be compartmentalised and labelled, but developed naturally.

"So, they must have a certain number of Islamic studies instruction, they've got to have the Arabic instruction…there is also some kind of conditioning in terms of their culture, and the development of their culture. So, you bring in something else called character development, um, it could look to them, like another dictate, it could." (T3)

"(There has been a lot of) categorising a lot, and compartmentalising, a lot. So, like, for me, education is just about the relationships we have with the teachers, and having these conversations, and putting space whether it was in the classroom, or in recess or when they're travelling, to have these conversations, related to character education." (P5)

However, some participants disagreed and preferred it was taught on its own including one of the focus groups. Some reasons include it being treated more seriously as a proper subject with grades, or the inability for schools to teach it within academic subjects and thus needing its own time. A few found it important to give it its own time to develop their morality through critical thinking reflection and discussion, especially when its separated from religion.

"If we put it under the context of, 'we're talking about morality here' rather than put it under the context of 'we're talking about (religion) or religion because children tend to, just, because its religion, you follow it, you don't discuss it, you don't have a conversation about it, we just, we know what Quran said and we do it." (C4)

"Because here the teachers and the students and even schools do not give, uh, attention to character or to any of the standards or to any of the, uh, content, unless it is a separate subject that has its own exams, its own standards." (C2)

Time

Time includes lesson time, lesson frequency and programme duration. It was not discussed by all the participants as some believed it should not be timetabled on its own, but for those who did, it was suggested each lesson should be as long as the schools' normal lesson time, between 45 minutes to an hour. Six participants and two focus groups believed it should be throughout the academic year with reasons such as the importance and efficacy of repetition and continuity. While others thought it is a significant matter and therefore should not be stopped.

"Consistency is the key to achieving whatever you are looking for…Because you know virtues, they are something we use every day but not on the top of our list, so you have to constantly remind them of what's important." (T1)

Lesson frequency varied from once or twice a week to once or twice a month.

"And I told you before it depends, if it was a separate subject then, they will have (that's it) a separate time for it (for example) two periods or one period per week, and they will be evaluated for it, or assessed for it during the year." (C2)

Pedagogy

This category involves the how and the who in that it examines how participants think a role modelling character education programme should be taught in the region, and who should teach it, thus the two sub-categories are labelled *methods* and *teachers.*

Methods

Within this subcategory there were no conflicting opinions, and it involves the way in which the participants think the programme should be taught to make it effective. All the participants who discussed this matter rejected the idea of theory or encouraged the idea of practicality, either by the students acting out these values, learning through movement, choosing the way they learn or taking charge of it. A total of nine participants and all three focus groups mentioned the programme being action-based, if terms such as 'act' 'action' 'doing' or 'practical' were used then this was placed under action-based learning.

For instance:

"But you only actually learn it when you do it. The mind, body, connection, the mind, muscle connection." (P3)

"(Focus more on the programme being practical more than theoretical. I mean notice, mostly you teach religion, and you teach...but there's no impact, there is no application of what you're teaching)." (T5)

"Or it could be active learning, where you can go actually ask the student to go and model this kind of value or character in different situations and how, and they reflect on it for example." (C2)

Another common method mentioned among the participants was the programme being student-led, and this included the students controlling the learning process rather than the teacher, or the students choosing the activities/role models.

"Puts the student more in charge then they are governing what direction they choose to develop in, it doesn't have to be part of a herd mentality, which is what I think we are trying to get them away from." (T3)

"(For me this point is very important, that you free the human mind, because I hate to bring children and dictate to them, I do not dictate anyone anything, I open the prospects of [said in English: achieving the minds]. I listen to them, and that is where you reach what we want, the objectives we want to reach)" (C6)

One of the methods mentioned was keeping the children's interest, thus for it to be effective three of the five curriculum developers emphasised the importance of the programme being engaging.
"(Now, we, this generation gets bored very quickly with the way it is automatically and traditionally taught, there has to be art in the way it's presented)." (C1)

"I think they need to be very engaging and interactive programmes, and I think they need to be student-focused. I believe you would have to come out of the classroom and put them into totally different environments which really allows the student to feel empowered, to be able to share thoughts and ideas in an altogether different environment." (C5).

"(If they empathised with the situation and loved it, and there is a connection, and there is a bond, and there is passion, then the children will react because with children, this is their main language, passion)." (C6)

Teachers

This sub-category includes anything related to who the teachers should be or what characteristics they should encompass. Three of the participants mentioned the importance of the teacher being the role-model and presenting the virtues taught to their students.
"…represent herself in front of students, as yes, I'm a complete role model in front of you, and inspiring her students." (P1)

"(If the student is suspicious that you don't have these values she will not commit.)" (T2)
Some participants, however, believed the teacher's passion about the subject and/or the child is what's important, and therefore the programme would not be as influential if the teacher is not.
"There are teachers who teach the whole child, the whole student, and there are teachers who would just want to teach their subjects. They don't necessarily gel very well, um, because a teacher who's only teaching her subject, is not going to adapt her curriculum to include different types of learners or character development." (T3)

"It should be, I think, a teacher either with a social, sociology background or social studies background, humanities, definitely. But it doesn't exclude the other teachers who are passionate about this…about human development and this social aspect, so I don't think it should be, um, (like) the teacher should be specifically from a certain major." (C2)
Even though some participants found passion to be essential, others believed some sort of training or acquisition of a certain skill was required to teach a character education programme effectively.

"(I feel he should have studied psychology, because with this he will be able to implant it in a more effective way)" (P2)

"Uh, it has to be, you know, someone with social studies, entrepreneurship, who are teaching kids these skills, but I think it has to be something as you mentioned, someone who is responsible for moral education, do these schools have, let's say, moral education teachers? I doubt it." (P4)

Two of the focus groups mentioned various subject teachers or someone close to them mainly due to their relationship with the teacher, and/or how influential they found them.

"Maybe the parents who want to volunteer to do it, they can do it because they are role models to most of their children." (S1)

"I would like my maths teacher and my Islamic teacher because they are both very influential and they would be good role models to help kids." (S1)

Some adults support the children's point, in their needing to be a relationship between the teacher and student:

"Um, definitely it should be someone who the kids already know, so they already have trust, they trust this person." (T1)

"(...between me and them [students] there has become a completely open connection)." (T2)

One teacher, however, mentioned the relationship difference between an expatriate teacher versus a Saudi one, with the students:

"I've observed, there are some conversations that I can have with students that they may not have with other teachers. You're from the outside, but you are Muslim, 'so can we tell you this' 'what can we tell you about this?' and 'do you think it's fair that people look at us and they see x, y, z but really that's not us?'" (T3)

Content

The *content* category explores what should be included in the programme and the three sub-categories are the *virtues*, involving which virtues the participants believe should be taught as well as the *activities* to help them teach those virtues, and the type of *role models* the virtues should be taught through.

Virtues

Several virtues were mentioned with honesty being the most frequent with six mentions, followed by responsibility, then respect, empathy and kindness. Other virtues that were mentioned once or twice are patience, self-love and authenticity. The virtues chosen were based on the lack of it in the region or internationally such as self-love, or the significance of it on a societal and global level. Some of the reasons these virtues were chosen are given:

"A sense of citizenship is not being developed. They are developing, how to make money. You are getting an education, to make money." (P1)

"Ah, um, because with authenticity comes, um, with authenticity comes honesty and, uh, with authenticity you can be yourself, and the, uh, society will benefit from the diversity that will come with authenticity." (P6)

"So, if you wanted to teach students, you want him to also be a global citizen, so you can't only focus on values concerning your society, so you have to teach him character and values that are concerning the global society." (C2)

Activities

Students as well as the various adult participants discussed the activities that should be included in the programme to teach learners virtues through role models. Two focus groups suggested sports, and two focus groups mentioned competitions, other activities the students brought up were field trips and real role models coming into the school, as well as writing and discussions. The most mentioned activities by adult participants are stories with five mentions, followed by real role models and projects with four and role-playing with three. Other activity examples include discussions, drama and journaling.

Role Models

To explore what kind of role models should be used in a character education programme, the student focus groups were asked who their role models were and what kind of role models they would prefer in a school setting. Participants in all three focus groups mentioned a family member, with parents being the most popular choice, and their reasons were mostly about their role models' character or how they teach them about life.

"My moral role models are my elder cousins and brother. They show me all difficulties I can go through when I grow up, they give me examples about how I can live life, also they give me advice about what to do and what not to do. My role models will also be my parents because they teach me what to do and how to take care of yourself." (S1)

"Our moms and dads...Cause like, uh, they make things right, and we need to, like, make the same things right." (S3)

Two focus groups, S1 and S3, mentioned religious role models, particularly Prophet Muhammed. Focus group S3 mentioned that they preferred real role models to fictional ones, while focus groups S2 and S3 supported the idea of having famous or known role models, as they mentioned role models such as Obama, Nelson Mandela and current famous singers. Participants in S1 disagreed with this, and argued they preferred role models they personally knew:

"You usually know the people around you, like you know what their character is, on TV you don't really know, if they're really good or if that's just like their outer look or what they're like inside." (S1)

The adult participants, however, chose a wider variety of role models with different criteria including, historical and present-day, or both; global, local or both; famous, not famous or both; religious, non-religious or both; and models with different job roles.
Historical role models were mentioned, but some believe it should be presented alongside present-day ones:
"Historical is important because it gives you a good foundation, but historical won't actually tell you what they've done because it's just a story in the end. So, you need to tie historical with someone who is actually living, the model." (P3)

"Yes definitely, because we can't detach ourselves from our history, especially the Islamic history and civilisation. So, I think there are very good role models, but we shouldn't only focus on past role models, we have to also focus on nowadays role models, that are existing now." (C2)

Local/global role models were brought up as some participants named role models with that characteristic while others discussed it as a concept. There were conflicting views as there were participants who prefer mainly local to make them more relatable in addition to loving people from their own community. However, others preferred mainly global models so as students are more open-minded can see morality on an international level. A few participants also mentioned the importance of the model not being associated with their religion.
"I think it should be definitely, global figures, I mean not tie it to religious or political view…Um, and it gives the child a wider perspective of morality. I mean to just think that the people I know from my background are good people and they are my role models, is ok, but to give them a bigger picture, is a much bigger lesson." (C4).

"I think therefore it is essential that this society, that somewhat looks to the West in some elements, retains the values that we hold dear here, but also have role models, key, identifiable role models who implement those values, in the classroom, in the school, within society." (C5).

The idea of the role models being mentors or proximal (i.e family members or friends) was repeated by some of the participants. It was seen that with mentors, learners can gain a deeper understanding when they see the context the role model is in, and that can only happen effectively with those they know around them. Several mentioned the importance of parents being the moral role models because that is what they see, and one participant mentioned peer-mentoring being an effective two-way learning model for the mentor and mentee.

"I would be cautious of risks. I think that role modelling is best served through, um, the adults they already have around them. I asked some students recently, just towards the end of term to write about, we were doing a project on heroes and you know out of a class of 14 students, I think maybe 7 or more chose their mother or their father." (T3)

"What can be done also, and this is one of the things that I implemented in, in, the previous school where I used to work in my country, a peer-mentoring programme...So that kid, from a senior class, is, we are helping him, basically we are helping both of them, you know?"(T4)

Participants also mentioned the importance of exposing a variety of role models to the students in the programme for reasons such as providing them a broader perspective, to include different learners and to show different values based on various situations:

"So, what I did is I created a hybrid role model…none existent of course, in real life, (but) like, that kind of inspires me to take bits and pieces from each one in different areas." (P5)

"Um, so I think there should be a mix because this is what the students are going to be, they're going to be a mix of you know different professions, and different people when they grow up, so they need to see different role models in different aspects." (C2)

"I think it needs to be diversified, so it doesn't only cover one certain background…embrace on the common, on humanity, on the humanity we have in common." (C3)

Lastly, several of the participants who discussed types of role models, mentioned known or famous ones who can be used in schools, but two participants, similar to focus group S1, suggested unknown role models could be more effective.

"(So) I think something around oral history, something about like knowing, um, (not just) celebrities, (that's enough, there's an excess in) social media and (whatnot, that's enough)." (P5)

"I would honestly look into low-profile figures who have accomplished things, uh, (like) I want to emphasise the message to people, it's not the number of likes, and it's not the number of followers you have, it's the impact you leave on yourself and your community." (C3)

Throughout all the themes there was one underlying common thought between most of the participants, and that was religion. This was not placed as a theme on its own because it is included as one of the sub-categories to answer RQ1, but the Prophet was mentioned as a religious role model by two focus groups, and several adult participants, with most explaining how that is their perfect role model. However, the importance of bringing other kinds of role models to support the learning process was also discussed by many.

"There is only one true role model which the Prophet (PBUH), after that everything is relative and you take from different role models for different things." (P4)

"Without, without even thinking about it The Prophet (PBUH)…and as a Muslim, I'd like to reflect whatever I am having in my daily life to whatever God told us, or whatever God has sent us messages through his prophets." (T1)

"And if those role models epitomise aspects of the Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) that's good, however, if they also epitomise and can show how navigate in modernity, the society, fast changing world that we live in now, that helps." (C6)

Although this is still an ongoing analysis, the findings so far have provided insight on various elements on how a role-modelling character education programme can be developed in Saudi

Arabia, and the following discussion section will examine how the findings relate to existing studies and can be used for future research.

Discussion

The findings of this paper intend to start answering the research question: *How should an effective role-modelling character education programme be developed in Saudi Arabia?* The main theme that emerged under this umbrella is, *development*, and it presents the details of how such a programme can be created, including its structure, pedagogy and content. The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues (2017) has created a framework for character education, which Osman (2019) previously based a role-modelling character education on. However, it seems in Saudi Arabia it cannot be easily structured in this way, as many participants had conflicting views on this. Even though it is thought to be significant, there were varying opinions on whether it should be taught as a separate programme, simply caught based on rising situations or taught within academic subjects. The reasons for the differing opinions was not due to the lack of belief in the programme but rather because of the current workload and pedagogy in school systems, supporting Alharbi's point on how Islamic and Arabic studies takes over more than fifty percent of the curriculum and the methods in which it is taught is a traditional and teacher-led manner, therefore decreasing its efficacy (2017).

Some of the findings' categories are interlinked and support each other, as it seems the opinions on *methods*, under the *pedagogy* category, and *activities*, under the *content* category, are based on the same reasons. Students in the focus groups and the adult participants emphasised the importance of the learners not only taking charge of their learning, but being active through practical activities, which opposes how they are taught other subjects such as social studies. The participants supported this point further by choosing activities such as, projects, sports, volunteering, field trips, journaling and role-playing/drama, which are all based on these pedagogical methods. This could explain the lack of efficacy in the role-modelling character education programme previously created by the present author (Osman, 2019), because even though many of the activities were student-led and included discussions, learners were expected to read, write and reflect rather than conduct more active or project-based activities.

The participants' views on the teachers teaching virtues coordinates with previous studies (Fallona, 2000; Sanderse, 2012; Rose, 2004; Kindeberg, 2013) since teachers are expected to acquire or at least act as role models with these values while teaching. In addition, they believed an interest in the children's character development that goes beyond the academic subject is required for effective moral development. The findings also seem to concur with the previous empirical studies on who adolescents choose to be their role models (Bucher, 1998; Bricheno & Thornton, 2007; Hendry, et al., 1992; Hurd, Zimmerman & Xue 2008; Ruggeri et al., 2018; and Yancey et al., 2011), as both focus groups and adult participants chose close, proximal role models, particularly family members and/or mentors. Furthermore, participants found a variety of role models could be effective, but an emphasis on present-day role models was included mainly due to today's fast-changing times. The region is somewhat aware of the need of a variety of models, as historical and religious models are already included in schools, but they have created an additional national role-modelling campaign based on communal and proximal

role models, including parents and teachers. Even so, the study's participants still support Alharbi's arguments (2017) in that, what is lacking are international role models so as learners gain a wider perspective of morality and learn more global character skills, in addition to an emphasis on virtues to help morally development.

Limitations and Future Research

There are several considerations to this study, firstly because it is still an ongoing analysis, but also due to the population sample and limited resources. The participants were from one city in the region, Jeddah, and although it includes experiences from different schools they were all within somewhat similar socioeconomic statuses due to accessibility issues. Furthermore, as it is an individual doctoral study, only one researcher collated and analysed the data. However, the findings thus far can still provide insight on how such a programme could be developed to increase its efficacy, which can be used as an initial starting point for future researchers interested in measuring its impact on moral development or for other educators looking into creating a similar programme.

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Appendix

Table 1. Participant information

Group	Key Informant	Characteristics				
		Age	**Gender**	**Local/Expat**	**School**	**Job**
Student Focus Groups	S1	10-13	3 F 1 M	Expat	Embassy	N/A
	S2	11-12	4 M	Local	Private International	N/A
	S3	10-11	7 F	Mix	Private International	N/A
Parents	P1	40-49	F	Expat	Embassy	Stay at home parent
	P2	40-49	F	Expat	Public	University administration
	P3	30-39	M	Local	Private International	Business owner
	P4	30-39	M	Expat	Embassy	University Lecturer
	P5	30-39	F	Local	Embassy and Private International	Life coach
	P6	40-49	F	Expat	Embassy and Private International	Life coach and University lecturer
Teachers	T1	30-39	F	Expat	Private International	Teacher
	T2	50-59	F	Local	Private national and Private international	Headteacher

	T3	50-59	F	Expat	Private national and Private international	Teacher
	T4	30-39	F	Expat	Previously private international	Used to be teacher Now therapist
	T5	50-59	F	Local	Private national and Private international	Headteacher
Consultants/ Curriculum developers	C1	50-59	F	Local	Mainly private	Curriculum developer/ Parent coach
	C2	30-39	F	Local	Mainly private	Education consultant
	C3	30-39	F	Local	Mainly private	Education consultant
	C4	30-39	F	Local	Private and public	
	C5	50-59	M	Expat	Private national school	Education consultant
	C6	40-49	F	Local	Own centre	

Flowchart 1. Predetermined themes

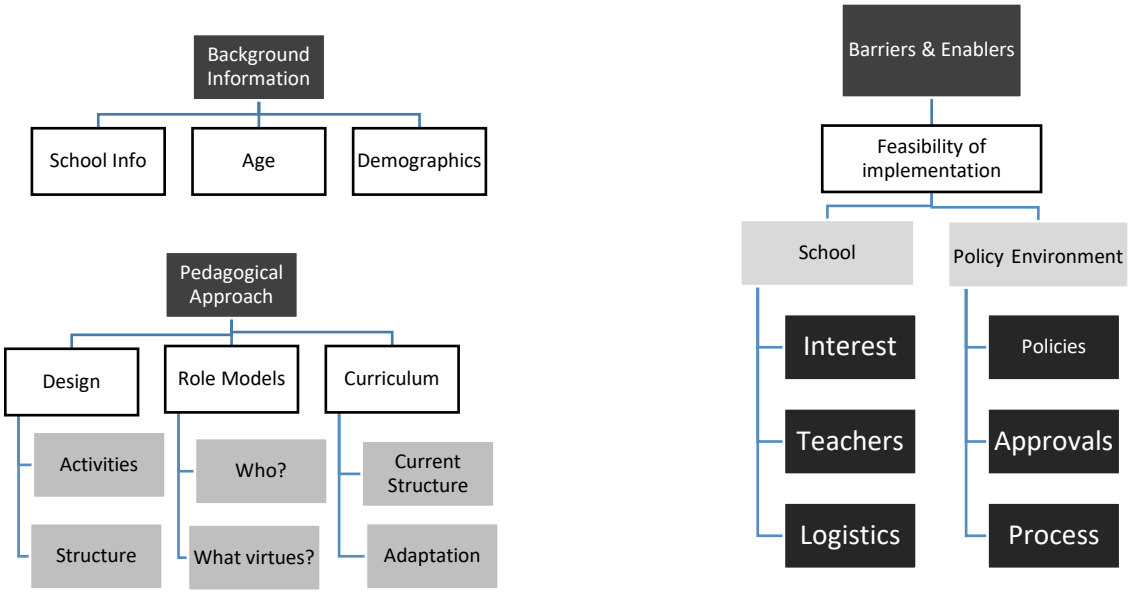

Table 2. Example of coding process

Theme	**Development**						
Category	**Content**			**Pedagogy**		**Structure**	
Sub-category	**Virtues**	**Role models**	**Activities**	**Teachers**	**Methods**	**Time**	**Curriculum**
	Kindness	Variety	Stories	Passionate	Student-led	Lesson duration	Whole School
	Honesty	Historical	Field trips	Trained	Project-based	Programme duration	Taught (separate programme)
	Hard Work	Modern	Sports	Role Models	Action-based		Caught (situational)
	Self-love	Local	Competition		Mentoring		Embedded within academic subjects
	Self-actualisation	International	Volunteering/social service				
Codes	Empathy	Known	Discussion				

	Responsibility	Unknown					
	Citizenship						
	Faith						
	Commitment						

Table 3. Coded quotes

Participant	Quotes	Codes	Sub-category	Category	Theme
P3	Self-love is another one, you know, because society is very harsh on themselves, so self-love is important.	Self-love	Virtue	Content	Development
C2	We can't detach ourselves from our history, especially the Islamic history and civilisation. So I think there are very good role models, but we shouldn't only focus on past role models, we have to also focus on nowaday role models, that are existing now.	Variety (Historical and modern)	Role Model	Content	Development
T3	Puts the student more in charge then they are governing what direction they choose to develop in, it doesn't have to be part of a herd mentality, which is what I think we are trying to get them away from.	Student-led	Methods	Pedagogy	Development