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**A Case Study of the Implementation of an Islamic Social Emotional
Learning Programme in a Public School in Qatar**

By

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**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Education**

**University of Warwick,
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List of Abbreviations

WEMWBS	Warwick- Edinburgh Mental Well-being scale
SEL	Social Emotional Learning
WHO	World Health Organization
QNV	Qatar National Vision
MOE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
PHCC	Primary Health Care Corporation
HMC	Hamad Medical Corporation
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
SAFE	Sequenced, Active, Focused and Explicit
SWB	Subjective Wellbeing
PERMA	Positive emotions Engagement, Relationships Meaning Accomplishment
PWB	Psychological Wellbeing
PYD	Positive Youth Development
CASEL	Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
SEAL	Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning

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Declaration

This thesis has not been submitted previously for a PhD at any University. To the best of my knowledge, this thesis does not contain previously published materials or written by another person except where due references are mentioned in the thesis.

Abstract

This thesis has evaluated the impact of a social emotional learning intervention (SEL) on students' wellbeing and classroom behaviours. This single embedded evaluative case study designed research is focused on evaluating the impact of the SEL programme on a public preparatory school for girls in Qatar. The study involved three main sequential stages. The first stage involved a cluster randomized controlled trial (RCT) of pre-assessment of students' mental wellbeing level using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being scale (WEMWBS) for an intervention ($n=81$) and a control group ($n=82$) of students aged (13-15) years. Then, the intervention group was provided with the programme's sessions on a weekly basis. Each session was conducted once a week over one hour. The second stage involved assessing students' wellbeing levels using the WEMWBS scale in both groups to compare and evaluate the impact of the social emotional intervention. This stage was followed by the third stage, in which interviews were conducted with students, teachers and social staff to evaluate the impact of the programme based on their perceptions and experiences. Furthermore, during each session, observation was conducted to evaluate and understand the programme's dynamics, content, instructional approaches and students' engagement. This observation was conducted to identify factors that can hinder or facilitate the SEL programme's success in school settings. An Effect Size calculations ($EF = 0.60$) revealed that social emotional intervention in this study had increased students' wellbeing levels in the intervention group when compared to the control group. In addition, this study highlights the importance of looking at the SEL intervention as an integrated process in which the content of the programme, the approaches of implementation, the instructor's characteristics and the study's context can facilitate or hinder the programme's success.

CHAPTER ONE,
Introduction
Thesis Background and Structure

Introduction

This thesis presents the findings of an in-depth case study that evaluated how a practitioner-designed social emotional learning (SEL) programme works within a preparatory public school setting in Qatar. Specifically, this investigation was conducted to evaluate the impact of the SEL programme on students' wellbeing, academic performance and classroom behaviours. In addition, the aim was to identify factors that hinder or facilitate the effectiveness of one SEL programme's implementation. However, investigating the impact of SEL intervention on students' academic performance was not possible due to the exceptional circumstances associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. Since the study was focused on one school to gather students, teacher and school staff experiences and voices, a single, embedded evaluative case study design was deemed most suited to assess the impact of the SEL programme in a Qatari schooling setting. This in-depth investigation of the SEL intervention is the first of its type in Qatar and can facilitate a better, deeper and holistic understanding of how SEL interventions work in the field, the impact on students' mental wellbeing and the related factors that can facilitate or hinder the programme's success.

This chapter sets the scene for my study by providing an overview of its nature, design and scope. This discussion includes the study's background, significance, researcher's role, context, and research structure. Firstly, the background of this study is discussed based on my personal experience and the previous empirical studies that investigated the impact of social emotional interventions worldwide. Secondly, I provide an overview of the study's context (the Qatari environment), the main characteristics of the Qatari community and the significance of this study within the Qatari educational context. In particular, I provide information about the Qatari settings, culture, family structure, religious values, educational system and mental wellbeing initiatives. Then, I discuss the outline of the SEL programme that was implemented within this study and the structure of the thesis noting the main points and a short description of each chapter of the thesis.

Background of the study

This study was initially designed to explore how a social emotional learning (SEL) programme works in a Qatari school setting and its impact on students' well-being, classroom behaviours, and academic performance. However, after the pandemic of Covid-19, investigating the impact of the programme on students' academic performance was not

possible. Therefore, the study is focused on evaluating how a specific SEL intervention works in schools settings and impact students' mental wellbeing. Furthermore, this study aims to explore the impact of SEL interventions based on students', teachers' and other school staff's perspectives. Thus, this study aims to achieve a deeper understanding of how SEL interventions work in the field, the impact on students' mental wellbeing and factors that contribute or hinder the success of these SEL interventions.

In recent years within the continuously changing society, preparing active, successful and passionate students to participate in their countries' development and excel in different fields is essential. To achieve this, educational institutions and schools need to provide students with learning opportunities that educate their hearts as well as minds, treat them as whole persons to maximize self-identify and self-confidence, and provide them with long-lasting life skills. In this regard, the educational history reveals that schools were established as much for moral, social and values-based reasons as for academic performance (Noddings, 2005). In addition, each student is a threefold human being, body, soul, and spirit, and all three dimensions need to be addressed to develop student capacities to perceive their inner and outer world (Easton, 1997). Therefore, there is a need to think of schools as educational context that serve students' social, emotional and mental needs alongside their academic performance.

Preparing students for life success requires broad and balanced educational opportunities that ensure their mastery of essential academic skills and prepare them to enter adulthood with the best mental health (Noddings, 2005). Mental health issues can impact anyone, anywhere and at any stage of life. In this regard, the World Health Organization (WHO) emphasizes that 1 in 5 children and adolescents can be affected by a mental disorder (Kessler and Üstün, 2004). These issues of mental health can result in negative consequences on the social and economic status of countries. To overcome these obstacles, serious commitments to invest in mental health services and social emotional interventions are needed.

Mental wellbeing is a key national outcome and a fundamental part of being a healthy and resilient individual. The concept of mental health cannot be separated from overall health, which was defined by the World Health Organization Constitution of 1946 as a state of *complete physical, mental and social well-being* and not merely the absence of disease or injury (Kessler and Üstün, 2004). More recent definitions of mental wellbeing have gone on

to describe mental health as *a resource for good living* and as an essential asset for an individual's social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities (Holte, 2014). Furthermore, the phrase 'there is no health without mental health' conveys clearly this positive sense and importance of mental health (Adamson, 2007).

Approaching the literature reveals that the concept of mental wellbeing is defined interchangeably with the concepts of mental health, positive mental health or wellbeing. These definitions, concepts and models are discussed in details in the second chapter of this thesis to explore the different dimensions of mental wellbeing. The focus of this study is on the concept of mental health as a concept related to *mental wellbeing*. In general, mental wellbeing is identified in the literature within two main dimensions; *the hedonic* and *the eudemonic*. The hedonic dimension refers to an individual's feelings, emotions, and life satisfaction levels that contribute to his/her positive thinking and happiness. In contrast, the eudemonic dimension refers to an individual's purpose in life, ability to function, achievement, and fulfilment of different life goals. Mental health and wellbeing according to The World Health Organization (WHO) is more than the absence of mental illness; it is an individual's behaviours, ability to work productively and to contribute successfully to their community (Kessler and Üstün, 2004). Jenkins et al. (2001) define mental wellbeing as an individual's own positive sense of self, belief in own worth and dignity of others, the ability to communicate, sustain and manage different life aspects.

From another perspective, mental health can be identified as individuals' ability to maintain an emotional status that enables them to cope with life challenges, survive pain, overcome disappointment and enjoy life (Bauer and Park, 2010). From this perspective, wellbeing is identified through the lens of *resilience* that facilitates the adaptation to the challenges associated with stressful experiences (Coutu, 2002). Researchers have shown that resilience is a key factor in an individual's higher wellbeing levels. As I am trying to evaluate the impact of the SEL programme on students' mental wellbeing within this study, the focus is on the concept of wellbeing that encompasses *the hedonic and eudemonic* dimensions of wellbeing. Adapting this definition aims to capture the general framework of an individual's positive feeling and good functioning. The background of this definition, approaches of assessment and the related empirical studies are discussed in the second chapter of this thesis.

Wellbeing of Adolescents

Adolescence is a critical time of formative growth to achieve human potential and a fascinating period of profound emotional and biological changes. This stage of life is marked by both vulnerability and opportunity (Holte et al., 2014). The focus of this study is on the challenging aspects of adolescents' stage of life that might positively or negatively impact their mental wellbeing levels. As adolescents develop through this stage, they start searching for engagement beyond their families, determining their future aims and looking for a greater sense of place in the world. The decisions they make, the relationships they maintain, targets they set and habits they form; can determine their mental wellbeing and success in the future (Adamson, 2007). Thus, investments in adolescent mental wellbeing promotion and prevention are therefore critical and a key factor to sustainable development.

Each individual needs to maintain the capacity and inner ability to face different problems, challenges and difficulties that can occur at any stage of life. Specifically, an individual's ability to solve any issue is "an essential ingredient to adequate adjustment in childhood, adolescence and across one's life span" (Kendall and Kendall 2011, p.4). Through the transition period from childhood to young youth, adolescents might be faced with different issues of managing emotions, adjustment to changes and alteration in relations with family and friends. Not all adolescents undergo these transitions in the same way or with the same speed; therefore, adolescents' positive mental wellbeing development is related to their abilities to adjust to the changes that involve biological, psychological, and societal factors (Lerner, 2004).

Adolescents with poor mental health are more likely to have poor educational performance, physical health, social relations and mental health problems that often persist into adulthood (Holte, 2014; Adamson, 2007; Seligman, 2011). According to Kendall and Kendall (2011), social cognitive thinking skills and strategies can be provided to students through planned and focused interventions to maximize their problem-solving skills and contribute to changing their distorted thinking. Mental health promotion aims to *promote* mental wellbeing levels and to *reduce* the prevalence of mental health problems. Furthermore, a growing body of literature reveals that adolescents can experience alarming elevated rates of depression, anxiety and different mental wellbeing issues, which emphasizes the need for SEL programmes in schools' settings (Luthar and Becker, 2002; Lepper, Corpus, and Iyengar

2005). In response to the importance of mental health promotion, different models started to emerge as risk reduction and preventive approaches.

For instance, Mrazek and Haggerty (1994) endorsed the *risk reduction model* to guide mental health preventive intervention by identifying common mental disorders risk factors. In this regard, Barry et al. (2019) emphasized the importance of risk reduction models in decreasing the prevalence of mental wellbeing issues. This model involves the enhancement of protective factors to reduce the chances of mental health issue. These approaches were empirically reviewed and revealed strong evidence of the impact of preventive intervention on both the reduction of the mental health risk factors and the enhancement of protective factors.

While the traditional risk reduction approaches are focused on reducing symptoms and risks of mental issues, the *protective approaches* focus on enhancing positive mental wellbeing competencies. This approach represents a shift from treatments of mental disorder to building individuals' capacities and strengths of emotional, social and behavioural skills. Thus, the objective of protective and positive development approaches is to enhance individuals' inner potentials. When individuals are aware of their inner strengths and abilities, they will feel more efficient, capable and competent to achieve in their life (Weissberg et al., 1991). As a result, enhancing social emotional skills and resilience competencies can promote mental wellbeing levels for the population of individuals as a whole rather than focusing on specific individuals with specific mental issues (Kessler and Üstün, 2004). These approaches with the empirical findings are discussed in detail in the third chapter of this thesis.

Personal statement of interest

From a personal perspective, I always believed that Social Emotional Learning is an important factor that can support students' needs in schools. The idea of this research has been developed over the past five years. I am a mother of five; three of them are between the ages of 10-17. Raising kids at this age provoked my thinking on the importance of school-based programmes' that can help them through their transition of this critical period of life. Adolescents at this age are faced with many social, developmental and academic challenges that might result in moodiness, demotivation and different episodes of anxiety and anger. In order to serve adolescents' needs at this stage, effective collaboration between schools and parents is needed to achieve successful outcomes. One of my daughters was part of a one-day

social emotional learning workshop within her school in Qatar. When she accomplished this workshop, she was thrilled and satisfied in a way that she was happy and willing to participate in any future programmes. She mentioned how the positive thinking ideas provided by the instructor had a positive impact on her level of self-awareness, relationships with others and her future planning.

My daughter's experience was the first step for me to start exploring opportunities on how to emphasise the importance of SEL programmes in schools in Qatar. The first step for me as a researcher was to join a Diploma and a Masters programme at Qatar University to develop a deep understanding of the Qatari schools' systems, educational objectives and curriculum content to explore the availability of any extra curricula that involve social and emotional competencies. Later, and as part of my Masters thesis, I developed action research in a public school in Qatar to explore instructors' practices within school settings. This action research involved a small-scale study to explore the context of public schools in Qatar and the school staff's awareness levels of the importance of SEL programmes for promoting students' wellbeing and academic performance. The results of this exploratory study revealed that SEL programmes are definitely needed in schools; however, no specific programmes are adapted, designed or implemented within the Qatari school contexts.

In order to prepare for this PhD research, I conducted a pilot study that involved three main components; a trial of the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) with 30 students aged 13-15, informal interviews with three educational staff members and a literature review to determine the available studies in Qatar and the Gulf. Students' feedback on the WEMWBS scale revealed that the scale was clear, easy to understand and can determine students' self-reported wellbeing levels. The results of the WEMEBS piloting are discussed in chapter 4. The staff interviews revealed the need for extracurricular activities that address students' social emotional skills in Qatari schools. Furthermore, the school staff mentioned that they would support any social emotional interventions that promote their students' mental wellbeing, academic performance and classroom behaviours.

The literature review revealed a significant lack of studies on SEL programmes and interventions in the Gulf area and in Qatar specifically. In addition, only one small scale study was conducted in Qatar to explore the impact of a social emotional lesson on students' emotional competencies (Al-Mansoori, Kayan-Fadlelmula and Abdeen, 2017). Furthermore,

worldwide, the different published papers on SEL interventions are focused on the programme's elements or outcomes without identifying in an integrated approach other factors that might contribute or hinder the effectiveness of the implementation and outcomes of these programmes. The results of the pilot study and the literature review enabled me to design a research project that focuses on a case study approach on the implementation of a SEL programme in a public school in Qatar to explore the programme's implementation process, factors that influence the effectiveness of the programmes, and the effects on students' well-being and classroom behaviours.

The aim was to use the case study approach as a *lens* to view the SEL programme's implementation from different perspectives to gain a deeper understanding of what can work in real-life settings. In addition, exploring how these programmes work from students, teachers and social specialists' perspectives and experiences can provide rich information and insights of how to develop, improve and implement those programmes effectively in similar settings. The feedback from students and teachers' interviews, the results of the well-being scale before and after the programme and the outcomes of the observational data can be combined together to give a triangulated whole view of the SEL programme in schools.

The Context of Qatar

Qatar is a peninsula located in the Middle East in the Arabian Gulf with a population of 2,833,882 (Afifi, 2020). The majority of the population are non-Qataris (85%) compared to the minority (15%) of Qatari nationals. Non-Qatari expatriates are either long-time residents born and raised in Qatar or short-time residents with temporary job contracts. The majority of non-Qatari expatriates are single workers, while the minority come as families to live in Qatar. The religion of all Qatari nationals is Islam and Arabic is the first language of the country. In addition, the Qatari constitution is based on Islamic concepts. Qatar has the highest tremendous growth in social, education, economic and health in the Middle East over the last twelve years (Ghuloum, 2020). This rapid economic growth makes Qatar the *wealthiest* country in the world, and that is the reason for the luxurious lifestyle there.

In the Qatari context, the holiest and the most important source of information is the Qur'an. All Qataris are Muslims and believe that the Qur'an contains all the major Islamic regulations about human life in this life and the hereafter. Therefore, Islam is the official religion of the

State of Qatar and the Islamic Law (Sharia) is the principal source of legislation. Sharia is the religious law forming part of the Islamic tradition, derived from the religious precepts of Islam and is based on the interpretations of the Islamic scriptures, particularly the Qur'an and the Hadith. The Islamic Sharia is based on "absolute justice and ethics and therefore the good faith in Islamic sharia is based on the parties' intentions to honor the Sharia orders and boundaries through the honesty and loyalty in their actions" (Al Mulla, 2017, p.117).

According to the Qatari Constitution, article one, "Qatar is an independent sovereign Arab State. Its religion is Islam and the Shari'a Law shall be the principal source of its legislation. Its political system is democratic. The Arabic Language shall be its official language. The people of Qatar are a part of the Arab nation". (The Permanent Constitution of the State of Qatar ,2004, p.3). This Constitution of Qatar establishes the main foundations of the community, accomplishes the individuals' participation in decision-making and guarantees their rights and freedoms (Ahmed, 2018). Furthermore, this Constitution includes 150 articles that regulate all aspect of life in the country pertaining to rights, duties, preserving the family, provide educational opportunities, foster public health and e ensuring the public welfare (Hamdan, 2012).

The family has a significant role in children and adolescents' development in Qatar. The social structure of the family in Qatar and the Arabic Islamic countries are different from the West. Social family relations form a significant dimension of Qatari society. The bigger families will meet at least once a week with separate areas for male and female's gatherings. Older grandparents are highly respected and being taken care of by different family members. Adolescents will not leave their family home unless they get married or are going to pursue their studies abroad. Qatari families have their own housekeepers, drivers and baby sitters to assist in the everyday responsibilities.

These high levels of socioeconomic and educational status are not necessarily the actual predictor of individuals' wellbeing levels; rather, mental issues are common in all societies. Diener and Biswas-Diener (2002) revealed in their study of the relationship between social class and mental wellbeing that, although poorer nations were less happy compared to the richer nations, the gain in wealth did not increase individuals' level of wellbeing. Therefore, being the wealthiest country in the world does not mean that mental wellbeing issues are evident in Qatari society. According to the results of a recent study on the prevalence of

mental illness in Qatar, one-fourth of individuals attending the primary health care centres presented at least one type of mental disorder and were at high risk of mental illness (Ghuloum et al., 2011). Furthermore, children and adolescents are exposed to foreign concepts while trying to adhere to their societal and religious roots. Therefore, for this generation in Qatar, the impact of psychological wellbeing and mental health of the future generations is unknown (Abdel-Khalek, 2014).

The government in Qatar aims to achieve clear plans, vision and agendas mainly in the healthcare, sport and education sectors (Rahman, 2014). The increasing emphasis on the importance of mental wellbeing promotion for children and adolescents is a national priority in Qatar. The *Qatar National Vision* (Tan, Al-Khalaqi and Al-Khulaifi, 2014) inspires the government-led development policies. This vision is based on four main developmental pillars; human, social, economic, and environmental. One of the main pillars of Qatar National Vision (2030) is the human social development of just, capable, well-developed, caring and successful society members based on Islamic moral standards. The focus of this objective is to expand youth capabilities by providing them with educational, physical and mental health opportunities and services that promote their inner abilities, wellbeing and future achievements.

Mental wellbeing services in Qatar

While emphasizing the importance of national identity, morals, culture, heritage, and Islamic values within these objectives, Qatar is striving to achieve a harmony between the rapid economic growths and social development within the Islamic and cultural values. Therefore, Qatar took multiple reforms in the government systems to improve students' outcomes. The first *Qatar National Mental Health Strategy* was initiated in 2013-2018 with the title of 'changing minds, changing lives' and aimed to provide the best mental health services. The second *National Health Strategy* was initiated in 2018-2022 to emphasize the importance of mental health and wellbeing's promotion in Qatar. Driven by the National Health Strategy and in partnership with the Ministry of Public Health, specialized mental health care and treatment services for mental health were designed and provided through the Psychiatry Hospital in Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC). Furthermore, these services are provided by the Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) centres in an integrated approach that

involves psychologists and psychiatrists to support patients with the needed treatments, therapies and resources that promote their mental health conditions.

In relation, the health cluster in Qatar initiated specialized multi-disciplinary child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) to provide specific services for children and adolescents up to the age of 18. These services include emotional wellbeing and mental health support for young individuals, their families and their careers. These services are provided upon receiving a referral from government primary health care centres, private doctors and school psychologists based on any observed risks and needs. Specialized treatments are tailored and individualized based on each child's needs and are offered outside of the hospital setting in an environment conducive to health and wellbeing for children and young individuals who do not require inpatient care. The services include; Parenting groups, Solution focused brief therapy, Individual therapy, Psychiatric and Psychotherapeutic intervention, Cognitive behavioural therapy, counselling, and, where necessary, medication (Goloum, 2020).

Despite the efforts undertaken by the Qatari government to promote mental health, issues of stigma represent one of the main challenges that prevent individuals from seeking medical advice regarding their mental issues (Ghuloum et al., 2011; Rahman, 2014). Stigma in mental illness can be described as a cluster of negative attitudes and beliefs that motivate fear, rejection, avoidance and discrimination against people who have mental illnesses (Rahman, 2014). These issues are related to the “lack of awareness of the mental health field and the view that the current international understanding of mental health is rooted in the Western assumption of illness” (Ghuloum, 2020, viii). In response to these challenges, the Qatari government is implementing ongoing efforts to enhance individuals' awareness of the importance of mental health, warning signs and approaches of seeking medical advice.

One of these initiatives is conducted in accordance with the World Health Organization (WHO) each year on the World Mental Health Day on the 10th of October. This awareness campaign is organized by the different Qatari's health organizations, including HMC, PHCC, Medical Commission centres, Qatar University and other private health care and educational institutions in Qatar. This campaign includes virtual activities designed to increase the awareness of mental health issues, decrease the stigma levels and encourage individuals to seek counselling services to receive the appropriate advice and treatments. Furthermore, the

Ministry of Public Health and in collaboration with the different health clusters in Qatar launched a help line that can be accessed every day by the public to support individuals with mental health issues. This review of the different services in the Qatari context reveals that the focus of these services and initiatives are on the risk-reduction and treatment of mental health issues. These results indicate the need for preventive approaches that promote individuals' inner capacities, abilities and emotional skills to protect them from future mental issues.

The educational system in Qatar

The first schools in Qatar were religiously based on Quranic values education. Young boys used to learn to recite the Quran to gain the fundamental Arabic literacy skills, values and morals. In 1952, the first elementary school for boys, followed by schools for girls were initiated in Qatar. This initiative was the first step in the development of the educational system in Qatar. By the 1980s, the Ministry of Education was established and the educational system in Qatar was quite well developed (Brewer et al., 2007). In 2001 Qatar's educational reform *Education for a New Era* was initiated to develop the quality of teaching and learning process at all schooling stages, and since that time, the educational system in Qatar has grown vastly (Brewer et al., 2007).

Education is one of the most critical pillars in Qatar's vision to achieve a diversified and knowledge-based economy and a prosperous future for all citizens. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOE) is the government entity that supports, manages and regulates education in Qatar. The MOE aims to achieve a creative, inspiring and effective range of educational opportunities in line with the national values. It also needs to produce independent, confident, and self-reliant critical thinkers capable of achieving sustainable development in Qatar. Within these objectives, Qatar is committed to continuous improvement in the educational systems by incorporating the best practices and standards from around the world; while ensuring that these improvements are compatible with Qatari values and culture. These services include a full array of K-12 public and private schools and high-quality institutions of higher education.

Every Qatari citizen has the right to public education that is compulsory and free. The MOE offers 208 public schools that serve more than 124,600 students; and more than 310 private

schools that serve approximately 200,000 students (Zellman, Constant and Goldman, 2011). The private schools' curriculum is designed to serve a variety of non-Qataris nationalities based on their countries' curricula. The public (or government) schools are designed specifically for Qatari nationals and might accept non-Qatari students in specific cases if their parents are working for the government sectors. Students spend 12 years in public school, divided into several stages. After going through the pre-school or kindergarten stage, students move to the primary stage at the age of 6 that lasts for six years. The primary stage includes co-educational schools, boys' schools and girls' schools. Second is the preparatory stage that lasts from seventh grade to ninth grade. Then students will move to the secondary stage from the tenth grade to the twelfth grade. After completing 12 years at schools, student in Qatar can join the university level.

The curriculum in the public schools is based on the Qatari national curriculum. All public schools in Qatar are committed to teaching mathematics, science, Arabic and English languages, Qatari history and Islamic education. Furthermore, public schools provide specialized services for students with special needs as well as gifted and talented students. The public schools in Qatar follow the Ministry of Education and Higher Education curriculum, while the private schools follow the curriculums in accordance with the needs of the expatriate communities living in Qatar (Zellman, Constant and Goldman, 2011). The public *preparatory* schools in Qatar follow a standard academic curriculum for the duration of 3 years. Students aged 13-15 years attend grades from 7-9. Schools in Qatar are gender-segregated at all stages.

Female staff manage girls' schools, and male staff manage boys' schools. School staff consist of the management team, teachers and social department specialists. The latter team involve psychologists and sociologists to manage students' behavioural, attendance and emotional issues. Therefore, the role of the sociologists in the Qatari schools are different from the role of sociologists in different Western contexts. When teachers notice a specific issue with students' classroom behaviours or with their peers, they raise this issue to the sociologist to advise students verbally or by writing to their parents. In addition, if the sociologists notice issues related to students' emotional and psychological needs, they refer them to the school psychologist to deal with the case. Thus, the sociologist's role in the Qatari schools is similar to the role of students' counsellor. The psychologist will assess the referred case, try to provide the needed support or communicate with parents. In case of complicated mental

health issues, the psychologist will refer students to the primary health centres to obtain the appropriate mental and emotional wellbeing support.

School issues in Qatar are different from issues in the West. The cultural and Islamic values are the guiding principles there. However, Qatari nationals are facing challenges “as they encounter expatriate values different to their own traditional norms” (Foody et al., 2017, p.2). In relation, the mix of the Qatari community that includes different nationalities in which students interact and learn from each other can have an impact on the cultural and traditional values that they are supposed to learn and practice. In addition, the rapid economic growth makes Qatar one of the wealthiest countries in the world, and that is the reason for the affluent lifestyle there. The majority of Qatari students have extravagant and luxurious lifestyles that enable them to get whatever they need without putting in great efforts. As such, many students might not be motivated to accomplish their studies because they already can have whatever they want. This includes only the Qatari students who have high salaries compared to the non-Qatari citizens.

In a report published by the UNICEF in 2013 on children and adolescents’ wellbeing in 29 rich countries, worrying results of behavioural issues that include physical fights, bullying and cigarette smoking were revealed (Brazier, 2017). Although no similar research or statistics exist for students’ well-being in Qatar, similar students’ educational and wellbeing issues can be assumed. Therefore, students might be faced with similar challenges that can negatively impact their emotional wellbeing and academic performance. According to a national survey conducted in Qatar to explore students’ perspectives of learning in the government school, 36% of the students reported that they feel bored at school and less motivated towards learning (Nasser, Cherif and Romanowski, 2011). In this regard, Alromaihi et al. (2016, p. 60) reported in their study that “the prevalence of health risk behaviours among secondary school students in Qatar was found to attain a relatively high level”. Furthermore, they reported that these risky behaviours are mainly related to physical school fights, unlicensed driving certificates and cigarette use. Therefore, Alromaihi et al. (2016) emphasized the need to increase secondary school students’ awareness of the impact of behavioural issues on their wellbeing and school performance through progressive school bases interventions.

These issues of being exposed to different cultural backgrounds combined with the very high level of lifestyle in Qatar (especially for Qatari nationals) form the basis of the main school related issues there. Therefore, students need social emotional programmes that improve their motivation to learn, respect to each other, and provide them with self-management techniques and different skills of how to be independent and successful in the future. Furthermore, as discussed earlier, despite the different initiatives and services in Qatar that target individuals at risk to provide the appropriate support and interventions, these approaches are not developed enough to address all students' needs in schools' settings. Moreover, worldwide, the policies of mental health and wellbeing are changing to move the focus from *treatment* to more *preventive* approaches that provide children and adolescents with skills to enable them to face different life challenges. These approaches are limited in Qatar, and this limitation represents the need for implementing SEL interventions, evaluate the outcomes and develop different future interventions that address students' social emotional needs.

Social emotional interventions

Preventive programmes are designed to focus on promoting protective skills and reducing risk factors that can decrease the probability of lower mental wellbeing levels (Kenny and Hage, 2009). This preventive approach aims to build individuals' strengths by increasing their positive inner development (Lerner et al., 2005). In relation, prevention approaches are focused on adolescents' positive development to promote their inner resources, improve their life- satisfaction levels and empower them to participate effectively in their societies (Lerner, 2001). Therefore, preventive SEL intervention can be considered as approaches of *empowering* students' inner abilities and skills to face different challenges. To achieve these objectives, many school-based interventions that address students' positive development and mental wellbeing started to be implemented, empirically evaluated and applied in different educational contexts. Social emotional learning (SEL) is one of the school-based interventions designed with specific objectives to promote students' wellbeing, academic performance and classroom behaviours. Types, designs, approaches of implementations and outcomes of SEL interventions are discussed in details in the third chapter of this thesis.

Many studies were conducted worldwide to assess, promote and emphasize the importance of SEL programmes in improving children and adolescents' social emotional competencies that

can support their positive development and mental wellbeing. Although research on the effectiveness of SEL interventions has been investigated in diverse countries with different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, very few studies have investigated the SEL intervention impact on children and adolescents from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). In addition, few studies were conducted in university settings, and only one study appeared in the literature review search that focuses on students' well-being in school settings in Qatar. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate how a social emotional learning intervention works in a Qatari school. The main question that guided this study was:

What impact does a social and emotional programme have on adolescent school pupils in a Qatari school?

This question was the basis for three sub-questions that guided the research process:

1. Would a social emotional programme in a Qatari girls' school improve students' wellbeing?
2. What is the impact of a social emotional programme from the teachers' and social staffs' perspectives in a Qatari girls' school?
3. What factors facilitated or hindered the implementation of a social and emotional programme in a Qatari girls' school?

Significance of the study

The importance of teaching social and emotional skills to serve students' emotional needs and promote their mental wellbeing has become apparent in different empirical studies. Schools are places where all children are expected to attend and to spend many hours of their life in. Therefore, schools represent the ideal setting to promote students' social and emotional learning skills and competencies. Students spend most of their times within school settings, interact with their peers and are exposed to different life experiences that might influence their level of wellbeing positively or negatively. When schools provide systematic programmes that focus on students' social and emotional skills; the incidence of negative behaviours are decreased, academic performance can be increased, quality of relationship with others can be enhanced, and as a result, levels of wellbeing will be improved (Payton et al.,2008; Durlak et al.,2011). Students with higher levels of wellbeing can maintain their

inner- abilities, positive emotions and relationships with others. As such, schools have crucial roles in addressing students' wellbeing.

School-based interventions that focus on students' mental wellbeing promotion have demonstrated a higher impact than interventions that focus on mental health problems (Wells, Barlow and Stewart-Brown, 2003). These interventions are designed with the attempt to integrate aspects of learning with the different dimensions of health (mental, behavioural, social), particularly in educational settings. The social and emotional learning (SEL) programme represents a very promising approach to reduce students' behavioural problems, promote their positive adjustment and enhance their academic performance (Diekstra and Gravesteyn 2008; Greenberg, 2004).

According to Elias et al (1997), social and emotional learning is a tool that empowers students to manage emotions, make good relationships with others, behave responsibly and make the right decisions. Enabling students to know more about themselves, improve self-confidence and avoid negative behaviours can be part of their life success. In relation, SEL programmes can work as an essential integrated component for schools' success by creating positive learning environments that improve students' social adjustment and academic performance (Payton et al., 2008). Thus, schools play an essential role in preparing caring, knowledgeable and responsible citizens who can positively contribute to the success of their countries (Elias et al., 1997). School-based interventions can empower students to be more confident, understand risks and opportunities, care about others, accept their differences and make their own decisions. These objectives can be achieved through systemic, well-structured and sustained SEL programmes within school settings that provide students with the opportunity to recognize their inner abilities, know their special skills and act upon ethical values. Thus, social emotional learning programmes can be considered as the *missing piece* that can support students' emotional needs and support schools to achieve more successful outcomes.

Although many studies have clearly highlighted the importance of schools as settings for social emotional intervention to promote students' mental wellbeing worldwide, there is still a lack in this aspect in the Qatari context. In addition, there is a paucity of empirical research on social emotional interventions targeting children and adolescents in Qatar. This research gap is problematic for three reasons: (1) The Qatari society is characterized by the

modernization and preservation of religious and cultural traditions, and with the rapid globalization, gaps between generations might develop. In addition (2) Second, different issues of mental health that might arise can negatively influence students' academic performance, relationships with others and the adaptation to their social norms and traditions. As a result, mental health issues that exert greater demands on the health care systems might emerge due to the increased burden on society. As a result, (3) the third issue is that this gap of research might hinder the actual needed efforts to promote students' mental wellbeing, what might work in the field and what actions is needed to be taken to improve current practices.

These three elements encapsulate the significance of the present study that focuses in particular, on the impact of implementing a social emotional learning programme on students' wellbeing and classroom behaviours. The study focuses on unpacking *how* SEL programmes work in the field and *what* are the related mental wellbeing outcomes. Furthermore, the study aims to understand how teachers and students reacted and interacted with the SEL programme and what the main results in relation to the literature are. The main sample of this study are middle school adolescent children who might experience a dramatic transformation associated with challenges and opportunities. Thus, this study will contribute to the knowledge of the real impact of a SEL intervention, how it works, and whether it can nurture and promote students' wellbeing. Furthermore, the importance of this study stems from the fact that providing adolescents with social and emotional support lies at the heart of the promotion of their wellbeing levels. As a result, this contribution to the body of knowledge can make better decisions regarding the implementation of social emotional interventions by highlighting cross-cultural evidence from the Arabic region in general and specifically in Qatar.

From another dimension, this study is focused on the SEL intervention as a whole process. The aim of this focus is to address the gap that was noticed in the wider literature. This gap is discussed in detail in the third chapter, in which different aspects of SEL interventions' designs, impact and implementation process are discussed. The main highlighted gap was the absence of discussing the SEL interventions as a completely integrated process. This process involves a description of the programme's content, the length of the implementation, the approaches of teaching, students' interactions, results based on different perceptions and characteristics of the programmes' instructors. Therefore, this case study is focused on the

impact, dynamics and fine-grained details of the SEL intervention to draw a detailed picture of implementing a SEL programme in a Qatari school setting.

Context of the study

This study was focused to evaluate the implementation process, the impact and the outcomes of a social emotional programme in a public school in Qatar. The aim was to explore and evaluate in an in-depth approach the SEL programme's impact from the participants' perspectives and the programme's dynamics to understand factors that might facilitate or hinder the SEL programme's success. In order to recruit a school, five preparatory public schools for girls were randomly selected and contacted during spring 2019, three schools accepted to participate in the programme, and one school was randomly selected to be part of the study. With the cultural and schools' management restrictions of allowing only female researchers in girls' schools and only male researchers in boys' schools for in-depth case studies, the focus on of this study was on a preparatory public school for girls. As this study is the first in-depth case study that explores SEL programme's intervention impact and process in Qatar, the outcomes can provide basis for more holistic future studies that involves girls and boys schools at different stages.

The participated school is a preparatory public school for girls in Qatar that includes students in grades 7-9. This school was selected because it represents one of the typical public Qatari schools that include Arabic speaking students with a majority of Qatari nationals. All staff there are females, and only female researchers are allowed to enter the school as per the Ministry of Education and Higher Education regulations. The school is located near the centre of Doha, the capital city of Qatar. The school management was motivated and looked forward to being part of the implementation of the *Positive Steps* programme in their school premises. In addition, the school management supported the idea of focusing on 2-3 classes of grade 7 to evaluate the impact on a specific group of students. The academic head teacher within this school attended the interview and mentioned the need for SEL programmes in schools and her full support for any data collection procedures I need throughout my research. The details of the school context are discussed in the methodology chapter.

The school year in Qatar consists of two terms. The first term starts in September and ends in December, and the second term starts in January and ends in June. The plan was to undertake

the data collection methods within four phases; the pre-intervention, within the intervention, immediately after the intervention and five months post-intervention. However, due to the pandemic of COVID19, conducting the last phase of the study was not possible. After receiving ethical approvals from the Ministry of Education and Higher education in Qatar, the University of Warwick, and the school's management, the study started in the selected school. The school's management also secured written consent from teachers, parents, and the students themselves. The first lesson was started on Tuesday, 10th of September 2019. Students were informed again that the participation is completely voluntary, and they could withdraw from the workshops at any time they wanted. Each session lasted 45 minutes, and the instructor mainly presented each session with the related activities and short videos.

The positive steps intervention

Reviewing the educational field of the social emotional initiatives reveals that there is a lack of SEL programmes in Qatar. In addition, and as part of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education's (MOE) regulations in Qatar, social emotional interventions are not allowed to be implemented in any school unless they are pre-approved by the Ministry of Education. In this regard, only two private educational centres in Qatar have initiated, designed and implemented social emotional programmes and were approved by the MOE. The first programme, *Qudurat* was initiated, implemented and distributed to limited schools by a charity in Qatar. Later, and due to the lack of funding, this programme was stopped.

The second programme, *Positive steps*, is a practitioner-designed programme provided by Maximize Educational centre in Qatar. This centre is approved by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Qatar and offers different courses to schools and students privately. These courses are provided to schools with charges depending on the time and the number of the requested sessions. The programme consists of 8-10 sessions or lessons (and can be delivered in either way depending on the school choice), and each lesson/session is designed with specific objectives that serve students' social and emotional needs. These sessions include subjects related to self-awareness, motivation, ambition, teamwork, respecting others, focusing on goals' settings, critical thinking, problem-solving, commitment, discipline, and making initiatives.

Before selecting this programme, I conducted an interview with the programme's instructor, the designer and developer of the positive steps programme. Furthermore, I conducted interviews with one student and one teacher from a school where one of the programme's sessions was delivered. The programme's instructor is a Qatari woman who has an educational background and a teaching experience of more than 15 years, and she designed this programme based on her experience and knowledge of the Qatari society. She has a bachelor and a master degree in educational leadership from Qatar University. She left teaching at public schools and started to work in a private educational centre. Within this centre, different courses are offered to students to serve their academic requirements. After working for one year in this centre, she decided to start developing sessions that serve students' emotional needs. Within those sessions, the instructor was trying to combine her experience with the Qatari community, schools and students to produce an effective programme that can positively impact students' wellbeing and social relations.

She designed the programme's sessions and activities based on Islamic religion and Qatari cultural and traditional values. This programme was one of the main and new initiatives of SEL programmes in Qatar. However, because the programme has been offered by a private educational centre, not all schools were willing to implement the programme. Thus, few schools were requesting the instructor to give one or two sessions of the programme to their students each year. According to the instructor, providing students with one or two sessions does not fulfil the programme's objectives as a whole. Furthermore, the instructor mentioned that the programme was delivered to many schools; however, schools selected only one to two sessions out of the eight original sessions, and no one had the opportunity to explore the impact of the full programme due to the limited sessions received. Therefore, she mentioned that providing 6-8 sessions to students within one semester is more effective to achieve better results in serving students' social and emotional needs. Furthermore, selecting, implementing and assessing a whole SEL programme within a public school context was one of the first studies to be conducted in Qatar.

The *Positive steps* is a school-based programme that aims to increase students' social emotional skills and overall positive mental well-being by translating Islamic concepts that deal with human happiness and life purpose into tools and skills that can be integrated into their daily lives. The programme's methods were designed based on student-centred, problem-solving, cooperative learning and discussion techniques to fulfil the aims towards

the development of cognitive and emotional skills. Furthermore, the programme's core components support the development of emotional regulation, problem-solving, positive relations and the capacity to regulate and maintain positive thinking.

The *Positive steps* programme is similar to other schools' interventions that aim to promote students' social emotional competencies, regulation and awareness of emotional capacity within an active, supportive and engaging school environment (Elias et al., 1997). The programme consists of sessions that impart virtues, skills and competencies that might be particularly influential on students' gratitude, compassion, self-realization and purpose in life. Each session is designed to be delivered through age-appropriate approaches that include real-life stories, discussions and activities over one hour. The programme is administered and facilitated by the Qatari programme's instructor, who designed the programme.

Each session starts with an introductory discussion to facilitate students' engagement with the new programme. Furthermore, each session starts with an initial icebreaker story to derive certain morals, lessons and virtues that guide the rest of the session. Stories are based on and adapted from cultural and religious texts and other literary work and are presented through multiple media tools such as pictures, drawings and short movies to build the required objective of the session. Each story or movie is supported by a deep explanation provided by the instructor. Then, a discussion to support students' own understanding, perception and retaining of the information is conducted after each session. PowerPoint presentations, complementary short clips, songs and real-life stories are used to deliver the objectives of each session. The programme's main objective is to guide students' emotions, inspire their actions and educate their hearts and minds with skills that can promote their mental wellbeing and academic performance.

The Positive steps programme includes a course of 8 sessions provided over one hour on a weekly basis. The sessions' titles are (1) Emotions Management and Self-realization (2) Taking Responsibility (3) Focusing on Empowering Interpretations (4) Purpose in life (5) Creating Meaningful relationships (6) Setting Goals (7) Spiritual life (8) Happiness and wellbeing. All the sessions are designed based on cultural, traditional and Islamic religious values in accordance with the Qatari community. Furthermore, each session is provided based on real-life stories, quotes from Qur'an, Islamic traditions and Qatari cultural concepts. The contents of each session are presented by PowerPoint, short video clips and activities related

to the subject of the session. In general, students are provided with skills of persistence, motivation and dedication to facilitate students' understanding of the importance of taking responsibility in their life.

In the first session, students are exposed to learning activities that describe *Emotions Management and Self-realization* skills. These skills facilitate students' understanding of the importance of realizing their inner worth, managing their emotions and learn how to overcome negative emotional events. In the second session of the positive steps programme, students learn the importance of *Taking Responsibility*. These responsibilities include managing their learning, emotions and all the tasks that they need to conduct in their daily life. Furthermore, this session encourages students to explore skills of taking initiatives and decision making. In the third session, Focusing on Empowering Interpretations, students will be provided with empowerment activities that involve subjects of empowerments, realizing their inner potential and recognizing that each one of them is a unique individual with special abilities and characteristics. Therefore, this session aims to improve students' self-confidence, self-awareness and self-acceptance. to improve their wellbeing levels.

Furthermore, as the programme session's progress, students will learn the concept of *Purpose in life*. Within this session, students will be provided with learning skills that enable them to realize the importance of having a target that they need to achieve in this life. These targets include academic achievements and personal improvements. In the fifth session, students will learn the importance of creating and maintaining meaningful relationships with others. In addition, students will learn the impact of positive relationships on an individual's health and wellbeing. Furthermore, this session includes information about the importance of accepting other's differences, respecting their needs and offering help to others.

The sixth session of *Goal's settings* is designed to allow students to explore the importance of planning, thinking of their future and work to achieve their goals. The seventh session, *Spiritual life* highlights the importance of spiritual, religious and cultural values in maintaining an individual's inner satisfaction, positive thinking and happiness. In the final session of the positive steps programme, *Happiness and wellbeing*, all sessions are integrated to give an overview of the concepts of happiness and wellbeing, life satisfaction and how to improve individuals' mental wellbeing levels. These programme's sessions are designed in a

simple, age-appropriate and active approach of instruction to provide students with the maximum positive outcomes within the intervention's period.

Finally, reporting the results of interventions requires details of the delivered content, the targeted population and information that can draw a picture of the specific context of implementation. This detailed picture can improve the completeness of reporting, and ultimately the replicability of the interventions in future practices. In this regard, Hoffmann et al. (2014) developed a *Template for Intervention Description and Replication (TIDieR)* checklist that represents the minimum recommended needed items to be included in the interventions' descriptions. This checklist can be used in different RCT trials and evaluative studies' designs. The TIDieR checklist includes information such as; a brief name, what (materials), what (procedure), who provided, how, where, when and how much, tailoring, modifications, how well (planned) and how well (actual). This checklist was adopted in this study to explain the SEL programme's features in details (Appendix D1).

Summary of the Methodology

This study was focused on evaluating the impact of a positive steps, SEL intervention in a Qatari school setting. Therefore, this study was designed based on an *evaluative case study* approach using different data collection methods to capture the impact of the SEL programme and the implementation dynamics from different dimensions. Thus, the data collection methods included the Warwick- Edinburgh Mental Well-being scale (WEMWBS), interviews with students, interviews with teachers and social department staff and observation of the implementation process of each session. The data from these methods were collected to answer the main research question that guided this study. This research question was:

What is the impact of a social and emotional programme on adolescent school pupils in a Qatari school?

The initial aim of this study was to evaluate the impact of a social emotional intervention on students' wellbeing and academic performance in a public school for girls in Qatar. However, due to the special circumstances and the changes in the educational systems to cope with the pandemic of Covid-19, evaluating the impact of the SEL intervention on students' academic performance was not possible. The reason was related to the changes in examination

approaches, which resulted in changing the assessment tools. Therefore, students were evaluated in the first semester by conducting regular end of term exams, while in the second semester, and with the Covid-19 circumstances, students' academic performance was evaluated by weekly homework. In addition, these changes of the schooling attendance and assessment approaches had an impact on the third stage of the study in which the aim was to evaluate the longitudinal impact of SEL intervention on students' wellbeing after six months of the intervention. Therefore, the study's objectives were changed to focus on the impact of students' wellbeing within the first semester only.

Thesis structure

This thesis is divided into seven chapters: *Chapter 1*, as discussed above, provides an overview, background and significance of the study in relation to the Qatari context. Furthermore, this chapter explained in detail the context of Qatar, the schooling structure, mental wellbeing's importance and the lack of SEL interventions in the Qatari schools' settings. The success of SEL programmes is related to the cultural context, content, instructional approaches and students' interactions. There is a dearth of interventions to promote children and adolescents' mental health in Qatar. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate the impact of a social emotional programme based on Qatari cultural, traditional and religious values and Arabic traditions on students' mental wellbeing levels in a preparatory public school in Qatar.

Chapter 2, discusses in an in-depth approach the concept of wellbeing, positive mental health and the movement to address students' mental wellbeing worldwide. Furthermore, this chapter illustrates the main definitions, frameworks and approaches to define and understand wellbeing theoretically and empirically. In addition, the move to study, measure and explore the concept of wellbeing are discussed in this chapter. This chapter ends by discussing the relationship between mental wellbeing and social emotional competencies.

Chapter 3, discusses the main approaches, designs, results and recommendations of SEL interventions in school's settings. A wide range of literature were consulted in order to gain an overview of social emotional learning programmes' backgrounds, history, approaches, designs, populations and applications. The aim of addressing students' mental wellbeing and social emotional skills is conceptualized in the literature as the *preventive approach*. This

approach aims to empower students with skills that serve their current emotional needs, strengthen their abilities to face future challenges and facilitate their life satisfaction and motivation levels. Addressing students' social and emotional learning is conducted within many school-based interventions and initiatives. The chapter starts with the concept of positive psychology and the movement to positive education. Furthermore, types of SEL interventions that include; universal, indicated, and whole school approaches are discussed in the light of previous empirical studies. This chapter ends with a description of the outline of the practitioner designed positive steps programme that was implemented as an intervention in this study.

Chapter 4, consists of detailed explanations of the study's methodology and methods. This research is designed as an evaluative case study design to focus on one school as a *bounded system* using multiple data collection methods. These data collection methods included; the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS), interviews with students and teachers and observation of the programme's implementation process. Furthermore, this chapter provides information about the ethical considerations, sample and school's information in that are involved in the study. The aim of this study was to collect data before, during and after the programme to investigate the impact and the dynamics of the SEL programme within a Qatari school's settings. This approach research design can dig down, thoroughly investigate and deeply illustrate the impact of the SEL programme on students' wellbeing. In addition, the study aimed to explore the dynamics of the programme and what factors can support or hinder the programme's success. This investigation was not done before in Qatar with this depth, and therefore, this study will contribute to the knowledge of the impact of SEL programmes in the Islamic and Arabic culture. In addition, the results of this study can provide a roadmap to implement the most appropriate social emotional interventions to promote students' mental wellbeing and help them to become better members in their society.

In *Chapter 5*, a combination of the quantitative and qualitative data are analyzed, presented and discussed. The quantitative data of the WEMWBS scale are analyzed and discussed in details. The discussion and analysis involve comparisons of the results between the intervention group that included students who attended the programme's sessions and the control group that included students who did not attend the programme. In addition, the outcomes of the quantitative results that involved students' interviews are compared and

contrasted with the previous studies. These interviews were deductively analyzed based on Seligman's (2011) PREMA model of human flourishing is presented and discussed to evaluate the impact of the SEL programme from students' perspectives. This comparison highlights the main outcomes and impact (if any) of the SEL programme on students' mental wellbeing after the intervention.

Within *Chapter 6*, the feedback of teachers' and social staff's interviews are analysed and discussed to understand their perceptions of impact of the SEL programme on their students. Teachers and social staff's interviews were analysed inductively, presented and discussed in this chapter. The aim of this discussion is to evaluate the outcomes of the SEL interventions on students' wellbeing and classroom behaviours based on teachers and social staff's perspectives.

Chapter 7, discusses the results of the observational data based on the SAFE model that capture factors that contribute or hinder the success of SEL interventions. This model consists of four main components that form effective SEL interventions; Sequenced, Active, Focused and Explicit. Durlak et al. (2011) suggest that, social emotional interventions that include these four aspects can achieve better outcomes. Furthermore, this chapter includes part of students' interviews that included information of the programme's aspects that encouraged them to participate in the programme and to attend each session. These aspects included the programme's content and instructor's characteristics. These outcomes are discussed in relation to the main empirical findings.

Finally, *Chapter 8* answers the main question of the research; *do social emotional programmes work?* Therefore, this chapter provides a triangulated holistic view of how the SEL programme works in the public school in Qatar, a conclusion of the main outcomes of this study, recommendations for future practices and limitations within the study's process.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an outline of the study, background and significance in relation to the Qatari context. Furthermore, the context of the study is discussed in details to highlight the

characteristics of the study's settings, Qatari's community cultural values, mental services and educational systems in Qatar. The discussion moves to the importance of SEL interventions to promote students' wellbeing, the lack of SEL interventions in Qatar and the significance of the study. In addition, an explanation of the programme's content, objectives and elements are provided in this chapter to form an understanding of the intervention that was implemented within this study. This study aims to explore the implementation of a specific SEL programme intervention within a Qatari school context to evaluate the impact on a particular group of students' wellbeing. In addition, the study will investigate how the SEL programme works, what types of SEL interventions might be useful and what methods, practices and techniques are needed to improve SEL programmes in the future. Furthermore, multiple data collection methods were used to explore the potential insights about the effectiveness of the programme from students and teacher's perspectives, the features of the implementation and the nature of settings that can support or prevent effective implementation. Therefore, the aim of this study is to showcase the impact of the programme, whether it works or not, how we can make it better, and to inform the policy makers and educational leaders of the importance of SEL programmes in Qatar.

**CHAPTER TWO,
LITERATURE REVIEW 1
What is Wellbeing?**

Introduction

This chapter aims to explore how previous scholars have identified, studied and assessed the concept of wellbeing. In the first section of this chapter, I discuss the concept of wellbeing by surveying a number of research topics that focus on wellbeing definitions, history, theories and Islamic perspective of wellbeing. The chapter starts with a discussion of the main dimensions of wellbeing; the hedonic and eudemonic, the main theories that stemmed from these dimensions and the move to study and measure wellbeing. These definitions and concepts form the basis for the second section of this chapter in which the importance of wellbeing for individuals and nations, assessments tools, measurable definitions and positive psychology movement are discussed. This chapter ends with the third section that discusses children and adolescents' wellbeing, approaches of assessments and schools' role in addressing students' wellbeing. Furthermore, within this section, the selected theory that underpinned this study is discussed. This chapter concludes with a summary of this first literature review and a short introduction of the next chapter.

What is wellbeing?

Approaching the literature reveals an overlapping of wellbeing concepts and encompasses different theories, frameworks and approaches to explore and reach a specific definition of this phenomenon. According to Dodge et al. (2012), wellbeing is an intangible concept, difficult to define and hard to measure. Pollard and Lee (2003, p. 60) argue that the concept of wellbeing is “a complex, multi-faceted construct that has continued to elude researchers' attempts to define and measure”. In order to reach a general understanding of wellbeing, previous and recent research have seen a crystallization of concepts within the field to organize the definitions and provide directions for future research. Accordingly, these different approaches of viewing wellbeing ask different questions of the relationships between the developmental and social issues related to well-being, and they implicitly or explicitly produce different approaches to understand what wellbeing is.

The historical background of wellbeing reveals multidimensional approaches of defining and studying wellbeing. Among the main theoretical perspectives that explore wellbeing are the *hedonic* and *eudaimonic* dimensions (Diener, 2009; Michaelson et al., 2009). These two paradigms of wellbeing are based on two philosophies of human nature; hedonism and eudemonism (Dodge et al., 2012). The *hedonic* paradigm refers to “constructs such as

happiness, positive affect, low negative affect, and satisfaction with life, while the *eudaimonic* theme highlights the positive psychological functioning and human development” (Dodge et al., 2012, p.223). Furthermore, the *hedonic* perspective of wellbeing is concerned with the level of pleasure attainment, positive thinking and pain avoidance, while the *eudaimonic* dimension focuses on self-realization and the degree to which an individual has the ability to function (Ryan and Deci, 2011). Although there is a clear overlapping between these two concepts of wellbeing, they complement each other by providing different philosophical definitions of the nature of wellbeing and deeper perspectives about personal, cultural and contextual factors that can prompt or hinder the level of wellbeing.

The hedonic paradigm

The *hedonism* paradigm evolves from the concept that pleasure and happiness are the optimum goals of this life. This view of wellbeing is identified based on Socrates and Plato’s view of human action in pursuing what will give them the greatest balance of pleasure over pain (Zeyl, 1980; Dyson, 1976). Therefore, within this paradigm, the level of pleasure and happiness is *the indicator* of a better life and a higher level of wellbeing. This perspective was the basis for many other theories and definitions that viewed wellbeing as happiness. For instance, DeSade viewed pleasure and self-interests as the goal of life and self-interest (Airaksinen, 2002), Hobbes regarded happiness as the core of human success (Steptoe, Deaton and Stone, 2015) and Bradburn suggested that high levels of wellbeing are the excess of positive feeling over the negative ones (Bradburn, 1969). Warner (1967, p.264) described the happy person as a “young, healthy, well-educated, well-paid, extroverted, optimistic, worry-free, religious, married person with high self-esteem, high job morale, modest aspirations, of either sex and of a wide range of intelligence”.

The hedonic perspective of wellbeing is related to the *desire satisfaction* definition. This perception is based on the *comprehensive desire theory*, which suggests that; life is better when more desires are fulfilled (Nussbaum, 2013). While this view of wellbeing is related to the hedonic view in terms of what make pleasurable experiences, it differs on how to get this pleasure. The hedonic paradigm views happiness and pleasure as the good life measure, while the desire satisfaction views wellbeing in getting the most of what individuals want to get.

The paradigm of the hedonic approach of wellbeing focuses on *subjective happiness* and the individual's experience and sensation of happiness and pleasure against pain. Kahneman, Diener and Schwarz (1999) define the hedonic concept as the study of what makes individuals' experiences in their life process pleasant or unpleasant. Therefore, the hedonic wellbeing can be measured by the Subjective Wellbeing (SWB) approach by assessing the level of life satisfaction, the presence of positive mood and the absence of negative mood (Diener & Lucas 1999). This approach was employed by many research studies as a major outcome variable of wellbeing. Within the SWB approach, events and situations are catalyzed in a positive perspective and ignorance of negative thoughts (Stephoe et al., 2015). Therefore, individuals with relatively high SBW are more motivated, more optimistic, more enabling and maintaining a more stable level of happiness, and as a result, of wellbeing (Davern et al., 2007; Steptoe, 2015).

Related studies on emotions and SWB reported that: (a) individuals always experience different affects; (b) these affects can be regarded as either positive or negative, and (c) many individuals might have positive affect most of the time (Diener & Lucas 1999). In relation, this concept of wellbeing is related to *personal wellbeing*. This perspective refers to individuals' feelings of satisfaction with life, whether they feel that the things they do in their lives are worthwhile and might contribute to their positive and negative emotions (Stephoe et al., 2015). This concept represents another dimension of the subjective perspective of how individuals realize their feelings and how they can influence their level of happiness and life satisfaction.

The eudemonic paradigm

The *eudemonic* paradigm of wellbeing is based on Aristotle's perception of an individual's happiness in doing what is worth doing rather than being followers of desires (Kashdan et al., 2008). This paradigm differs from the hedonic view of wellbeing by focusing on the *objective needs* and *functions* instead of pure subjective needs (Waterman, 1990). In the same vein, this consideration of wellbeing argues that not all desires are good for the individual to get; instead, engaging in more life activities and missions enable individuals to feel they are alive, exist, motivated and can positively function (Ryff & Singer, 2008). As a result, individuals with high eudaimonic wellbeing will have a good level of personal expressiveness (PE) (Waterman, 1990).

This concept describes the impact of feeling alive in relation to an individual's growth challenges, development activities and fulfilments efforts. This status of wellbeing contradicts with the hedonic paradigm in which enjoyment, pleasure and happiness are the core of wellbeing. In relation to the functioning concept of the eudaimonic paradigm, wellbeing can be seen as the *quality of life*. This concept is related to Rogers' (1961) definition of wellbeing as an equal phenomenon to the *good life*. From this perspective, wellbeing is seen as an individual's motivation and willingness to be open to new experiences and challenges to positively function (Gasper, 2010). In relation, Shin and Johnson (1978) identify wellbeing as "a global assessment of a person's quality of life according to his own chosen criteria" (p. 478). This definition is related to the World Health Organization's definition of quality of life as; individual's perception of his/her own current position in life in the context of culture, achievements, values systems, goals-settings, expectations and concerns (WHO, 1997).

This concept is influenced by the individual's physical health, personal beliefs, preferences, relationships with others and psychological status. In this regard, Zikmund (2003) conceptualizes quality of life as an individual's capabilities, opportunities and possibilities to live in a satisfying way, to have specific goals, to maintain good social relationships and to live in a convenient manner. This perspective of quality of life views wellbeing in terms of satisfying an individual's aspirations and life goals (Zikmund, 2003).

In relation to the eudaimonic paradigm, wellbeing is identified according to the *lifespan theory* of human flourishing as the individual's willingness to realize his/her potential and striving to be perfect (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). This theory suggests that the core of wellbeing is not limited to attaining pleasure; rather, an individual's personal goals and projects contribute to the level of wellbeing and human flourishing (Prescott-Allen, 2001). The term flourishing is related to Seligman's (2011) wellbeing theory. Within this theory, the PERMA model of flourishing is proposed to suggest that well-being consists of five main components; positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (White, 2016). Promoting an individual's function, health, and emotional status can be explored in terms of psychological wellbeing (PWB) by focusing on these psychological aspects of wellbeing (Bradburn, 1969).

PWB is based on the essence of eudemonia that relates an individual's ambition towards achievements and excellence based on his/her inner abilities and unique potential (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Therefore, this conception of wellbeing articulates the importance of the inner development, self-realization and human growth in achieving the highest level of wellbeing. PWB is focused on constructs of self-acceptance, individual growth, life purpose, autonomy and positive relatedness (Ryff & Singer, 2008).

Although the hedonic and eudemonic definitions do not necessarily contradict each other, they represent different lenses and perspectives and strengthen the notion that there is no one correct way of defining wellbeing. Each one of these two paradigms of wellbeing (the hedonic and the eudaimonic) has its strengths and weaknesses. For instance, from the hedonic perspective, the SWB model is criticized for its limited scope of exploring the positive functioning, healthy living and life purpose dimensions of wellbeing. In contrast, the PWB model is focused on the functioning dimension of wellbeing and is limited in terms of gaining insights from individuals of factors that influence their life, emotions and positive thinking. These different definitions, scopes and perspectives led researchers to develop various types of inquiries to investigate the understanding of wellbeing.

The concept of resilience

One of the concepts that have strong psychological overtones into an individual's wellbeing is *resilience*. Within this concept, cultivating positive emotions is seen as the main contributor to an individual's personal growth by promoting the inner ability to overcome negative emotional experiences and facilitate the adaption with new challenges (Fabio and Palazzeschi, 2015). Letzring, Block and Funder (2005) define resilience as an individual's ability to overcome challenges, analyze the *goodness of fit* between situational demands and behavioural possibility and ability to adapt to different changes. Tugade and Fredrickson (2004) argue that resilience is an individual's adaption of strategies that facilitate coping with discomfort. Coutu (2002) conceptualizes resilience as an array that enables individuals to transform critical challenges, experiences and situations into opportunities that contribute to the personal growth. From a positive youth development perspective (PYD), adolescents' social, psychological and emotional resources can be seen as resilience that promotes positive adaptation, thereby enhancing wellbeing (Catalano et al., 2004).

Grotberg (1995) argues that children and adolescents' resilience levels can crush or strengthen their inner abilities to face different stresses, challenges and issues. These challenges include divorce, poverty, disease, academic issues and many other challenges. Approaching the literature reveals various preventive interventions that focus on reducing risk and promoting protective factors for adolescents. By improving the competencies of trusting relationships, emotional support, self-esteem, hope, responsible risk-taking, school achievement, belief in God and morality, many of these interventions can promote resilience levels for adolescents (Lerner et al., 2005).

While the concept of resilience shares many similarities with the concept of wellbeing, some core differences between these two concepts can be highlighted. In terms of similarities, the concept of wellbeing is related to the concept of resilience in dimensions of an individual's inner satisfaction, self-realization and positive relations with others. Therefore, in many cases, the concepts of wellbeing and resilience can explain the same aspects of life satisfaction. In terms of differences, the concept of wellbeing focuses on an individual's *feelings, emotions* and *ability to function*. In contrast, the core aspect of the resilience concept is an individual's *inner capacity* to face and overcome challenges. As a result, the adversities of life will strengthen, improve, transform or even decrease an individual's resilience levels.

For this study, and as I am aiming to evaluate the impact of a social emotional intervention on students' mental wellbeing levels, the focus will be on the concept of wellbeing. The study will evaluate students' self-reported understanding of their *emotions, relationships with others* and *their motivation towards achievements*. These concepts are more related to mental wellbeing elements, and therefore, mental wellbeing is the focus of this study.

Islamic and Western conceptions of wellbeing

One of the important factors that facilitate capturing the meaning of wellbeing is to understand the view of human nature in different contexts. Therefore, within this section, different definitions of wellbeing are explored from the Western and Islamic perspectives.

The history of Western conception of wellbeing

Approaching the literature reveals that Western thinkers presented a wide variety of well-being conceptions. These varieties of conceptions can be conceptualized within three main periods, *the oldest*, *the middle aged* and *the modern times* conceptions of wellbeing. The oldest conceptions of wellbeing were mainly related to the guidance of the church. For instance, one of the old Christian dominant views is that, life on earth is a kind of real hell, but when lived correctly could lead to real paradise in heaven happiness (McMahon, 2006). This view persisted for hundreds of years until different Ancient Greek philosophers emphasized that there are chances for *imperfect earthly happiness* for human wellbeing (McMahon, 2006).

In this regard, Locke (1975) argued that living a morally good life in accordance with the religious teachings can lead to the achievement of earthly wellbeing and happiness. This conception was based on the belief that God wanted human to be happy on earth and provided them with the needed recourses to achieve that earthly happiness (McMahon, 2006). However, as science continued to reveal the secrets of the universe and the economic progress continued to reduce the number of people struggling, religious beliefs and religious conceptions of wellbeing started to be out of favour in the West (Diener et al., 2011). Therefore, the pursuit of a moralistic and pleasurable happiness on Earth started to be more acceptable than those which advocate suffering on Earth for the sake of perfect well-being in Heaven (Ehrenreich, 2009).

This deviation from the church conceptions led the movement to *the middle ages* conceptions of wellbeing. In the middle ages, excellent personal traits were replaced mainly with religious virtues (Estes and Sirgy, 2017). For instance, within the theory of virtue by Chrysippus, virtue is considered to be sufficient to constitute happiness (Ehrenreich, 2009). This view is related to the notion that a virtuous individual can choose between good and bad, and therefore can achieve happiness. As a result, within these periods, Western thinkers started to recast well-being as something that individuals could influence through purposeful actions without the need for religious and moral consideration (Estes and Sirgy, 2017). Later, the spread of more secular worldviews and more scientific views of the mind appeared to have made valuing pleasure more acceptable. In the *modern times*, with the Enlightenment movement, the emphasis was shifted more to the possession of wealth and power, away from

being a morally good person. During the Enlightenment stage, many antireligious scholars started to challenge the contemporary theistic beliefs of wellbeing. One of the main anti-religious approaches of viewing wellbeing is the view of La Mettrie, a physician who argued that humans are physical objects without souls, and they can effectively do self-winding, indicating that pleasure is the main source of wellbeing (McMahon, 2006). Within this view, wellbeing is secular and materialistic sensory pleasure was viewed as the only chance of happiness on earth. From another dimension, these aspects of pleasurable views of wellbeing were consistent with the industrial revolution and the formation of the consumer society (McMahon, 2006). From this perspective, the individual's ability to obtain more needs is essential for happiness, and this was represented by the commercialization of pleasure in the Enlightenment period (Estes and Sirgy, 2017). In this regard, Smith (1982) supported the notion that, the promotion of happiness is implicit within society's economic growth, individual's increases in wealth and the reduction of financial suffering.

After the revival of the enlightenment period, wellbeing views in the West started to be focused on the overabundance of positive states of mind over negative states of mind, and a general satisfaction with life (Joshi, 2013). As a result, Western notions of wellbeing were based on the recognition of individual agency in the culture (Sahin, 2018). This concept of individualism is related to the notion that the individual's desires, pleasure, wealth and satisfaction are the core aspects of communities' success (Christopher, 1999). In addition, individualism refers to exercising one's free will and the avoidance of submitting to fate or spiritual beliefs (Joshi, 2013.)

The history of the Islamic conception of wellbeing

As illustrated in the first chapter, the social emotional intervention (positive steps) that was implemented in this study was based on Islamic perspectives. As such, within this section, the Islamic perspective of wellbeing, human spiritual and psychological dimensions is discussed to explore how this concept is identified and conceptualized.

Background of the Islamic principles

In Islam, the wellbeing of individuals in this life is one of the main objectives. The Islamic perspective of wellbeing offers a more detailed and holistic view of wellbeing.

The individualistic aspects of the Western notions are different from the Islamic perspectives of wellbeing. From Islamic perspective, the focus is on the social aspects of the community as a whole. In Islam, the family is the core centre of successful society. Therefore, there are different central beliefs that unite Muslims including the importance of the belief in the oneness of Allah, the message of the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the importance of providing care to parents, to different family members and all relatives. In addition, many religious practices aim to bind Muslims together to achieve unity within the different levels of the community. These practices include salat (daily prayer), zakat (annual charity), sawm (month-long fasting) during Ramadan, and hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca). In relation, Qur'an is the absolute and unquestionable authority among all Muslims. The Qur'an provides clear guidelines on how a Muslim should live a good, proper, worthy, and admirable life.

The word Islam literally means submission or surrender. It indicates the believer's absolute submission to the will of Allah (God), the only one that Muslim worship (Khatab, 2006). In Islam, Allah is the creator of the world, the observer and evaluator of each individual's actions through this life (El Azayem and Hedayat-Diba, 1994). Allah as described in the Qur'an, is being aware of every aspect of this life and have a close relationship with each individual "human being than his or her own jugular veins" (Qur'an, p. 519). Allah knows each individuals' private feelings and thoughts and everything in the universe is regarded as a sign of Allah's presence (Khatab, 2006). Therefore, Muslim individuals need to maintain the belief that assist them in the different circumstances that they might face. This belief is based on their awareness that Allah will be with them and support them.

Within the Islamic concepts of human beings, Muslims are considered as *Khalifa* in this life. Khalifa refers to each individual's role in taking care of every aspect in this earth during the life process. This care includes the consideration of development of the own self, participating in the enhancement of others' lives and contributing to the improvement in the different areas of knowledge.

Quranic verses confirm that Allah had created human beings with an innate aspiration for goodness *Fitrah*. Fitrah represents the individual's inner motivational force in the human personality to do everything good in this life (Joshnloo, 2017). Thus, according to Islam, each individual is born with the inner submission to Allah to live a proper life, full of

happiness and satisfaction (Joshanloo, 2013). This message of submission, Fitra and all other aspects of worshipping Allah in this life are taught and delivered by prophets. The messages of the prophets are considered as *external forces* that strengthens individuals' inner capacities by following God-given guidance. Therefore, this approach of strengthening individuals' inner feelings, emotions and inner capacities form important aspects of Islamic pathway to pursuit of wellbeing.

In Islam, individuals have the free will to surrender to Allah and follow the Shari'a or to choose the other ways. As discussed in the first chapter, Shari'a is "the concrete embodiment of the Will of God, how God wants them to act in this life to gain happiness in this world and felicity in the hereafter. The life of the Muslim from the cradle to the grave is governed by the Shari'ah" (Nasr 2003, p. 75). Believers are promised that when they act appropriately and follow Islamic guidance, they will attain the greatness and will be rewarded with the great bounties of heaven.

In addition to the bright side of human nature, the dark side of human nature is also identified in the Qur'an. Therefore, individuals who follow the guidelines of improving themselves, supporting others and make the positive change in this life, they will achieve the bright side of human nature. In contrast, the dark or devilish side of human nature that lead to sinful behaviours. These behaviours might be related to individuals' actions of being forgetful, ignorant, selfish and even might lead to the commit acts of cruelty and murder (Akhtar, 2008).

In more detail, the rival forces in human nature are often referred to as "selves" in Qur'an: are a devilish force that strongly urges individuals to do evil, and a peaceful force that constantly urges human beings to seek Allah (Joshanloo, 2013). The devilish force of human nature is obviously negative and conflict with both personal and societal wellbeing. In contrast, the peaceful force is equivalent of conscience, and represents the inner voice that challenges against the evil-commanding self (Akhtar, 2008).

The resistance to the conscience inner voice of human nature and following the evil side might lead to internal imbalance, anxiety, and guilt. In contrast, following the peaceful and conscience forces of the inner self can facilitate reaching this state of balance and an internal assurance resulting from the awareness of one's complete reliance on Allah. Therefore,

Muslims are urged to constantly engage in this internal battle, with the aim of placing all devilish powers, desires, and instincts under the dictates of God's command (Islami, 2003). As a result. Individuals will be rewarded with a complete wellbeing, both subjective and objective, both physical and spiritual, in the hereafter. This subjective state consists of complete harmony within an individual in every realm of functioning, and is regarded to be the highest stage of psycho-spiritual development in Islam (Abu-Raiya, 2012; Joshanloo, 2013).

Wellbeing in Islam and individuals role

Many phrases in Qur'an (the Holy Islamic book) refer to the importance of life satisfaction, the way of understanding the *own self*, achieving the peaceful balance and the influence of these perceptions on the individual's life style, relations and success. The Qur'an refers to the *uniqueness* of every person created by God on this earth "We have certainly created man in the best of stature" (Qur'an, p.597). This uniqueness is related to the fact that everyone has been given two parts in his soul "And [by] the soul and He who proportioned it. And inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness. He has succeeded who purifies it. And he has failed who instils it [with corruption]" (Qur'an, p.595).

Therefore, and based on the individual's choice to do something good for him/herself and for everyone on this earth, his/her life and destiny will be changed. Individuals, who do the best for themselves and for others, are promised by God to have a beautiful life. This is illustrated in Qur'an as "Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do" (Qur'an, p.19). Thus, each individual is encouraged to realize and discover the inner potential, do the best and utilize the chance of this life to reach the highest levels of achievements.

The principal factors that foster an individual's wellbeing in Islam are mainly about the *good heart*. Furthermore, this view of wellbeing is based on the concepts from Qur'an, in which the human nature is fully known by God (the Creator); therefore a sophisticated and detailed understanding of wellbeing can be drawn. From this perspective, an individual who is considered to be at a higher level of wellbeing is the one who has: 1) A self with a *good heart* that is able to spread goodness by having mercy towards others and always offering to help;

and an ability to enjoy the beauty and joy of this life that is created by God. 2) A self with a *reproaching soul* to keep on giving the best and work the hardest to achieve the highest levels of knowledge and practice. 3) A self with a *reassured soul* that maintains high levels of tolerance towards the different events in life, and the various ups and downs that an individual might face. As a result, each individual is motivated to feel optimistic regardless of the difficulties that face him/her, give the best and work the hardest to achieve the highest levels of knowledge and practice and have a high level of tolerance towards the different life events.

Thus, an individual's life will be a *cycle of satisfaction* of whatever he/she has, be optimistic about the future and work hard with the resources available. As a result, each individual can achieve the most desirable and balanced state of self is the peaceful, serene, or tranquil self (*Al-Nafs Al-Mutmainna*). This state of the balanced inner soul is considered to be the highest stage of psycho-spiritual development in Islam (Joshnloo, 2017).

Life is viewed in the Islamic perspective as a chance given by God for each individual to be the best, do the best and achieve the best before death. After death, different grades, levels and rewards are given to each individual based on his/her ability to obey God's rules. These rules are focused mainly on three types of relationships that guide each individual's life. These relationships are: relationship with God, relationship with others, and relationships with self. The positive relationship with God leads to inner satisfaction because of believing that he is always there, knows everything and watching each event, thought and action in this life. Therefore, this type of relationship with God can guide an individual's inner thinking, motivation and actions to do the best and avoid doing any harm to others. Two types of responsibilities guide an individual's relationship with God in this life to reach the blessings of God, *the faith in destiny and the religious responsibilities*.

The faith in destiny involves an individual's acceptance of all the events of life, between happiness and sadness, richness and poorness, health and illness and face these events with patience, satisfaction and positive realization that whatever happen is meant to be the best for them. Thus, a Muslim's life will always be between thanking God for happy events and being patient for difficult events, which as a result will lead to inner satisfaction, happiness and reassurance even in the most difficult times. This belief in destiny can improve an

individual's inner satisfaction by prompting the inner feeling of contentment of all the events, challenges, and difficulties that might face him/her in this life.

The second responsibility for Muslim individuals is *the religious roles* that involve doing the best possible in every minute in this life to gain knowledge that improves inner abilities to serve the needs of everyone on this earth. In addition, these roles need to be implemented with the highest level of proficiency, accuracy and perfectionist possible to gain the highest levels in heaven after death “and for everyone, there will be lots of levels for whatever they do” (Qur'an, p.145). These actions done by each individual will be appreciated even if it was so little, as long as they are done to make life better for others. Therefore, the more an individual will function to achieve and fulfil, the more levels in life and after life will be achieved. These two types of responsibilities that are illustrated by the Islamic perspectives will facilitate the path to happiness and satisfaction with life when applied effectively into everyday actions. The faith would strengthen an individual's inner thinking to be satisfied with the different events of life, while the religious responsibilities will provoke the motivation to achieve, search for opportunities and gain knowledge in different fields. In addition, adherence to the faith and religious roles and regulations can enable Muslim individuals to “achieve and enjoy the four ingredients of a healthy and balanced life, namely, physical, social, mental, and spiritual health” (El Azayem and Hedayat-Diba, 1994, p. 49).

Spiritual wellbeing in Islam

The Quranic concepts provide a timeless perspective that underlies all Islamic formulations of wellbeing throughout Islamic history. This strong influence of the Quranic concepts is obvious in Islamic approaches understanding of wellbeing. For instance, according to Al-Farabi, a Muslim philosopher in 951, wellbeing is related to the soul, and inner feelings, “happiness means that the human soul reaches a degree of perfection in existence” (Walker, 2005, p. 98). In this regard, Amina Wadud, one of the Islamic modernists, Quranic and Islamic concepts do not promise a life of ease, rather, it provides guidelines, indications and rules of how to face struggle to achieve peace, beauty and happiness on earth and on the life after (Wadud, 2003). Motahhari (1992) argued that morality, justice, conscience, and societal values cannot be achieved without religious faith. In this regard, Yahwa (2001) warned that the lack of spiritual faith might lead to devastating psychological effects. Joshanloo and

Weijers (2019) claim that the absence of religious faith might lead to the sense of purposelessness and the objective features of a meaningful life.

Therefore, the Qur'an provides the purposeful movement and a more specific plan that enable individuals to move towards perfection, happiness, and actualizing the divine human potential. This make Muslim life dedicated for a *purpose*, and without this purpose, there is no meaning of this life, and no real happiness and wellbeing. In this regard, Khomeini (2002, p.14) emphasis that, even when people reach the universe, "they will still be deprived of true happiness, moral virtues and spiritual advancement and be unable to solve their own social problems". The solution of these social problems requires deep foundations of faith and morality, rather than merely focusing on acquiring material power and wealth (Khomeini (2002). Therefore, the morality in achieving wellbeing in Islam is to truly to serve humanity instead of endangering it

In more detail, Islamic guidelines posits that humanity needs religion to achieve genuine wellbeing. In Islam, there is a series of spiritual needs and *God-seeking* aspect of human nature that create a strong psychological need to worship a higher power, which should be prioritized over other needs (Joshano, 2013; Al-Jibouri, 2009). Failure to satisfy this strong need in the human nature might hinder the attainment of real wellbeing. In addition, the "enjoyments derived from the physical, material, and natural means of life are not sufficient for man's happiness and felicity (Joshano, 2013, p.248). Thus, true happiness in Islam can be achieved by satisfying one's spiritual needs through worshipping Allah, doing the best in this life and serving human needs. In other words, *genuine wellbeing* is not achievable through pure rationality; rather, rationality is just one of many tools that can aid one's servitude to Allah (Nasr, 2003).

Many Muslim scientists explored the relationships between individual's religious beliefs and wellbeing levels. Abu Zayd Al-Balkhi explored through the concept of the *Sustenance of the Soul* the inner aspects of the soul, the body, and the interconnected relationship between them (Badri, 2018). He noted that "when the soul is afflicted (with psychological pain), the body will lose its natural ability to enjoy pleasure and will find its life becoming distressed and disturbed" (Badri, 2018, p.29). Furthermore, he explains the influence of faulty thinking on leading the individual to different cases of anxiety, anger and depression, and if the soul is emotionally tired or sick, the body will eventually be tired, and the individual will stop

having a positive life satisfaction. Therefore, he suggests that the body's sustenance can be achieved by maintaining a good level of wellbeing, because when the soul is happy and healthy, any psychological symptoms or mental problems can be avoided.

Furthermore, many empirical findings showed positive correlation between personal religiosity and spirituality positively correlated with mental wellbeing. For example, religiosity and spirituality have been found to strongly predict different aspects of wellbeing in Iranian Muslims (Joshanloo, 2013). Positive religious coping abilities were found to be particularly strong predictors of wellbeing among Muslims (Abu-Raiya and Pargament, 2011).

Differences and similarities across cultures

Reviewing the different concepts of wellbeing from Western and from Islamic and Arabic concepts revealed some similarities and major differences. Exploring these different conceptions of wellbeing, revealed that, despite starting out with a similar *religious focus*, Western views of wellbeing were shifted to be more centred on subjective and individualistic forms of happiness than Islamic conceptions. The modern Western conception of wellbeing is more related to the attainment of pleasure, wealth and satisfaction within the materialistic perspectives. In contrast, the Islamic conception of wellbeing emphasises that individuals' adherence to religion and spirituality guidelines are the key factors to understand the notion of mental wellbeing. The Islamic concept of wellbeing is more comprehensive and coherent. This concept can be seen as "embracing unity which took in the universe, the soul, and all human life...to unite earth and Heaven in one world; to join the present world and the world to come in one faith; to link spirit and body in one humanity; to correlate worship... and work... in one life. It sought to bring all these into one path which led to Allah" (Khatab, 2006, p. 126).

This exploration of the different social and individualized notions of human agency indicates that there is a direct implication on the conceptualization of the wellbeing concept across cultures. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate the outcomes of a home-grown social emotional programme, based on the Islamic and Arabic aspects on students' wellbeing. This study provides contextualized perspectives of SEL interventions within Arabic and Islamic sociological backgrounds and the impact of cultural adaptations to the programme's outcomes.

Within this study, the focus is on the concept of wellbeing that encompasses a mix of two of the highlighted dimensions; hedonic and eudemonic. Adapting this definition aims to capture a wellbeing concept that relates to an individual's ability to feel good and function well in a positive approach.

The importance of studying wellbeing

The importance of studying wellbeing is equivalent to the importance of studying different physical and mental health disorders. Since the 1930s, individuals' wellbeing and welfare started to be one of the main goals of governments and policy makers (Perlman and Marietta, 2005). Wellbeing measures how a nation attends to its citizens; therefore, wellbeing is considered to be one of the desirable outcomes worldwide (Steptoe et al., 2015). Wellbeing has various valuable outcomes and beneficial consequences at nations and individual levels. In terms of national levels, higher levels of individuals' well-being is an important indicator of how governments are achieving a democratic society that respects individuals' choice, needs and goals (Diener, 2009). Moreover, nations with higher levels of wellbeing are more stable in terms of economic growth, educational achievements and societal progress.

At an individual's level, wellbeing can be considered as the indicator of life satisfaction and goal achievements. Furthermore, Individuals with higher levels of wellbeing can cope with life challenges, overcome difficulties, and feel more optimistic about the future (Diener, 2009). In relation, different research and empirical evidence report that higher levels of wellbeing can positively influence individuals' performance, motivation, function, relationships, income and mental health (Davern et al., 2007). In terms of work environment, individuals who experience higher levels of wellbeing can; perform better at work, earn higher incomes, and present more collaborative attitudes with colleges (Deneulin and McGregor, 2010). When employees' wellbeing is higher, they feel satisfied, loyal, and perform better in their workplace, while lower levels of employees' satisfaction are associated with less productivity, achievements and profitability (Warr and Nielsen, 2018).

Wellbeing is correlated with better and long-lasting social relationships, happier marriages and better friendships (Diener, 2009). Lyubomirsky, King and Diener (2005) explored the benefits of frequent positive affect on the success of different domains in life. They found evidence suggesting that individuals with higher levels of wellbeing can be more successful

in social relationships, work performance and obtain higher incomes. In a relation, Diener, Ng and Tov (2008) revealed that individuals with higher levels of wellbeing are socially successful citizens who can contribute to the development of their countries compared to the individuals with decreased levels of wellbeing.

Wellbeing status can affect the mental and physical health of individuals in the society. For instance, according to Steptoe, Deaton and Stone (2015), lower levels of wellbeing can negatively affect an individual's immune systems and health in general, while higher levels of wellbeing are related to better mental and physical health. In relation, one of the main objectives of studying wellbeing is to measure an individual's life satisfaction, functioning and mental health. The results of these measurements can be used to improve the wellbeing level and prevent future complications. The future complications are mental health issues such as anxiety, depression and different mental problems that cause a negative impact on an individual's life performance and function.

Measuring wellbeing is crucial for policy makers to formulate an extensive understanding of societies' progress (Seligman, 2011). Furthermore, comprehensive assessments of wellbeing levels can provide governments with the information needed to develop, monitor and improve policies that serve individuals' needs. Furthermore, measuring wellbeing is crucial to evaluate interventions, set directions, identify priorities and assess achievements against specific objectives (Twenge, 2000). In addition, measuring wellbeing can provide information about warnings of lower levels of wellbeing that can in turn, facilitate early interventions with the required actions for improvements (Diener and Seligman, 2002). Therefore, wellbeing is the common desired goal for education, health, environment and welfare policies and service.

In terms of adolescents' wellbeing, and as reported in the UNICEF *report card 7* of adolescents' wellbeing in rich countries, the true measure of any nation's standing is "how well it attends to its children, their health and safety, their education and socialization, and their sense of being loved, valued" (Adamson, 2007, p.1). Within this report, the wellbeing of children and adolescents of 21 industrialized world nations was measured and assessed based on six different dimensions: material well-being, health and safety, education, social relationships, behavioural risks, and young people's own subjective sense of well-being. The

main findings of this report suggest that there is no obvious relationship between levels of children and adolescents' wellbeing and the economic status of their countries.

For instance, the report reveals that the Czech Republic had a higher overall ranking for children and adolescents' wellbeing than several much wealthier countries, including France, Austria, the United States and the United Kingdom (Adamson et al., 2007). These results indicate the importance of studying and measuring children and adolescents' wellbeing to address challenges, opportunities and approaches of promoting and improving wellbeing levels in different countries. These approaches of investigating individuals' levels of wellbeing can provide insights of the current wellbeing status and the related needed interventions.

Measuring and Assessing Wellbeing

Measuring and monitoring wellbeing started after the 1960s when scholars such as Huebner (1991), Bradburn (1969), Campbell, Converse and Rodgers (1976) and Gurin et al. (1960) started to explore the quality of life from individuals' perspectives (as cited in Diener, 2009). The results of these studies formed the basis to improve national policies. Scholars investigated, identified and accordingly evaluated wellbeing in multiple approaches. Within the coming three sections, definitions, assessments tools and studies related to subjective wellbeing (SBW), psychological wellbeing (PWB) and the efforts to combine both concepts are discussed.

Assessing and measuring wellbeing is one of the main scientists and practitioners' aims to determine individuals' levels of wellbeing and to apply the appropriate interventions (Dodge et al., 2012). Therefore, researchers from psychology, sociology, anthropology, education, economy and neuroscience had focused on rigorously investigating and monitoring the levels of wellbeing. In order to examine different aspects of human wellbeing empirically, many operational definitions that stem from the theoretical concepts had to be established. The literature reveals various scholars' attempts to define wellbeing in a specific and focused approach to facilitate wellbeing levels' measurements. Conceptualizing a specific definition of wellbeing is a challenging undertaking due to the multiple, multifaceted and various constructs that encompass this concept (Christopher, 1999).

Wellbeing is defined according to Seligman, Parks and Steen (2002) as individuals' positive perspectives, evaluations and emotional considerations of their life satisfaction. Cowen (1991) argues that wellness is more than the absence of mental problems; rather, wellness is more related to strong relationships, coping strategies, resilience and exposure to different life events, activities and environment that empower individuals and promote the level of wellness. Adamson (2013) suggests that mental well-being means not only the absence of mental illness, but also a broader sense of positive functioning that facilitate life satisfaction.

Approaching the literature reveals that there is no single measurement that captures the entirety of wellbeing. According to Christopher (1999), no assessment of wellbeing is value free, and individuals' judgments of wellbeing are based on their perspectives, moral visions, and personal experiences. Therefore, different instruments were designed to assess individuals' level of subjective and psychological wellbeing together or separately depending on the theoretical background and the objectives of the tools.

Wellbeing instruments were designed to capture the levels of wellbeing using different statements or Likert scales or Self-reported scales. These scales are sensitive to life circumstances and different events and are responsive to changes. These measures can prospectively correlate with the relevant theories that prove their effectiveness in empirical research. Furthermore, valid measurements are essential for representing theoretical constructs and investigating causes and consequences of wellbeing. These investigations can result in new concepts, frameworks and theoretical developments by underlying different constructs of wellbeing components. Some of these wellbeing measures and investigations are focused on SWB, PWB or both dimensions. Therefore, the following sections provide discussions of different wellbeing instruments and the background of each approach to studying wellbeing.

Subjective wellbeing (SBW)

Approaching the literature reveals that there is no single definition that captures the entire construct of SBW wellbeing. SWB is defined within two concepts; *cognitive* and *affective* experience (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002). These concepts of reflective judgments and affective experiences provide different approaches to understanding how an individual's life satisfaction can be evaluated, assessed and studied (Diener, 2009). Moreover, these positive

and negative effects are different dimensions, bipolar opposites and caused by separate factors (Huebner & Dew, 1996). The cognitive dimension represents an individual's opinion, judgment and reflection about his/her own life's overall quality (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002), while the affective experience refers to positive and negative feelings, emotions and moods (Huebner & Dew, 1996).

Diener and Emmons (1984) suggest that the combination of SWB emotional (affective) and cognitive (evaluative) components lead to life satisfaction. Life satisfaction is identified as one of the main concepts of SWB. Kapteyn, Smith and Van (2010) view life satisfaction as individuals' perceptions of their aspirations and achievements and the gap between them in reality. Aspirations according to Christopher (1999) is individuals' expectations of what they should or expect to achieve versus what they actually have, which reflects their level of satisfaction with life. Therefore, within these concepts, wellbeing is viewed in relation to the core concepts of the hedonic dimension in which feelings and emotions are related to individuals' desires. Diener (2006, p. 400) reached a specific definition of SWB that suggests the following:

Subjective well-being refers to all the various types of evaluations, both positive and negative, that people make of their lives. It includes reflective cognitive evaluations, such as life satisfaction and work satisfaction, interest and engagement, and affective reactions to life events, such as joy and sadness. Thus, subjective wellbeing is an umbrella term for the different valuations people make regarding their lives, the events happening to them, their bodies and minds, and the circumstances in which they live.

The life satisfaction component of SWB is usually assessed using different life satisfaction scales or domain satisfaction measures that ask individuals to evaluate different conditions and aspects of their lives. Some examples are; Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS) for children and adolescents, the Overall Life Satisfaction Scale (Campbell et al., 1976) and the Personal Well-being Index (Cummins et al., 2003). In contrast, reflective judgmental scales are used to assess positive and negative feelings and moods to explore individuals' experiences with their lives and their mood fluctuations (Diener et al., 1991), such as the Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) (Huebner, 1994).

Reporting feelings and affective experiences can provide two main categories; pleasant and unpleasant, and more pleasant feelings are associated with higher levels of satisfaction with life (Kahneman, Diene and Schwarz, 1999). Thus, studying these effects can provide intensive deep insights into individuals' perspective of their experiences and feelings. Examples of these scales are; The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) by Watson, Clark and Tellegen (1988), Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE) by Diener et al. (2010).

Many researchers suggest that combining the positive and negative affects with the cognitive components is not always appropriate due to the fact that these two affects are theoretically correlated but empirically separate (Bradburn, 1969; Watson, Clark and Tellegen, 1988). Therefore, many SWB researchers suggest different and separate assessment for the positive/negative affects and the cognitive dimension of wellbeing. In contrast, and despite the difference between the cognitive and positive/negative affects components of wellbeing, many researchers report an interrelated relationship between these two components (Diener, 2006). Therefore, from an empirical view, these concepts are separate, while from a theoretical perspective, there are specific factors that influence each other (Davern, Cummins and Stokes, 2007). One of the theoretical frameworks that discussed the interrelationships between different SWB constructs is the bottom-up versus the top-down models (Schimmack, 2008).

The bottom-up model consists of individuals' evaluations of their life characteristics and domains in which they live to calculate overall judgments. Therefore, the outcome scores of SWB levels in this model are related to the life circumstances, which in turn will affect the reported emotional judgments and experiences of wellbeing (Davern, Cummins and Stokes, 2007). In contrast, the top-down model posits that "satisfaction might be more a personality characteristic than something influenced by living conditions" (Saris, 2001, p.137). Therefore, personality traits and personal perception of life experiences affect an individual's perception of happiness and life satisfaction. Thus, an individual with a higher level of SWB will view different life events and life characteristics more positively and therefore, his/her judgment of life domain will be higher (Schimmack, 2008).

The bottom-up model suggests that wellbeing is constructed by individuals' overall judgments of the different domains of their lives. This assessment is influenced by the daily

life circumstances and emotional experiences, which in turn affect the level of wellbeing (Keyes, 2007). In contrast, the top-down model suggests that the inner personality processes influence the individuals' level of life satisfaction (Diener, 2006). Thus, optimistic, motivated and happy individuals view the different life circumstances from a positive perspective. Therefore, within this model, the personality processes are the dominant factor that influences an individual's judgment of his/her life satisfaction, rather than the different life challenges, changes and circumstances they experience (Keyes, 2007).

Many researchers explored the relationship of positive and negative emotions to SBW. In particular, some studies investigated the impact of different life events and ongoing daily activities on the emotional level that is related to SWB. For instance, Suh et al. (1996) explored the effect of live events on (SWB) in a two-year longitudinal study that included 115 individuals. The researchers found that positive and negative emotions and, as a result, the level of SWB are affected by the recent life events during the last three months of time.

With a bigger sample, Luhmann et al. (2012) conducted a meta-analysis of 188 publications with 65,911 participants to explore the short and long-term effect of life events on the level of SBW. The study showed that across samples, different life events have a different and consistent effect on SBW. In a more focused approach, Gomez et al. (2009) investigated the level of SBW in relation to positive and negative life events and the personality traits across the life span in order to explore aspects that underpin the mechanisms and situations variables that impact SBW. The results of 766 participants reported a strong relation between negative and positive life events and the level of (SBW) with more influence of negative events on (SWB).

These results reveal that there is a link between *the cognitive* and *affective* components of wellbeing and they can be combined to capture individuals' quality of life in a holistic and complete view of their lives (Diener, 2000). Therefore, these two components can complement each other rather than focusing on a specific source of information to predict life satisfaction. In summary, in order to measure SWB, there is a need to consider individuals' affective feelings, inner beliefs and judgments of their life quality considered as an integrated concept.

Psychological wellbeing (PWB)

Within the eudaimonic position, feeling positive or attaining desires are not the main indicators of positive emotions, rather, the functioning status of individuals is the major indicator of the PWB. In relation, from a eudaimonic view, “issues such as the repression, disclosure, compartmentalization, and over control versus under control of emotions are highly pertinent to what defines wellness” (Ryan and Deci, 2001, p.151). After the 1980s, a movement towards expanding the focus of studying wellbeing to include more aspects of the eudemonic dimension of human functioning and self- realization was started (Ryff, 1989). Ryff’s perspective is one of the most influential aspects in the field of positive psychological wellbeing. Within this concept, Ryff aimed to form a specific conceptualizing of the positive psychological functioning definition. Thus, Ryff extensively explored different theories and perspectives of previous researchers in the field of positive psychology and functioning, including perspectives like; Allport’s (1961) *conception of maturity*, Franz’s (1964) *individuals’ formulation*, Rogers’s (1961) *perspective of the positive functioning*, Erikson’s (1959) *psychological stage model* and Neugarten’s (1968) *perspectives of stages in the personality changes* (as cited in Ryff, 1989).

In her research, Ryff (1989, p.1079) voiced a critique by suggesting that the “preceding perspectives, despite their loose conceptualizations, can be integrated into a more parsimonious summary”. As a result, Ryff found six core concepts to form psychological wellbeing; Self-acceptance, Purpose in life, Autonomy, Positive relations, Environmental mastery and Personal growth. Ryff’s theory has for two decades been the basis for focused eudaimonic research. In relation to the eudemonic dimension, Ryff and Singer’s (1996) and Ryan and Deci’s (2001) theories and concepts viewed psychological wellbeing as fulfilling individuals’ needs (autonomy, acceptance, and mastery). Ryan and Deci (2001) focused their work on individual’s functioning and goal fulfilment as crucial parts of human wellbeing. They identified the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which proposes three basic needs for promoting an individual’s personal growth and psychological well-being: autonomy, competence and relatedness (Ryan and Deci, 2001). According to Ryan and Deci (2009, p. 434), when these three needs are “supported and satisfied within a social context people experience more vitality, self-motivation, and well-being, conversely, the thwarting or frustration of these basic needs leads to diminished self-motivation and greater ill-being”. SDT is related to students’ motivation towards learning, self-regulation and personal wellbeing. More discussion about this theory is discussed at the end of this chapter.

Keyes (1998) has gone so far as to examine individuals' social functioning status as an indication of their positive psychological wellbeing. His work revealed five specific indicators of optimal socially functioning individuals; social coherence and understanding what is happening around, social acceptance, social actualization and potential, social contribution to the society and social belonging to the society.

Various scales were specially designed to assess PBW and the eudaimonic dimension in adults and adolescents to capture aspects of human functioning. Examples of these scales are the Purpose in Life Scale (Reker, 1977), the Flourishing Scale (Diener et al., 2009), and the Psychological Well-being Scale (Ryff, 1989) and The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) (Hills and Argyle, 2002). Ryff and Singer (2008) investigated the connections between PWB wellbeing and individuals' personalities to explore common aspects with these two domains. The results indicated that there is a correlation between personality traits and psychological wellbeing aspects. Neuroticism, extraversion and conscientiousness were linked to the purpose of life, environmental mastery, autonomy and self-acceptance. Openness to Experience was linked to personal growth, and agreeableness was linked with positive personal relations with others. These relationships between wellbeing and personality characteristics are the basis for emotional management. Thus, personality traits are related to some extent to the individual's conceptualization of his/her own wellbeing levels (Updegraff, Gable & Taylor, 2004).

As a result, wellbeing levels can be influenced over time by individuals' emotional status, motivation, and approaches of assessing their different emotional life events in relation to the level of satisfaction (Cheng and Chan, 2004). Therefore, diverse types of research have focused on the relationship between the hedonic dimension of wellbeing (SWB), the eudaimonic dimension (PWB) and individuals' emotions. From another perspective, Reis et al. (2000) showed that within-person fluctuations in all three components of Self Determination Theory basic needs predicted the positive effects that the individual can experience. Therefore, daily experiences of autonomy, competence, and relatedness can contribute to an individual's happiness and wellbeing.

Positive psychology

The previous discussions showed the difference between the two dimensions of wellbeing, the various attempts to measure those dimensions, and the different related theories and concepts. Self-determination theorists and psychological scholars view wellbeing in terms of an individual's functioning and the achievement of three core psychological needs (Ryan and Deci, 2001). In contrast, life satisfaction is considered the optimum target in the concept of Subjective wellbeing (Eid and Larsen, 2008). However, according to many scholars, these two opposing dimensions of wellbeing (the hedonic and the eudaimonic) can be integrated to measure the different aspects of wellbeing (Ryan and Deci, 2001; Keyes et al., 2002; Waterman, 1990). Therefore, despite the overlapping aspects of wellbeing dimensions, there are related aspects in which positive emotions, life satisfaction, psychological functioning and life purpose can be assessed together (Vaillant, 2000).

In this regard, Diener (2009) suggests that SWB and PWB are distinct in some aspects but related in others. Many studies reported evidence of the connections between the two dimensions of wellbeing when combined in studies. Ryff and Keyes (1995) reported an association between aspects SWB and PWB scales that assess happiness and life satisfaction, self-acceptance and environment mastery. In relation, Huppert and So (2013) define wellbeing as the combination of multiple components of feelings, emotions and functions. Seligman and Diener (2002) argue that emotions, positive /negative affects and competence are not the main components that lead to higher levels of wellbeing. Therefore, within the same vein of flourishing concept, Seligman (2004) developed the *theory of wellbeing*, which consist of five main components; positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (PERMA).

Compton et al. (1996) found that the hedonic and the eudaimonic aspects of wellbeing are overlapping, distinct and moderately correlated; thus, measuring these two aspects together is important to understand wellbeing. King and Napa (1998) investigated individuals' understandings of what makes a good life, and they found that happiness and the ability to achieve can both contribute to their perception of wellbeing. In terms of positive mental health indicators, McGregor & Little (1998) found that the main two factors for mental health are happiness and life purpose. Sen et al. (1987) argued that life satisfaction is an important element of wellbeing; however, it is not the only component of the good life. Therefore, Sen suggested that in order to view wellbeing in a more holistic and coherent approach,

components of SWB (feeling happy, life satisfaction, and PWB (functioning, purpose in life, life style) need to be combined (as cited in Anand & Sen, 2000).

In an effort to achieve a more holistic definition of wellbeing that combine the hedonic and the eudemonic dimensions, many researchers conceptualized the definition of *positive mental health* (Ryan and Deci, 2001). Westerhof and Keyes (2008) view positive mental health as the combination of hedonic, psychological and societal concepts. This definition parallels the definition of Keyes (2007), who identified mentally healthy individuals as ones who maintain a high level of optimal psychological functioning combined with an optimal level of subjective wellbeing. This concept is related to the World Health Organization's definition of positive mental health as a healthy status in which "the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community"(WHO, 2005, p. 2).

Rather than focusing on mental illness, positive mental wellbeing represents an important protective approach that can prevent mental health issues (Gargiulo and Stokes, 2009). In a related concept, "The modern psychological study of well-being and its close relatives, resilience, and prosocial behaviour belong together under a common umbrella called *positive psychology*". In this regards, Seligman (2002, p. 3) argues that "the aim of positive psychology is to catalyze a change in psychology from a preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building the best qualities in life". Therefore, the objective of the positive psychology is the promotion and empowerment of an individual's inner capacities to prevent mental wellbeing issues.

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) identify positive psychology as the study of positive emotions, personality and flourishing. The science of positive psychology was introduced to enhance understanding of "how, why, and under what conditions positive emotions, positive character, and the institutions that enable them to flourish" (Seligman et al., 2005, p.415). In relation, Keyes (2007) identifies wellbeing as a *flourishing* concept with three major categories; 1) emotional affects, life satisfaction and happiness (SBW), 2) functional and psychological (PWB), and 3) dimensions of social relations.

Life satisfaction involves the different hedonic components of cognitive and positive and negative dimensions of SWB. The life engagement dimension explains the extent to which an

individual is optimally functioning, engaging with different life activities. While the life meaning is focused on concepts of purpose in life, achieving targets, contribute to different projects and add to the community and environment. Therefore, the concepts of positive psychology and positive mental health share similarities in terms of combining an integrated concept of wellbeing that involves the hedonic and eudaimonic together under a holistic conceptualization.

Many studies involved different approaches for investigating the proactive approach of positive psychology. For instance, some of the studies involved screening for mental issues to focus on mental illness prevention, early intervention and positive mental health promotion (Gadeberg et al., 2017). The screening studies can provide different governmental services and systems with the needed information to improve psychological services and intervene with appropriate programmes. These improvements can be achieved by refining mental health options, tolerating prevention activities based on the specified needs and identifying the best forms of interventions.

From a different perspective, many studies focused on exploring, measuring and assessing the impact of positive mental wellbeing interventions on multiple dimensions of wellbeing. As one of the main scholars of positive psychology, Martin Seligman proposed this concept as a new area of psychology in 1998 (Seligman, 2002). Positive psychology consists of components that focus on fostering an individual's wellbeing, inner-strength, resilience and social relations (Lopez, 2006). Therefore, based on these concepts, various educational and social interventions were designed to enhance wellbeing by investigating different dimensions of life satisfaction, life engagement and life meaning.

Adolescents' wellbeing

Enhancing children's positive mental health and wellbeing improves their ability to maintain social relationships, achieve academically and become responsible citizens in the future (Greenberg et al., 2003). Moreover, "adolescence is a critical time of formative growth to achieve human potential—a fascinating period of profound physical, psychological, and emotional change" (Dahl et al., 2018, p.1). In this regard, Layard and Dunn (2009) suggest that life will not run completely perfectly and smoothly for everyone. Therefore, children and

adolescents from any social class can be faced with exam stress, peer bullying, family break-ups and all other issues that can negatively impact their wellbeing levels.

Recently, promoting adolescents' positive mental wellbeing as a *preventive approach* has become a national priority worldwide (Clarke, Kuosmanen and Barry 2015; Greenberg et al., 2003). Child positive wellbeing and mental health were highlighted as a social indicator of nations' developments (Ben-Arieh, 2008). Adamson (2007) argues that a nation's progress is represented by its ability to improve children and adolescent's wellbeing, meet their rights and assign the appropriate interventions and projects to address those needs. According to Lyubomirsky, King and Diener (2005), the collection of systemic data from children and adolescents themselves to understand their perceptions of wellbeing levels is very limited. In relation, an in-depth UNICEF study was conducted to investigate children and adolescent's perceptions of their life conditions, health and safety, relationships, behaviours and educational wellbeing (Adamson et al., 2007). The study reported that research which involved data provided by children and adolescents are very limited. Furthermore, these studies are limited to a number of developed countries and emphasized the need to investigate children and adolescents' wellbeing in a *culture-informed* approach to achieve more generalizations Adamson (2007).

The study recommended conducting future research to explore wellbeing in a *micro-focused* approach that involves case studies and experimental studies. This approach is more focused than the *macro approach* in which data are collected in assessing wellbeing levels in general without exploring participants' perceptions and experiences. In relation, scholars such as Casas et al. (2012) and Seligman (2002) supported a change in the focus of research from studying negative aspects of wellbeing to investigating positive aspects reported by children and adolescents themselves. These self-reported studies can help researchers to critically investigate, understand and explore children and adolescents' own opinions of their social world, inner perspectives and understanding of wellbeing. Moreover, children and adolescents' perspectives are important to understand what influence their positive thinking, what change their mood, what makes them feel satisfied and what influences their view of wellbeing. In this regard, Wyness (2015) suggests the need to view children and adolescents as *social agents*, with intentionality, capability, inner ability and the right to express their opinions.

Changes in SWB in the adolescence stage of life are explored in many studies indicating a progressive decline in SWB throughout adolescence (Holte et al., 2014). In a study conducted by González-Carrasco et al. (2017) to explore SWB levels through the adolescence stage, the study revealed a tendency to decline in SWB levels for both genders, with a more obvious and long-lasting decline in the girls' sample. In relation, Casas et al. (2012) reported in their study that wellbeing levels were decreased with age in a sample of (12-17) years old adolescents. These findings are related to the various critical cognitive, physical and emotional changes that adolescents usually experience through this transitional period of life (Call et al., 2002).

Ryff et al. (1989) conducted studies to investigate wellbeing fluctuation levels through individuals' different ages. The results of these studies revealed that an individual's wellbeing conceptions and components change differentially with age, and while younger individuals focus on the concepts of self-acceptance, autonomy and competence, older individuals focus on deeper relationships, more coping strategies. These findings accord well with the results of Bijl et al.'s (1998) study, in which they found that the prevalence of mental illness in younger individuals are more than the older ones. Furthermore, Basic psychological needs like competence, autonomy and relatedness have a critical role in promoting wellbeing across the life span Ryan and La Guardia (2000).

In their chapter of *Positive Psychology for Children*, Roberts and colleagues (2002) suggest that the focus on children and adolescent's psychology is crucial to address their psychological and developmental needs to achieve healthy and well-balanced growth. In relation, positive psychology posits that youth's positive development is the result of socialization and individuation processes (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Positive socialization provides children and adolescents with opportunities to explore their society, become more connected with their community and maintain successful relationships with others. The individuation enables children and adolescents to develop their personal identity, recognize self-regulation skills, and develop more self-confidence.

Damon (1983) suggests that "there is a dialectical interplay between the needs of the individual to maintain relations with others and the needs of the individual to construct a separate self, the individual can only construct the self in the context of relations with others, but at the same time, the individual must step beyond the confines of those relations and

forge a unique destiny” (as cited in Adams and Marshall, 1996, p.431). As a result, when adolescents experience higher levels of wellbeing; greater personalities, more self-confidence and better social relationships can be achieved. Crous, Casas and González-Carrasco (2018) investigated the main aspects that contribute to adolescents’ wellbeing and life satisfaction. The study involved 763 students aged (11-16) from a compulsory secondary school in Spain. Multiple types of instruments for measuring subjective wellbeing, psychological wellbeing and a list of aspects of full satisfaction in life were given to students. The highest scores among all age groups that contribute to wellbeing were given to; feeling happy, having a good time, trying new challenges. In terms of PWB, many studies explored the changes of PWB in relation to different sociodemographic factors; however, no study was specifically designed to assess adolescents’ psychological wellbeing (Clarke, 2010).

Assessing children and adolescents’ wellbeing

According to Holte et al. (2014), only in the last few decades, some researchers started to study wellbeing from children and adolescent’ point of view and subjective understanding. Involving children and adolescent in the research “affirms them as competent social actors and the experts in their own lives, and therefore valid sources of data” (Crivello, Camfield and Woodhead, 2009, p.52). Researchers started to explore children and adolescent’ personal perceptions, satisfactions with life and wellbeing by developing specific instruments. These instruments were used to capture what make children and adolescents happy and what factors really contribute to their wellbeing from their own understanding (Casas et al., 2012). Furthermore, these subjective indicators can provide evidence of children and adolescents’ perspectives, evaluations and opinions of their life satisfaction, social reality and issues that impact their wellbeing. Information obtained from these measures can provide researchers and policy makers with opportunities to assess current levels of wellbeing, design the appropriate interventions, and evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions (Denier, 1984). According to Currie et al. (2009), using multiple research methods in children and adolescents’ research is important to achieve a better understanding of their opinions, aspirations and inner thinking.

Children and adolescents’ wellbeing investigations were conducted using different methods and measurements of life satisfaction, happiness and self-realization. Some of these studies had successfully involved scales that were designed for adults. For instance, the Satisfaction

with Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener et al., 1985) and the overall life satisfaction (OLS). Other scales were developed specifically for assessing children and adolescents' well-being in a different context. Some examples are; Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS) by Huebner (1991), Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scales (MSLSS) (Huebner 1994), The Quality of Life Profile-Adolescent Version (QOLP-Q) by Raphael et al. (1996), Comprehensive Quality of Life Scale Students Version (Com-QOL Students) by Cummins (1997) and the Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS) Seligman et al. (2005).

One of the promising tools that have been used with adults and adolescents' samples to investigate their levels of wellbeing is the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) (Stansfield et al., 2013). This scale can be used to measure individuals' *self-reported* wellbeing. The scale consists of positive statements that describe feelings and thoughts over two weeks of time. In addition, this scale can be used to measure any changes in pre and post-intervention groups with a minimum of two weeks gap to investigate any improvements on intervention groups. This scale is validated and represents an effective measurement approach of assessing mental wellbeing nationally, internationally and locally (Stansfield et al., 2013). The scale's validity and reliability were approved in many studies worldwide as an effective tool to assess individuals' wellbeing after different interventions (Clarke et al., 2011; Haver et al., 2015). Therefore, I have selected this scale for my research and more discussion about this method is provided in the methodology chapter.

Wellbeing in schools

Reviewing the literature reveals various initiatives, policies and educational studies that focus on the school's role in addressing students' wellbeing. As mentioned in the previous section, students' social, emotional and developmental needs should be considered to nurture their inner abilities and enable them to flourish. Positive psychologists assume that schools represent an important environment for the promotion of positive adolescents' development (Seligman, 2002). Schools can form a positive environment to improve and enhance students' wellbeing due to the long time spent every day in schools. This environment can either facilitate or hinder student's wellbeing according to the schools' vision, focus and expectations. Therefore, schools need to provide students with social and emotional resources

that strengthen their inner abilities, ensure positive outcomes and address their different psychological needs.

In the last years, the focus on wellbeing and mental health prevention and treatment strategies has been shifted to focus on enhancing positive aspects of mental health and wellbeing. This focus was the base for many school-based initiatives that were designed, implemented and empirically tested to measure the impact on student's wellbeing. A number of researchers have suggested, designed and proposed different frameworks and educational policies to improve students' wellbeing within school settings. These frameworks provided different approaches of schooling that shift the focus from merely being functional education to a more *person-centred* education (Fielding, 2007). According to Fielding (2004, p.302), "Students complain that schools do not care about them as persons, but only about them as bearers of results and measurable outcomes are now ubiquitous". Therefore, (Seligman, 2002) suggests that schools need to maintain and create nurturing experiences for students to address their different psychological needs, listening to their perspectives and provide them with opportunities to be part of their educational journey.

The *person-centred* education is an intellectual framework suggested by Fielding (2004) to focus on students' flourishing. This framework emphasises the importance of initiating new approaches of education as part of democratic objectives that support students to reach their potential, nurture their psychological needs and enable them to flourish. Within this approach, Fielding (2007) discusses the importance of shifting the schools' focus from the *high-performance* model in which the personal aspects of education are used for the sake of fulfilling the functional, to a more *person-centred* approach where students are included in the educational process. Furthermore, Fielding (2007) considers students' voices as an important factor that allows researchers and education policy makers to gain rich information through students' reflections, discussions and participation in dialogue and different activities. This approach can encourage students to articulate their opinions, enable them to express their views and enable researchers to assess any changes critically. Different school-based interventions and initiatives are discussed in the next chapter.

The framework of the study

According to Seligman (2011), the wellbeing theory consists of five building blocks of wellbeing, Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment (PERMA). These elements are characterized by three properties; 1) it contributes to an individual's wellbeing, 2) it is defined and measured independently, and 3) people pursue it for its own sake (Seligman, 2011). In addition, these elements cover the hedonic (emotional and subjective wellbeing) and eudemonic (human functioning and achievement) dimensions of wellbeing. Within this theory, wellbeing is considered as a *buildable* and *promotable* concept. Therefore, and in relation to this concept of wellbeing, the central mission of positive psychology is to promote an individual's wellbeing (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). This promotion of wellbeing can lead to human flourishing and higher levels of life satisfaction. Fredrickson and Losada (2005) suggest that when individuals flourish, they can maintain high levels of human functioning, positive emotions and life satisfaction. The aim of this study is to evaluate the impact of a social emotional intervention on students' mental wellbeing. Therefore, I selected the PERMA framework of human flourishing in this study to investigate the impact of the programme on promoting students' core aspects of wellbeing. In addition, the SEL programme's dynamics are evaluated in this study in accordance with the SAFE model by Durlak et al. (2011). Within this model, the SEL programme's content, activities and instructional practices are evaluated in terms of Sequenced programme's sessions, Active forms of learning, Focused approach on specific SEL skill and Explicit instructional approaches that focus on the promotion of social emotional competencies.

Conclusion

Within this chapter, I explored the history of studying wellbeing, approaches to identify dimensions of studies and the stages of developing tools and measures to gain different results. All measurement tools are based on different theoretical and conceptual frameworks and stemmed from the integration of previous work of scholars on the different fields of wellbeing. The first section discussed the historical and theoretical aspects of wellbeing as well as a range of definitions and dimensions. The second section discussed scholars' efforts in measuring wellbeing from the hedonic dimension and SBW, while the third section explored the movement to study wellbeing from the psychological, functioning and eudemonic perspective. In addition, within this section, the main scholars in the field that developed different concepts, theories and tools based on the previous work were discussed. In the last section, the discussion was focused on the shift to study SBW and PWB together to

arrive to an integrated multi-conceptual approach that assesses wellbeing from different dimensions. Finally, the school's role was illustrated at the end of the chapter with a discussion of the importance of addressing children and adolescent wellbeing.

In sum, the literature represents a mix of concepts that lack some clarity and overlapping of aspects on what and how to define *wellbeing*. Although these definitions do not necessarily contradict each other, they represent different lenses and perspectives and strengthen the notion that there is no one correct or specific way of understanding wellbeing. Based on the review above, there are two main paradigms of wellbeing in two different and interconnected approaches, the hedonic and the eudaimonic. Within these two paradigms, different concepts, theories and approaches of exploring wellbeing are clustered. In addition, the Islamic view of wellbeing provides a different holistic dimension of understanding human nature, individual's uniqueness and factors that can hinder or promote wellbeing. This chapter is the base of the next chapter that will deeply investigate the relationship between adolescent wellbeing and social emotional learning, school and community role in addressing social emotional learning and school interventions for promoting students' mental health and wellbeing.

**CHAPTER THREE,
LITERATURE REVIEW 2
Social Emotional Learning**

Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, positive psychology emerged over the last 20 years when researchers such as Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), Sheldon and King (2001) and Lopez (2006) started to develop and investigate within this concept factors that can facilitate good life to identify aspects that contribute to individual's life satisfaction. Furlong et al. (2009) argue that positive psychology represents a lens that can be used to view, research and investigate factors that facilitate or hinder students' wellbeing and school engagement. Based on positive psychology, positive education was emerging as a rapidly growing area in the educational and social sciences. Seligman et al. (2009, p. 293) define this concept as the "education for both traditional skills and for happiness". Positive education for children and adolescents have been applied in different studies to investigate primary prevention, mental health promotion, social emotional development and resilience research (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). In this regard, Holte et al. (2014, p.601) suggest that "the hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions of well-being, including subjective emotional well-being and positive psychological and social functioning, is clearly embraced in current conceptualizations of positive mental health".

In an operational approach, Seligman (2011) conceptualizes positive education as the combination of positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (PERMA) that forms the basis for wellbeing and flourishing. In this regard, Kern et al. (2015) suggest that positive education programmes are applied in schools within three forms; empirically validated well-being intervention programmes, proactive strategies to the whole school mental health and virtues or values-based lessons within the curriculum. Different models that encompass the principles of positive psychology were applied in many school settings (Seligman, 2011). Driven primarily by prevention logic, school interventions were designed based on the concepts of positive psychology.

There are a variety of terms that have been used to describe school-based interventions, depending on the disciplinary approach and objectives. Examples of these terms are Non-cognitive skills, Social and emotional learning (SEAL, an English government initiative that has become popular in English schools), Positive youth development, the Whole Child, Positive psychology, Resilience, Mindfulness, Inner-Strengths-based, Life skills,

Psychological wellbeing and Character education. The focus of this study is on the concept of social emotional learning (SEL) programmes in schools' settings. SEL forms the umbrella framework for the approaches driven primarily by prevention logic to promote children and adolescents' social emotional skills, and mental wellbeing that lead them to feel good and function well (Huppert & Johnson 2010).

Within the previous chapter, I explored the different dimensions of wellbeing, Islamic perspective and positive psychology movement. In this chapter, the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) programmes and interventions in terms of definitions, frameworks, implementation, effectiveness and design are discussed in detail. The aim in this discussion is to understand the impact of SEL programmes by exploring previous studies, initial frameworks, approaches of delivering and the achieved outcomes. SEL programmes' can positively impact students' academic performance, wellbeing levels, while some outcomes can impact both dimensions. In addition, main points drawn from the literature in SEL interventions outcomes and dynamics are discussed in this chapter. In terms of the Qatari context, a discussion of the limited number of studies that explored the impact of social emotional interventions is provided. This chapter ends with the study's aims and research questions that formed the basis for the mythological design and data collection methods of this investigation.

SEL definitions

SEL definitions are different in the literature and can be categorized within two main themes; *conceptual* and *operational*. The conceptual definitions refer to scholars' efforts to conceptualize what is SEL in terms of objectives, components and process. For instance, Elias et al. (1997) view social emotional learning programmes as the process of learning social skills and competencies that enable individuals to manage their emotions, maintain positive relationships, achieve better academically, make appropriate decisions and solve problems in different life situations. In relation, Kabakçı and Korkut-Owen (2010) suggest that social emotional learning is the process of empowering students to recognize and manage their emotions, effectively solve problems and establish positive relationships with others. In this regard, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) define SEL as "the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and

achieve positive goals, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions” (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2015, p. 5).

Social and emotional learning in English schools is best embodied by the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) as “a comprehensive approach to promoting the social and emotional skills that underpin effective learning, positive behaviour, regular attendance, staff effectiveness and the emotional health and wellbeing of all who learn and work in schools” (Humphrey, Lendrum and Wigelsworth, 2010, p. 4). In relation, Durlak et al. (2011, p.406) view SEL as an approach that “integrates competence promotion and youth development frameworks for reducing risk factors and fostering protective mechanisms for positive adjustment”. Therefore, SEL “can serve as the unifying framework under which schools can organize various competence-building and preventive efforts because of SEL’s dual focus on building student competencies and establishing supportive environmental settings” (Graczyk et al., 2000, p.4).

SEL can be defined with a practical focus on the operational dimension as a set of combined competencies *applied* within school’s settings to promote students’ social and emotional skills. In particular, Mckown et al. (2009) argue that social emotional learning consists of combining social and emotional competencies, putting them into a logical framework related to children and adolescents and provide those competencies in an appropriate approach within school’s settings. This concept is identified in the literature within different titles such as Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), Positive Physiological interventions, Mindfulness, Resilience and Character Education programmes (Elias, 1997; Berkowitz and Bier, 2005, Greenberg et al., 2003). Within these programmes, many empirical studies were conducted to assess the importance and effects of implementing programmes that address students’ emotional needs (Weissberg et al., 2015; Seligman et al., 2009).

Social and emotional learning programmes are designed and implemented based on different frameworks and models. For instance, Lerner et al. (2004) proposed the five Cs as core competencies that contribute to positive children and adolescents’ wellbeing; *competence, confidence, caring, connection, and character*. These competencies can support the positive development of students’ mental health and educational performance. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) conceptualized one of the main frameworks of SEL initiatives. This institute was established in the USA in 1994 with the

goal of producing high quality, evidence-based social and emotional learning as an essential part of preschool through high school education. CASEL defines the SEL framework as an approach of integrating social emotional skills that *empower* students to manage their emotions, set future targets, maintain positive relationships, solve problems, have specific targets and handle different challenges. Furthermore, within this framework, SEL is conceptualized within five core interrelated competencies; self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2015).

Merrell (2010) describes these competencies in detail by arguing that self-awareness refers to students' emotions, feelings and self-confidence that form the foundation for their strength and future success. Self-management is concerned with stress control, goal settings, time management and personal achievements. The social awareness within this definition refers to establishing positive relations with others, recognizing and respecting others' differences and needs and maintaining social relations. This concept is related to the fourth aspect of relationship skills that encourages students to achieve healthy and positive relations through collaboration with others, solving and avoiding conflicts and establish a sense of empathy with others. Responsible decision-making refers to students' ability to respect others, participate in their society-building and taking the appropriate decisions in different life situations.

In a different approach with similar objectives, social emotional programmes were designed, managed, implemented and evaluated under the initiative of Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) in the UK. Weare (2010) argues that SEAL interventions are different from many other interventions in the literature because of their flexible, loose and enabling frameworks rather than being structured to a specific approach. In this regard, Humphrey, Lendrum and Wigelsworth (2010, p.2) emphasise that within this framework, "schools are actively encouraged to explore different approaches to implementation that support identified school improvement priorities rather than following a single model, meaning that they can tailor it to their own circumstances and needs". Therefore, SEAL interventions maintain a sense of sustainability and flexibility in school-based interventions.

Furlong et al. (2014) developed a model that consists of social emotional learning, resilience and positive psychology concepts in an integrated correlated approach. The model is based on four core positive mental health domains; belief-in-self, belief-in-others, emotional

competence and engaged living. Furlong et al. (2014) posit that these positive-psychological constructs are enhanced within this multi constructs model when they are presented in a combined approach. Therefore, the more social and psychological objectives covered in an intervention, the higher and better outcomes can be achieved.

Social Emotional Competencies (SEC), SEL and Wellbeing concepts

Reviewing the concepts of wellbeing, social emotional learning (SEL) and social emotional competencies (SEC) reveals primary distinctions between those concepts, with similar objectives. Social emotional competencies can be identified as a set of skills that facilitate individuals' interaction with others, communication of feelings and regulation of behaviours (Linares et al., 2005). Thus, the competencies of, self- esteem, self-confidence, social relations, self-management persistence, problem solving, patience, empathy and communication skills play critical roles in the healthy social and emotional development of children and adolescents (Schunk and Usher, 2012). In this regards, Rubin, Bukowski and Laursen, (2011, p.162) suggest that successful navigation into the different life challenges requires “ a wide range of skills , such as communication skills, emotion knowledge, self-regulation, access to a repertoire of appropriate and effective social strategies and a sense of self-efficacy in social situations”. In order to explore the relationship between SEC and wellbeing, a comparison between these two concepts was conducted as illustrated in figure 3.1. Wellbeing and SEC concepts can overlap in the goals of improving individual's own situation, flourishing, while in terms of concepts, wellbeing and SEC are different.

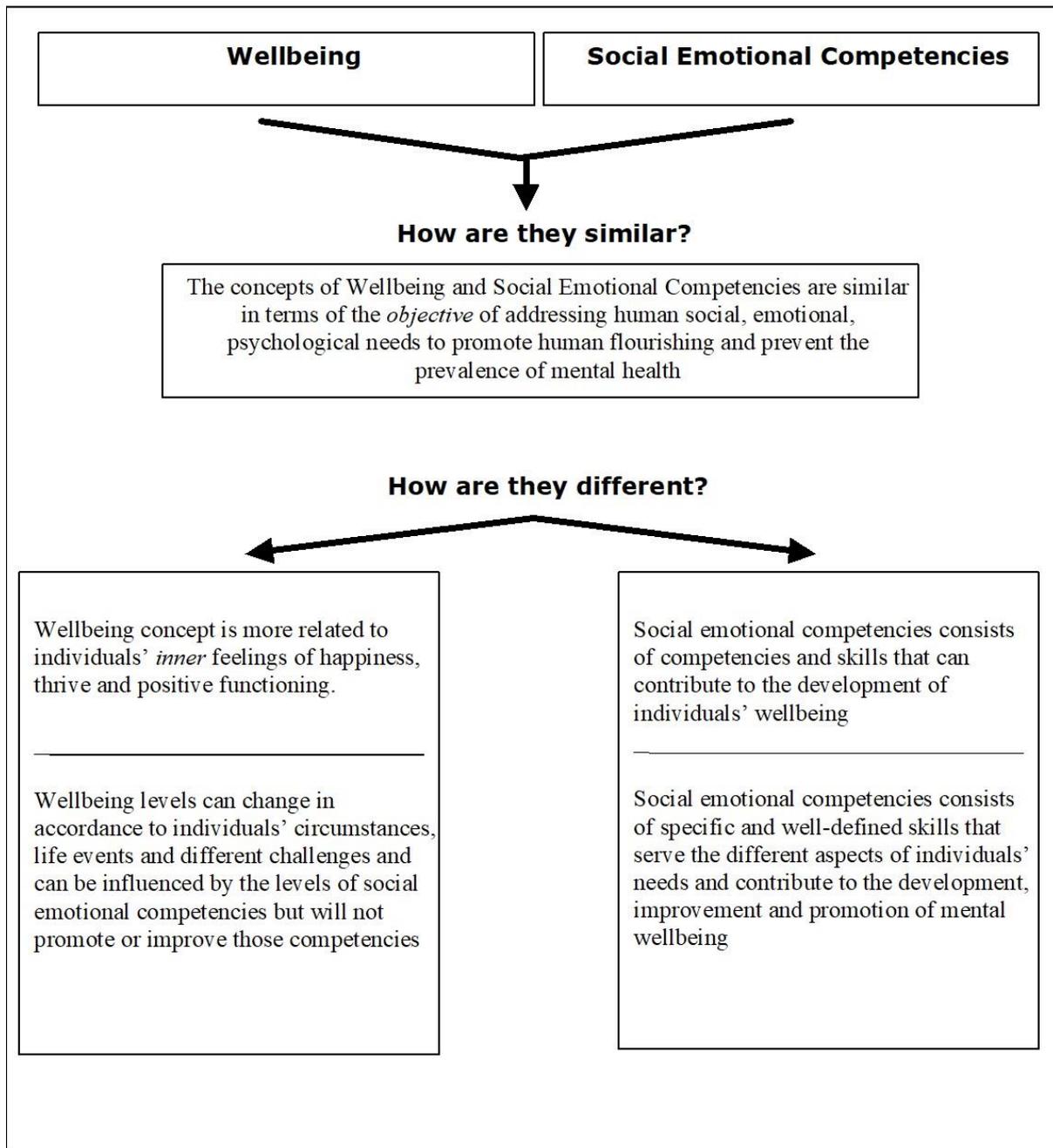


Figure 3.1. SEC and Wellbeing Concepts

Wellbeing can be conceptualized as individual's inner feelings of satisfaction and happiness with the different life domains that include personal achievements, social relations and life style. In addition, the concept of wellbeing is related in general to individual's feelings, functionality and coping strategies. This distinctive meaning of wellbeing was explored in many previous studies as discussed earlier in the previous chapter. From another dimension, social emotional skills and competencies can be developed through programmes of social

emotional learning to contribute in the promotion of positive feelings, the prevention of negative ones, and as a result, the improvement in individual's wellbeing levels. To explore these relations in more details, a short summary of what is SEC and what is wellbeing are discussed.

As reported earlier in this chapter, SEC represents core competencies that enables individuals to recognize and manage emotions, achieve positive goals, appreciate the perspectives of others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle interpersonal situations constructively (Elias et al., 1997). Therefore, the main goals of SEL programmes are to foster the development of different interrelated sets of cognitive, affective, and behavioural competencies that include; self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making (CASEL, 2015). As a result, these competencies and skills can contribute to individuals' wellbeing. Therefore, this view of SEC skills emphasizes that, in order to achieve wellbeing level, there is a need to acquire different interpersonal competencies.

In a similar vein, Csikszentmihalyi (2002) makes it clear that happiness is not something that just happens, rather, it is a condition that "must be prepared for, cultivated, and defended privately by each person" (p. 2). This puts the pursuit of wellbeing as a responsibility for individuals to achieve by teaching them how they can increase their resources to face challenges and to maintain a sense of life satisfaction. In this regard, Keyes (2002) emphasizes that there is a direct relationship between wellbeing levels and social, emotional and psychological competencies. In his study, Keyes (2002) explored this relation by asking youths to report on the frequency of a number of symptoms related to their social, emotional and psychological wellbeing. The results revealed that higher frequencies of the different symptoms of social emotional competencies were related to positive flourishing, and as result, higher levels of wellbeing.

In this regards, Goleman (2011) supports this link between SEC and wellbeing by emphasizing the need for empowering students' social emotional needs to enable them to be mentally healthy individuals. This level of mental health can be achieved by paying attention to systemic SEL intervention that incorporate SEC to enable student to be knowledgeable, responsible, nonviolent, caring, and thoughtful (Goleman, 2011). In relation, Estes and Sirgy

(2017, p.4) suggest that higher levels of wellbeing appear to “be reserved for those who attain remarkable levels of consciousness, self-awareness, and compassion for others”.

From another dimension, Cummins (2014) argues that one of the essential elements in the pursuit of individual wellbeing is the fulfilment of a balanced sense of harmony between thoughts and actual life events. This balance is called *homeostasis*. Within this concept, individuals’ life that is full of distractions can prevent them from the achievement of collective wellbeing level. In contrast, individuals’ inner capacity of self-reflection, focus and introspection can facilitate a pathway to higher levels of wellbeing. This argument is supported by Estes and Sirgy(2017, p.11) who suggest that wellbeing is not a thing, rather it is the result of “ a process of continuous introspection, self-reflection and thoughtful analysis”.

Seligman (2011), viewed wellbeing within the theory of human flourishing as a set of building blocks of: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment (PERMA). Therefore, within this concept, Seligman (2011) was aiming to explore the sources of strengths that those people were drawing on and skills that contributed to their wellbeing levels. Ryff’s early work (Ryff, 1989a) identified aspects that constitute wellbeing: autonomy; environmental mastery; positive relationships with others; purpose in life; realization of potential and self-acceptance. In addition, this approach is related to the view of wellbeing from the cognitive-behaviour therapy perspective (Diener and Suh, 1997). This therapy suggests that individuals’ way of perceiving different events in life, and then to categories them into positive or negative events will influence the emotions, thinking and as a result the behaviours as a whole. As a result, individuals’ level of wellbeing is influenced and interconnected with their ability to distinguish between positive and negative ideas to avoid perceiving the negative ones and effecting the thinking, emotions and vice versa.

Living life in a positive approach enables individuals to face different challenges, overcome difficulties and move from painful past experiences to the present moment. In essence, stable wellbeing is related to individuals’ psychological, social and physical resources that they need to meet a particular psychological, social and/or physical challenge. When individuals have more challenges than resources, their wellbeing levels will decrease, and vice versa (Shah and Marks, 2004). Estes and Sirgy (2017, p.3) emphasize this relationship by indicating that the “experience of wellbeing results from a combination of the varied internal

and external experiences that impact our lives each day”. In this regard, many researchers emphasized the link between overcoming the different painful or unwanted memories to the improvement of individuals’ wellbeing levels. This process of overcoming memories according to Burch and Penman (2013) requires a set of well-honed emotional skills that can facilitate the healing, adjusting and flourishing of individuals. This connection is explained in the light of *Abdera* theory. Within this theory, individuals are viewed as unique clusters consisting body and soul atoms that were equally material (Estes and Sirgy, 2017). According to his theory, good mental health and wellbeing is the result of the function “of a kind of dynamic equilibrium or harmonious balance among the internal atoms of an individual and the external atoms of his or her environment” (Estes and Sirgy, 2017, p.36). Therefore, the more inner skills and cognitive abilities individuals have, the more ability they can develop to face different external challenges in their life. Thus, the attainment of well-being is predicated by individuals’ ability and inner skills to consciously use the past and the hoped-for futures to inform present’s thoughts, feelings, and actions with deliberateness and intentionality.

Another interrelated dimension of wellbeing and SEC is the relation between feeling happy and positive social relations. In his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith (1982) emphasized that what contribute in achieving self-satisfaction and happiness is the praise from others and self-approbation. These linked feelings of satisfaction are best sources of happiness because “the chief part of human happiness arises from the consciousness of being loved” (Smith, 1982, p. 41). Therefore, this relationship forms another approach of linkages between self-awareness, positive relations with others and wellbeing.

From Islamic perspective, social, emotional and psychological skills are seen as important contributors to the individuals’ wellbeing levels. For instance, Muslims attend a group prayer each Friday with an integrated small lecture. The aim of this group prayer is to enhance social, emotional, religious and spiritual skills that enhance individuals’ wellbeing and life-satisfaction. This life stratification is achieved by training the own-self to accept all the circumstances and to maintain positive thinking. Positive thinking is related to the blessings given by God to each individual that include inner worth, uniqueness and the ability to overcome obstacles. Therefore, each Muslim is encouraged always to remember the blessings he/she has “And continue to remind, for surely the reminder profits the believers” (Qur’an, p.595).

All these aspects emphasize that SEC and Wellbeing can be considered as interconnected concepts in which the development of social emotional skills can improve the status of individual's wellbeing levels. Therefore, SEL is focused on providing students with the social emotional competencies (SEC) that allow them to explore how to deal with their own feelings, how to react to the different life changes and how to maintain social relations with others. As a result, SEL is an approach that *empower* students with SEC to improve their wellbeing levels throughout the different stages of their life.

Significance of SEL programmes

Social and emotional learning skills are important to determine the quality of life for all ages. Zins and Elias (2007, p.250) emphasize that “students today must be prepared not only to pass tests at school but also to pass the tests of life”. In addition, Elias (2006, p.6) suggests that “SEL is sometimes called *the missing piece* because it represents a part of education that links academic knowledge with a specific set of skills important to success in schools, families, communities, workplaces, and life in general”. People with strong social and emotional skills are more successful in many areas such as solving personal problems, establishing interpersonal relationships, having self-knowledge and self-understanding (Kabakçı and Korkut, 2010).

According to Zins et al. (2001), the potential effects of social emotional learning are divided into two groups; *primary* and *secondary*. The primary effects are; academic achievement, motivation towards learning, increased commitment to school, decreased possibility of school's dropout rate, graduation with a higher degree and higher possibilities of finding future jobs. Secondary effects can be seen in different areas like; greater competence, increased cooperation with others, developed social and problem-solving skills, community cohesion, increased healthy life expectations, less drug and violence and improved family relations (Kabakçı and Korkut, 2010). Payton et al. (2008, p.6) emphasize that SEL can be implemented to enable students to :

- 1) appraise themselves and their abilities realistically (self-awareness),
- 2) regulate their feelings and behaviours appropriately (self-management),
- 3) interpret social cues accurately (social awareness),
- 4) resolve interpersonal conflicts effectively

(relationship skills), and 5) make good decisions about daily challenges (responsible decision making).

Therefore, students who apply these competencies are headed on a pathway toward success in school and later life (Payton et al., 2008).

SEL programmes carried out in schools can lead “to improvements not only in the mental health of children and their parents but also improved social functioning, academic and work performance and general health behaviour” (Barry et al., 2019, p. 292). In relation, Payton et al. (2008) revealed in their results of three large-scale reviews of 317 studies that SEL programmes yielded multiple benefits to all students. The benefits included an increase in positive social behaviour, commitment to school, self-awareness, relationships with others and academic performance and a decrease in emotional distress and conduct problems. In addition, these SEL programmes improved students’ academic performance across all schools indicating the positive educational outcomes associated with SEL.

Planning, implementing and evaluating programmes that serve children and adolescents’ mental health needs is one of the central priorities of the 2015-2030 Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescents’ Health (WHO and Mathers, 2016). Within this priority, adolescence is considered as a critical stage of formative growth marked by vulnerability, opportunities and emotional variability (Dahl and Killen, 2018). During this period of life, adolescents’ understanding of their world, relationships with others and habits they develop will determine their future success and mental wellbeing. Adolescence is described by Coleman (1978) as the storm and stress stage of life in which youth are faced with different issues that make them vulnerable and anxious. These issues might negatively influence adolescents’ relationships with others, the ability to deal with life challenges and might result in mental health issues. Therefore, as suggested by Casas et al. (2013), providing youth during their developmental stage with the appropriate support that strengthen inner abilities and enables them to recognize their potential will contribute to their positive development and reduce the risk of mental health issues. Thus, adolescence can be considered as the *optimal time* to promote positive mental health, coping skills and positive behaviours that equip youth with considered buffering skills against potential risk factors and mental health problems.

Investing in initiatives that work to address adolescents' profound social, psychological and emotional needs is key to the community's sustainable development. Furthermore, 'there is strong evidence that the early years of life have a crucial impact on mental health throughout the life cycle and the development of strategies to promote the mental health of young children is therefore of fundamental importance' (Barry, 2019, p.131). In addition, a growing body of the literature reports the benefits of SEL interventions that contribute to the positive development of children and adolescents' wellbeing. Keyes (2006) reports that significant numbers of middle school students experience low levels of psychological well-being. Therefore, Keyes (2006) suggests that students can maintain higher levels of wellbeing when their social and emotional needs are supported in a healthy learning environment that enable them to flourish and prompt their inner abilities.

Furlong et al. (2014, p.14) argue that "increased numbers of external assets (e.g., supportive family and school relationships) and internal assets (e.g., achievement motivation and coping skills) are predictive of better school achievement and other quality-of-life outcomes for youth". As a result, numerous enduring psychological, social, emotional and academic benefits can be achieved when students maintain and practice incrementally higher levels of wellbeing (Furlong et al., 2009).

The role of the school

Schools have an important role in nurturing children and adolescent's social and emotional development in addition to their academic and cognitive skills. Moreover, schools represent an ideal socializing context for promoting students' mental wellbeing during their formative age of social, emotional and cognitive development (Durlak et al., 2011). In this regard, many studies report that students who experience a positive school environment are more likely to experience an increase in the levels of mental health and a decrease in the levels of risk behaviours (Wickrama and Vazsonyi, 2011). In relation, "research has shown that from the earliest ages, the quality of school experiences plays a contributory role in key developmental and learning milestones such as motivation, identity development, health outcomes and overall academic success" (Furlong et al., 2009, p.3).

In this regard, Barry et al. (2019) argue that "comprehensive SEL interventions that focus on children and adolescents' wellbeing in their school socializing environment can produce

long-lasting effects on the mental social and positive behavioural outcomes". Aked et al. (2008) discussed the role of child and student-centred school interventions in prompting their wellbeing and social emotional competencies. They emphasized the importance of these interventions on empowering individual's strengths, preventing mental health issues and prompting positive mental health. Therefore, social emotional prevention and promotion interventions can significantly contribute to improving the overall health of society.

Social emotional learning programmes are designed in schools and educational systems to equip students with skills and competencies that enable them to succeed in different practices in the future (Greenberg et al., 2003). Future practices are not limited to core academic achievements, rather, it is related to serving individual's social and emotional needs to be able to work within multicultural environments, practice positive relations, and face different challenges successfully. Damon et al. (2006) argue that SEL can contribute in promoting students' wellbeing by addressing their social competencies, social relations and academic and behavioural performance. Therefore, schools' role is not limited to focusing on students' academic performance and cognitive development, rather, a shift to focusing on the social and emotional development is needed. As a result, addressing students' social and emotional needs can improve their wellbeing levels and empower them with practices that enable them to face future challenges.

Application in school's settings

Approaching the literature reveals various SEL interventions implemented in different countries, with different participants' backgrounds using multiple approaches of interventions. These studies were designed to investigate the *impact* of SEL programmes on dimensions of mental health and wellbeing, academic performance and social behaviours. Those dimensions were assessed either together or separately based on the research design and objectives. Furthermore, SEL programmes are evaluated in different experimental, meta-analysis, randomized control trials and case studies to reveal the main outcomes and benefits that can be achieved. The results of SEL interventions vary in the literature; some studies reported that SEL interventions had a positive impact on multiple outcomes, other studies revealed that the impact was limited to one or two outcomes, while other studies reported that there was no impact associated with SEL school-based programmes.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2005) emphasizes that SEL programmes can be applied in schools' context to promote students' positive social development and academic performance within two approaches; *instructional* and *environmental*. The first approach refers to directly applied instructional strategies that involve designing, selecting and providing students with programmes that cover social and emotional competencies in a contextually and culturally appropriate approach (Lemerise and Arsenio, 2000). These approaches involve different designs of schools' programmes integrated within the curriculum, offered in different settings within school time or as after-school activities. In contrast, the aim of the indirect environmental approach is to establish a positive school environment that foster students' emotional skills by involving them in social activities, peer initiatives, and whole school practices that promote their sense of belonging, intrinsic motivation and mental health development (Greenberg et al., 2003).

Payton et al. (2008) argue that SEL interventions are delivered in schools in three main developmentally appropriate approaches; the *whole school*, *targeted/indicated* and *universal-classroom* interventions. These interventions are sometimes overlapped with the time constraints, academic demands and educational pressure that force teachers to prioritize the academic objectives over the social emotional ones. To overcome these challenges, many programmes were designed to be effectively integrated within the everyday curriculum to avoid any overlapping or pressure to the teaching environment. In addition, other programmes were designed on session-based programmes that last from 8-12 weeks, while other programmes adopted the after-school approach to avoid any conflicts with schools' curriculum (Greenberg et al. 2005, Durlak et al., 2011).

Whole school approach

The *whole school* approach is designed to create a positive, nurturing *school environment* to serve students' social and mental wellbeing needs. This approach involves delivering SEL interventions to the entire school community to integrate the promotion of social skills, mental health and wellbeing into daily practices to include all students, teachers and school staff (Oberle et al., 2016). The whole school approach aims to form a comprehensive, collaborative and supportive school environment to promote social emotional competencies. Bond et al. (2004) explain the whole-school approach as the process of building trust, communication, and relations through the establishment of positive values within the whole

school context. Within this approach, the school environment is viewed as a whole unit of change to promote different life skills within the ongoing collaboration of all school stakeholders (Greenberg et al., 2003). Meyers et al. (2015) posit that the whole school SEL design aims to teach social emotional skills in an indirect approach that involves best practices of school's vision, policies, positive relations, students' and staff's participation academic performance.

The discussion of the whole school approach's impact on social emotional skills, wellbeing and academic performance is contradicted in the literature. Goldberg et al. (2019) reported in their meta-analysis of 45 studies that evaluated whole school interventions that post-intervention outcomes demonstrated small but significant improvement in students' skills of social emotional adjustment and social behaviours. Furthermore, these interventions did not influence students' academic achievements. In their systematic review of 52 systematic reviews and meta-analyses of mental health in schools, Weare and Nind (2011) pointed out that whole school approaches are failing to show a significant impact on students' social emotional skills and wellbeing because of the lack of a consistent process of implementation and rigorous evaluation. Therefore, they emphasized the need for more effective designs, approaches of implementation and evaluations of whole schools' SEL interventions.

In contrast, other scholars support the view that the whole school approach can significantly impact students' social and emotional skills. Green et al. (2005) revealed in their review of 8 systematic reviews of the impact of school-based interventions in promoting students' mental health and social emotional competencies that promotional mental health approach that targets the whole school environment to be more effective in achieving the programmes' objectives. In relation, Goldberg et al. (2019) reviewed in their recent meta-analysis school-based interventions adopting a whole school approach to determine the impact on students' social and emotional developments. The findings of 45 included studies reported significant but small improvements in students' social, behavioural and emotional adjustments.

Bernard and Walton (2011) examined the impact of the whole school SEL interventions in six primary schools, with six matched schools serving as controls. The results indicated significant improvements over time on different aspects of student wellbeing for students' who participated in the SEL interventions. In this regard, Kasler and Elias (2012, p.5) reported in their study that "the whole school SEL programme is highly scalable, reaching

over 7,000 students with training for nearly 800 staff members at 23 district schools in a two year period”. Therefore, their results indicate the effectiveness of the whole school approaches in reaching higher numbers of students who can benefit from SEL interventions. These results demonstrate that the whole school approach might be considered as a moderator for successful SEL outcomes.

Targeted approach

The targeted or indicated interventions are designed specifically for students at higher risk of mental health problems, including anxiety and depression, to equip them with skills that reduce negative behavioural and mental health issues. These interventions are designed to strengthen students’ coping skills and provide them with opportunities to practice these skills to promote their social emotional. There is strong evidence that indicated SEL programmes have a substantially positive impact in improving wellbeing, mental health and behavioural issues for students at risk. In this regard, Beelmann and Lösel (2006, p.603) emphasise in the results of their study that “prevention measures indicated for children and adolescents who already manifested some behavioural problems had larger effect sizes than universal approaches”. In their review of 80 indicated studies involving 11,337 students that focused on students with signs of social emotional, and behavioural problems, Payton et al. (2008) reported significant positive benefits across a range of outcomes. These outcomes included; improved relations with others, social emotional skills and decreased symptoms of anxiety and depression. Coelho et al. (2015)’s study results support these findings by emphasizing that students with initially lower levels of social skills benefited more from the SEL intervention.

Schwartz (2016) evaluated the impact of an indicated social emotional intervention on 35 students using a randomized-control trial design. The findings of this study revealed improvements in student knowledge, problem behaviours, and teacher ratings of prosocial behaviours for all students. In a systematic review of 19-targeted social and emotional learning interventions, Blewitt et al. (2019) revealed that, while evidence for targeted SEL programmes is still emerging, it might offer a promising early intervention approach to strengthen aspects of social and behavioural functioning.

In contrast, other scholars reported that indicated SEL programmes might not significantly impact students' social, behavioural and emotional skill. Quinn et al. (1999) reported in their meta-analysis of social skill interventions for students with emotional or behavioural disorders that indicated interventions did not result in substantial changes in students' behaviours. These results revealed that indicated SEL interventions might not benefit students at risk or with behavioural issues. In relation, in their meta-analysis of 55 indicated SEL for children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders (ASD), Bellini et al. (2007, p.160) indicated that although the interventions that were implemented in the students' typical classroom setting, however, these social skills interventions were minimally effective for children with ASDP.

Universal approach

Universal SEL interventions are designed to integrate social, emotional competencies in classroom settings to all students to promote their mental health and wellbeing. Therefore, this approach is different from the whole school approach that focuses on the school environment as a whole rather than classroom settings. In addition, this approach is different from the targeted approach in that it involves all the students in the classroom regardless of their social, behavioural and mental health status. These universal SEL programmes are associated with major positive outcomes on students' social emotional competencies, a greater level of wellbeing, school performance and social relations (Damon et al., 2006). As the focus of this study is on evaluating the impact of a universal social emotional intervention, the universal approach is discussed in detail in this section.

Ashdown and Bernard (2012) investigated the effects of SEL skills universal curriculum on students' wellbeing, social-emotional development and academic performance of 99 students in Australia. Students were randomly divided into an experimental group that participated in a ten weeks programme and a non-participants control group. The study revealed that the SEL programme had a statistically significant positive effect on students' wellbeing, behaviours, academic achievements and social emotional competencies. Catalano et al. (2002) too revealed in their systematic review of 25 SEL programmes for youth that school-based interventions successfully improved students' interpersonal skills, positive relationships and academic achievements. In this regard, in their meta-analysis of 75 studies that investigated universal school-based SEL programmes, Sklad et al. (2012, p.892) revealed

that these universal programmes successfully resulted in “overall beneficial effects on all seven major categories of outcomes occurred: social skills, antisocial behaviour, substance abuse, positive self-image, academic achievement, mental health, and prosocial behaviour”.

In a recent meta-analysis, Taylor et al. (2017) reviewed 82 universal SEL interventions and revealed that participants achieved significantly higher results compared to controls in terms of wellbeing indicators and social emotional competencies. Furthermore, the researchers of this study emphasized that “by fostering social and emotional skills and positive attitudes in students, the school-based, universal SEL interventions reviewed in this study achieved these ends during follow-up in terms of significantly improving skills, positive attitudes, prosocial behaviour, and academic performance” (Taylor et al., 2017, p.1167). Weare and Nind (2011) indicated in their review of 46 meta-analysis and narrative reviews of universal school-based SEL interventions that beneficial effects on children and adolescents following the SEL interventions were achieved, while long-term impact needs further investigation.

Wells et al. (2013) conducted a systematic review of universal school-based mental health promotion interventions. The results of 17 studies revealed that universal school-based programmes could be effective in promoting students’ mental wellbeing and social skills. In relation, Corcoran et al. (2018) reported in their systematic review and meta-analysis of 79 studies that students exposed to a universal social and emotional learning intervention showed significant improvement in social competence, emotional skills e, behavioural management, emotional and behavioural issues, and academic performance compared with control participants.

Durlak et al. (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of 213 school-based studies involving 270,034 kindergartens through high school students to examine the impact of universal SEL programmes on students’ social and emotional skills, academic performance and classroom behaviours. Schools’ teaching staff fully delivered these SEL programmes. The results revealed that experimental groups compared to control groups demonstrated improvement in SEL skills and academic achievements. Related to these results, in a study conducted to evaluate the impact of SEL programmes on students’ academic performance in 24 schools, Schonfeld et al. (2015) reported that participated students reported higher levels of grades in reading, writing and math. These results indicate that social emotional programmes can form a promising approach to promote students’ academic proficiency in different subjects.

Furthermore, Shulkind and Foote (2009) argue that the lack of addressing social and emotional competencies in schools can result in a negative impact on personal, academic and behavioural performance.

When the SEL programmes are focused on improving social emotional skills and competencies, the *social dimensions* of students' wellbeing can be improved. These dimensions include; increased social and emotional skills, better behaviour and reduced mental health difficulties. These interventions may also have an impact on students' academic performance, however, the focus of these interventions is to measure the impact on the social emotional skills. Various interventions were developed to target adolescents to improve their social and emotional competencies and mental wellbeing (Barry, Clarke & Dowling, 2017). Evidence that supports the direct positive effects of social emotional learning reasonably is consistent in the literature especially in facilitating healthy mental development and well-being for students. Moreover, a considerable number of systematic reviews and meta-analyses results support the notion that SEL programmes can positively impact children and adolescents' wellbeing and social emotional competencies (Seligman et al.2005; Sin and Lyubomirsky, 2009).

Wilson and Lipsey (2006) revealed in their systematic review of 73 universal school-based SEL interventions that Students who participated in universal SEL programmes reported lower aggressive and disruptive behaviour after the programmes compared to students who did not participate in the programme. Gigantesco et al. (2015) conducted an evaluation study for a school-based mental health programme to assess the effectiveness of this programme on 308 students from nine Italian schools. The results showed significant positive effects on the positive mental wellbeing of participated students.

Seligman et al. (2009) conducted one of the major leading studies in the USA to explore the concept of positive education. Within this study, researchers explained the importance of positive education in combining academic and well-being skills in schools. This combination can change the learning objectives from being limited to literacy, success and accomplishment, to consider students' social and emotional needs to achieve the best results in educational settings. Within this study, two school psychological interventions were investigated to evaluate their impact on students' well-being: the Penn Resiliency Programme (PRP) and the Strath Haven Positive Psychology Curriculum. The programmes' evaluation

was conducted by completing a randomized controlled evaluation of the high school positive psychology curriculum. A total number of 347 Year 9 students were assigned to Language Arts classes that contained the positive psychology curriculum (Positive Psychology Condition) or did not (Control). The results reported a significant impact on decreasing depression symptoms, reduction in hopelessness and anxiety symptoms and increased students' reports of enjoyment and engagement in school.

Beelmann, A. and Lösel (2006) examined in their meta-analysis of 84 universal SEL interventions that focused on the effects of social skills on adolescent's antisocial behaviour and revealed that significant beneficial outcomes on social competencies and antisocial behaviour at post-test were achieved. Coelho, Marchante and Sousa (2015) investigated the impact of a universal school-based social-emotional learning programme on students' social, emotional competencies. The study involved 1091 students in three school years of grade 7th to 9th. The results revealed positive intervention results in social awareness, self-management, self-confidence, social isolation, and social awareness and social anxiety. Furthermore, Castro (2014) revealed that a culturally adapted SEL programme resulted in a significant impact on adolescents' social emotional, resiliency and self-knowledge.

Universal interventions can benefit all students regardless of their behavioural, academic, social or cultural background. Duncan et al. (2017) reported in a study involving a total of 1130 youths in 14 schools that holistic SEL programmes universally delivered students can positively impact all participating in these programmes regardless of their high-risk or low-risk behavioural problems. These results are consistent with the meta-analysis of 180 school-based universal SEL studies involving 277,977 students in which Payton et al. (2008, p.12) reported that "compared to students in the control groups, those participating in SEL universal programmes demonstrated significantly enhanced social-emotional skills, attitudes, and positive social behaviour, reduced conduct problems and emotional distress, and improved academic performance at post-intervention".

Such early findings continue to be replicated and extended in current, more recent literature. Cejudo, Losada and Feltrero (2020) revealed in their quasi-experimental study that SEL interventions significantly improved students' mental health, behavioural adjustments and quality of life aspects. In addition, they emphasized the importance of implementing SEL programmes throughout adolescent's developmental age as a protective approach. In a long

term evaluation over three years, Barrett et al. (2020) evaluated a universal preventive SEL programme on students from grades 6-9 in comparison to the control group. The longitudinal and follow up results indicate that SEL programme significantly reduced symptoms of anxiety, depression and emotional disorders. In their recent meta-analysis of 57 social emotional, Lee et al. (2020) the results indicated that interventions to enhance prosocial behaviours, emotional regulation, and spirituality were generally effective for individuals with mental or physical illnesses and for individuals from the community in general.

In more recent studies, Deli, Kaur and Hashim (2021) revealed in their study that regular SEL interventions in school settings reduced students' dropout rates and learning anxiety. In relation, Harris and Binfet (2021) explored children's perceptions of a six-week after-school social emotional learning programme. The results of their case study revealed that students reflected a positive experience, improved engagement and more interactions with others after participating in the programme. Kopelman-Rubin et al. (2021) provided a group of 419 adolescents with a social emotional learning programme based on interpersonal psychotherapy for adolescents. The results of the second year analysis showed a significant improvement in students' emotional managements, self-control, responsibility, relationships with others and cooperation skills. Moreover, the study revealed significant reductions in internalizing symptoms and bullying among students in the intervention group.

Green et al. (2021) reported in their findings of a social emotional intervention that students who received the curriculum showed significant improvements in decision-making, communication, emotional regulation, and problem-solving and resilience skills compared to the student who did not participate in the intervention. These results of the different recent studies of SEL interventions suggest feasible and promising outcomes that can reduce students' behavioural issues and anxiety symptoms while enhancing interpersonal emotional skills.

Critics of social emotional learning programmes in school

Although multiple outcomes are associated with SEL interventions, as discussed in the previous sections, some scholars are against supporting these programmes in schools. Craig (2007), for instance, warns that SEL may be a *waste of time* and resources and might backfire and undermine young people's wellbeing. He argues that SEL interventions might expose

children and adolescents to major psychological experiments that can negatively impact their emotional thinking and wellbeing levels. Furthermore, he claims that “the implication is that young people all need to be taught a range of skills managing their feelings, making friendships, keeping calm – that previous generation accomplished without express help and took for granted” (Craig, 2007, p.60).

In this regard, Ecclestone (2007) claim that social emotional interventions aim to improve individuals’ self-awareness, emotional management and social relations; however, teaching these skills might lead to the approach of *professionalization* of individuals’ emotions. Therefore, Ecclestone (2007) argue that within this approach, individuals will develop the idea that they are vulnerable and need the support of professionals to teach them how to feel, how to control their emotions and how to maintain their relationships with others. Moreover, Ecclestone (2007) views SEL interventions as a *therapeutic education* that might negatively impact the educational system and society as a whole.

Other scholars argue that SEL interventions might not improve students’ social emotional skills or make a difference in their wellbeing levels. In this regard, in a combined quantitative and qualitative empirical inquiry, Wigelsworth, Humphrey and Lendrum (2012) conducted national evaluations of universal secondary SEAL programmes in the UK. The quantitative stage of the study involved 22 SEAL schools and a comparison group of 19 schools in which students’ self-report surveys were collected. The analysis of students’ surveys indicated the SEAL programmes had failed to significantly impact students social and emotional skills, mental health and pro-social behaviours. This quantitative stage was followed by a qualitative component in which nine schools were recruited to be part of longitudinal qualitative case studies (Wigelsworth, Humphrey and Lendrum, 2012). Data collection involved interviews, observations, focus groups and school document analysis. The results revealed that SEL interventions, in general, had not led to the expected outcomes across schools; however, a significant increase in students’ feelings of autonomy and influence and specific improvements in behaviour, interpersonal skills and relationships were achieved. This is related to Goldberg et al. (2019)’ meta-analysis that revealed no impact of SEL interventions on students’ academic performance.

Combining the perspectives of the different scholars who are against or with the implementation of social emotional interventions reveals some gaps in these perspectives.

The scholars who are against the SEL interventions claim that children and adolescents do not need to be taught what they should think or behave. In contrast, scholars who support SEL interventions argue that, within these interventions, we are not teaching children and adolescents how to think; rather, we are providing them with learning opportunities and life skills that improve their inner abilities to face challenges, maintain positive relations with others and achieve academic and personal targets. In addition, empowering students with social and emotional competencies can buffer them against different mental and psychological health issues. Therefore, the benefits of SEL can be considered as a preventive approach that can improve adolescents' inner capacities to cope, adapt and adjust with different life events.

This section highlighted the different perspectives on the benefits and outcomes that can be achieved after implementing SEL interventions. The majority of studies worldwide report a change, an increase or a development in students' social emotional competencies, academic performance or social behaviours after participating in SEL interventions. Thus, the focus of this study is to explore how SEL programmes work in the field, what positive outcomes can be achieved and what factors can hinder or facilitate the SEL programme's success. Therefore, this study is based on the literature that hypothesizes a positive relationship between the implementation of social emotional interventions and positive outcomes for adolescents' wellbeing levels. Due to the Covid-19 circumstances, the evaluated outcomes in this study are focused on the short-term and immediate results after the SEL programme's implementation. Therefore, more future investigations are needed to investigate the longitudinal impact of SEL interventions in the Qatari schools' settings.

Social emotional learning population

There is a growing body of evidence indicating that SEL interventions, when effectively designed, prepared and implemented, can promote children and adolescent's emotional and social skills and mental wellbeing levels in schools and result in better emotional, social functioning, academic performance and higher levels of mental wellbeing (Wilson et al., 2001). The diverse abilities, backgrounds and needs of students in educational settings result in different levels of academic achievements, social adjustments and wellbeing. Therefore, one of the main challenges for schools' leaders is to create a nurturing environment that serves those different needs. Some students can easily engage with the teacher, achieve

higher grades and feel more happy and optimistic about their future. In contrast, other students might have different abilities, ambition or motivation towards learning, and therefore can be faced with various issues that impact their academic performance, social relations and wellbeing levels (Kumpfer & Seligman, 2003).

In this regard, Greenberg et al. (2003. P.476) argue that “large numbers of students with mental health problems and deficits in social emotional competence have difficulty learning or disrupt the educational experiences of their peers “(Greenberg et al., 2003. P.476). Therefore, SEL interventions are designed based on the population needs to serve all different student in educational settings. Therefore, the implementation of SEL interventions are different based on the *population focus*. The population focus of SEL interventions can be categorized into two different approaches; *promotion/preventive* approach and *reduce risk factors* approach.

Wilson and Lipsey (2006, p.7) describe the difference between these approaches by stating that “universal prevention interventions are programmes delivered in classroom settings to an entire classroom; children are not selected individually for treatment but, rather, receive the programme simply because they are in a programme classroom”. In contrast, selected or indicated prevention interventions target children who are exhibiting risk factors (such as anger or hyperactivity) or children who are already showing signs of the disorder.

The *preventive* approach of SEL programme is designed to promote students’ social emotional competencies to prevent them from future social and mental issues. Merrell, Levitt and Gueldner (2010) emphasize that preventive social and emotional learning (SEL) interventions are delivered to all students based upon the idiom of ‘an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure’. In this regard, Barry et al. (2019, p. 2) suggest that “promotion focuses on promoting positive mental health among the general population and addresses the needs of those at risk from, or experiencing, mental health problems”. Within this approach, early adolescences students are ‘immunized’ against future difficulties and challenges that everybody face during the different life stages. Early adolescences is the period from 10 to 15 years (Barry et al., 2019). Within this period, adolescents go through a significant transitional period in human development, marking the crossroads between childhood and young adulthood. Therefore, the general preventive approach of SEL interventions can be

considered as an approach to reduce future mental, social and psychological issues (Greenberg, 2004)

As a preventive and protective approach, SEL programmes aim to promote children and adolescent' positive mental and social emotional development by integrating skills, competencies and values within school programmes to provide them with skills of positive adjustments to different life challenges (Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008). Ferrer-Wreder (2014, p.3025) suggest that “prevention science is concerned with taking action at the present time in order to reduce the likelihood that a problematic, future outcome will come to pass”. Therefore, prevention researchers seek to better understand the impact of social emotional intervention as a preventive approach and determine which steps can facilitate the achievement of the desired outcomes. Furthermore, “primary prevention efforts would lower the incidence of emotional disorder by reducing stress and enhancing competence and coping skills” (Weissberg, Kumpfer & Seligman, 2003, p.425).

This proactive approach is crucial to prevent students from facing various social and emotional issues during their different developmental stages. One of the universal programmes that targeted the promotion of students' wellbeing in schools is Zippy's Friends universal SEL intervention (Bale and Mishara, 2004). This programme was evaluated in many countries such as Canada, Denmark and the UK, and the results indicated a positive change in students' social emotional competencies, classroom behaviours and social relations (Bale and Mishara, 2004). These findings indicate that universal SEL programmes can provoke growth in positive behaviours and decrease negative behaviours for all students.

SEL programmes are different in terms of instructional approach and instructors. In terms of instructional approach, programmes can be integrated into the everyday curriculum indirectly, provided in workshop style lectures on a weekly basis, or given in afterschool hours (Payton et al., 2008). The curriculum integrated programmes might be longer than the weekly and short terms ones and are likely to be more successful (Pahl & Barrett 2006). These long-term interventions can promote students' positive mental health and well-being and achieve positive changes to the whole school environment (Barry et al., 2013). In contrast, Taylor et al. (2017)'s study revealed that short-term classroom-based interventions could achieve higher positive results. In relation, Sklad et al. (2012) examined 75 studies that

investigated school-based social emotional programmes' interventions features to explore the effectiveness of short duration programmes compared to the longer duration ones. They found that programmes delivered within less than a year resulted in higher immediate effects on students' social emotional skills than longer programmes.

As a result, this approach of incorporation of SEL in the standard educational practices can result in a positive impact on different social and emotional competencies, wellbeing and academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011). In terms of the programme's duration, this study is evaluating the impact of a social emotional programme on students' wellbeing delivered over eight weeks.

Instructors of social emotional interventions

Fielding (2004) emphasizes the importance of students and school staff relationships within the student-centred learning environments. He suggests that successful schools' interventions are associated with mutual care, respect, dialogue, and actions that prompt students' aspiration and commitment within these programmes. Hawkins, Smith and Catalano (2004) mentioned the important role of quality of instruction in the success of SEL programmes in schools by enhancing students' sense of belonging and prompting their motivation to be involved in different academic and social activities. Furthermore, Humphrey et al. (2010) investigated in their study what makes an SEL programme successful in schools' settings. The study revealed that the most important component of effective SEL programmes are the delivery approach and the instructor's personality. In addition, in their early case studies reports, Humphrey et al. (2009, p.292) indicated that "the characteristics of the facilitator were considered to be a crucial component of small group implementation in our case-study schools...effective facilitators had to be able to make use of the very social and emotional skills they were attempting to promote in pupil".

Some scholars support the notion that SEL programmes delivered by school staff are more effective than programmes delivered by external instructors. In relation, Payton et al. (2008) suggest that SEL programmes can be more effective and achieve better outcomes for students when implemented by school staff. Furthermore, Durlak et al. (2011) reported in their meta-analysis that SEL interventions were more effective and achieved better outcomes when delivered by teachers within a classroom integrated approach.

In contrast, other scholars reported evidence that SEL programmes are far more effective when delivered by practitioners and professionals outside schools. Carsley, Khoury and Heath (2018) reported in their meta-analysis of 24 studies that investigated the effectiveness of school-based interventions that interventions were more effective and achieved better outcomes when delivered and facilitated by outside instructors. The reasons are attributed to the more experience and in-depth knowledge that the practitioners have compared to trained teachers. From another perspective, Sklad et al. (2012) found in their meta-analysis that there was no significant difference between the outcomes of programmes delivered by trained school staff or by outside instructors and facilitators.

Within this study, an outsider instructor/practitioner delivered the social emotional programme. This instructor's background, experience and characteristics were discussed in the first chapter. She has knowledge of the Qatari culture and awareness of the Qatari educational system. Her role in this study was to implement the programme's eight sessions in the selected preparatory public school in Qatar. Therefore, part of this study is the evaluation of the impact of implementing the SEL programme by an outsider instructor on the programme's outcomes-based in students' perspectives.

A Western and an Islamic designs of SEL

As discussed in the wellbeing chapter, the concepts of wellbeing in the Western and Islamic culture are different in some aspects and are similar in others. In relation, Social emotional learning programmes have the same similarities and differences within the different contexts. In order to explore these similarities and differences of the two different SEL programmes, a comparison between the Islamic SEL programme in this study, and the CASEL model was conducted.

As illustrated in this chapter, different approaches, designs and initiatives that aim to address students' social emotional competencies were conducted in the West. One of the popular interventions is based on the CASEL model. This model is based on five main competencies; (a) self-management, (b) self-awareness, (c) social awareness, (d) relationship skills, and (e) responsible decision-making (Payton et al., 2000). The CASEL model emphasizes that these five competencies can lead to short- and long-term positive outcomes including positive

attitudes and social behaviour, reduction of conduct problems and emotional distress, higher academic success and improved mental health (Durlak et al., 2011; Greenberg et al., 2003). Similarly, the SEL intervention in this study was based on Islamic concepts with the aim to improve students' different competencies of emotional regulation, positive thinking, relationships with others, social awareness and motivation towards achievement. Within this SEL programme, Islamic virtues are considered to be translated into positive pro-social/emotional behaviours.

For instance, the concept of self-management in CASEL model refers to individuals' ability to regulate thoughts, emotions, and behaviours (Durlak et al., 2011). In relation, the positive steps programme in this study aims to improve students' self-management by providing them with the required skills that enable them to transform stress into resilience based on different Quranic and Hadith verses. In relation, the self-awareness dimension in the CASEL model is related to the dimension of Islamic skills of self-reassurance, self-compassion and self-care in the positive programme. These skills are aimed to empower students to be able to recognize their own emotions and accurately assess their own strengths and weaknesses. In terms of social awareness, this part is covered also in the Islamic designed SEL programme in this study. These aspects were presented in an approach that encourage students to be aware of the different culture, beliefs, and feelings of the individuals around them. This is also illustrated in many Quranic verses that encourage individuals to accept the difference of others and respect their needs.

This dimension of social awareness in the CASEL design leads to the effective social relations. This part is covered by the positive steps programme based on the Islamic notions of positive relations with others, collaborating with them and building meaningful relationships. Finally, the responsible decision-making or the ability to make plans for the future in the CASEL model is also covered in the Islamic version. This part emphasizes the need to follow moral and ethical standards to enhance individuals' own life and contribute to their wellbeing. Therefore, both approaches of SEL interventions (the CASEL and the positive steps programmes) have a strengths-based perspective and view individuals' development through the lens of empowering students with SEC that enable them to manage their emotions, face challenges and maintain their wellbeing levels. Furthermore, both approaches are based on essential elements that lead to adolescents' positive development.

However, one main difference within these two models can be identified. The CASEL model is based on the different social emotional competencies only, while the Islamic model combines these different competencies with the spiritual dimension of wellbeing and positive thinking. This substantial difference is related to the different cultural, religious and traditional backgrounds of the Arabic and Western societies. In addition, both programmes' designs are focused on specific skill promotion and positive behaviour change through teaching a set of skills in structured classrooms settings, however, they are based on different theoretical linkages and backgrounds. For instance, CASEL is based on different theories such as; Social-Cognitive Theory, Problem Behavior Theory, Social Learning Theory and Health Belief Model (Payton et al., 2000). In contrast, the positive steps programme in this study is based on Arabic and Islamic aspects that form the basis for human behaviours. Therefore, the Islamic model of SEL stresses the alignment of social emotional competencies that improve individuals' existing resources, strengths and abilities within culturally and religious concepts.

Finally, the Islamic based and SEL programme that is based on CASEL concept are different in terms of the empirical investigation of their potential strengths, pitfalls and unique contributions to the development of students' SEC and wellbeing. The CASEL based programmes were investigated in different studies (Graczyk et al., 2000; Bridgeland et al., 2013; DePaoli et al., 2017; Ross and Tolan, 2018)) while the investigation of the impact of Islamic model of SEL is still limited. Therefore, there is a need for more detailed approaches and empirical work to outline the outcomes of Islamic SEL interventions.

Social emotional learning in the Middle East

SEL programme are influenced by cultural issues in the context of implementation. According to Goldberg et al. (2019), individuals are raised, socialized and interacted within a culture that determines their values, motivation and social behaviours. Therefore, adapting to these values in a culturally appropriate approach can lead to higher levels of inner wellbeing. These cultural norms differ within countries and communities in conceptualizing what lead individuals to feel satisfied, worthy and happy. For instance, within industrial nations, getting the highest paid jobs is associated with better wellbeing levels, while in other religious countries, an individual's level of adaption to religion's guidelines, values and morals is related to life satisfaction and happiness. Therefore, one of the main challenges of SEL

programme is to design and implement evidence-based school interventions appropriate for different cultural settings and diverse groups of children and youth (Chan et al., 2019).

In relation, Chan et al. (2019, p.33) mentioned in their report of youth mental health promotion that “there is a lack of research on how religion, an important dimension of human diversity, influences the implementation and effectiveness of these interventions”. In this regard, Abdel-Khalek (2011) and Wong, Li-Tsang and Siu (2014) emphasized the important and significant role of religion in promoting wellbeing and social competencies for children and adolescent, especially in the Middle East. Moreover, the Islamic religion has an important role in addressing individuals’ spiritual, emotional and social needs and represents one of the main socio-cultural aspects in Qatar. Therefore, this study is evaluating the impact of a social emotional intervention that was designed based on religious and cultural aspects related to the Qatari community and cultural norms.

According to Chan et al. (2019), studies that focus on children and adolescents’ wellbeing and social emotional interventions in the Middle East are very limited and few studies investigated the impact of SEL interventions in Qatar specifically. Therefore, there is a need for conducting studies that explore and evaluate the impact of SEL interventions in relation to the cultural, traditional and contextual norms.

In Qatar, only two small scale studies were conducted to explore social emotional interventions. Within the first study, researchers designed a prototype lesson plan that was presented by the English teacher. The study sample included students from a girls’ preparatory school in Doha, grades 7 to 9. Data were collected through classroom observations and interviews with students and teachers before and after the prototype lesson. The results reported a significant increase in students’ participation, attention, creativity, and positive attitude (Al-Mansoori, Kayan-Fadlelmula and Abdeen, 2017).

The second study is a recent study conducted by Dedeche (2019) to explore the impact of an evidence-based coaching intervention within a Qatari government secondary school. The sample consisted of 40 male students aged between 13 and 16 years old randomly divided into two groups to conduct a randomized controlled trial. Pre and post measures were obtained for both groups. In addition to the quantitative measures, interviews were held with eight students. While the quantitative results did not show a significant improvement in life

satisfaction, the interviews strongly reported students' interest in the coaching sessions. In addition, the study revealed the urgent need to pay attention to students' wellbeing in the Qatari schools through well-designed interventions that address their emotional development. These two studies bring attention to the lack of studies that evaluated the interventions of SEL programme in the Qatari context and the needed research to fill the gap in this field there.

The discussion in the previous sections indicates that SEL programmes and interventions as constructs are drawn almost exclusively from secular Western Democracies. However, in spite of the availability of different SEL interventions worldwide, these interventions might not form the appropriate interventions throughout the different cultures. In relation, as suggested by Brown, Maggin and Buren (2018), SEL interventions in the U.S. and Western Europe have been produced by people from the West, indicating that those interventions might not necessarily form the appropriate interventions across cultures. Therefore, even with the different approaches of SEL that exist across Western cultures, there is a need for a focused approaches that serve individuals' needs from different cultural backgrounds. These *culturally relevant, adaptive or fit* social emotional interventions' are based on the reality that individuals might have different morals, values or spiritual bases that differ from culture to culture. As a result, these morals and values might interfere with individuals' inner feelings and the capacity to face challenges, achieve life satisfaction and maintain higher levels of wellbeing. Therefore, SEL interventions need to be applied and conducted in accordance to the diverse cultural norms (Brown, Maggin and Buren, 2018).

When it comes to the Islamic version of SEL interventions, there is a significant lack of such programmes in the Arabic and Islamic contexts. This lack may be related to the fact that Islamic morals and values are usually delivered to students through the subjects of Islamic studies on everyday basis in the different schools' settings. However, a specific approach or model that represents an Islamic model of SEL interventions that enhance SEC and wellbeing levels is limited in the literature. Thus, there is a need to develop a model based on the consideration, the characteristics and the cultural values of Islam to help students develop and practice these social-emotional skills and competencies. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the Qatari context is an Islamic based concepts. This Islamic culturally based context indicate the need for culturally relevant SEL interventions that involve the appropriate materials, content and objectives. Therefore, this study aims to file and amplify the outcomes and the

implementing process of a SEL intervention, rooted on Islamic values and concepts, implemented in an Arabic and Islamic context. Thus, this study is investigating and evaluating an Islamic based SEL intervention that aims to promote positive mental health and wellbeing in classroom settings, designed by an educational centre in Qatar. This intervention was delivered by an experienced instructor and was investigated through a case study methodology using both quantitative (Warwick- Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale) and qualitative (focus groups and teachers interviews) methods. These methods will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. The research question that guided this study is

What is the impact of a social and emotional programme on adolescent school pupils in a Qatari school?

This question was the basis for three sub-questions that guided the research process:

1. Would a social emotional programme in a Qatari girls' school improve students' wellbeing?
2. What is the impact of a social emotional programme from the teachers' and social staffs' perspectives in a Qatari girls' school?
3. What factors facilitated or hindered the implementation of a social and emotional programme in a Qatari girls' school?

Conclusion

Several important conclusions can be drawn from previous sections of this chapter. First, the positive impact of social emotional interventions is consistent in the literature. The majority of SEL programmes reported improvement in students' wellbeing, social behaviours and academic performance dimensions in general; other programmes reported improvement in one dimension while no improvement was reported in other studies. However, the majority of studies are from the West, and very limited studies were conducted in the Middle East and Qatar to investigate the impact of SEL interventions.

Therefore, there is a need to design, implement and evaluate social emotional interventions in school settings to identify the main outcomes, best practices and key

success factors for effective implementation in a Middle Eastern Qatari context. In terms of the programme's dynamics, social emotional intervention's success is related to the approach. Three main approaches have emerged in the literature of SEL interventions; the *whole school, indicated or universal*. The whole school approach is implemented in an indirect approach that involves the whole school environment. The indicated approach is focused on the group of students who have specific social, mental and behavioural issues. The universal approach involves direct instructions and teaching of social emotional competencies within the classrooms settings. This study is focused on the universal approach of social emotional learning.

Social emotional interventions can be delivered in multiple instructional approaches. These approaches include workshops, group work activities and direct instructions. School staff or practitioners outside school can deliver the activities of SEL interventions. In terms of duration, the literature reveals that SEL interventions can be short (6-12) weeks of more than a year.

In order to understand how and why a social emotional intervention can work while others might fail to achieve specific outcomes, there is a need to explore factors related to the programme's content, participants, type, instructional approach and duration of implementations. This information can illustrate what really works in educational settings. Thus, there is a need to conduct studies that encompass different data collection methods to explore the different dimensions of SEL interventions to provide more rigorous findings that contribute to the policy and community development.

Chan et al. (2019) argues there is a need to investigate the role of religious values on students' social and emotional learning from areas that lack studies such as the MENA (the Middle East and North Africa). There is a lack of studies that investigate, implement or evaluates social emotional interventions in Qatari school settings. Therefore, the focus of this study is on evaluating the impact of a practitioner delivered (type) universal social and emotional programme (approach) based on Islamic values on grade seven students (sample) in Doha-Qatar (context) on students' wellbeing and academic performance (outcomes).

Finally, within the next chapter, the methodology design, instruments and implementation of the programme is discussed. This literature review aimed to formulate a holistic understanding of what makes the SEL programme work, what is the real impact, how can we improve them in the future, how can we benefit from the enormous number of studies to arrive to integrated concepts of the best practices that facilitate or hinder SEL implementation.

**CHAPTER 4,
METHODOLOGY AND METHODS**

Introduction

The study was conducted in a preparatory public school for girls in Qatar. For this investigation, I selected a case study design because I needed to focus on the programme's implementation process, outcomes and perceptions of impact within a specific bounded system. This approach enables the researcher to explore a specific phenomenon of interest within its real-life settings to gain deep insights, rich information and a holistic view from different perspectives (Yin, 2002; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Thomas, 2016). In addition, I selected multiple data collection methods in order to explore and evaluate the implementation process and the SEL programme's outcomes from students, teacher and social staff's perspectives. These methods included the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS), interviews with students, teachers and social staff and observation of each SEL session. When used together, quantitative and qualitative approaches provide more coherent, reliable, and useful conclusions than do each on their own.

This chapter starts with the research design, aims and questions, a description of the selected methodological approach (the case study), characteristics, research context, sample, data collection methods, programme's implementation and ethical considerations. This chapter ends with an overview of the collected data's analytical approach to address the research questions. In more details, within this chapter, I explain the methodological research design, data collection methods and the research implementation process. The study involved four sequential phases in which each phase was the basis for the next one. Phase one involved an initial assessment of students' wellbeing levels using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being scale (WEMWBS) in a cluster randomized controlled trial (RCT) for an intervention and a control group of students. Phase two was designed to gather data on the programme's implementation process and procedures within the school context to identify factors that might hinder or facilitate the SEL programme's success. For this phase, data collection methods involved regular observations for the SEL programme's sessions. In phase three, students' level of wellbeing for the intervention and the control group after participating in the SEL programme was assessed to evaluate the achieved outcomes. In phase four, semi-structured interviews with students, teachers and social staff were conducted to explore their perspectives and experiences of the SEL intervention in their school's settings.

Research questions

This study is based on a case study design and aims to investigate and evaluate the impact of social emotional intervention on students' wellbeing and classroom behaviours in a preparatory public school in Qatar. Thus, the aims of this study were to:

- Document the effects of a social emotional programme on students' wellbeing and classroom behaviours in the context of Qatar.
- Gather evidence from students' and teachers' perspectives and opinions regarding SEL programmes in schools
- Highlight factors that can contribute or hinder the success of social emotional interventions in schools' settings
- Contribute an evidence-based study that can inform policy and practice concerned with social emotional learning in Qatar. This is the first in-depth evaluative case study conducted in Qatar that considers the experiences and needs of SEL from both students' and teachers' perspectives.

According to Thomas (2016), the study follows logically from the researcher's specified questions. In relation, DeMarrais and Lapan (2003) suggest that the study's bounding is achieved by specifying the research questions. Determining the research questions is one of the most critical parts of any study. Research questions guide the whole study's process by indicating in advance the objectives of the study. As a result, the design and the methodological approach are based on the research questions. Therefore, selecting the appropriate questions that serve the research aim is the first step that precedes the research design. Given that the overarching aim of this study was to investigate and evaluate the impact of a social emotional learning programme on students' wellbeing and classroom behaviours and factors that contribute or hinder the success of these interventions, the main research question that guided this study was:

What is the impact of a social and emotional programme on adolescent school pupils in a Qatari school?

Three secondary questions stemmed from the main research question to guide this study:

1. Would a social emotional programme in a Qatari girls' school improve students' wellbeing?
2. What is the impact of a social emotional programme from the teachers' and social staffs' perspectives in a Qatari girls' school?
3. What factors facilitated or hindered the implementation of a social and emotional programme in a Qatari girls' school?

The study's design, type, aim, data collection methods and analytical approach are illustrated in the following figure (4.1).

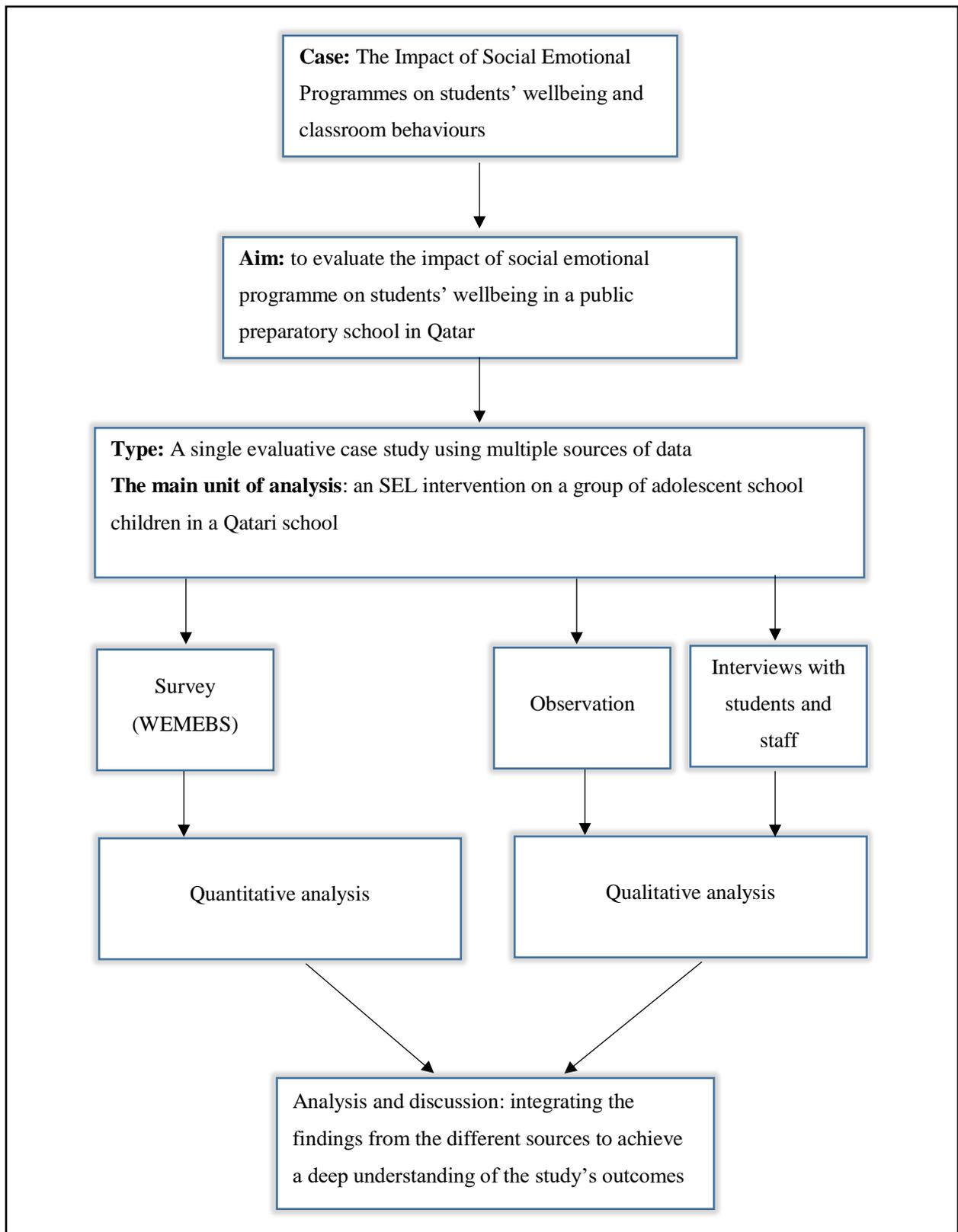


Figure 4.1. Study design and data collection methods

Definition of case study

The literature reveals different approaches to define and conceptualize the case study design in social and educational research. However, these definitions are generally related in terms of the case study's design, objectives, approaches and data collection methods. Yin (2002) defines a case study as comprehensive empirical research to investigate a *contemporary phenomenon* within its *real-life* context, especially when the boundaries between the context and the phenomenon are not clear and the researcher has little control of the research context. Zucker (2009) views the case study approach as a *systematic inquiry* to explore an event or a set of related events in order to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest. The case study design can be considered as a strategy or a focus. In this regard, Thomas (2016) suggests that the case study is not a method by itself, rather, it is conceptualized as a *focus*, and that focus involves looking at the case being studied from different angles. In relation, Stake (1995) regards the case study as a *choice* of interest in an individual specific topic within a specific time. Cases studies, according to Johansson (2007) could be said to be a *meta-method* that can be used in the practice-oriented fields of research such as social studies education and business studies.

One of the main characteristics of the case study is to be conducted within a specified context. Stake (1995) suggests that the case study is research conducted within a *bounded system*. This bounded system, as suggested by Johansson (2007), has a specific object, conducted within a complex functioning unit and investigated in natural settings using multi types of methods. In relation, Merriam (1998) stresses that a case study is a *particularistic* approach that focuses on a specific situation, programme or phenomenon to produce a rich, thick and descriptive understanding of the subject under study. Furthermore, Merriam (1998, p.27) identifies this approach as the investigation of “a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries” (p. 27). DeMarras and Lapan (2003) suggest that case study research involves a *close examination* of individuals, events, issues, or programmes to uncover interactions, connections and interpretations related to a specific phenomenon. In this regard, Cohen et al. (2007) suggest that the case study is an inquiry of interest that is bounded with a specific *fence* to facilitate the researcher's focus on the objectives of the case under study.

Boundaries of case studies can be designated to time and geographic limits, activities or initiatives to be included in explicit contextual conditions that surround the case under study (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Furthermore, unlike other research designs, the case study approach seeks to answer a set of focused questions to produce in-depth descriptions and interpretations over a relatively short period of time, perhaps a few weeks to one year (Cohen et al., 2007). This bounded, specific, and focused methodological approach of case study enables the researcher to concentrate on one area by looking at it from different angles to provide a rich picture of a specific situation. This focus can facilitate an in-depth understanding of the *complexity* and *uniqueness* of a particular project, policy, institution, programme within the *real-life* context (Creswell et al., 2007). Therefore, case studies can generate a rich picture and a large number of features, processes and relationships to produce evidence-based results that improve related practices. In thoroughly investigating a specific event, project or situation from many angles, case study frequently draws upon multiple paradigms (qualitative and quantitative approaches) and multiple data-collection methods (survey, interview, observation) to comprehensively investigate a research problem (Luck et al., 2006). Leedy and Ormrod (2001) suggest that the case study approach is especially suitable for investigating and learning more about a little known or poorly understood situation.

The case study allows the researcher to conduct an in-depth examination of the different elements of a specific case to capture the fine-grained details (Yin, 2002). This examination involves individuals' experience to explore the impact of an intervention and what changes might have occurred in a specific bounded system from several angles. Investigating a situation within a bounded system using multi-methods determinants is crucial to capture the extent of implementation, context and changes. Greenhalgh, Russell and Swinglehurst (2005) have also called for the development of theory-driven research designs that focus on the details that underpin the implementation process rather than a package of information.

Johansson (2007) supports this argument by emphasizing the need to investigate interacting factors within a specific research environment using a broad range of methods to evaluate changes after field interventions. These approaches can bridge the gap between theory and practice by providing practical guidance of evidence-based SEL programmes that capture, determine the key success factors, and measure how and what promotes mental health in educational settings. These results can provide policymakers, practitioners, and educational

leaders with information concerned with SEL interventions' practicality, successful approaches, and best practices of implementations. Thus, implementing interventions in complex multilevel systems such as schools, workplaces, and communities requires a focus on the complex characteristics of the intervention, the instructor, the participants, the organizational capacity and the implementation process in the specific context in which the intervention is being implemented (Barry et al., 2019).

Therefore, evaluation approaches that involve in-depth exploration methods to capture the complexity of implementation and outcomes in real-life settings are required. According to Yin (2002), one of the major strengths of case study design is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence. Using multiple sources of evidence in case studies allows the researcher to address a broader range of issues related to the subject being studied. In relation, Wigelsworth, Humphrey and Lendrum (2012) have called for more defined and sustained measurement in the educational context to evaluate SEL outcomes' effectiveness by including a greater focus on students and teachers' own perspectives as an important predictor of outcomes. Therefore, and as I am evaluating the impact of the SEL programme from different dimensions, case study design represents the most appropriate approach for this investigation.

Case study as an evaluative method

Many scholars emphasized the importance of case study as a tool in evaluative research (Cohen, 2007; Yin, 2002; Thomas, 2016). Evaluative case study research is framed by the expectation that the researcher is conducting the research to investigate and evaluate how well an intervention is working or has worked and whether a change or outcomes have been achieved (Thomas, 2016). In this regard, Yin (2002) emphasizes that, compared to other evaluation methods of research, case study evaluation can; 1) capture the complexity of a case including related outcomes over time, 2) provide a clear picture of the contextual conditions, including those that potentially interact with the case and 3) explain how the case as a planned intervention, ongoing initiative or a programme, works.

Case study's evaluation method can be part of a larger evaluation or can be used as the primary evaluation method (Yin, 2002; Merriam, 1998). In the first approach, the case study can be designed within a larger evaluation methodological design that involves experimental

and quasi-experimental designs. Within these designs, the case study can be used to complement the preceding designs by examining how a specific intervention had worked or not to produce deeper information about contextual conditions, individuals' experiences and relationships between the outcomes (Cohen et al., 2007). In a different approach, the case study can be the *primary evaluative* approach when the initiative being evaluated is the main focus in a case study evaluation (Yin, 2002). Within this approach, the researcher can focus on the evaluation of the initiative's process, presumed outcomes and the link between the initiative and the outcome together. Thus, as a primary evaluation approach, the case study can facilitate the tracking of the implementation process in the field of research (Yin, 2002). Therefore, as I am focusing on evaluating the impact of the SEL programme within a Qatari preparatory public school setting on students' wellbeing and classroom behaviours, I selected the *evaluative case* study design to be the primary methodological approach for this investigation.

Yin (2002) suggests three main procedures that I followed in this research in order to make the best use of case study as an evaluative tool. The first procedure is concerned with the *rigour* of the case being studied. The researcher needs to employ different data collection methods from multiple sources of evidence to achieve rigour and a well-designed case study (Cohen et al., 2007; Yin, 2002; Stake, 1995). Therefore, I selected three types of data collection methods (described below) in order to capture details of the case, confirm and evaluate the findings. The second procedure suggested by Yin (2002) is that *data sources* can be either qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods. Thus, in this study, I selected both quantitative and qualitative methods, including; scales, semi-structured interviews and observations.

The third procedure in the evaluative case study research, according to Yin (2002) is to conceptualize a specific theory, framework or hypothesis about the case under study. This conceptualizing can facilitate evaluating a specific initiative, how it might work in a different context, and the expected outcomes. The general hypothesis that guided this study was that *social emotional intervention could improve students' wellbeing*. This hypothesis was based on the reviewed literature of SEL interventions. In addition, I discuss at the end of this chapter the analytical framework that I used to analyse, present and explain the results of my research.

Mixed methods within case study

This case study included multiple data collection methods to evaluate the impact of the SEL intervention from different dimensions to gain a valid overall picture of the case being studied. In this regard, Fishman (2013) suggests that there is a need for what he calls a *pragmatic* case study in social sciences that integrates qualitative and quantitative designs. Specifically, he further suggests that, this pragmatic approach can be applied by integrating case study with randomized control trials (RCT). RCT according to Cohen et al. (2007) involves selecting and evaluating the outcomes of two randomly selected groups at before and after the intervention. As a result, Fishman and colleagues suggested the "Case Studies within RCT Designs" model (Dattilio, Edwards, & Fishman, 2010). Within this model they argue that, more rigorous results can be achieved by conducting studies that include "randomized controlled trials, qualitative examinations of the implementation of treatment programmes.. [together with] a review that offers an overall synthesis of the findings from different methodological approaches (Dattilio, Edwards, & Fishman 2010, p. 427).

Thus, and as I was aiming to evaluate the outcomes of the SEL programme from different sources at different stages, this study design involved different sequential phases. These phases included a randomly selected intervention and control groups to evaluate their wellbeing levels before and after the programme, interviews with the intervention group students and with school staff, and observation of the programme's implementation. The study's phases are discussed in detail in this chapter.

Ontology and Epistemology

Ontological and epistemological views of the nature of knowledge underlie the researcher's type of inquiry. These views can implicitly or explicitly influence the research design and data collection approaches. *Ontology* refers to the approach of viewing and perceiving reality. Grix (2002) emphasizes that ontological assumptions are concerned with the beliefs of social reality. In social sciences, realism and relativism are the main ontological stances (Cruickshank, 2003). Realism is related to the positivism approach that views knowledge as *one truth* that needs to be measured objectively to generalize results to other situations (Cohen et al., 2007). In contrast, within the relativism concept, the reality is shaped by the different perceptions of individuals in a context bounded approach. Thus, results from

research underpinned by the relativism approaches are transferred to other contexts and cannot be generalized. *Epistemology* is defined as the relationship between reality and the researcher and the possible ways of acquiring knowledge (Cruickshank, 2003). In relation to the ontological positions and epistemological stances differ according to the approaches of collecting data to construct the knowledge (Grix, 2002). The researcher's perception of reality will be reflected in the knowledge gathering approach. Thus, the interrelationship between how the researcher views reality (the ontological position) and how to gain knowledge (the epistemological position) determines the research's methodological approach.

There are two main epistemological stances of knowledge structure, *positivist* and *interpretivist*. The positivist epistemological stances are related to the realism approach and therefore, within this concept, knowledge can be collected using objective research methods such as surveys. In contrast, the interpretivist stance is related to relativism in which subjective data collection methods such as interviews can be used (Cohen et al., 2007). In the case of studies, the ontological and epistemological positions of reality and knowledge are more related to the interpretivist approach. Within this position, the researcher investigates a specific case within the real context to understand the situation in real life settings. Stake (1995) emphasizes in this regard that most contemporary qualitative researchers hold constructed knowledge. Therefore, case study researchers are “interpreters, and gatherers of interpretations which require them to report their rendition or construction of the constructed reality or knowledge that they gather through their investigations” (Yazan, 2015, p.137).

Within this case study research, I was trying to explore students, teachers and social staffs *constructed* knowledge about the impact of the SEL programme on their wellbeing levels. These perceptions of the impact were evaluated by using quantitative (the WEMWBS scale) and qualitative (interviews and observation) methods. Therefore, this case study encompasses a mixed-methods design. Approaching the literature reveals a range of paradigms in mixed methods research. Hall (2013) suggests that mixed methods researchers can adopt three possible positions to underpin their research; *the paradigmatic stance*, *the multiple paradigm stance*, and *the single paradigm stance*.

Within the *paradigmatic stance*, methodology is independent of the epistemology that gave rise to it (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2011). Therefore, Hall (2013) suggests that the paradigmatic stance might not be the viable approach in the mixed methods research since no

research is paradigm free. The *multiple paradigm stance* claims that researchers can adopt more than one paradigm in their research by keeping the methods separate to sustain the strengths and the insights of each method (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2011). In addition, within this approach, insights are gained by mixing the different sets of perceptions, values and assumptions (Greene, 2007). Therefore, this approach contends that the paradigm choice is related to the mixed methods design. Within the *single paradigm*, researchers can adopt a single paradigm that includes both qualitative and quantitative research methods (Hall, 2013). This paradigm consists of the *realist approach*, which supports the use of mixed methods studies. This approach has been applied widely in “the field of programme evaluation as well as in other areas of social research” (Hall, 2013, p.5).

The concept of realist approach is related to Pawson & Tilly (1997)’s scientific realist approach, in which the mixed methods approach plays a prominent role in the conduct of the evaluation. Julnes, Mark and Henry (1998) developed a similar realist paradigm for the evaluation purposes that is often best achieved by combining quantitative and qualitative methods. Sayer (2000) developed a *critical realism* paradigm for social sciences. Within the critical realism paradigm, the world is viewed independently of the researcher’s knowledge and implies a more complex set of relationships. This approach is compatible with different types of data collection methods, including both qualitative and quantitative. Therefore, the realism paradigm recognizes “the complexity of social phenomena by enabling a role for values and interpretive meaning while at the same time accepting explanation as a legitimate goal of social research” (Hall, 2013, p.6). Thus, the single paradigm stance is the most appropriate approach that underpins my methodological design and the selection of the data collection methods.

Positionality statement

Hall (2013) suggests that two approaches reflect the researcher’s positionality. The first approach is the *insider position*. Within this approach, a practitioner-researcher considers conducting research within his/her organization, school or community as an opportunity to acquire research skills to deepen the knowledge and generate results from inside out. In this case, the researcher is the practitioner that conducts the study in their own field (Anderson, Herr & Nihlen, 2007). For instance, a teacher might write a diary, reflect on his/her own teaching and analyze the results to explore what can promote classroom-based instructional

practices. In contrast to this approach, Herr and Anderson (2005) suggest an *outsider approach* in which the researcher selects a specific context to explore the phenomenon of interest. For instance, a researcher might visit a school to conduct observation and interviews with the teachers to explore their perceptions and instructional practices. Holmes (2020) further suggests that the collaboration with the insider staff can support the outsider position. This was the case with my research.

For this study, I aimed to evaluate and explore the impact of implementing a social emotional intervention in a preparatory public school for girls in Qatar. This type of in-depth investigation has not been conducted in Qatar before; therefore, I needed to pre-plan each research step. The pre-planning stage involved collecting data from the field of social emotional programmes in Qatar, communicating with the Ministry of Education to understand the required ethical approvals for the fieldwork and coordinating with the selected school's management to prepare for the programme's implementation. Furthermore, this preparation involved introducing myself as a researcher who studies at Warwick University and works at Qatar University. This introduction of my educational background might have facilitated the Ministry of Education's approval and the school's management.

My role in the programme's implementation was mainly related to the coordination with the SEL programme's instructor and with the school's management team to schedule the timings for the programme's sessions each week. Teachers reflected in their interviews that they understood my role as a researcher, and that might be the reason that motivated them to share their ideas without thinking that I am evaluating or assessing their instructional performance. Sometimes teachers might develop this fear if they think that the researcher is trying to assess their teaching and instruction and convey this information to the Ministry of Education to suggest further development. Thus, my position as a researcher from Qatar University might have contributed to teachers' motivation to participate in the interviews.

Students in the intervention group thought that I was an 'outsider' teacher who came with the programme's instructor to observe the sessions' implementation. I tried to avoid any type of participation in the programme's implementation, instructions or activities to maintain my positionality in this research as an outsider researcher with the aim to explore the implementation of the programme in the school settings. This approach was also related to the adopted paradigm of the single paradigm stance which underpins my research to explore

the impact of the social emotional intervention from students, teachers and social staff's perceptions using multiple data collection methods.

Case study design for evaluating SEL interventions

In contrast to the survey studies, case study research can be designed to focus on exploring internal factors related to students' wellbeing, the programme's impact and factors that hinder or facilitate the programme's success. Approaching the literature reveals that the case study was the selected methodological design in many SEL interventions in the literature. Lendrum et al. (2009) conducted five in-depth case studies in primary schools in the UK to investigate the successful implementation of SEAL programmes and interventions using multiple data collection methods. Their study revealed a range of factors that can facilitate or hinder the success of SEL interventions. Evans and Scourfield (2015) employed a case study methodology to investigate four socio-economically and academically contrasting secondary schools in Wales. The study aimed to explain the implementation and adoption of SEL interventions. The results revealed four main contextual features related to the interventions' success; intervention preparations, intervention assessment, intervention clarification, and intervention responsibility.

Furthermore, in a single designed case study, Bryzgel (2018) explored participants' perspectives of the SEL programme in a school in the USA, and he reported *deep insights*, suggestions and feedback of best practices of implementation. Wyness and Lang (2016) conducted a case study in an English secondary school to explore participants' perceptions and understandings of schooling's social and emotional dimensions. The results revealed a number of themes, including; relational work in a school that extends into the community, the school as a network of communication and the important role of emotions at several school levels. Furthermore, this case study led to the development of a school model based on the conception of a people-oriented learning community (Fielding 2004).

In addition, the case study was the design of Hamedani and Darling-Hammond's (2015) study in which they investigated the impact of the SEL programme on 363 students. This study revealed *insights* into the programmes' impact on students' feelings, emotions and perspectives of the SEL intervention and the impact on schools' environment as a whole from school staff's perspectives. In a case study, Cook et al. (2017) examined the outcomes of a

culturally responsive SEL programme in promoting students' social-emotional development and academic performance in a group of seven Latina third grade students. The mixed-methods data revealed that students had demonstrated improvements in academic engagement and social-emotional learning (SEL), including effective communication, respect for others, self-management, self-awareness, and self-confidence.

Humphrey et al. (2009) conducted a multiple case study design within a progressive focusing framework to investigate the process of implementing the SEAL programme in five schools in the UK. Their interviews, observations and document analysis within the case study approach reported *key aspects* and range of factors that facilitate the successful implementation and results of social emotional programmes in schools. Stanbridge and Campbell (2016) explored in a small-scale case study the impact of an SEL intervention on students' wellbeing using a questionnaire based on the School Children's Happiness Inventory (SCHI) and interviews with school staff and children. The study's findings indicated that the intervention supported positive outcomes for all children, and unexpected advantages were also revealed.

These designs and results of previous studies emphasize that case study design can be utilized to capture in an in-depth approach the different elements of the SEL interventions. These elements can facilitate the understating of the process, impact, outcomes and evaluate SEL interventions' real benefits. Therefore, *the evaluative case study* approach was the appropriate design for this study.

Study design

The study design is the logical sequence of research phases that connects research questions, data collection approaches, analytical framework, and conclusions (Thomas, 2016). Yin (2002) defines research design as the logical sequence that connects the empirical data, the initial research questions with the final conclusion. Case study's design is different in the literature in terms of theoretical position, study type, research objectives, study context and the number of cases being studied. Researchers such as Yin (2002) emphasise that the case

study's entire investigation needs to be preceded by a detailed plan. This plan can be based on the relevant literature review that needs to be conducted before the data collection phase. Furthermore, this plan presents the comprehensive approach of research design, questions, data collection methods and data analysis approaches. Merriam (1998) supports this *planned* approach by emphasizing the need to plan the whole process in terms of research aims, questions, sample, timeframe and context.

In contrast to the planned approaches of case study design, researchers such as Stake (1995) suggests that the flexible case study designs are more appropriate in enabling the researcher to focus on one or two main research questions, collect data, and explore the phenomenon in a *progressive focused* approach. In addition, he emphasizes that “the transition from stage to stage, as the investigation unfolds, occurs as the problem areas become progressively clarified and redefined” (Stake, 1998 cited in Yazan, 2015, p.141). However, this unplanned approach might lead to uncertainty and ambiguity since the research steps' specific guidelines are not clear or missing (Yazan, 2015). Therefore, for this study, I selected the planned approach by determining the study's purpose, aims, type, design, data collection methods and analytical framework in advance.

In order to select the best case study design that is mostly related to my area of inquiry, I started to plan the process by formulating *the purpose*, determining *the objectives* and *selecting the most appropriate* methodological design that answers my research questions. Firstly, I followed Thomas' (2016) four stages of planning case study's design; *Subject, Purpose, Approach and Process*. According to Thomas (2016), the subject of the study can be a key case, an outlier case or a local knowledge case. The key case represents a good example of an exemplary case, while the outlier case refers to the investigation of something interesting because of its difference from the norms. In contrast, the local knowledge case is an example of the researcher's own experience about which he/she wants to explore more and investigate deeply.

For this research, the case study's subject is related to a local knowledge issue that I am trying to investigate. This subject emerged based on the review of previous interventions and the noticed gap of this type of research in the Arabic region in the Qatari context. In terms of the study's purpose, according to Cohen et al. (2007), the case study can be intrinsic or instrumental, then the case study can be exploratory, explanatory, or evaluative depending on

the study purpose. An exploratory case study is conducted to know more about an issue of interest and to gather data that can help to identify and determine specific practices (Yin, 2002). An explanatory case study is conducted to investigate interrelations, potential explanations and an in-depth understanding of specific context (Thomas, 2016). The evaluative case study is conducted to examine the relevant processes with multiple sources of evidence to explore how an initiative, a programme or an intervention might work in the field (Yin, 2002).

For this research, I was trying to conduct an *instrumental* case study to understand and provide clarification of what makes a specific situation better. Furthermore, I tried to investigate the impact of the SEL programme on students' wellbeing and classroom behaviours and to assess any changes during and after the programme's implementation process. Therefore, I selected an *evaluative case* study approach to facilitate and guide the process of this research.

The third stage in Thomas (2016)'s case study design is to determine the study's approach. The case study's approach can be either testing a theory, building a theory or aiming to illustrate experiences that can be instructive for practitioners and educational policymakers. Within this study, the aim was to explore and illustrate the impact of implementing a social emotional programme in a public school in Qatar to bring attention to the importance of adopting such programmes to improve students' wellbeing. Therefore, the approach of this research was an illustrative case study that can inform different educational sectors by unfolding perspectives, events and effects about the impact of the SEL programme within a unique dynamic setting. Furthermore, this approach can draw a picture of the case in a bounded system from participants' perspectives.

The final stage in Thomas (2016)'s approach of the case study design is the *process*. A case study can be a single, multiple or nested case study with different units. In more details, Yin (2002) suggests four types of case study design: single holistic, single embedded, multiple holistic and multiple holistic designs. The holistic design is focused on the investigation of one unit as a whole, while the embedded design focuses on multiple units of analysis (Yin, 2002). This case study was anticipated to focus on one public preparatory school with multiple units of analysis to reach results that can be generalized to other public schools'

contexts in Qatar and in the Middle East in general. Therefore, this study is a *single embedded case study design*.

The sequential case study involves different stages of data collection phases (Thomas, 2016). The first phase of this study explored students' initial levels of wellbeing in a preparatory public school for girls in Qatar. The second phase assessed whether an increase in students' level of wellbeing had been achieved or not, and that was the basis for the third phase in which students, teachers and social staff's interviews were conducted to explore their perspectives and understanding of the programme's effectiveness. This sequential investigation was conducted to gain an in-depth examination of the different elements of a specific case to capture fine-grained details. Thus, this study was designed as a *sequential, single embedded, evaluative* approach to evaluate the SEL intervention's impact within school settings.

Validity and reliability of case study

The quality of case study research design is related to logical tests of construct validity, external validity and reliability (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010). *The construct validity* is related to the number of sufficient operational measures used to collect data for the case under study (Yin, 2002). DeMarrais and Lapan (2003, p. 230) argue that "in case study research, construct validity refers to the extent answers to study question are considered to be accurate representatives of the case". Therefore, three main strategies can be used by the case study researcher to increase the construct validity of the case. These strategies, according to Yin (2002), are; the use of multiple sources of evidence, establishing a chain of evidence and having a draft of a case study reviewed by key informants. These steps were followed during my research to ensure that the construct validity of research is developed. I selected multiple data collection methods, and my research proposal was reviewed by my supervisor, the upgrade panel and the MoE team. Furthermore, I followed all the provided feedback, suggestions and comments to improve the study design.

In terms of external validity, the case study's findings need to be assessed in terms of generalization beyond the immediate study. Case study research design might face criticism for the limited number of cases being studied, and therefore, conclusions might not be generalizable (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010). However, the case study's approach is focused

more on the deep investigation that sheds light on the specific phenomenon from different angles to produce evidence-based results (Cohen et al., 2007). Generalization in the case study is different from other experimental designs. In the case study approach, generalization is not the goal; rather, “discovering the *uniqueness* of each case is the main purpose” (DeMarrais and Lapan, 2003, p. 218). Stake (1995) argues that case study’s findings can be presented in a *naturalistic generalization* approach. This approach is described by Lincoln and Guba (1989) as *transferability*, and it is the researcher’s responsibility to provide a description of the case being studied. This description needs to be sufficiently *thick* to assess the degree of similarities between the cases investigated and those to which the findings are to be applied (Gomm et al., 2000). Therefore, case study research might be used to expand and enrich the understanding of social constructions available to practitioners and policymakers.

Research reliability is achieved when other researchers can follow the same procedures within specific research to arrive at the same conclusions (Cohen et al., 2007). Reliability in case study can be achieved when the researcher documents the procedures followed in the case under study (Yin, 2002). In this regard, Yin (2002) suggests that the general way of addressing the reliability issue in case study research is to make as many procedures as explicit as possible and to conduct the research as if someone were looking over the shoulders. Within this study, I tried to explain the research design, data collection methods, analytical approach and discussion of the results in details to demonstrate all the procedures adopted in the study’s different phases. This approach was aimed to produce a piece of research that can be conducted in other schools’ settings in Qatar to investigate the impact of SEL interventions.

Research context

As mentioned in the first chapter, this study was undertaken in a preparatory public (government) school for girls that includes students in grades 7-9. The school is located near the centre of Qatar in the main city, Doha. Preparatory schools in Qatar is similar to secondary schools in the UK. The school was established by the Ministry of Education in 2009 and started to welcome students by 2010. The school’s vision is to achieve a successful and knowledgeable generation of students that participate in their country’s success, accept other cultures and maintain their Islamic Qatari identity. To achieve that, the school mission

is to equip students with the inner skills that enable them to achieve higher levels in the different academic, behavioural and social objectives. In addition, the school aims to provide educational practices that meet the diverse needs of students, address their different abilities and provoke their thinking using the updated teaching and instructional practices.

Furthermore, the school aims to produce a safe, secure and effective learning environment that reflects the Islamic, cultural and traditional concepts of the Qatari identity.

The participated students aged (13-15) years. As discussed in the previous chapter, within this early adolescences stage, students are faced with different developmental, psychological and social challenges. In addition, social and emotional competencies learnt during early adolescence have proven to be contributing to the enhancement of social relationships, conflict resolution and academic success during this challenging period of time (Payton et al., 2008; Chan et al., 2019). Furthermore, as stated earlier in this chapter, research in the domain of SEL indicated a significant positive relationship between students' social and emotional skills and their mental wellbeing level. Therefore, this sample of students was selected to participate in this evaluative study. All students were girls attending a preparatory public school in Qatar. The majority of students (80-90%) at this public school are Qataris, while the remaining (10-20%) from other Arab nationalities (Palestine, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan). With this population, and in contrast to international schools in Qatar, this case study school represents the typical characteristics of public schools in Qatar in which the majority of students are Qataris and the minority are non-Qataris. The school includes 684 students in grades 7-9, and students at each grade are grouped into 5-6 classes. Each class consists of 25-27 students. In case of special needs students who might need additional care, teaching assistants are available to provide the required support.

The school's staff are females, and only female researchers are allowed to enter the school as per the Ministry of Education and Higher Education regulations. The school staff consists of 64 teachers and 28 admission and management team members. The majority of the management team are Qataris. Part of the management team is the *social department team*. This team consists of two sociologists and one psychologist. The sociologists' role is to manage students' behavioural issues with the teachers, communicate with their parents and report any cases with social or mental issues to the school's psychologist. The school psychologist's role is to deal with students' social, emotional and mental wellbeing issues. These issues include students' who suffer from family issues, bullying or low school

performance. As a result, upon receiving a referral from the sociologists, the psychologist will refer cases that she can deal with directly or cases that need to be referred on to the mental health services centers.

Depending on the mental, behavioural or social issues and cases identified by the sociologists, the psychologist will act based on the students' needs within three stages. Within the first stage, the majority of reported cases would be solved in sessions conducted by the psychologist with the student in person. The second stage cases might involve contacting parents to describe the identified social, mental or behavioural issues of their children and to encourage them to take the required action. If these two interventions did not result in improving students' situation, the psychologist would refer the student to specific clinics in the primary health centers to investigate the case and to provide the needed intervention.

Study Sample

The sample of this case study consisted of students, teachers and social department's staff. The aim of including this sample was to explore the impact of the social emotional interventions from the perspectives of different participants. The students' sample included 82 students from the intervention group and 81 students from the control group. The teachers' sample included five teachers who teach both; the intervention and the control groups. The social staff department sample included two sociologists and one psychologist. The details of each sample are discussed in the following sections.

Students

The research sample consisted of randomly selected year seven students in a preparatory public school for girls in Qatar with an age average of 13 years. This sample was selected because it represents one of the most critical times in adolescent life (Wreder, 2014). At this age, students are under enormous emotional, physical, and hormonal changes that might affect their way of thinking, self-confidence, and relationships with others. Phillips-Howard (2010) describes this stage of life as a period full of psychological crises, suffering, anxiety, frustration and emotional fluctuations. Adolescents at this stage might suffer from a lack of confidence, feeling threatened, being bullied, experience difficulties in coping with others and facing societal pressure. These issues can negatively influence their behaviours, and they

might start to develop mood fluctuations and lack of concentration which can affect their mental health development (Hunter, Houghton & Wood, 2015). Furthermore, while undergoing these considerable physical, emotional, and social changes, adolescents begin to depend less on their parents and more on their peers and experience new behaviours (Andrusik, 2011).

The imposing burden of adolescents on their society in terms of the families, community and welfare systems as a consequence of mental health problems that arise in childhood and adolescence is well documented (Call et al., 2002), making adolescence a critical time for developing positive mental well-being. Therefore, addressing adolescents' different issues at this stage of life can be preventive and essential during their developmental process. The preventive approach is represented by exposing students to wellbeing programmes that increase their awareness of life skills that they need to adopt in their daily life to prevent future problems. Thus, school psychological interventions can enrich students' thinking, improve their behaviours, and provide them with opportunities to flourish and achieve their inner potentials.

The selected students were distributed into two groups, the intervention (group A) and the control (group B). This approach of including intervention and a control group was conducted in previous studies. For instance, Humphrey, Lendrum and Wigelsworth (2010) investigated the effectiveness of social emotional interventions in pre-test and post-test control and intervention groups at the beginning of the intervention, at the end of the intervention, and an eight-week follow-up. The selection process of this study's sample was completely a *random approach*. This approach of sampling, according to Cohen et al. (2007, p.153), is useful when the researchers aim to ensure that "each member of the population under study has an equal chance of being selected". Furthermore, this method involves selecting randomly from a list of students, classes or groups (a sampling frame) the required number of subjects for the sample (Cohen et al., 2007).

The aim of this random assignment was to select a diverse sample to be part of the universal SEL intervention. This approach was a universal form of SEL intervention as it was aimed to involve all students regardless of their social, emotional or mental background in a specific SEL sessions. Therefore, this approach was the appropriate method for the sampling selection

of this study. The sampling step involved the selection of the intervention and the control group of students for the pre and post-intervention comparisons.

There were a total of 243 students divided into nine classes in year seven. These classes are named with numbers from 1-9. The process of selecting students for both groups was totally random. This process resulted in selecting three classes, and each class consisted of 26-28 students. The intervention group classes were; Grade7 (5), Grade7 (3) and Grade7 (2). On the other hand, the control group classes were; Grade7 (6), Grade7 (7) and Grade7 (8). Students' age average was 13 years old. Of those students, in the intervention groups , 90% were Qataris, and 10% were non-Qataris, while in the control group, 85% were Qataris and 15% were non-Qataris. The non-Qatari students' origins were from different Arabic backgrounds like; Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Sudan, and Iraq. This is the typical school population because public schools in Qatar are designed specifically for Qataris and might welcome non-Qatari students whose parents work for government sectors.

Students in both groups were provided with a detailed explanation about the WEMWBS scale they needed to complete before starting the SEL programme. These scales were filled by students themselves while the class teacher was attending and observing the process without any interference. Students were recruited and assigned to an intervention (n = 82) and a control (n = 81) groups. Before completing the pre-intervention survey, participants were informed of the confidential nature and purpose of the study. The intervention group and the control groups did not significantly differ on any of the demographic variables. These variables included their age, their background (all are from Arabic origins) and gender. The intervention group's participants were informed that they would be assigned to an intervention group that will involve (1) completing a pre-intervention scale, (2) attending weekly intervention sessions (8 sessions, 1 hour each), (3) completing a post-intervention after the final programme's lesson to assess the impact of the intervention on changing participants' wellbeing levels.

Teachers

Before the programme, invitations with the consent and details of the study were sent to all teachers that teach grade 7 students. Of the 18 grade 7 teachers, 10 accepted to participate in the study, and 5 withdraw their acceptance to participate later. Thus, participating school staff

consisted of five teachers who teach year seven students in both groups. Teachers' age ranged from 26-50, females, 90% of whom were Qataris, and 10% were from Jordan and Egypt. Teachers' experiences ranged from 5-25 years of employment with the qualifications of bachelor degrees. Teachers professions were; one science teacher, one mathematics teacher, two social studies teachers and one English language teacher.

Social staff

The social staff department in public schools in Qatar consists of two sociologists and one psychologist. All the social staff department accepted to participate in the programme. The two sociologists were Qataris with school experiences of eight and nine years, respectively. The psychologist was from Jordan, with a comprehensive background in students' emotional and social issues and mental health assessment strategies. She had a Masters degree in psychology and adolescence.

The implementation of the programme

As illustrated in the first chapter, the intervention is a school-based practitioner developed social and emotional learning programme. The intervention was conducted over eight weeks within the selected preparatory public school's settings. The number of students in group A (the intervention) was 82 and for group B (the control) was 81 students. The initial plan was to give WEMWBS scale to students before the intervention, at the end of the intervention, and after five months of the intervention. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic circumstances and the urgent need to close schools, initiate online learning and finish the academic year earlier than the planned calendar, it was impossible to implement the third stage of the scale. Missing the third stage of the study prevented the evaluation of the longitudinal impact of the SEL intervention after five months. Furthermore, these changes in the examination approach in the second semester resulted in stopping the assessment of the SEL intervention on students' academic performance.

Before starting the programme, I conducted a short meeting with the academic specialists to explore the school settings, the number of classes for grade seven and the number of students in each class. The academic specialist is responsible for tasks related to the number of students in each class, the exams' dates, and all the administrative tasks related to students' registration. After this meeting, we planned the dates and settings of the selected SEL

programme in accordance with the school timelines, exam dates and classes schedules. Furthermore, based on this meeting, and after getting permission from the school management, the SEL programme's implementation plan was agreed upon with specific dates, time, and place.

The implementation of the SEL programme was facilitated by one of the school's sociologists. Furthermore, the social department staff were provided with information about the research, expectations for involvement, the random assignment of classrooms intervention, and control programmes. Students were told that they would be randomly assigned to participate in a social emotional programme or to a control non-participating group. In addition, the school management sent letters of consent forms to the participating students' parents to inform them about the SEL programme implementation and voluntary participation. Moreover, the letters included information about the SEL programme in general and an enrolment form outlining the expectations of students' involvement and their choice of withdrawing from the study at any time during the intervention.

In order to manage the programme's implementation effectively, and due to the relatively large number of participating students, the school's management decided to prepare the school's hall for the programme. This hall consisted of multilevel chairs with a small table for each student, presentations' equipment and a sound system to enable the programme's instructor to present the programme effectively. Furthermore, the school management suggested that the programme's workshops can be implemented in the school on a weekly basis, every Tuesday, between 10-11 am. Those dates and times were convenient for me as a researcher, for students, for the programme's instructor and for the social staff team

The SEL programme was implemented inside the school hall in order to have enough space for the 82 participating students. Shortly before the programme starts, each teacher was required to bring her students to the hall, ask them to take their seats and assist in the workshop's organisation. Additionally, the IT teacher was responsible for assisting the instructor in preparing the sound and presentation systems before the programme start. The IT teacher and the IT technical specialist prepared the presentations' equipment, and they collaborated with the programme's instructor to deliver the session effectively. The presentation equipment included a big screen for the session's content presentation, audio system, laptops and lightening settings. Before the programme's first session, a detailed

explanation about the project's objective, the upcoming sessions, and the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being scale (WEMWBS) were given to students. In relation, the scale's purpose in evaluating any changes that happened as a direct result of the SEL programme was explained to students. Furthermore, a follow-up WEMWBS scales were given to students (in both groups, the intervention and the control) to measure the programme's impact and assess any differences in the level of well-being. Moreover, a special quiet seating area was prepared by the school's management to conduct students' interviews after the programme.

Data collection methods

Data collection methods in case study research are related to the research question, the situation being studied and the research design. As mentioned in the case study definitions, one of the main advantages of case study design is the in-depth investigation approach that enables the researcher to study a specific phenomenon from different angles. In relation, the case study approach recognizes and accepts that many variables need to be captured by more than one data collection method (Cohen et al., 2007). To conduct such a deep rigorous investigation, the case study approach blends quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to critically observe a specific case in its real settings (Thomas, 2016). Therefore, case study forms the umbrella in which multiple types of evidence can be collected for triangulation purposes.

For this study, I selected three types of data collection methods; the WEMWBS scale, interviews and observation. This selection of multiple data collection methods was aimed to triangulate data from different sources of information to build a coherent and concise picture of the contextual factors and actual outcomes. Within the next sections, a thorough explanation of each data collection method is discussed. The WEMWBS tool, the type of students and teachers' interviews and the observational approach are discussed, respectively. The research methods for this study are:

- Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being scale (WEMWBS)
- Semi-structured interviews with students, teachers, social specialists and psychologists.
- Observation of the programme's implementation

These methods were selected to answer the research questions as illustrated in the following table:

Table 4.1. Data collection methods and research questions

Research methods	
Research Question	Methods of Data
1. Would a social emotional programme improve students' wellbeing?	Warwick- Edinburgh Mental Well-being scale (WEMWBS) and students' interviews
2. What is the impact of the social emotional programme according to teachers and social staffs' perspectives?	Teachers and Social Specialists and Psychologists Interviews
3. What factors hinder or facilitate the implementation of SEL in schools?	Observations and Interviews

Warwick- Edinburgh Mental Well-being scale (WEMWBS)

Self-reported scales can be used as an efficient and effective data collection method in social and educational research to obtain perspectives, attitudes and understanding of specific phenomena (Cohen et al., 2007). One of the promising and practical tools to assess elements of positive mental wellbeing is the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) (Steward-Brown, 2008). This scale can be used to measure an individual's *self-reported* wellbeing. In this regard, Clark et al. (2011) suggest that WEMWBS is a psychometrically strong population measure of mental wellbeing. Furthermore, WEMWBS is one of the few solely positive single scales for measuring mental wellbeing, which has been fully validated for use in different age groups.

The WEMWBS scale consists of statements that describe feelings and thoughts over two weeks of time. This scale can also be used to investigate any changes in pre and post-intervention groups with a minimum of two weeks gap. This investigation can be conducted

by asking participants to select what describe their feelings and thoughts within the past two weeks by selecting specific statements. Students' were provided with explanations about the scale and the need for their responses before and after the programme to follow the effects of the programme by measuring the differences in their wellbeing level.

This scale is a validated and effective measure of mental wellbeing nationally, internationally and locally (Stansfield et al., 2013). According to the user guide of the WEMWBS scale, having a control group to compare with the intervention group would strengthen the findings of the impact that the intervention has had on mental wellbeing (Stansfield et al., 2013). Therefore, this scale was selected to be used to assess the level of wellbeing in two groups; group A that include students who participated in the intervention programme and group B, with students who did not participate.

There are 14 items (Appendix C) which had to be filled by each participant to assess their current level of wellbeing. Items are: *I've been feeling optimistic about the future; I've been feeling useful; I've been feeling relaxed; I've been feeling interested in other people; I've had energy to spare; I've been dealing with problems well; I've been thinking clearly; I've been feeling good about myself; I've been feeling close to other people; I've been feeling confident; I've been able to make up my own mind about things; I've been feeling loved; I've been interested in new things; I've been feeling cheerful.* The responses have five categories of numbers from 1-5. The higher the response, the stronger and higher level of wellbeing. The collected scales can be analysed by calculating each participant's scores and the approximate time to finish the responses is from 10-15 minutes. The participants' basic requirement was to think of their experiences over the last 2 weeks and rate the statement that describes their current feelings.

Validation of the Arabic version of the WEMWBS

One of the important aspects of using a translated version of an available tool is to consider the psychometric properties of the tool in different cultures. These properties are related to the validity and reliability of the measurement tool. Validity refers to the degree that an instrument is measuring what is desired to be measured (Cohen et al., 2007). Reliability refers to the degree to which a research method produces stable and consistent results (Cohen et al., 2007). Before distributing the survey, examinations of the face validity,

psychometric properties and the internal consistency of the translated version of the WEMEBS scale were conducted.

Face validity

In accordance with other similar WEMWBS scale validation studies, a rigorous translation process was implemented in this study (Mavali et al., 2020; Santos et al., 2015; Lloyd, K. and Devine, 2012). The scale was translated into the Arabic language in line with WHO recommendations, which include (1) forward-translation, (2) expert back-translation, (3) pre-testing and cognitive interviewing, and (4) final version (WHO, 2009). This approach was conducted in different previous studies that validated the WEMWBS scale across cultures (Lang and Bachinger, 2017; Fung, 2019). After obtaining the approval from the WEMWBS authors, the scale was translated into Arabic by two different bilingual translators (forward-translation). Then, in order to identify any possible inappropriate or inaccurate translations, two educational translation experts who were fluent in both English and Arabic were invited to cross-check the translations separately. Both translators verified that the meanings of the original English and the translated Arabic versions were identical.

Later, the Arabic version was translated back into English by an independent bilingual translator (expert back-translation). Later, this back translated version of the WEMWBS scale was compared by three educational and English language specialists and any emerged issues or disagreements were resolved with consensus. The feedback of the back-translated instrument was satisfactory. The finalized Arabic version was then sent to three language specialists (who did not participate the translation process) to assess readability of wordings and comprehensibility. All the three specialists confirmed that the scale is clear, easy to understand and can be used with students from 12 years onwards.

In addition, and as this study was aimed to evaluate the impact of a SEL intervention on students' wellbeing, efforts were made to ensure that the Arabic version would be well suited for students aged from 13-15 (pre-testing and cognitive interviewing). Thus, the Arabic translated version of the WEMWBS scale was given to 10 students aged from 13-16. Each student filled the scale during an individual cognitive interview and was asked to provide feedback if the statements were completely understandable and to raise any concerns if the statements were difficult to comprehend. Ultimately, all the 10 participated students mentioned that they did not face difficulties in understanding or answering the questions in

the Arabic translated versions. The result was the Arabic version of the WEMWBS (Appendix B-3).

Psychometric properties

Later, and as a pilot for the scale, the final Arabic version of the WEMWBS was distributed to a sample of 151 randomly selected adolescents aged (13-18) years. All participants signed informed consent forms after receiving information about the study procedures, confidentiality and voluntary participation. To calculate the sample size, previous studies that demonstrated the one-dimensionality of the WEMWBS scale were considered (Tennant et al., 2007; Maheswaran et al., 2012; Santos et al., 2015). In addition, according to Sapnas and Zeller (2002), when the primary focus is on exploring psychometric measurement properties, determining a sample size of at least 50 and not more than 100 subjects is adequate to represent and evaluate the psychometric properties of measures of social constructs. Therefore, a sample of 10 respondents per scale's item can be considered as an adequate sample size and sufficient to carry out an exploratory factor analysis (Sapnas and Zeller, 2002). Thus, the sample of 151 participants in this study can be considered as an appropriate sample for the psychometric properties.

The WEMWBS data from the sample of the Arabic speaking respondents were coded using information reported in the WEMWBS User Guide (Stewart-Brown & Janmohamed, 2008). Each of the 14 item responses in WEMWBS is scored from 1 (none of the time) to 5 (all of the time) and a total scale score is calculated by summing the 14 item scores. The minimum score is 14 and the maximum is 70. Consistent with Tennant et al. (2007), data were included in the analysis only when the WEMWBS was fully completed. The overall median score for the WEMWBS in this sample of the Arabic speaking population was 56 which is higher than the value of 51 result reported by Tennant et al. (2007) and that value of 50 in Lloyd, K. and Devine (2012) study.

Factor structure

Given that this study was the first to use the WEMWBS in an Arabic speaking population, the data analysis was conducted by using an exploratory factor analysis (EFA). In order to check the suitability of the data for factor analysis, the Kaiser–Meyer–Oklin (KMO) measure of

sampling adequacy and Bartlett’s test of sphericity (Bartlett, 1954) were conducted. The KMO value was 0.934, which exceeds the value of 0.6 in the Pallant (2005) study and the value of 0.875 in Santos et al. (2015) study, and was consistent with the value of (0.97) in Lloyd and Devine (2012) study. The Bartlett’s test of sphericity was statistically significant (chi-square = 1137.047; df = 91; p-value <0.001) supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. These results indicated that, this analysis is perfectly suitable for processing these data.

The EFA was applied to the data using the principal component analysis (PCA) procedure with varimax rotation. Table 4.2 shows the factor loadings representing the contribution of each variable to compose the components. The results of the PCA suggest that, in line with Tennant et al. (2007), scores derived from this sample of the Arabic speaking population show a single underlying factor that explains 51.52% of the total variance. In accordance with previous studies, the values of the factor loading should be more than (0.4), which means that all the items of the tool are related to the factor and therefore are valid (Field, 2005). In addition, based on the criterion suggesting that factor loadings above (0.50) are considered of practical significance, the significant variables in each component was revealed. Factor loadings of the EFA in this study were high and ranged from (0.69 – 0.90), indicating the validity of the scale’s items.

Table 4.2 WEMWBS component matrix

	Component
	1
I’ve been feeling optimistic about the future	.909
I’ve been feeling good about myself.	.812
I’ve been feeling loved.	.774
I’ve been feeling cheerful.	.744
I’ve been feeling relaxed.	.722
I’ve been dealing with problems well.	.708
I’ve been feeling interested in other people.	.699
I’ve been feeling close to other people	.692
I’ve been interested in new things.	.687
I’ve had energy to spare.	.662
I’ve been feeling confident.	.653
I’ve been feeling useful.	.648
I’ve been able to make up my own mind about things.	.643
I’ve been thinking clearly	.643

Construct validity

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to determine if the WEMWBS consists of the hypothesised unidimensional structure. This analysis was based on the EFA results used to examine the factor structure and to confirm the factors extracted from the EFA. CFA was undertaken using STATA 17 software. First, the root means squared error of approximation (RMSEA), and the Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) values were explored. The RMSEA takes the model complexity into account as it reflects the degree of freedom. RMSEA value smaller than (0.05) indicates a convergence fit to the analysed data of the model, while it indicates a fit close to good when it produces a value between (0.05- 0.08). In addition, a RMSEA value falling between the range of (0.08-0.10) is stated to indicate a fit that is neither good nor bad (Chen, 2007). The (RMSEA) value was in this study (0.071) indicating a close to good value. The Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is an index of the average of standardised residuals between the observed and the hypothesised covariance matrices (Chen, 2007). The SRMR values can be considered an acceptable fit when it produces a value smaller than (0.10) and can be considered a good fit when it produces a value lower than (0.05) (Kline, 2011; Lacobucci, 2010). The value of SRMR in this study was (0.049) and can be considered as acceptable ranges to indicate the fitness of the model to the data.

Reliability

The internal consistency among the fourteen questions was tested using Cronbach's alpha, one of the psychometric indicators that is commonly used to determine the reliability and internal validity of an instrument. In terms of reliability, the tool can be considered reliable when the value of the Cronbach's Alpha is more than (0.7) (Cohen et al., 2007). As illustrated in table 4.3, the analysis of the internal consistency of the Arabic translated version of the WEMWBS scale revealed a Cronbach's Alpha's value of (0.849), indicating the reliability of the scale in producing stable and consistent results. This value is similar the original WEMWBS Cronbach's alpha value (0.890) in Tennant et al. (2007) study and to the values reported of (0.87) in Clarke et al. (2011) study and (0.89) in Waqas et al. (2015) study and lower than Kim et al.'s (2014) study that reported a value of (0.94).

Table 4.2. WEMWBS Reliability

Reliability of survey	
Cronbach's Alpha value	Number of survey items
0.849	14

Interviews

The interviews aimed to enhance the understanding of the programme's impact to produce clear evidence of the achieved outcomes from students, teachers, and social staff's own perspectives. These inner perspectives can provide deep insights into how and why the programme affected students' wellbeing and classroom behaviours. In addition, the results of interviews can provide feedback on the programme's quality, effective approaches of implementation and ways to improve future SEL programmes in Qatar. Students, teachers and social specialists' interviews were conducted after the completion of the programme.

Approaches of interviews are categorized into three types: structured, unstructured and semi-structured (Cohen et al., 2007). The primary difference between these three types of interviews is the amount of control the researcher has over the interviewee's responses and the aim of the interview. The structured interviews are well prepared with predetermined, planned and designed set of questions asked in the same order. This approach involves asking each research participant the same set of questions, and there is no room to move beyond the set of questions (Wilson, 2012). This format of interviews is an effective approach to keep the focus of the interview tightly on the targeted research questions (Bryman, 2008). However, Alsaawi (2014) argues that structured interviews lack richness, depth and limits the availability of fine-grained data.

In contrast, the unstructured form of interviews is directed by the information given during the interview (Longhurst, 2003). This type of interview is the opposite of the structured approach in that it allows interviewees' elaboration, flexible participation and leading the conversations in an unpredictable direction (Alsaawi, 2014). Bryman (2008) posits that the unstructured interview approach is similar to a *conversation* in which the researcher asks a specific question and the participant has the choice to which extent he/she needs to respond. Interruptions within the unstructured interviews are kept to a minimum, and this would

provide a more relaxed atmosphere for the participants. Although this type of interview might result in a huge amount of data, it is appropriate for researchers who want to focus on a specific phenomenon from interviewees' perspectives (Longhurst, 2003).

In the middle, within the semi-structured interviews, the researcher has a list of specific questions while ensures flexibility in the way issues are addressed by the participants (Longhurst, 2003). Valentine (2005) emphasizes that unlike most of the quantitative methods, interviews and focus groups aim not to be representative but to understand how individual people experience and make sense of their own lives. Alsaawi (2014, p.151) argues that this type of interview is appropriate “to researchers who have an overview of their topic so that they can ask questions; however, they do not prefer to use a structured format which may hinder the depth and richness of the responses”.

Brinkmann (2016) suggests that semi-structured interviews facilitate the use of dialogue in a knowledge-producing approach. This dialogue enables the researcher to gather deeper information from the participants by encouraging them to express their experiences, opinions and perspectives of the phenomena being studied. Thomas (2016) suggests that in semi-structured interviews, questions are structured with a list of issues or specific questions allowing the researcher to have the freedom to follow up points as necessary. In this regard, Longhurst (2003, p.10) argues that “although the interviewer prepares a list of predetermined questions, semi-structured interviews unfold in a conversational manner offering participants the chance to explore issues they feel are important”. Therefore, semi-structured interviews are commonly used in small-scale social and educational research when the researcher aims to explore specific phenomenon from the participants’ perspectives within a flexibly structured context.

Semi-structured interviews were used in different previous studies to explore the impact of social emotional interventions in schools’ settings. In their study, Rutledge et al. (2015) conducted semi-structured interviews with principals, assistant principals, guidance counsellors; teachers, and grade 10 students to explore their perceptions of the programme’s impact. Humphrey, Lendrum and Wigelsworth (2010) conducted interviews with members of the school community (students, teachers, instructors, head teachers) in the qualitative part of their national evaluation of social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) programmes in secondary schools. Thus, and as I was intending to focus on investigating, evaluating, and

exploring the programme's outcomes from students' and school staff's different perspectives, I decided to use a semi-structured method to guide my interviews process. This design allowed me to implement a flexible and manageable interview and allowed me to stay organized within the interview process while maintaining a level of freedom to understand the interviewee point of view flexibly.

Phases of the interview

Conducting interviews within the Qatari school environment was a challenging process. The researcher needs to respect culture, opinions and the accepted values within the area of investigation (Cohen et al., 2007). Schim, Doorenbos and Borse (2005, p. 355) define culture as "the complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs arts, morals, law, custom, and many other capabilities and habits acquired by a man as a member of society". Therefore, within the students, teachers and school staff's interviews process, I followed the phases of interviews suggested by Whiting (2008) to enable me to explore the phenomenon that I am studying within a culturally accepted approach. These phases are; building rapport and apprehension, exploration, co-operative, participation and concluding phase.

In the *building rapport and apprehension* phase, I started a friendly conversation with the student/teacher I was interviewing to build a relaxed atmosphere that facilitated an engaging conversation. This approach was important to facilitate the interview in a culturally restricted Qatari school environment. Therefore, I started to introduce myself as a researcher, ask general questions like what do you about mental wellbeing, or what make you happy? These questions were the basis for the second phase of *exploration*. In this phase, students, teachers and social staff started to engage in the discussion, and many of them were less worried and presented more motivation and interaction in the interview process.

Later, the participants reached the *co-operative* phase in which they were comfortable enough to participate and give a deeper understanding of their experiences. This participation phase was the important part of the interview in which the richness of data collection was achieved. Finally, positive notes and acknowledgement appreciation for the interviewees' participation concluded the interviews. Furthermore, I prepared a list of well-planned *prompt* questions suggested by Whiting (2008) that help the researcher follow on participants' ideas and ensure that key issues are addressed within the interview process. All these strategies were used to

maintain good interaction with the participants and gain insights into their experiences with the implemented SEL programme.

Observation

One of the main strengths of case study research is that it can allow the researcher to observe the impact in real contexts by recognizing that context is the powerful determinant of both causes and effects (Cohen et al., 2007). As a tool of data collection method, observation involves noting, looking and capturing in a systematic approach people, events, settings and routines (Simpson & Tuson, 2003). The main distinctive feature of the observation in the research process is offering the researcher the opportunity to gather direct and *live* data from naturally occurring social contexts (Cohen et al., 2011). Therefore, within this case study, observation was one of the main data collection methods. This approach enabled me to look directly into the programme's implementation to explore students' interactions within the sessions and highlight factors that students and teachers might not freely express during interviews.

In terms of the researcher's role in the observational process, Gold (1958, as cited in Cohen et al., 2007) offers four categories; the complete participant, participant as an observer, observer as a participant and the complete observer. The complete participant conducted covertly or overtly by a member of the research group; in contrast, the participant as an observer is conducted overtly by a group member of the research group. The observer as a participant is an outsider researcher that might participate in the activities. Finally, the complete observer is conducted by only observing the phenomenon of interest without any type of participation in the research activities. The complete observer's concept is related to Gorman et al. (2005) concept of an unobtrusive observer described by Spradley (1980) as a *passive* observer.

Cohen et al. (2007) argue that the researcher's adopted role in the observational process depends on the problem to be studied, the researcher's willingness to be studied, and on the researcher's prior knowledge and the research environment. In this regard, Gorman and Clayton's (2005) suggest that research conducted in a new environment may require the researcher to adopt the role of *complete observer*. In this role, the researcher is present on the scene but, according to these three authors, does not participate or interact with the participants to any great extent. Thus, within this approach, the researcher remains

completely detached from the research group. Therefore, the complete observing researcher will listen, note and observe.

Within this type of observation, the researcher is present in the study context but does not participate or interact with participants to any great extent. As a result, the researcher can remain completely detached from the participant's group, which allows the observation of things that happen, listening to what is said, and systematically record the observed data Gorman et al. (2005). Furthermore, in this type of observation, the researcher attempts to record in a handwritten approach what is happening in the field in terms of activities, interactions and communications. This approach enables the researcher to gain meaningful insights from these observational data. Gorman et al. define structured observation as a method that “involve the systematic recording of observable phenomena or behaviour in a natural setting” (2005, p. 40).

For this study, and as I intended to observe the programme's implementation, impact and outcomes without manipulating or interfering in the process, I was acting as a *complete overt observer*. I was attending each session and looking, listening and observing the implementation process of the SEL programme. This approach enabled me to observe students' interactions, look into patterns of the events, and take notes of factors that might hinder or facilitate SEL interventions' success in schools' settings.

Observation process

The observational approach varies in relation to the research objectives. Patton (1990) suggests that the observational approach can be structured, semi-structured and unstructured. In the structured approach, the researcher plans in advance what to observe, what to look for and what categories to include in advance (Cohen et al., 2007). The semi-structured observational approach is less predetermined than the highly structured; however, the researcher will have an overall agenda of what to observe in the research settings and might include other emerging factors. In contrast to these two approaches, within the unstructured approach, the researcher will go into a situation and observe what is taking place before determining its relation and significance for the research (Cohen et al., 2007). This approach

is more complicated than the other structured and semi-structured observational approaches and is a key method in anthropological and sociological research (Mulhall, 2003).

Ponitz et al. (2009) define structured observation as a systematic and comprehensive qualitative research methodology that has been used by the social sciences for several years. It is a methodology in which an event or series of events is observed in its natural setting and recorded by the researcher in the study's context. According to Stausberg (2011), structured observation is a planned and scheduled data collection method conducted in natural field settings within a standardized *observation protocol*. This observation protocol represents a significant part of the research process (Bryman, 2008).

The main objective of this protocol is to focus on the selected aspects like acts, actors, objects and places. These aspects are listed into relevant categories to provide a precise definition of the observed situation. This approach can enable the research to focus on the sequential positions of actions, activities and behaviours of the different participants. This selective approach is a theory-driven act of interpretation. Furthermore, in this approach of structured observation, the researcher decides beforehand what events or behaviour will be observed and which ones will be ignored. Based on these specified objectives, the researcher starts to record detailed and descriptive data of the behaviour, dynamics and events within the distinct pre-determined categories.

For this study, I pre-planned my observation in a structured approach because I was planning to focus on the programme's implementation process and programme's delivery approach to explore students' interaction with the sessions and factors that might contribute or hinder the programme's outcomes in relation to the programme's delivery. These interactions, approaches of delivery and ways of instructions enabled me to address the third question of this study that aimed to understand what factors can contribute to the positive outcomes of SEL interventions in schools' settings. Therefore, *structured observation* was the selected observational approach for this study.

The aim of selecting the structured observation approach was to explore the different dimensions of the SEL programme's implementation process. These dimensions were examined across a range of best practices to highlight key factors that might affect the quality of implementation. The focus on positive mental health requires the attention to evaluate the

programmes' delivery approach, principles, process, and procedures. Evaluation methods that focus on documenting the whole implementation processes are important to determine the key predictors of the outcomes (Barry et al., 2019). As a result, capturing the programmes' dynamics can provide the critical ingredients for the successful SEL programmes' implementation. Durlak (1998) defines implementation as what an intervention consists of in the real practice and how much it was delivered in accordance with the designed objectives. Therefore, good implementation is crucial to positive outcomes. Effective programme's implementations that involve specific procedures related to the SAFE practices are more likely to have more positive results.

In order to identify the steps of the structured observation, I followed Stausberg (2011)'s framework. This framework starts with determining the sample, units of analysis, the observation protocol, the observation schedule and the of recording the findings. These elements represent the clear focus and the boundaries of the observation. The sample consisted of the participating students in the SEL intervention's sessions and the programme's instructor. The next consideration is to determine the observation units that depend upon the selected sample and the research question. The observation was conducted to capture students' interactions with the SEL intervention and the factors that can hinder or facilitate the programme's success.

The third step involved the development of the observational protocol. This step was conducted to systematize the whole observation process. After approaching the literature, the observational protocol was based on the *SAFE framework*. The acronym SAFE is broken down into the following four elements: (1) Sequenced these are classroom activities; (2) Active-active learning activities; (3) Focused specifically targeting the core elements of social and emotional skills; and (4) Explicit approach of teaching specific social and emotional skills (Taylor et al., 2017). Durlak et al. (2011) proposed the SAFE model as an acronym to be used in implementing and assessing effective strategies to pedal the SEL model in the classroom. In addition, Durlak et al. (2011) revealed in their meta-analysis that most SEL interventions that incorporated the SAFE programme features were associated with significant improvements in self-perceptions, positive social behaviours, school grades, and levels of academic achievement.

In addition, many researchers indicated that the most effective SEL interventions are the ones that deliver instruction with sequenced, active, focused, and explicit (SAFE) practices (Smith et al., 2018; Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010), providing a framework for *intensive intervention and the most effective features* of SEL programs (Domitrovich et al., 2017). According to Jones and Kahn (2017), these recommended practices promote learning and skill acquisition through explicit and sequenced activities that actively engage students with the learning environment (Smith et al., 2018). To that end, SAFE practices can be built into the daily curriculum and be connected to other extracurricular activities to enhance the social and emotional competencies of the learners in both formal and informal school settings (Mutsvara, 2021).

Accordingly, I planned to explore the positive steps programme's main features through the lens of the SAFE recommended practices. Thus, I selected the specified categories according to the SAFE model, related them to the research question and assigned codes for each category to facilitate the recording process. The code of the observation protocol included the programme's implementation features, content and students' engagement. I mainly wanted to find out in practice; first, *how students were interacting with the sessions*; second, *how the instructor was delivering the sessions*; and third, *what were the steps of the session's implementation and the programme's content in relation to the SAFE model*.

Therefore, the observation code protocol consisted of the following questions; *Sequenced*, does the programme apply a planned set of activities to develop skills sequentially in a step-by-step fashion? *Active*; does the programme use active forms of learning?; *Focused*, does the programme devote sufficient time and content to develop social and emotional skills? , *Explicit*, does the programme target specific social and emotional skills? In addition, the protocol consisted of the following two questions; are students engaged with the sessions? Furthermore, does the instructor deliver the session in a clear and active instructional approach?

Each of these questions were answered with yes or no, and then a detailed description of each answer was recorded in writing. This detailed description included data related to the time of the session; description of the session (title, content, the sequence of the activities, the focus on specific SEL objective), the delivery approach (active form of learning or direct instructional approach) and description of the apparent events (instructor's approach,

students' engagement, students' participation). This approach led the focus on evaluating and capturing the dynamics of the implemented programme to identify critical ingredients for *effective programme* development. This structured observational approach was structured around the same themes and protocols in the results and analysis chapters.

The observation process was conducted in accordance with Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC) (Flanders, 1970). This tool has been widely used in educational and social sciences studies to conduct the structured observation. Within this approach, the researcher as an observer can sit in the corner of the classroom to record the interactions as it happens at specific time intervals. Therefore, I attended each session of the SEL programme in this study to record within the specified SAFE protocol each event, communication, interaction or activity that happened during the sessions. This recording of the predominant events was conducted every 2-3 minutes to make sure that the different events were captured correctly.

Students' academic performance

The second dimension that was *planned to be evaluated* in this study is the impact of the positive steps programme on students' academic performance. Evaluating the impact of the SEL programme on students' academic performance was part of many previous studies that explored the impact of SEL interventions (Payton et al., 2008; Greenberg et al., 2003; Durlak et al., 2011). As illustrated in the methodology chapter, Outcome indicators of school performance are based on the standardized achievement test scores in the form of overall GPA. These tests are usually conducted at the end of semester one and at the end of semester two. Between these two main tests, minis test are conducted to evaluate students' performance throughout the year.

The planned objective was to collect students' test scores and overall GPAs at the first term exams (which happened immediately after the end of the programme) and at the second term exam (that planned to be conducted four to five months after the programme). However, due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, schools in Qatar were completely closed at the start of the second term. This closure of schools required educational leaders to implement new strategies of teaching and instruction that can accommodate the major changes. These strategies involved a significant change in the assessment approaches that evaluated students' performance based on mini activities and assignments that they can do in their homes. This

change of the examination approaches combined with the changes in the different aspects of the schooling process prevented the second assessment of students' test scores. Therefore, the impact of the SEL programme on students' GPAs was not conducted in this study.

The elimination of this stage related to special circumstances of Covid-19 resulted in missing the third stage of this study. Within this stage, the aim was to evaluate students' well-being levels and their academic performance after six months of the SEL interventions. The objective of this evaluation was to explore the longitudinal impact of the SEL programme on students wellbeing after a specific period of time. Therefore, this study explored the short-term impact of the SEL programme on students' wellbeing and classroom behaviours.

Phases of the data collection process

Evaluating the outcomes and dynamics of the SEL implementation in this study required multiple data collection methods conducted over different phases. In this regard, Humphrey et al. (2013) recommended in their report of lessons learned from SEAL implementation that there is a need to incorporate different quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to assess the process of implementation and the achieved outcomes. DeMarrais and Lapan (2003, p. 228) suggest that “the use of multiple methods and multiple sources as forms of triangulation makes case study finding not only more comprehensive but also more complicated because so many perspectives are represented”. Thomas (2016) argues that in order to understand something and drill deep to explore the details in a case study, researchers need to employ different data collection methods. This approach is identified in the literature as the *triangulation* of data which allow the researcher to use multiple methods to understand a specific case from different angles, directions and vantage points.

The integration of multiple qualitative and quantitative data source of evidence was selected to encapsulate the complexity of the phenomenon, gain more convincing accurate results and increase the reliability of the case study. Furthermore, this sequential case study design aimed to capture holistic and meaningful characteristics of the social emotional intervention within real life settings. In order to ensure the methodological integrity of the case study, a systematic approach of data collection in specific procedural steps was undertaken in this study. The data collection methods of this case study comprised four main stages, as illustrated in the following Figure 4.2 :

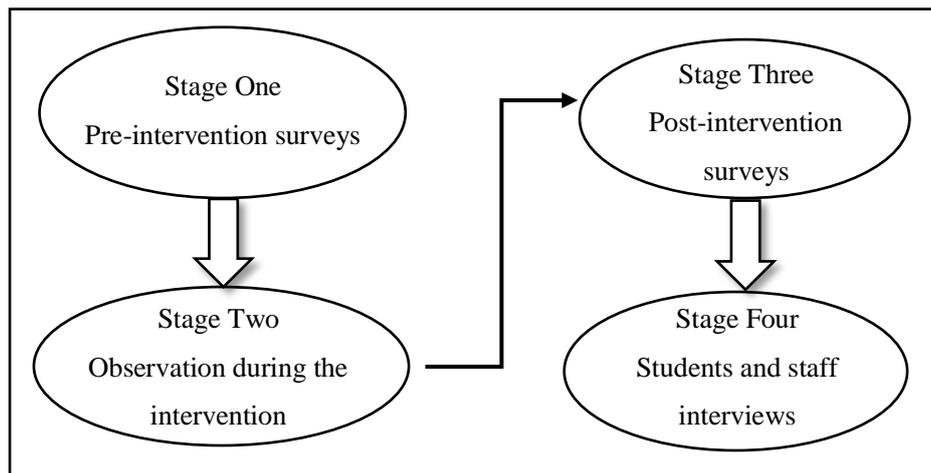


Figure 4.2. Data collection stages

Yin (2002) suggests that when moving between the research's stages, researchers need to provide an explanation of the logic behind the decisions of each phase. At the beginning of the fieldwork and before the programmes' implementation, the first data collection method was conducted. The implementation of this stage was preceded by different ethical approvals, meetings with the school management staff and meeting with the programme's instructor to explain the research's objectives, procedures and context. In this study, a pre-test and post-test for the intervention and control group were used to make comparisons in terms of mental wellbeing development between students. The intervention group involved completing the WEMWBS survey, attending weekly intervention sessions (eight sessions, one hour each), completing the post-intervention WEMWBS survey after the final session, and participating in the interviews. The control classrooms did not have any social emotional lessons or took part in any other social emotional activities during the intervention. They also did not receive any additional attention, support, or guidance from their teachers. They continued with the regular curriculum for the preparatory school. Therefore, the control group's involvement in the study was limited to completing the WEMWBS scale at the two measurement time points.

Within this *first stage*, the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) surveys were given to both groups of students, the intervention group (*Group A*) and the control (*Group B*). This self-reported scale was translated to the Arabic language and was reviewed by many educational and research specialists before being given to both groups of year seven students at the selected preparatory public school in Qatar. The purpose of this

survey is to assess students' initial thoughts, feelings, perceptions that form their wellbeing level.

Before starting to fill the surveys, students were informed of their voluntary participation and the confidentiality of their information. In addition, a short explanation of the survey, in general, were provided to students by their teachers to avoid any misunderstanding or confusion. This phase was sought to answer the first question of students' wellbeing level before the programme. Data analysis of this phase was conducted using the Statistics Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (SPSS Inc., 2010). The results of the WEMWBS for both groups were entered into the SPSS programme. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to measure, describe and present data in a clear, understandable approach. In addition, comparisons between the means of both groups were conducted to examine the differences in the wellbeing level before the programme's implementation.

The *second stage* of the data collection process was conducted during the programme's implementation. I was attending each session to observe the implementation process in detail. The aim was to capture the implementation's factors in terms of process, context, instructor's behaviours and students' engagement with the programme. This information can be used to identify contextual factors that can hinder or facilitate SEL programme's implementations in schools' settings. The *third stage* was conducted at the end of the programme. Within this stage, students in both groups were given the same WEMWBS survey to assess their level of wellbeing. Later, this stage was followed by the *fourth* stage, in which students, teachers and social specialists' interviews were conducted to explore their experiences, opinions and feedback of the SEL intervention.

The *fourth* stage of this research involved semi-structured interviews with students who participated in the programme, their teachers and social staff (sociologists and psychologist). In order to conduct the data collection in this phase, a *purposive sampling approach* was selected. This sampling approach is used in order to access *knowledgeable people*, those who have in-depth knowledge about "particular issues, maybe by virtue of their professional role, power, access to network, expertise and experience" (Cohen et al., 2007, p.157). In addition, according to, (Patton, 2002) the purposive random sampling approach can increase the credibility of the results by allowing the researcher to select for interviews the sample of

individuals to describe their experiences with the implementation of programmes and interventions.

In this study, the adopted purposive sampling technique was the *total population sampling*. Within this approach, the entire study population, who share common experiences are selected to participate in the study (Patton, 2002). However, as suggested by Bernard (2002), in addition to participants' knowledge and experiences, there is a need to consider their availability and willingness to participate in the study. Therefore, within this study, all the intervention group's students were invited to participate voluntarily in the interviews to collect their understanding, perspectives, and opinions of the programme's outcomes. As a result, only 20 students accepted to be part of the interviews. In relation, interviews' invitations were sent to all the teachers and to the social department staff. In response, only five classroom teachers (who teach both the intervention group and the control group), two sociologists and one psychologist accepted to participate in the interviews. Conducting interviews with the school staff provided more details of the programme's impact from practitioners' perspectives. The combination of these perspectives with the results of students' surveys and focus groups was aimed to reach a more rigorous view of what has been achieved, what can be improved, and what is really needed in school settings.

Ethical considerations

According to Cohen et al. (2007, p. 77), social and educational research process necessitates obtaining "the consent and cooperation of subjects who are to assist investigations and of significant others in the institutions or organizations providing the research facilities". The ethical considerations for this study was formed within two main aspects; *research ethical approvals* and *participants' right before and during the research process*.

Firstly, ethical approval was obtained from the Department of Education (DE) at Warwick University (Appendix A.2). This approval was important to ensure compliance with the research process with the DE's policy. Furthermore, permission from the University of Warwick was sought by contacting the authors of the WEMWBS scale, conducting an online registration to use the WEMWBS scale and obtaining authors' (Appendix B.1). Unlike the UK research requirements, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for researchers working with vulnerable people is not required in Qatar. However, the Ministry of Education and

Higher Education (MOE) requests the researcher's educational background, work experience and a detailed proposal to facilitate the process of ethical approvals. In addition, details of the project's design, data collection methods, time of implementation, the confidentiality of students and school staff during the different research's stages, information about who will attend the school's settings and the length of the whole process were required by the MOE.

All these details were provided to the MOE, and formal approval to conduct this research in one of Qatar's public preparatory schools for the duration of one year from the date of approval was issued (Appendix A.1). The Ministry's approval was valid for one year and was given as a signed official letter that notifies schools of the Ministry's approval. The letter contained a brief summary of the research, the needed information, and the support required from schools during the different research stages. I started the school's selection process after I received the Ministry of Education's approval and randomly approached different schools. As I was aiming to conduct one case study, I contacted three potential public schools to seek their acceptance to participate in the research. Two schools accepted to be part of the programme and one school refused to participate. One of the schools that accepted to participate withdrew its acceptance due to the school's management changes and one school accepted to continue with the research process. Therefore, the initial communication with the three schools was important to have an alternative plan in case of any school's management withdrawal. Furthermore, as per the MOE regulations in Qatar, researchers are not allowed to conduct or implement any school initiatives or programmes unless they are pre-approved by the Ministry's educational team. Therefore, I selected a programme called Positive Steps provided by Maximize education centre, an approved institution by the MOE in Qatar.

Special care was taken to ensure that participants' rights, dignity and confidentiality issues are well protected before, during and after the programme's implementation. All participants were treated fairly with dignity, within an ethic of respect and free from judgmental issues related to race, age, gender, nationality, faith, disability, or other differences. Furthermore, informed consent was given to all participants to explain the study's objectives, procedures and the required contributions. Informed consent, according to Diener and Crandall (1978) is "the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions" (Diener and Crandall 1978 as cited in Cohen et al., 2007, p.78). Cohen et al. (2007) describe this process

within four concepts that I followed in this research; *competence, voluntarism, full information and comprehension.*

Competence refers to individuals' ability to gain the required information to make their decisions. The headmaster of the selected school was contacted to explain the research aims and gain permission to proceed with the research process within the school's settings. Written consents were given to the school's management, who decided to handle this process. They sent the consents to students' parents, including information about the social emotional programme to obtain their approval of allowing their children. In addition, consent forms were given to teachers and social staff (psychologist and 2 sociologists) to ensure the given information's confidentiality. All participants provided me with their consent and agreement to participate in the research, apart from two teachers who refused to participate in the interviews.

Voluntarism refers to the free choice of individuals to take part or not in the research. School staff were provided with consent forms to explain the research's objective and voluntary participation. Moreover, students and teachers were provided (depending on their level, whether they are students or teachers) with full information about the research, how the data will be gathered, how the information will be used and how the results will be reported without causing any harm to them. This information was crucial to enable participants to understand and reach full comprehension of the process to take the appropriate participation decision. Participants were also informed that they could withdraw at any time without any penalty if they wished. The obtained data were stored in a secured system, and special codes were assigned to avoid using names and maintain confidentiality.

Non- participating students were given choices to take a break in the school's sports area, be in another classroom or participate in art activities within the school. Providing these alternative choices were intended to enable students to have the freedom to accept or reject their attendance in the SEL programme's sessions. Despite the voluntary choice of participation, all students in the intervention group accepted and decided to participate in the SEL programme. Their acceptance was supported by their parents' agreements to allow their kids to be part of the social emotional programme and the research process.

Several ethical dilemmas and practical problems might arise during any study. Some of these ethical dilemmas can be anticipated before and at the beginning of the research, while others might emerge during the research study. One of the main challenges of this research was to work within a culturally sensitive environment. Such an environment requires careful considerations to each step of the research to maintain the confidentiality and autonomy of participants. Valentine (2005) suggests that researcher needs to think carefully and be highly sensitive to local codes of conducts when conducting research within different cultural contexts. This approach is important to maintain confidentiality and respect of participants' rights, especially within research that involves semi-structured interviews (Law, 2004).

One of the dilemmas that I faced with this study was the teacher's refusal to record the interviews. In response, I fully supported their decisions and started to write their answers instead of audio records. In addition, the school's management selected a specific place for the interviews for the safety and dignity of the school's staff and students. Therefore, all interviews were conducted in the selected room to avoid any conflict or ethical issues during the research. In addition, during interviews, any judgmental, discriminatory or issues that might pose strong ethical dilemmas were avoided.

Law (2004) argues that true anonymity of participants is achieved only when their identity is not linked to the data. In this regard, Cohen et al. (2007) suggest that the information that each participant shares should not be used for other purposes unless consent is received by participant. Special attention was given to human dignity in this research to ensure participants' anatomy by assigning special ID numbers to the filled questioners. Research participants were also reassured at the outset and the end of the interviews that their views will be kept confidential and that all interviews will be anonymized through the use of pseudonyms and encrypted file names. Before and after the programme, students were asked to fill an Arabic translated version of WEMWBS (Warwick- Edinburgh Mental Well-being scale) to assess their level of wellbeing and if there is any effect of the programme on them.

The scale was given to both groups of students that had returned consents in their usual classroom. Students were provided with basic guidelines on how to complete the questionnaires and reminded of their voluntary participation. During this process, two teachers were present to answer students' questions. In addition, when students attended the programme's lecture hall, I provided them with a short description of the research, the

programme time and objectives. Students were reminded of their voluntary participation at the beginning of the programme and during the sessions and that they have the right to leave the programme at any stage without any consequences. Interestingly, no students left the programme through the whole eight sessions despite the notion that they were given a choice to leave the programme's sessions at any time of the research process. As mentioned above, students were given three alternative choices if they were not willing to participate in the programme at any stage. These choices included; taking a break in the sports hall attending another classroom, or attending an art session within the school settings. Furthermore, students were informed of all the details pertaining to the programmes possess, how they will participate, who will deliver the sessions and where the lectures will be implemented. Students explicitly consented to join the social emotional programme and were aware that this is part of the research.

Analytical strategy

Consistent with the approach developed by Yin (2002), the data from each source was initially collected and analysed independently. Each method provided distinct understandings of the phenomenon under investigation. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the analysis of the WEMWBS data. The students' interview data were analyzed by way of deductive approaches in relation to the PREMA model of human flourishing and inductive analysis in relation to students' perceptions of the SEL programme's impact. Teachers and social department staff's interviews were analyzed inductively to explore the main outcomes of the SEL intervention from their perspectives. Observational data were analyzed based on the pre-planned codes and were combined with students' perspectives of the SEL programme. The results of these methods were synthesized in the final chapter of this thesis using the *pattern matching* approach to evaluate the understandings gained from these multiple methods and to answer each research question.

Pattern matching is a common strategy that brings the different sources of data in case study research together (Yin, 2009). This strategy is used in studies that involve different quantitative and qualitative data collection methods by identifying and comparing the evident patterns in the data against the pre-hypothesised patterns (Almutairi, Gardner, and McCarthy, 2014). This approach starts by stating the study's proposition or hypothesis which can be developed and drawn from patterns in the literature and the previous empirical findings in the

field of study (Yin, 2009). Then, the findings of the study is discussed in relation to the hypothesis, the study's findings and the previous research results (Trochim,1989). This analytical approach was important to view the interconnections between the different parts of the collected data to help understand how elements of the case study are integrated together.

The hypothesis for this case study was mainly derived from the previous literature that investigated, evaluated and explored the impact of social emotional interventions on students' mental wellbeing. In particular, the proposition of this study was that:

Social emotional interventions can work in school settings and promote students' mental wellbeing and classroom behaviours as perceived and experienced by students, teachers and social staff.

From this main hypothesis, four sub hypotheses were formed to explore and compare the findings of this study with the previous literature:

- *Participating in the social emotional programme will promote students' self-reported wellbeing.*
- *The SEL programme would improve students' core aspects of wellbeing based on Seligman's PREMA model*
- *Social emotional interventions can work in school settings and promote students' mental wellbeing and classroom behaviours as perceived and experienced by teachers and social staff*
- *If the positive steps programme encounters the four SAFE model recommended practices, successful outcomes can be achieved*

In the following three chapters, each of the three sub-research questions are addressed. Chapter 5 answers the question that evaluated the impact of the social emotional intervention on students' wellbeing. The answered question within this chapter was, *Would a social emotional programme improve students' wellbeing?* In order to answer this question, the chapter discusses the results of the WEMWBS scale and students' interviews results. In addition this chapter compare the results in relation to the two hypothesised propositions;

Participating in the social emotional programme will promote students' self-reported wellbeing, and, The SEL programme would improve students' core aspects of wellbeing based on Seligman's PREMA model.

This chapter is followed by chapter 6 which explores teachers' and social staff's perceptions of the programme's impact on students' behaviours. The question guiding this chapter was, *what is the impact of the social emotional programme according to teachers and social staffs' perspectives?* To answer this question, inductive analysis of teachers and social staff's interviews was conducted to explore the main themes and findings in relation to the research question. In addition, this chapter compare the previous findings with the hypothesis that; *Social emotional interventions can work in school settings and promote students' mental wellbeing and classroom behaviours as perceived and experienced by teachers and social staff*

Chapter 7 is focused on exploring the programme's dynamics. Therefore, this chapter is focused on answering the question of; *what factors can hinder or facilitate the implementation of SEL in schools?* This question was answered by the analysis of the structured observational data combined with students' perspectives of the programme's content, process and instructor's characteristics. Furthermore, this chapter is designed to discuss the hypothesis that; *If the positive steps programme encounters these four recommended practices, successful outcomes can be achieved.*

In the concluding chapter, the findings of the three chapters are gathered through the *pattern matching* approach to develop the outcomes of the study. As a result, the achieved results were compared and contrasted against this proposition and in accordance with the previous findings.

Conclusion

Within this chapter, I explained the methodological design of my study, the data collection methods and the research phases. I selected this single evaluative case study design to investigate the SEL programme's impact within a public preparatory school setting in Qatar. The study involved four sequential phases of data collection methods; WEMWBS scale before the SEL programme, observation during the programme's implementation, the

WEMWBS scale after the programme, and interviews with students, teachers and social staff department. The use of multiple data collection methods within these sequential phases enabled me to understand students, teachers and social staff's views, perceptions, and experiences of the programme. Furthermore, the programme's dynamics and implementation process were explored to determine factors that can contribute or hinder the SEL programme's success. This information can provide a holistic view of what SEL programme can result in real-life settings. In the next two chapters, the analytical approach, findings and results of this study are discussed in the light of previous findings.

CHAPTER FIVE,
Would a social emotional programme improve students' wellbeing?

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the data analysis approaches, process and findings obtained from the quantitative and qualitative methods that evaluated the impact of the SEL programme on students' wellbeing. The results of the Warwick- Edinburgh Mental Well-being (WEMWBS) scale's results are analyzed, presented and discussed. These results involve the pre and post-intervention scales results of students' wellbeing levels for the intervention and the control groups. Furthermore, students' interviews are analyzed and discussed in this chapter to explore the impact of the SEL programme on students' wellbeing from their own perspectives.

As mentioned in the Covid-19 statement, this study's initial plan was to investigate the impact of the SEL programme on students' wellbeing and *academic performance* by comparing the means and scores of an intervention group to a control group at three stages. The first stage (before the start of the programme), the second stage (at the end of the programme), the third stage (four-six months after the programme). Due to the circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic and the major changes in the educational systems to cope with this urgent situation, schools in Qatar were closed shortly after the start of the second term. As a result, all classrooms, exams and assessments were delivered through online systems. In addition, all extra-curricula, research and out of school activities were stopped to cope with the challenges of the teaching and instructional changes. These special circumstances resulted in two main issues that influenced some stages of this study.

The first change was that the evaluation of students' wellbeing levels at the third stage was not possible due to the major changes of the educational system and the school closure. The second major change was related to the evaluation of students' academic performance. Due to the changes in the schooling system to cope with the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, schools' managements decided to stop the second term examinations and assessment. Therefore, evaluating students' academic performance after participating in the SEL intervention was not possible. Thus, the focus of this study was shifted from the holistic evaluation of the SEL intervention's impact on students' wellbeing and academic performance to the focus on the outcomes on students' wellbeing levels only.

This part of the discussion is focused on two main dimensions; the impact of the programme on *students' self-reported wellbeing* based on the results of the WEMWBS scale and the impact on the *core aspects of wellbeing* based on students' interviews. Each dimension is discussed separately to answer the specified question and to compare the results with the previous relevant research. These results were directly gained by asking students about their perceptions and evaluations regarding their experience of participation in the positive steps programme allowing a deep understanding of students' own perspectives in reality.

Consistent with the approach developed by Yin (2002), each data source was initially collected and analyzed independently. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the analysis of the scale data. The interview data were analyzed by way of deductive approaches in accordance with the PREMA model of human flourishing. Each of these methods and their results is described in chapter 4. Each method provided distinct understandings of the phenomenon under investigation. Within this chapter, the outcomes of the study and the understandings gained from these multiple methods are discussed. As discussed in the methodology chapter, the main question that guided this investigation was:

What is the impact of a social and emotional programme on adolescent school pupils in a Qatari school?

This question was the base for three sub-questions that guided the research process. This chapter is focused on answering the first question:

1. Would a social emotional programme in a Qatari girls' school improve students' wellbeing?

From this question, two sub-question guiding the evaluation of the SEL programme's impact on student wellbeing:

1. What is the social emotional programme's impact on students' self-reported wellbeing levels?
2. What is the impact of the social emotional programme on students' core aspects of wellbeing according to students?

The first question was focused on students' self-reported results of the WEMWBS scale. The second question was focused on the SEL programme's impact on students' core aspects of wellbeing. This question was addressed by conducting interviews with 20 students after the programme's implementation.

Quantitative results

This section presents the quantitative findings of the WEMWBS scales' results for the intervention group who participated in the social emotional programme and for the control group who did not participate in the programme. The initial analysis is conducted within each group to explore the differences in the wellbeing levels for each group before and after the programme. Then, a comparison between both groups is conducted to evaluate any differences in students' wellbeing levels between the intervention and the control groups.

Student's sample

The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being scale (WEMWBS) can be used before and after an intervention (within eight weeks duration) to establish if students' mental wellbeing has been improved. The students' sample consisted of an intervention group ($n=82$) and a control group ($n=81$) of year 7 students in a preparatory public school in Qatar with a mean age at baseline of 13 years. In terms of ethnic background, students from the intervention and the control groups were predominantly Qatari national adolescents 90% ($n=146$) while 10% ($n=17$) students were from Egypt, Palestine, Iraq, Syria and Sudan. The reason of this variation in the number of Qatari nationals and non-Qatari nationals is that public schools are designed mainly for Qatari nationals. In some special cases, non-Qatari nationals can be accepted at public schools if the students' parents are working in government's sectors. Otherwise, the majority non-Qatari students will attend international and private schools in Qatar.

Arabic is the teaching, instruction and native language of all participants, and all students were Muslims. The control group was a non-intervention control group that did not participate in any social emotional intervention sessions or take part in any other social emotional activities or support from teachers during the time of the intervention. They continued to attend their usual regular classes, and their involvement in the study was limited to completing the WEMWBS scale at the different phases.

Before providing their answers, students in both groups were provided with a short description of the research, the survey and their choice of voluntary participation. All students from both groups accepted to participate, and a total of 82 scales for the intervention and 81 scales for the control group were obtained. Calculations based on the WEMWBS guidelines were conducted for the missing values in the returned scales. In addition, and as recommended by the WEMWBS scale's guidance, any scales with less than 11 out of 14 answers were not reported or included in the analysis. For scales with 11, 12 and 13 questions, a weighted average was used based on the calculations suggested by the scale's authors.

Analytical approach

The WEMWBS is composed of 14 positively worded items, and each item's score is ranging from 1 (*none of the time*) to 5 (*all of the time*) (Appendix. C). The overall score for the WEMWBS is calculated by totalling the numbers for each item with equal weights with a maximum score of 70. Therefore, the higher the WEMWBS scale's score, the better indication of mental well-being level. For this study, two analytical stages for the survey were conducted to understand the impact on students' wellbeing deeply. Firstly, students' scales mean scores for the intervention and the control groups before and after the programme were analyzed and compared separately. A post-intervention comparison between the intervention and the control group was then conducted to evaluate any differences between both groups. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations for intervention and control groups, were calculated at pre and post-intervention. Furthermore, independent t-tests were conducted to determine whether there were any systematic differences between the groups prior to the intervention. In relation, a probability level in determining the statistical significance of $\pm.05$ confidence intervals was used to determine the significance of the results.

Calculation of Effect Size

Due to the complexity of the findings, a calculation of effect size (*ES*) (Cohen's *d*) of the observed data was conducted to determine the impact of the programme on students' mental wellbeing outcomes levels (Cohen, 1988). This analytical approach facilitates the comparisons of the obtained results with prior related research that used the same type of indication to determine the interventions' outcomes (Hedges and Hedberg, 2007). These

calculations are based on the standardized mean difference or effect size (ES), by subtracting the means of the control group from the intervention group at pre and post-test. Effect sizes (ES; as measured by Cohen's *d*) can range from 0.20 to 0.80, with ES of 0.20, 0.50, and 0.80 as small, moderate, and large, respectively (Cohen, 1988).

This type of calculation was conducted in many previous studies to evaluate the impact of SEL programmes. Durlak and Wells (1997) evaluated 177 school-based prevention programmes and used EF as one of the main approaches to explore the impact on students externalizing behaviours. Their study revealed that effective social emotional programmes that targeted the awareness of emotions resulted in robust gains in different competencies (EF from 0.69 to 0.85). Wilson, Gottfredson, and Najaka's (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of 165 prevention social competence activities and reported a range of EF from 0.04 to 0.29. Payton et al. (2008) used the EF indicator to determine the impact of SEL programmes on students' outcomes in their meta-analysis of 180 studies and found a range of EF from 0.23 to 0.60. Neil and Christensen (2009) applied the EF evaluation method to explore the effectiveness and outcomes of 27 school-based prevention programmes and revealed a range of effect sizes results from 0.11 to 1.37. January, Casey and Paulson (2011) used EF to evaluate 28 SEL studies' outcomes and found an EF of 0.50, indicating a statistically significant improvement in students' different skills. Therefore, this study aimed to add to this literature base by examining the possible effect size of a school-based SEL intervention on students' wellbeing.

The process of effect size calculation process of this study involved three stages, a comparison of the ES of the intervention group before and after the SEL programme, a comparison of the ES of the control group (who did not participate in the SEL programme) before and after the programme, and a comparison between both groups after the programme. The aim of these three stages was to highlight the differences within groups and between groups. Higher effect size's levels reflect greater positive programme impact, while lower effect sizes (EF around 0.20 and less) reflect non-significant improvement based on previous educational research (Payton et al., 2008).

The first part of the quantitative phase was the WEMWBS scale's scores analysis. The collected surveys from both the intervention and the control groups, before and after the programme, were entered into an excel sheet prior to the data analysis process. Then, the data

were analyzed using the Statistics Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation and average were used to describe the results of the data in an understandable approach.

In addition to the descriptive statistical analysis, calculations of the power sample size was conducted. The concept of statistical power is associated with sample size and the power of the study increases with an increase in sample size. Ideally, the significant power of a study required is to be within a range from 0-1, and the more the range is closer to 1, the more significant the results to be considered (Jones, Carley and Harrison, 2003). Generally, the larger the sample size, the more statistically significant results can be achieved, meaning that there is less of a chance that results happened by coincidence. Statistical power can be conducted before, or even after the completion of study (Cohen et al., 2007). After the study, a retrospective power analysis will be useful in reporting the results. Within this study the power was calculated after the study to determine if the results found are true or possibly due to chance alone (Jones, Carley and Harrison, 2003). Each value of the statistical power is reported in discussed in the tables below. Although the power sample calculations were conducted for the for stages, the focus is on the results of the pre and post intervention group, and on the comparison between the intervention and the control groups after the intervention.

As illustrated in the table 5.1 , for the intervention group’s comparison, the pre-intervention mean score of the WEMWBS wellbeing scale was ($M=52.68$), ($SD= 10.11$), while the post-intervention mean was ($M=60.05$) and ($SD= 7.42$), with a mean effect size of ($EF= 0.60$). These results suggest a significant increase in the level of wellbeing for students who participated in the programme, with a p-value of ($p < 0.001$) and an effect size of more than (0.20) as suggested in the previous studies (Payton et al.,2008). In addition, the power of (0.99) indicates the significance of the results.

Table 5.1. Intervention group’s comparison

	Intervention Group (N = 82)				t-value	p-value	Effect Size (Cohen's d)	Power
	Pre-Test		Post-Test					
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Survey	52.68	10.11	60.05	7.42	-5.44	< 0.001	0.601	0.999

As shown in table 5.2, the pre-intervention mean of the WEMWBS scales' scores for the control group was ($M=55.62$) with a standard deviation of ($SD= 10.39$). At post-intervention, the WEMWBS scales' mean results were ($M=55.61$), ($SD=10.3$). The p-value of these results ($p= 0.99$) suggests no increase in students' wellbeing level. Furthermore, the value of the effect size ($EF= 0.001$) supports these results by confirming that there was no significant difference in the means of the pre and post-intervention scales for the control group. In addition, the power value of (0.02) indicate that there was no significance in in the results in relation to the sample size.

Table 5.2. Control group's comparison

	Control Group (N = 81)				t-value	p-value	Effect Size (Cohen's d)	Power
	Pre-Test		Post-Test					
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Survey	55.62	10.39	55.61	10.03	0.01	0.994	0.001	0.025

Before comparing the results between the intervention and the control group, a *pre-test comparison* was conducted (Table 5.3). the results reveal that to start off with, the control group had a higher level of wellbeing compared to the intervention group. However, this level was not significant in relation to the p-value ($p = 0.06$) and an effect size of ($EF= 0.141$) that confirms no statistical significant difference between the two groups before the SEL intervention. Furthermore, the power of (0.05) is consistent with the non-significant results.

Table 5.3. Pre-intervention control and intervention groups comparison

	Pre-Test				t-value	p-value	Effect Size (Cohen's d)	Power
	Control Group (N = 81)		Intervention Group (N = 82)					
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Survey	55.62	10.39	52.68	10.11	1.83	0.069	0.141	0.051

Comparing the results of both groups by an independent sample t-test (Table 5.4) reveals that students in the intervention group had demonstrated significantly enhanced levels of wellbeing at post-intervention. The p-value ($p = 0.002$) and the effect size of ($EF= 0.50$) confirm a significant difference in the means level of students' wellbeing scores levels after

the programme between the intervention and the control group. In relation, the value of the power of (0.93) indicate that the results were significant and less chance that results happened by coincidence.

Table 0.4. Post-intervention control and Intervention groups comparison

	Post-Test				t-value	p-value	Effect Size (Cohen's d)	Power
	Control Group (N = 81)		Intervention Group (N = 82)					
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Survey	55.61	10.03	60.05	7.42	3.22	0.002	0.503	0.939

More specifically, when investigating improvement levels within percentile gains in the intervention group compared to the non-participants in the control class, the ranges of improvements are different. According to Vacha-Haase and Thompson (2004), these improvement indices provide a better indicator and explanations of the practical value of improved outcomes than effect sizes alone. As shown in Table 5.4, when translating the effect size into improvement results that show percentile gains achieved by each group, the results indicate a percentage of (%13.98) in the intervention group compared to a percentage of (% -0.02) in the control group. These improvements provide more focused indicators of the value of improved outcomes in the intervention group after participating in the positive steps programme.

Table 0.5. Percentile gains

	Control Group (N = 81)			Intervention Group (N = 82)		
	Mean		% of changes	Mean		% of changes
	Pre-Test	Post-test		Pre-Test	Post-test	
Total Survey	55.62	55.61	-0.02	52.68	60.05	13.98

To reveal more in-depth data of the surveys, an analysis of the WEMWBS scale's 14 items that cover both hedonic and eudaimonic aspects of mental health was conducted. The aim of this analysis was to evaluate the impact on each dimension of wellbeing separately and to explore which item scored highest. As discussed in the second chapter, wellbeing consists of

two main dimensions, positive affect feelings of (optimism, happiness relaxation) and positive functioning that maintains positive (interpersonal relationships, energy, thinking, self-confidence, personal development, competence and autonomy).

The WEMWBS scale includes both dimensions of wellbeing, hedonic and eudaimonic. The hedonic dimension includes positive effects:

- *I've been feeling optimistic about the future*
- *I've been feeling useful*
- *I've been feeling relaxed*
- *I've been feeling good about myself*
- *I've been feeling confident*
- *I've been feeling loved*
- *I've been feeling cheerful*

The eudaimonic dimension includes elements of functioning, relationships with others and self-acceptance:

- *I've had energy to spare*
- *I've been dealing with problems well*
- *I've been thinking clearly*
- *I've been interested in new things*
- *I've been able to make up my own mind about things*
- *I've been feeling interested in other people*
- *I've been feeling close to other people).*

Elements of these two dimensions were analyzed separately to investigate the impact on both dimensions of wellbeing and to compare the difference of change in both groups. As shown in Table 5.5, the analysis of the scale's elements that cover the hedonic dimension reveals various levels of changes in the intervention group compared to the control group. In more details, a decrease in the elements of (*I've been feeling optimistic about the future*) can be seen in the control group (-3.14%) compared to being the highest scored element in the intervention group with a (28.77%) positive improvement. Furthermore, the statement of (*I've been feeling loved*) reveals a (-3.39%) decrease in the control group compared to an increase of (14.36%) in the intervention group. For the other 4 elements of the scale that cover the hedonic dimension of wellbeing, the percentages of changes (1.965%), (2.57%),

(2.05%), (2.27%) show a slight increase in these dimension in the control group compared to higher levels of increase in the intervention group of (21.73%), (14.75%), (18.01%) and (18.18%) respectively.

Table 5.6. Hedonic dimension analysis

Items	Control Group (N = 81)			Intervention Group (N = 82)		
	Mean		% of changes	Mean		% of changes
	Pre- Test	Post- test		Pre-Test	Post- test	
	I've been feeling optimistic about the future	4.01	3.89	-3.14	3.58	4.61
I've been feeling useful	3.87	3.94	1.96	3.73	4.28	14.75
I've been feeling relaxed	3.65	3.75	2.57	3.36	4.09	21.73
I've been feeling loved	4.24	4.10	-3.39	3.83	4.38	14.36
I've been interested in new things	3.95	4.03	2.05	3.72	4.39	18.01
I've been feeling cheerful	3.83	3.92	2.27	3.74	4.42	18.18

As shown in Table 5.6, the intervention group changes compared to the control group are varied in terms of eudaimonic dimension. Elements of the WEMWBS scale that showed a decrease in the percentage of changes in the control group were for the items; *I've been feeling interested in other people* (-2.00%) and *I've been feeling close to other people* (-4.28%), compared to an increase in both elements in the intervention group in a percentage of (8.17%) and (15.985%) respectively.

Table 0.7. Eudemonic statements analysis

Items	Control Group (N = 81)			Intervention Group (N = 82)		
	Mean		% of changes	Mean		% of changes
	Pre- Test	Post- test		Pre- Test	Post- test	
	I've been feeling interested in other people	4.20	4.11	-2.00	4.04	4.37
I've had energy to spare	3.75	3.89	3.65	3.37	3.96	17.51

I've been dealing with problems well	3.67	3.63	-1.01	3.62	3.96	9.39
I've been thinking clearly	3.99	3.69	-7.45	3.64	4.21	15.66
I've been feeling good about myself	4.33	4.34	0.21	4.29	4.43	3.26
I've been feeling close to other people	3.97	3.80	-4.28	3.63	4.21	15.98
I've been feeling confident	4.26	4.00	-6.17	4.40	4.90	11.36
I've been able to make up my own mind about things	4.18	4.18	-0.02	3.91	4.25	8.70

Furthermore, a decrease in the elements of *I've been dealing with problems well* (-1.01%), *I've been thinking clearly* (-7.45%), and *I've been able to make up my own mind about things* (-0.2%), and *I've been feeling confident* (-6.17%) can be noted in the control group.

Compared to the intervention group, these elements showed increases of (9.39%, 15.66%, 8.70% and 11.36%) respectively. Moreover, the elements that showed a slight positive change in the control group are; *I've had energy to spare* (3.65%), and *I've been feeling good about myself* (0.21%) compared to (17.51%) and (3.26%) increase in the intervention group's levels. These results indicate significant improvements in the different dimensions of wellbeing (the hedonic and the eudemonic) for the intervention group's participants. In contrast, the control groups did not gain any improvements in the different wellbeing dimensions.

Discussion of the WEMWBS results

Within this section, the discussion will be focused on answering the first question to address the impact of social emotional programme on students' self-reported wellbeing

What is the impact of social emotional programme on students' self-reported wellbeing?

In order to answer this question, students in the intervention and the control groups were asked to fill the WEMWBS scale before and after the programme. As mentioned in this chapter, the WEMWBS is a 14-items self-reported scale designed to measure positive mental health or mental well-being. It comprises both hedonic elements (happiness, joy, contentment) and eudemonic elements (psychological functioning, autonomy, positive relationships with others, and a sense of purpose in life). The hypothesis based on the

previous studies was that; *participating in the social emotional programme will promote students' self-reported wellbeing*. Consistent with this hypothesis, the WEMWBS scale analysis revealed that students' wellbeing levels in the intervention group were significantly improved after the programme. These improvements were achieved within the intervention group and in comparison with the control group. Before the SEL programme, the pre-intervention mean for the intervention group was ($M= 52.68$, $SD= 10.11$) and was changed to ($M= 60.05$, $SD= 7.42$) after the programme. This change reflects a significant improvement in students' wellbeing level after participating in the SEL programme. In contrast, the pre-intervention for non-participating students in the control group's wellbeing mean was ($M= 55.62$, $SD = 10.39$), while after the programme, results show a mean score of ($M= 55.61$, $SD=10.03$) reflecting no change in students' level of wellbeing.

In addition, calculation of the effect size (EF) (Cohen's d) of the collected data was conducted to determine the impact of the programme on students' mental wellbeing outcomes levels (Cohen, 1988). Comparing the results of the interventions' group before and after the programme reveals an effect size of ($EF= 0.60$) that suggest a significant increase in students' wellbeing levels. In contrast, the control group's effect size of the mean scores was ($EF= 0.01$), suggesting that there was no significant difference in the control groups' self-reported wellbeing levels. Furthermore, the between-groups comparison revealed an effect size of ($EF= 0.50$), emphasizing a *significant difference* in the self-reported wellbeing levels between the intervention and the control groups.

These results indicate that students' self-reported wellbeing levels in the intervention group were increased after participation in the positive steps SEL programme. In contrast, there was no change in the wellbeing levels for students who did not participate in the sessions. These results in the control group might be related to the impact of not participating in the SEL intervention. The unchanged levels of wellbeing in the control group reflect that the daily classroom practices might not improve students' wellbeing and social emotional competencies. In addition, despite the care that was taken to ensure fair participation and random sampling for the SEL programme, students in the control group might had the feeling that they were lefts out and neglected, as they were not randomly chosen to take part in the SEL sessions. However, there was no significant decrease in students' wellbeing levels in the control group, suggesting that students might not have developed these feelings.

The results of the WEMWBS confirm the notion that, exposing students to social emotional programmes can improve their wellbeing levels compared to students who do not have the opportunity to participate in SEL programmes. Including the control group that involved similar age students, at the same grade, within the same schooling conditions and studying the same academic curriculum, without being exposed to the social emotional intervention was important to understand the impact of the programme in an accurate, precise and comprehensive approach. Students in the intervention group reported significant differences in their wellbeing levels and positive thinking. In contrast, students in the control group did not have the opportunity to develop these skills within the normal schooling curriculum and educational practices. Students in both groups were aware of the SEL intervention.

These results indicate that social emotional skills can positively impact students' wellbeing, motivation towards learning and relationships with others. Therefore, these results suggest that social emotional interventions might work and fulfil positive outcomes when implemented effectively in different Qatari school settings. Thus, these results confirm the hypothesis that participating in a social emotional intervention within school settings will improve students' self-reported wellbeing levels. These results are in line with previous studies that revealed significant improvements in students' self-reported wellbeing levels after participating in SEL interventions (Payton et al., 2008; Shoshani et al., 2016; Greenberg et al., 2003; Durlak et al., 2011).

In more detail, the programme had a positive impact on both hedonic and eudaimonic aspects of mental wellbeing, including positive affect (feelings of optimism, cheerfulness, relaxation), satisfying interpersonal relationships and positive functioning (energy, clear thinking, self-acceptance, personal development, competence and autonomy). The analysis of the statement-by-statement of the WEMWBS scale revealed that the programme had a significant impact on the different components of the hedonic dimension of wellbeing. The highest score of these statements was for *feeling optimistic about the future*. These results indicate the programme had a positive impact on students' emotional thinking and motivation towards future achievements. These results are similar to previous studies that reported the impact of SEL on students' positive affect and emotional wellbeing. Merrell et al. (2008) study's results reported that positive changes in students' emotional knowledge and optimistic levels. Weinstein and Ryan (2010) suggest in this regard that engaging in social

activities can foster positive changes in students' positive emotions, life -satisfaction and wellbeing.

For the eudaimonic dimension of wellbeing, the programme significantly promoted students' interpersonal relationships and positive functioning with the highest score to statements; *I've had energy to spare*, and *I've been feeling close to other people*. These results indicate that participating in SEL programmes can improve students' eudemonic psychological wellbeing by improving their relationships with others, their motivation towards achievement and their realization of the own self-worth. Consistent with these findings, Greenberg et al. (2003) revealed in their study results the important role of SEL in enhancing students' psychological wellbeing by promoting their inner-worth and socialization with others.

As hypothesized, the positive steps SEL programme was positively associated with improving students' self-reported wellbeing in both dimensions, hedonic and eudemonic. Achieving this combination of feeling good and functioning well aspects of wellbeing indicates that SEL programmes can lead to successful results when implemented in an effective approach in school settings.

Clustering consideration

Educational research studies take place in a special context within a natural clustering structure. All students within a group are exposed to the same conditions, such as the same teacher or the same facilities within times. Individual randomization can hardly be used in educational research and might be less feasible. If individual randomization was used in an educational research study, such a bias (distortion or systematic error) could be caused by interactions between individuals in different study groups. For example, if students in the control group were individually randomized they could easily be encouraged by students in the intervention group to explore the specific features of the new intervention or teaching strategy being tested. Consequently, a *contamination* between the groups can occur.

Therefore, Cluster randomization can “potentially reduce treatment *contamination* between intervention and control groups”(Dron et al. (2010, p.703). Thus, in schools' settings, the randomization unit is often a classroom, where a number of students belong to the same class within the same level (Hayes, 2017).

In this study, and for practical issues related to the schooling context, the school management decided to allow me as a researcher to randomize students based on their class, not as individuals. Within this type of randomization, the school's management was aiming to guide the process of the implementation in an approach that does not impact the teaching and learning environment of the schools, while allowing students in the intervention group to benefit from the program.

Cluster-level randomization plays a critical role in minimizing the impact of interaction and interference among participants by assigning individuals who are most likely to interact with one another to the same treatment group (Sobel, 2006). However, the primary implication of adopting a cluster randomized design is that students in any one cluster are often more likely to respond in a similar manner, and thus can no longer be assumed to act independently (Dron et al., 2010). This lack of independence in turn leads to a loss of statistical power in comparison with a patient randomized trial. Therefore, in terms of design, there might be an effect of the clustering of students within the same class. Thus, although the aim was to avoid contamination, clustering might have resulted in higher positive results of the study. Students in the intervention group might have shared their ideas with the control group due to the fact that they attended the same school. However, the clustering of three classes in which the same group of students belong to was aimed to eliminate this effect by allowing the same group to be exposed to the same set of activities.

Another common complication in cluster randomized studies is individuals' variation in exposure to the intervention (Sobel, 2006). This variation can occur when individuals can move in or out of the group and elect to attend some of the sessions during the intervention period, and thereby, receiving only part of the intervention. This issue can be identified as a treatment noncompliance or intervention adherence or participation (Lopez, 2006). Within this study, all students attended the whole program's sessions, and therefore, this issue of noncompliance to the intervention might not be related to the outcomes.

From another dimension, as discussed in the methodology chapter, the aim of including the control group in this study was to rule out that an observed effect could have arisen also without the new method. However, as the intervention was on cluster level, not all observed results in the intervention group can be attributed to the SEL program. In this regards,

Dreyhaupt et al. (2017) suggest that differences in results observed when comparing the control and intervention group can be really attributed to the new interventions when statistical comparability is achieved. This statistically comparable results indicate that the control and intervention groups differ as little as possible and at the most by chance. This level of comparability includes; (1) the structure of the control and test arms (structural equivalence); (2) the interactions with students, with the exception of the specific new method being evaluated (equivalence of treatment conditions); and (3) the observations (equivalence of observations).

Structural equivalence is related to the confounders within the groups that might influence the outcomes (Lopez, 2006). Examples of confounders are; age, gender and educational background. Random allocation of students to the control or intervention group allows one to achieve a similar distribution of known and unknown confounders across both arms, or at least to assume that it has been achieved (Dreyhaupt et al., 2017). Within this study, the effort was made to ensure the structural equivalence of both groups by randomly selecting 3 classes for the intervention, 3 classes for the control. Each of these classes consisted of girls' students, coming from Qatari or non-Qatari Arabic backgrounds, and were all at year seven. Therefore, this aspect was covered within this study.

From another dimension, the equivalence of treatment conditions and observations can be achieved when all groups receive and experience the same treatment conditions, apart from the new method, teaching strategy or intervention being assessed (Dreyhaupt et al., 2017). These treatment conditions include for instance, the same time for seminars and the same conditions for seating. In this study, and as discussed in the methodology chapter, the school management decided to allocate the school big lecture hall for the intervention group, while the control group were attending their normal classes. Therefore, this non-equivalent condition might had an impact on outcomes of this study. Students in the intervention group might had the feeling that they are more special in attending the school hall and to be part of a new intervention. Therefore, future studies that investigate the impact within the same conditions might lead to more specific results (Dron et al., 2021).

Finally, the control and intervention groups are considered to have equivalence of observations, when situations are always observed and assessed according to the same rules (standardized conditions), e.g. the same evaluators are used to grade examinations (Lopez,

2006). In this study, students' levels of wellbeing were assessed using the same scale before and after the intervention. Students in both groups were attending the same school environment, within the same classroom conditions, apart from the day of intervention. Therefore, the aspect equivalence of observations was achieved in this study, and the results of the intervention can be attributed to the SEL program.

Thus, the difference in students' wellbeing levels might not be a coincidence and the SEL intervention might be the responsible for these outcome. However, the difference in some of the conditions such as the equivalence of treatment conditions might impact the interpretation of the data, and might lead to observed outcomes and effect that can no longer be exclusively attributed to the new interventions. Therefore, future studies that involve more schools and bigger samples might result in similar or different outcomes that eliminate any other *blended* effects and outcomes.

Qualitative results

This section presents the results, analysis, and discussions of students' interviews to explore the impact of the social emotional intervention on their core aspects of wellbeing in relation to Seligman's PREMA model (2011). Including the qualitative component in this study was crucial to understand students' perspectives and experiences with the SEL intervention. In relation, according to Fielding (2007), allowing students to act as active respondents in which they are given the opportunity to express their feelings, experiences and interact with the researcher is crucial to achieving meaningful and deep results based on active discussions with students beyond the limited focus on passive data. Therefore, students were asked in these interviews to reflect on their journey with the SEL programme and to describe the impact of the programme based on their own perspectives. Students were given anonymous names (S1-S20) to report their results with confidentiality

Analysis of students' interviews

Interviews can be analyzed using two approaches; deductive and inductive. The deductive (or data-driven) approach incorporates looking for themes in the data related to a specific framework, theory or propositions derived from the literature, while the inductive analysis are based on themes that emerge from the data (Cohen et al.,2007). Students' interviews were

conducted to investigate the impact of the SEL programme on their wellbeing levels and the SEL programme effectiveness based on their subjective understandings. In this chapter, the first part of students' interviews that exported the SEL programme impact on their wellbeing levels are discussed. Therefore, these interviews were deductively analyzed using Seligman's PREMA model of wellbeing and flourishing. This analytical approach was based on the preliminary research findings and the selected research question. This model can be applied in schools and classroom settings to assess and promote students' wellbeing (Seligman, 2011).

This model is made of five essential elements of human flourishing and wellbeing that form the acronym PREMA; *Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Achievement*. As a result, five broad categories formed the analytical approach of students' interviews. The first part of this section will present the results of students' interviews analysis guided by the PREMA model; the aim of the deductive approach with students' interviews was to investigate the SEL programme's impact on students' wellbeing from their own *inner* perspectives while focusing at the same time on the objectives of the study.

Deductive analysis

This section presents examples from the qualitative data to present how students interacted with the positive steps programme. Students' interviews sample consisted of 20 students who accepted to participate in the interviews. The majority of students were Qataris, 90% ($n=18$), while the other two students were from Palestine and Syria 10% ($n=2$). Students' interviews were captured by taking notes because voice recording was not allowed in this process. Seligman's framework guided students' interviews data analysis to develop the code structure. The discussion in this section will start with an illustration of each of the five core components of wellbeing within the PREMA model, followed by the analysis related to each concept.

Positive emotions

Students' experiences in this study were generally consistent with variations in their impressions and perspectives. The *Positive emotions* category of the PREMA model refers to the hedonic dimension of wellbeing that forms happiness, pleasure and enjoyment. Furthermore, positive emotions reflect an individual's ability to remain optimistic, focusing

on the positive aspects of life and feeling confident about the own self. The analysis within this category included a broad range of related outcomes and affective skills such as self-awareness, coping with challenges, appropriate expression of emotions and resolving personal conflicts.

Self-confidence (which can also be defined as self-compassion) is a personality trait that involves distinctive ways of treating oneself with kindness, managing stressors when confronted with challenges and protecting oneself against negative self-evaluation that leads to psychological stress (Neff et al., 2007). The majority of students reported that the programme had a positive impact on their self-confidence. In an integrated feedback, one student (S-1) reported that:

I feel much more confident about myself, when I face any problem, I would not hold inside, I would go to seek help, talk to others, and try to change. This programme enabled me to recognize the importance of emotion's management.

In similar feedback, another student (S-12) mentioned that:

The programme improved my confidence to the highest levels, I can now speak to tell anything that I feel without being afraid of others' opinions.

Another student (S-4) mentioned that she felt stronger from inside:

I learned how to stop saying bad words about myself to value myself and to know my abilities.

Another student (S-7) reported how the programme empowered her to face bullying:

I feel now much more confident, I don't care anymore about bullying or bullies, and even if anyone tries to bully me I will not feel sad because my self-confidence has been enhanced with this programme.

This level of self-confidence and self-awareness equipped students with skills that enabled them to face challenges. For example, one student (S-11) reported that:

Now I can't face problems that I was afraid to face before. I feel that I am empowered from the inside and motivated to do and achieve the best.

Similarly, another student (S-13) mentioned the courage she developed after the programme:

I do not feel afraid like before, I feel more confident to face and solve my own problems.

From another dimension within the positive emotion aspect, the majority of students reported that the programme increased their positive emotional thinking, which promoted their level of happiness and satisfaction. For instance, one student(S-3) described how the programme touched her heart and mind:

The programme is emotionally touching it touched my feelings, I was feeling happy, satisfied and relaxed during the lectures, and I feel now that I have positive energy to spread.

Another student (S-16) described the social emotional programme as:

This was a life-changing programme, lovely and touching lectures, it changed me from inside and now I feel happy and satisfied.

The majority of students reported that the programme had a major impact on influencing their thinking of the future. For example, one student (S-19) mentioned that:

The information given in this programme is different, I feel optimistic, I swear God that this experience was different from any other lecture.

In relation, another student (S-18) supported this feedback by stating that:

The most important thing that I learned from this programme is to feel positive about the future and be optimistic, regardless of any challenges and setbacks. I really like the programme.

Engagement

The second element that contributes to individuals' wellbeing within the PERMA model is individual's engagement. This concept refers to an individual's sense and level of involvement, immersion and participation in an activity (Seligman, 2011). In terms of school's settings, this concept is used to describe students' feelings, sense of belonging and attachment to their learning environment. Thus, the more sense of engagement, interest and curiosity to learn students develop, the more positive learning outcomes can be achieved (Fredricks et al., 2004).

Many students mentioned in their interviews that they felt more connected to their learning environment after participating in the importance of knowledge lesson. For example, one student (S-8) mentioned how the programme's activities enhanced her awareness of the importance of ambition:

I started to realize my own ambition and to set future targets in my life, I feel that I can achieve my objectives I have energy to spread.

Another student (S-17) described how she felt more engaged with the learning environment:

I feel that I am connected with my teachers and my peer students much better than before; I am willing to participate in the classroom activities.

More specifically, one student (S-15) mentioned that this schooling engagement was the result of discovering her inner values and abilities:

The programme was a great opportunity in which I was able to discover my inner strengths, which as a result, improved my interaction with my teacher. The most effective lecture was about achievement and how to achieve it was really good thing that attracted my attention and motivation.

Furthermore, this sense of engagement enhances students' feeling of responsibility towards their learning, this was reflected by (S-20) who mentioned that:

I feel that I am responsible for achieving the best I can in this life, and therefore I will more motivated towards learning.

Relationships

The other main contributor to an individual's wellbeing within the PREMA model is a positive relationship. This aspect refers to an individual's ability to maintain effective relationships with others, support others and the sense of connectedness to others (Seligman, 2011). Positive relationships and interactions with an individual's parents, siblings, peers, and friends is a key ingredient to overall joy. Applying this concept to schools' settings reveals that previous research has consistently reported an association between adolescents' relationships, sense of belonging, social adjustments and positive levels of mental wellbeing (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Therefore, student's connectedness with their community members forms a significant contributor to higher levels of students' wellbeing. Outcomes in this category included positive interactions with others, cooperation, respect and responsiveness in different social situations,

One of the main positive feedback reported by all students is the programme's impact on the nature of their relationships with others. For instance, one student (S-16) mentioned that:

I feel that I love others more than before, I have positive energy to share with them.

Another student (S-12) mentioned how the programme enabled her to realize the negative impact of bullying on others:

One of the main things that influenced me in this programme is the impact of bullying on others, so I decided to stop bullying and to stop harming anyone with any word or type of harassment.

Many other students confirmed this outcome; for example, one student (S-2) explained how the programme supported her to accept other's differences:

The programme taught me how to love others, accept their differences and the need to stop any type of bullying. This is the most crucial thing that I have learned from this programme.

As a result, students reported that they learned to love others, be kind with them and offer to support anyone in need. This feedback was supported by (S-12) by this statement:

Now, I hope the best for everyone, this programme taught me how to be kind, supportive to others and hope them everything good.

From another perspective related to the nature of relationships, students reported that the programme provoked their thinking of the importance of respecting others. For instance, (S-11) reported that:

I gained new experiences, new ideas, and the most important thing that I learned is respecting others. Now I respect others, solve any problems that might happen with them and avoid harming anyone.

This approach of respect provoked a sense of connectedness and kindness, one student (S-13) expressed this feeling by stating that:

I feel that I am much better than before, I think of others, take care of their emotions, and help anyone in need. I respect my teachers, my peer students and I take care of my family and especially my parents.

Meaning

The concept of meaning within the PERMA framework is related to an individual's sense of purpose in life. (Seligman, 2001). This sense of life leads individuals to achievements and fulfilment in different domains that result in life satisfaction and wellbeing (Steger, Kashdan and Oishi, 2008). Having an answer as to "why are we on this earth?" is a key ingredient that can drive individuals towards fulfilment. In school settings, factors that define students' sense of meaning are conceptualized as using personal strengths to be effectively engaged in school activities and contributing to the wider community (Hart et al., 2007). In this regard, many students mentioned that the programme enabled them to understand and perceive the

importance of having specific goals in life, realizing inner abilities and increasing their intrinsic motivation. Students mentioned that they realized that they could change, for instance, (S-19) reported that:

I feel confident that I can improve my behaviours, I can achieve, I can do. The programme changed many things in me.

Students mentioned that the programme facilitated their self-realization; one (S-10) student described this impact by stating that:

The programme provoked my thinking to value myself, believe in my inner abilities and have a life target to work on and achieve in the future.

This self-realization contributed to developing the sense of meaning as stated by (S-15):

One of the lessons involved the subject of having a purpose in life; this subject taught me how to have more self-discipline, depend on myself, values my inner strengths and work on developing my abilities to contribute to my country and society.

As a result, they started to specify missions and dreams that they are willing to achieve. For instance as reported by (S-18)

Now I have a mission to succeed, to study every day, to do better, and to apply what I learned in this programme in my life.

Accomplishments

Achievement and accomplishments in the PREMA model refer to an individual's level of persistence, determination and dedication to accomplish different tasks and goals (Seligman, 2011). This sense enables individuals to make realistic goals and to reach high levels of satisfaction, pride, thrive and flourish when those goals are achieved. Thus, within this concept, a higher level of wellbeing is associated with an individual's inner motivation, passion and persistent drive to accomplish goals. Hart et al. (2007) explain this concept as an individual's ability to keep on efforts toward challenges while maintaining positive thinking

and interests over time. As a result, an individual's ability to keep forth effort and self-determination despite challenges and difficulties is associated with higher levels of wellbeing and life satisfaction over time (Hart et al., 2007). In this regard, the majority of students reported that the programme improved their motivation levels. For instance, (S-1)

The programme enhanced my inner motivation towards learning, to study more, to achieve more and to plan everything in advance. I started to plan my studies for each day.

This feeling of motivation facilitates their feeling of commitment, an example of this was mentioned by (S-17)

I used to be a careless person; now I feel more committed, determined and devoted to achieving the best, succeed in my life and contribute to my community.

in this regard, another student (S-14) mentioned that they started to specify their dreams and goals to be achieved:

I feel more motivated to plan and achieve my dreams. This is a future oriented programme, I feel motivated to achieve better in my future.

Another student (S-3) talked about her daily schedule and how participating in the programme changed her way of planning her future goals:

Now, I have daily schedules to do my prayers, plan my studies, and achieve my future plans. I realized the importance of feeling confident, understanding my inner abilities, and working towards my dream. I am happy to be in this programme.

Students also learned that specific plans would achieve these goals. For instance, (S-11)

The programme enabled me to learn about myself how to plan my future how to have motivation for studies which I didn't have before. Now I have started to have my own plans two of my academic performance. It was a really amazing opportunity, I hope that my family do the same and assist me in reaching my goals.

Another student (S-12) mentioned that:

After participating in this programme, I learned how to plan, manage and use my time and meet all the deadlines specified by my instructors.

Discussion of the interviews

This section discusses the main findings of students' interviews to answer the following question:

What are the effects of the SEL programme on core aspects of students' wellbeing according to students?

The hypothesis that guided this part of the study was that *the SEL programme would improve students' core aspects of wellbeing based on Seligman's PREMA model* (Seligman, 2011). In order to investigate this assumption, students' interviews were conducted to understand their own perceptions, experiences and opinions of the programme's impact on their wellbeing levels. Students' sample was discussed in the methodological chapter. Students' interviews were analyzed deductively based on the PREMA model to explore which core aspects of wellbeing were improved after participation in the programme. This section will discuss the main finding of the deductive analysis to examine the impact on the core aspects of wellbeing.

Positive emotions

The first component of wellbeing within the PREMA model is positive emotions. The main factors that contribute to the promotion of positive emotions are self-realization (self-worth), self-confidence and self-regulation (self-management). The majority of students (18 out of 20) described how the programme's lessons enabled them to realize their uniqueness and inner potential. Students had the opportunity to learn how to deeply discover their strengths, think about their inner abilities and develop higher levels of self-esteem. Empowering students with these skills is crucial to improve their strengths to prevent them from personal weaknesses and different life challenges. Thus, when students' awareness of their inner

potential were addressed, their wellbeing levels were enhanced. This approach of increasing students' awareness of their inner-worth is related to Seligman (2011)'s model that emphasizes the need to raise young people by seeing into their soul, amplifying it and nurturing it with skills that enable them to understand themselves. Furthermore, these results can be explained in the light of the *social self-prevention* theory by Dickerson and Kemeny (2004). This theory posits that there is a direct impact of positive self-evaluation on the achievement of higher levels of psychological, social and behavioural satisfaction. These results are also reflected in Arch et al. (2014)'s findings which emphasized that individuals who had participated in self-compassion training reported less anxiety and lower stress responses compared to the control group. Therefore, self-realization and self-compassion act as protective factors that buffer adolescents during different life events.

Many students reported that they felt *more confident* after participating in the positive steps SEL programme. They reported that the programme's lessons enabled them to explore their strengths, accept themselves, and appreciate what they have. Furthermore, students started to reflect more confidence levels in their classroom participation, peer relations and face different challenges. As a result, students' inner satisfaction and wellbeing levels started to increase. These results are related to many previous findings in the literature. Guo et al. (2015) reported in their study that adolescents' higher self-esteem could prevent symptoms of poor mental health such as anxiety and depression, and therefore, improve their wellbeing levels. Niemiec et al. (2006) found that high-school students with higher levels of self-confidence and self-regulation reported higher levels of wellbeing. Shoshani and Aviv (2012) indicated in this regard that higher levels of self-confidence are associated with beneficial outcomes among youth, such as school success, resilience, kindness, tolerance, and the valuing of diversity, open-mindedness, and altruism.

The majority of students mentioned in their interviews that the programme provided them with opportunities to learn and explore *self-management skills*. These skills provoked students' thinking to realize, manage and control their own feelings to handle stress and challenges and to focus on their own progress towards achievements and goals. As such, students started to understand the importance of self-regulation, emotional management and how to deal with negative emotions. This awareness contributed to the promotion of their positive emotions. These findings are consistent with previous studies that found an association between an individual's emotions management and higher levels of wellbeing.

Howell and Buro (2009) reported that emotional management and self-regulation skills are associated with higher levels of wellbeing. Oberl et al. (2011) explain positive emotions and the ability to manage the self through the different phases of life as *protective forces* for adolescents' positive self-esteem. Therefore, managing one's feelings can lead to maintaining a well-grounded level of self-confidence, self-management and self-awareness (CASEL, 2005).

Realizing the *inner worth* and *potential* are important factors that influence the individual's self-confidence, productivity and purpose in life. These concepts are interconnected; individuals who are aware of their own abilities, realize what they can do, have specific targets within their own limits can maintain higher levels of wellbeing. When students had the opportunity to recognize their own potential and learn how to maintain high levels of self-confidence, their wellbeing levels started to increase. Furthermore, enabling students to explore different emotional management skills, confidence and self-realisation encouraged them to accept themselves. Accepting self, appreciating the unique abilities and believing in the own worth contributed to the increase in students' wellbeing and satisfaction levels. Bernard (2014, p.iii) supports this argument by emphasizing that *self-acceptance* is viewed in different social and psychological theories as a catalyst for the "alleviation of emotional misery as well as an energizer supporting growth towards happiness and fulfilment". Therefore, managing and accepting one's feelings can lead to maintaining a well-grounded level of self-confidence, self-management and self-awareness (CASEL; 2005).

These results reveal that within this case study, SEL intervention that addresses students' social and emotional needs can provide them with opportunities and contribute to promoting their positive emotions, improving their interdependence, and enabling them to support themselves emotionally. In addition, SEL programmes can guide students to the success pathway in school and their future life. In line with these findings, many previous studies reported an association between positive emotional, mental wellbeing and higher achievements (CASEL, 2005; Zins, 2004). Diener & Diener (1995) found that across nations, self-esteem, self-worth and positive emotions were associated with increased levels of wellbeing. In relation, Fredrickson's (2004) broaden-and-build theory suggests that promoting an individual's positive emotions is associated with higher psychological and life satisfaction levels. Thus, SEL interventions that incorporate positive emotions can lead to higher levels of wellbeing, school engagement and motivation for learning (Meyer & Turner, 2006; Payton et al., 2008).

Relationships

Students mentioned in their interviews that the sense of *connectedness* to others that were developed after they participated in the programme. These improvements were evident also in the explanations of 10 students of their feelings towards others, realizing the importance of respecting others and considering care and empathy when dealing with others. As mentioned by every single respondent in the intervention group's interviews, the programme allowed students to explore the importance of positive social relations with others. The majority of the interviewed students (14 out of the 20) mentioned that they stopped thinking negatively of others and started to avoid any bullying words. Other students reflected how the positive social relationships with their families, friends and teachers promoted their inner satisfaction.

These results indicate that exposing students to social emotional programmes that explain the nature of social relations, the happiness related to feeling close to others and the importance of helping and respecting others can improve students' social relations. As a result, this improvement might contribute to students' mental wellbeing and life satisfaction. These results are aligned with theoretical assumptions related to the positive impact of social relations on an individual's wellbeing (Payton et al., 2008). Deci and Ryan (1991) described social relations as a *basic human psychological* need that contribute to higher levels of an individual's wellbeing. Mikulincer and Florian (1998) considered positive relations as a general resilience factor across the lifespan. Lansford et al.(2005) argued that high-quality social relationships bolster well-being levels for adolescents and adults. Park, Peterson, and Seligman (2003) revealed that one of the main character strengths that predicts life satisfaction and wellbeing is social relations.

Many empirical studies have shown that adolescents' connectedness, relationships with others and sense of belonging to the community are significantly associated with higher levels of wellbeing (Slone & Shoshani, 2008). Diener and Seligman (2002) reported in their study of the very happy people that all respondents in the happy group maintained positive social relationships with others. Arch et al. (2014) revealed in their results of a study involved 50,000 early adolescents revealed that positive relations, community connection and sense of belonging are related to a higher level of self-expectations, positive identity and wellbeing

indicators. Consistent with these findings, Ryff and colleagues reported in their study that positive relations with others is a direct source of wellbeing (Ryff & Singer, 2000).

These results reveal the significant impact of the SEL programme in strengthening students' positive relationships with their friends, families and teachers. Social emotional programmes that support students' positive relations with peers, family and community can significantly influence their life satisfaction by improving their sense of belonging. This sense of belonging and connectedness is crucial for their wellbeing and school engagement (CASEL, 2005).

Achievements

As discussed in the previous chapter, achievement within the PREMA model is related to student' awareness of the importance of goals' settings and the ability to work on them. The majority of students (16 of them) mentioned in their interviews that the SEL programme provided them with planning, time management and goal settings skills. Encouraging students to set their own goals fostered their feeling of competence and efficacy and motivated them to achieve more. Of the 16 students, three students mentioned that the programme motivated them to realize the impact of achievement on their personal and community levels. Furthermore, 5 students reported how the programme influenced their perception of the *value* of achievement on their future. These results indicate the importance of prompting students' perceptions of the achievement's importance in the Qatari community. As one of the wealthiest countries in the world, Qatari citizens have the highest rates of salaries. These salaries might negatively affect students' motivation towards learning because they feel that they already have and can obtain whatever they want to get. Participating in the positive steps programme enabled students to realize the importance of striving for achievement beyond the *materialistic perspectives*. Students had the opportunity to explore the importance of persistence, goal setting, task accomplishments, and mastering higher levels of knowledge in different fields. These skills enabled students to understand wellbeing and happiness from the perspective of passion, dedication and achievement.

These results are consistent with theories related to the association between life goals, motivation towards achievements and wellbeing levels. In the light of Goal Contents Theory

(GCT), goals that are set to influence an individual's intrinsic motivation can facilitate personal growth, need satisfaction and wellness (Vansteenkiste et al., 2006).

McGregor and Little (1998) argued that an individual's feelings of responsibility, competence and confidence are associated with higher levels of wellbeing. Martin and Marsh (2008) explain students' ability to achieve within the different academic setbacks and life challenges as *academic buoyancy*.

This conceptual framework articulates that empowering students with skills of social emotional management that maintain their wellbeing and motivation levels can lead to the achievement of students' buoyancy. Thus, the concept of academic buoyancy focuses on an individual's ability to respond to life challenges within a proactive rather than reactive approach to such challenges. Ryff & Singer (2000) emphasise that personal achievements can lead to significant improvement in wellbeing. Sheldon and Elliot (1999) describe the impact of achieving personal goals by the *self-concordance model*. Within this model, goals' achievement and realization of self-potential represent critical components of an individual's higher levels of wellbeing. Therefore, individuals who attain more goal gain more need-satisfying experiences that predict greater wellbeing levels.

Similar relationships between the accomplishment and higher levels of wellbeing and positive functioning have been reflected in previous studies. Miller, Connolly and Maguire (2013) found a statistically significant relationship between wellbeing and academic achievement. Durlak et al. (2011) reported in their meta-analysis of 213 school-based interventions that SEL programmes can improve students' achievements. Thus, these findings would appear to suggest that meaningful social emotional learning programmes can result in an interplay of students' wellbeing, emotional competencies and achievements.

Engagement

The majority of students reported that the programme's activities facilitated their school engagement. Nine students reflected in their interviews how they felt more connected to the lessons as they started to appreciate the value of learning, develop higher levels of curiosity to explore knowledge and adherence to school's norms. Furthermore, the majority of students (15 out of 20) started to develop a study plan, set targets and work to achieve them.

Therefore, these results reveal the impact of promoting students' social emotional skills on

increasing attention, interest and motivation towards learning. When students were provided with an opportunity to participate in activities that enable them to understand their inner potential, abilities and strengths, they started to develop skills of competence, control, motivation and engagement. These results explain how SEL interventions can form a crucial part of promoting students' sense of schooling engagement.

Consistent with these findings, many previous theories and studies had specifically investigated the impact of social emotional activities, extra-curricula and interventions on the promotion of students' intrinsic motivation and school engagement. For instance, these results can be viewed in the light of Organismic Integration Theory (OIT) by Ryan and Deci (2000). This theory suggests that individuals' engagement and integration can be facilitated by *contextual factors* that support the skills of autonomy, persistence, performance and motivation.

Thus, when students participated in the positive steps programme that involved these skills, their engagement and motivation levels were increased. Students' motivation towards learning can be explained in the light of Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) by Deci, Koestner and Ryan (1999). This theory posits that social and interpersonal interactions can either facilitate or undermine intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, this theory maintains that when students' psychological needs are supported within school settings, they are more likely to internalize their motivation to learn, their classroom engagements and their relationships with others. As such, when students participated in the programme within a nurturing school context and an active learning environment, their intrinsic motivation to learn, explore different skills and improve their personal relations with others was significantly improved.

In relation to these findings, many empirical studies support the notion that SEL interventions can improve students' engagement. Damon et al. (2003) emphasise that extra school curricula related to students' interests and emotional needs can enhance students' intrinsic motivation, academic performance and schools' engagement. Brackett et al. (2009) support these results by indicating that developing students' social emotional skills can positively impact their adherence to school's academic and social activities. Similarly, Burton et al. (2006) showed that intrinsic motivation was associated with higher levels of well-being. Lopes and Salovey (2004) emphasized that SEL programmes can foster students' sustained intellectual engagement and studying by improving their emotional regulation skills, the motivation to

attend and the ability to concentrate within the lessons. Hamedani and Darling-Hammond (2015)'s study reported a significant improvement in students' school engagements, resilience and wellbeing after participating in social emotional education programme. Duckworth and Seligman (2005) support these findings by emphasizing the role of social emotional competencies of self-regulation, self-discipline and self-realization as a robust predictor of schooling engagement. Therefore, when students are provided with interventions that improve their emotional capabilities, improvements in their motivation towards learning, classroom engagement and wellbeing levels can be achieved.

Meaning

Many students reported in their feedback that the positive steps programme had guided them to think of their purpose in life. In this regard, the majority of students (13 of them) mentioned that the programme enabled them to develop a sense of purpose in life is an approach that changed their understandings in many aspects. As such, students were able to realize the importance of their role learning, contributing and participating in the development of their community. They started to develop an understanding of the importance of setting goals, direction and meaning in life. In this regard, teachers noticed the difference in students' awareness, contributions and participation in the classroom activities. This sense of purpose facilitated higher levels of positive energy and motivation to achieve and fulfil more objectives in life. Therefore, a students' sense of purpose in life facilitated their learning, schooling commitment and belongingness, which as a result contributed to promoting their wellbeing levels.

These results can be explained in the light of *universalistic claims of attachment* theory (Cicchetti and Rogosch, 2012). This theory posits that the sensitive, warm and nurturing learning environment can foster the development of a secure attachment and a sense of purpose. This attachment supports the sense and inner beliefs about the self, the world and the relationship with others and, as a result, support positive development outcomes such as wellbeing and resilience. In relation, Keyes (1998) conducted research to find indicators that prosper good levels of wellbeing. One of the main five dimensions that he found in his framework that contribute to an individual's wellbeing was the sense of purpose. This sense of purpose can facilitate individuals' beliefs of their potential, the value of their activities to

their society and the sense of belonging to their environment. As a result, higher levels of social acceptance can be achieved, which in turn can impact wellbeing levels positively.

When students had the opportunity to explore different social emotional skills within a supportive learning approach, they developed a sense of belonging to the programme, to their peers and to their community. This sense of belonging and secure attachment was reported in students' interviews in which they explained the impact of the programme in fostering their positive thinking. These results were confirmed by previous scholars that reported an association between students' sense of meaning and level of engagement in school activities and experiencing moments of flow (Lambert et al., 2013). In relation, Steger et al. (2008) argue that, processing the sense of meaning is related to higher levels of self-realization and utilizing inner strengths in activities and initiatives that contribute to beneficial outcomes for the wider community.

Combining the different results of the impact of the SEL intervention on students' core aspects of wellbeing suggest that the programme had a positive impact on improving students' core aspects of wellbeing in relation to the PREMA's model of human flourishing. Fostering these aspects of wellbeing improved students' inner perceptions of their self-realization, appreciation of their unique abilities and self-confidence. Similar relationships can be found in studies that investigated the impact of SEL programmes on students' emotional regulation that equip middle-school students with a repertoire of personal and academic self-regulation strategies. Participation in similar SEL programmes reported significant impacts on student wellbeing, social relations, and academic achievements (Graziano et al., 2007; Gumora & Arsenio, 2002; Payton et al., 2008).

These results can be explained by the *broaden-and-build* theory that considers positive emotions as a vehicle for psychological growth and improved wellbeing (Fredrickson, 1998). This theory posits that positive feelings allow individuals to broaden their thought actions repertoires and enable them to build intellectual, psychological and social resources over time. Thus, exposing the student to universal, focused and age-appropriate social emotional interventions can positively impact their inner-thinking and empower them to face future challenges.

In relation to these results, the New South Wales Commission for Children and Young People (2007) identified three main overarching themes that presented children and adolescents' perspectives of wellbeing; agency, security and positive sense of self (Fattore, Mason and Watson, 2007). Agency refers to an individual's ability to make decisions, solve problems and face challenges. Security refers to an individual's sense of feeling safe, being safe and surrounded by the care of others. The positive sense of self reflects an individual's inner self-confidence. Therefore, empowering students with social emotional skills will improve their wellbeing levels and facilitate their positive development. In other words, positive emotions can equip individuals with skills that encourage them to confidently explore their environment, approach new goals and build important personal capacities.

These results can reflect an interrelated and interconnected impact of SEL programmes on students' learning and motivation towards learning. When students are emotionally satisfied, they will feel more confident, realize their inner abilities, take steps to be better and become motivated to achieve academic and personal goals. Therefore, social emotional learning activities, programmes and initiatives can facilitate the flow of students' engagement with their school, improve their social relations, promote their self-compassion and as a result, improve their wellbeing. In this regard, Schunk et al. (2008) argue that when students are competent, motivated and active, they will be able to exhibit their abilities and skills in different life events. As such, students will be given the skills that enable them to face challenges, stay motivated and demonstrate higher levels of dedications to reach their goals and succeed in the different academic and personal tasks.

Critical commentary

Although the majority of students reflected positive engagement, feedback and outcomes of the SEL programme, for some students, the programme did not change anything. This feedback was reported by two students. For instance, (S-9) reported that

I think that I am the same, the programme did not change anything. At some levels, I was feeling bored, while at other times I was enjoying the sessions. Maybe we need more active sessions.

Another student (S-2) supported this perspective by explaining that:

The programme was a nice journey in which we learned many things, but I am not sure if I can or will apply these skills into practice.

In contrast to the SEL intervention's positive outcomes, two students mentioned that the programme did not change anything in their way of thinking, accepting others or their motivation towards learning. These results indicate that universal SEL intervention can achieve positive outcomes for the majority of students, while the minority of them might not benefit from these interventions. As illustrated in the data analysis section, one student mentioned that they felt bored during the SEL intervention's sessions. The reason might be related to the programme's implementation approach in which more active interactions are needed (As discussed in chapter 7). Furthermore, the reasons might be related to the need for different subjects that might attract all students' attention. However, the comparison between the positive outcomes and negative or null outcomes of SEL interventions reveals that positive outcomes are higher for most students who participated in the universal SEL intervention.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the impact of SEL intervention on students' different aspects of wellbeing. To answer the question of this chapter, two types of data collection methods were analyzed and discussed, the WEMWBS scale and students' interviews. In particular, the impact of the SEL programme on students' self-reported wellbeing levels based on the WEMWBS scale and the impact on students' aspects of wellbeing in relation to the PREMA model of human flourishing are discussed. The results of both data collection methods revealed significant improvements in students' levels of wellbeing. Furthermore, students' interviews reflected that the SEL programme enabled students to realize their emotions, establish positive connections with others and gain different skills on self-regulation. These results indicate the SEL interventions can improve students' wellbeing levels when applied in a universal, age-appropriate and culturally related approach in school settings.

CHAPTER SIX,

**What is the impact of the social emotional programme according to
teachers and social staffs' perspectives?**

Introduction

Evaluating teachers and school staff's perceptions of social emotional intervention is one of the main predictors of the programme's outcomes (Wigelsworth, Humphrey and Lendrum, 2012; McKown *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, many researchers emphasized the need for studies that investigate the impact of SEL interventions by involving teachers and school staff in the evaluation of SEL outcomes (Pereira and Marques-Pinto, 2018). This approach of evaluating the SEL programme can create an in-depth contextual knowledge of what might work in the field. This knowledge and evidence-based outcomes can assist researchers and educational policymakers in designing the appropriate SEL interventions that serve students' social and emotional needs. In this study, interviews were conducted with the school's teachers and social staff department to explore their perceptions and experiences with the SEL intervention. The primary objective was to gain their subjective viewpoints to deeply understand how they perceived the SEL intervention and what outcomes were achieved from their own perspectives. This chapter presents the results and analysis of teachers and social staff's perceptions and experiences with the social emotional learning programme. The question that guided this chapter is:

- What is the impact of a social emotional programme from the teachers' and social staffs' perspectives in a Qatari girls' school?

Teachers and school staff's interviews

As mentioned in the context of the study, this research was conducted in a preparatory public school for girls in Qatar. Public schools for girls in Qatar are managed and guided by female staff only. The programme's sessions were mainly delivered by the programme's instructor, who designed and implemented the SEL programme. The instructor's information was added to the introduction chapter. Interviews involved teachers and social staff (sociologists and psychologist) who dealt with and instructed students in the intervention and control groups' samples. Teachers in this study did not deliver or participate in delivering the SEL intervention's sessions. Their role in this research was limited to participating in the study's interviews to explore their perception of the programme's impact on students.

The sample consisted of five teachers, four of whom were Qataris and one Egyptian. Their subject areas were mathematics, English language, art, Arabic language and science. The

social department staff included one psychologist and two social specialists (sociologists). The psychologist was from Jordan, and the two sociologists were Qataris. All the participating staff were qualified with a bachelor of art or science in their field of expertise. A Bachelor degree is the minimum accepted qualification in the Qatari public schools. Furthermore, all teachers had a minimum of three years of experience prior to joining the school. The participants' experiences in this study ranged from 5 -15 years.

Teachers and social department staff's interviews were conducted individually with each participant using the Arabic language in an empty and quiet lecture room. In addition, due to the cultural and traditional perspectives, all staff refused to approve interviews' recording. Therefore, I was writing the answers immediately during the interview to avoid losing any data. Teachers' and social department staff' (the psychologist and the sociologists) interviews were analyzed separately and inductively. The aim of the inductive analysis was to look for the emerging themes within teachers and social staff's interviews that answer the research question.

Analytical approach

The inductive approach was applied in the analysis of teachers and social staff department's (sociologists and psychologists) interviews. This inductive approach involved *thematic analysis* in searching for common themes, threads and categories that extend across the set of interviews (DeSantis & Noel Ugarriza, 2000). Furthermore, this approach involves capturing themes that emerge directly from the data (Cohen et al., 2007). Humphries, Williams and May (2018) conceptualize thematic analysis as the process of reading and interpreting data by way of systematic classification to create themes that emerge from the data. Sandelowski and Leeman (2012) define themes as a coherent integration of the different components, responses and patterns of the data set in relation to the research question. Vaismoradi et al. (2016) describe the theme in the qualitative analyses as a descriptor that organizes a group of related and repeated ideas to unify the different concepts regarding the subject of inquiry.

Therefore, theme determination can facilitate a comprehensive view by uncovering patterns related to participants' perspectives. In this study, the search for themes involved careful reading, classifying, comparing, and labelling the data to identify and collapse related patterns and major themes. The inductive analysis approach aimed to capture participants'

different experiences, viewpoints, suggestions, and impressions of the SEL programme's impact in details. Thus, the analysis of all interviews was discussed based on the themes that emerged from the interviews data. As a result, two major themes emerged that guided the analysis process: *SEL importance* and *SEL impact*. These two initial themes were related to the research questions.

Draucker et al. (2007) suggest that the initial analysis and interpretation of themes in the inductive data analysis leads to the development of *categories*. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) define categories as ideas that participants directly express in the text. As a result, for each theme, different categories were used to classify the findings in accordance with the interviews' results. These categories were the primary product of the analytical process and the descriptors of the themes. The themes and categories for teachers and social staff are presented in separate sections and discussed together at the end of this chapter.

Results of teachers' interviews

As mentioned above, within the data of teachers' interviews, two main themes have emerged; importance of SEL programme and impact of the SEL.

Importance of SEL programmes

For the first theme of *importance*, three main categories involved; knowledge about SEL programmes, beliefs about the need of SEL programmes and the available interventions in Qatar.

Knowledge about SEL programmes

For the knowledge about SEL, all teachers mentioned that SEL programmes are new to their school, and they did not experience the implementation of such interventions before:

I did not attend or participate in any workshop that is especially dedicated to students' social, emotional needs before. We have these skills as objectives, but no specific or real interventions were conducted in our school or in the other school that I worked with before.

Another teacher supported this feedback by stating that she did not participate or experienced any of these interventions:

Social emotional learning as a programme or an intervention is new to me, however, when I looked at the objectives of the programme I am sure now that these interventions are so important to address our students' mental wellbeing and social skills needs.

Beliefs about the need of SEL programmes

In terms of *beliefs and needs of SEL* programmes, all teachers emphasized the need for social emotional programme in schools' settings, especially in the early adolescents' stage:

These programmes are especially needed for students at this age because students are experiencing a transitional period from childhood to the teenage stage, and they need to learn how to be responsible, respectful and successful candidates.

Another teacher emphasized the importance of empowering students with social emotional skills:

In this sensitive stage of life, equipping students with values and social skills is really needed- they act and interact with a social environment that influences their thinking approach, self-confidence, and social behaviours. Therefore, I am sure that social emotional intervention are needed and might result in significant improvements in students' social competencies.

One teacher viewed social emotional skills as a seed planted in students' heart that can grow and positively impact them in different situations:

I think that this programme is like planting a seed and leave it to grow- the impact can be immediate, or longer time effect will be shown at different life stages.

In relation, another teacher explained the *need* for SEL programmes for the Arabic community:

Students need those programmes for sure, the nature of life here, the busy parents, the social media influence and the interaction with other communities in our country are factors that emphasize the need for interventions that guide students' social and emotional skills, psychological needs and motivational competencies.

In more details, one teacher explained how the SEL interventions can improve students' wellbeing:

I am sure that when students' behaviours are better, their well-being will be better, which I noticed with my students. They look more optimistic, happier and motivated towards learning.

The available interventions in Qatar

In terms of available programmes in Qatar, all teachers mentioned that there is a lack of these interventions:

We need social emotional interventions in our schools, and there are no available structured programmes that address students' emotional needs from different dimensions; we really need these programmes in Qatar.

In a contrary perspective, one teacher mentioned that although the SEL interventions are essential, teachers might not be able to deliver or manage such interventions:

I am sure that SEL interventions are essential and needed for our kids and there is a lack in such programmes in Qatar. However, we are already over-busy with our teaching and instruction tasks, so I don't think that we can implement such a programme or have time for it.

SEL impact according to teachers

Within the impact theme, three categories were emerged as the main themes according to teachers' perspectives. These results were based on teachers' interviews and answer the research question of the impact noticed by teachers. These subcategories included the impact

on; teacher-student relationships, student-student relationships and students' classroom behaviours.

Teacher-student relationships

For the *teacher-student relationships*, teachers reported similar perspectives within this category. The majority of teachers believed that the SEL programme increased students' awareness of the importance of *respecting their teachers*:

I feel that the programme had a positive impact on students' social skills, such as respect; for instance, in one incident; I told a student (from the intervention group) who was faced with behavioural issues that I will call her mother- she immediately apologized - this reaction was a result of the respect lecture that the student attended in this programme.

Another teacher confirmed these results by emphasizing that:

One of the major issues that I was always facing in school is students' disrespect. After the programme, I noticed a significant and obvious change on students' attitudes toward me. When I ask them to participate in the classroom activities or to become quiet during the lesson, they immediately follow my instructions.

Another teacher described how she noticed a change in students' behaviours with her:

I think that students are calmer, happier and ready to listen and to follow their teachers' instructions. This is one of the main differences that I noticed in this regard in the intervention group students

Student-student relationships

Teachers reported that the programme had positively improved students' social relations with their peers. These results were observed and noted by teachers in the classroom settings. These relations, according to one teacher, involved dealing with others with respect and fewer bullying issues:

Students learned how to respect others, and I have noticed that in their classroom behaviours, they used to be more aggressive, less respectful while now they are much better. I noticed that students are calmer, dealing with their peers in more positive attitudes and the number of conflict between students were significantly decreased.

Another teacher noticed how students started to share what they have learnt from the programme with their peer students:

This experience is amazing you cannot imagine the level of impact that can spread to others, I noted a case in which one student from the intervention group talked to another in the control group about the programme; as a result, students in the non-intervention group asked me if they can join.

Another teacher noticed similar outcomes and described how students were talking about the SEL programme to their peers:

Students' interactions with the programme were amazing. As a teacher for both the intervention and the control groups, I noticed that they convey the information and the lessons learned to other students from the other classrooms that did not participate in the programme- that reflects the strong impact of the programme.

In contrast to these feedbacks, one teacher emphasized that the period of the programme was too short to notice any significant differences in students' relations outcomes:

I think that the programme had a positive impact on some areas; however, I did not notice a difference in students' relationship with their peers for me as a teacher. I think that there is a need for more frequent and longer-lasting programmes to achieve higher and more effective outcomes.

Classroom engagement

For the classroom engagement, teachers reported that students' participation in the classroom activities were significantly increased after they participated in the social emotional programme. These results were confirmed by teachers' feedback in which they reported a

significant difference in students' motivation, interest and participation in different classroom activities. For instance, one teacher mentioned that:

I noticed that students' interactions with the lessons and classroom activities are much better than before- they have the confidence now to participate- the motivation to answer and the dedication to be better, it was very obvious.

Another teacher supported this feedback by explaining the noticed positive change on students' willingness to participate in the classroom activities:

I noticed a difference in students' behaviours, specifically towards their academic engagement. Before this programme, when I was asking questions in the classroom, the majority of students would not participate or share their thoughts; now, I noticed a significant improvement in their classroom engagement; they have the confidence to share their answers, thoughts and opinions regardless of whether they are right or wrong.

Another teacher emphasized that the programme encouraged less active students to participate in the classroom's activities:

The programme effectively encouraged the majority of self-isolated and less-active students to be part of the classroom activities, participate, and express their feelings. I feel that students are better now in terms of their self-confidence levels, they are more responsible and that is reflected in their classroom behaviours.

These outcomes were similar to another feedback that explained students' willingness to be successful candidates in the future:

One of my students informed me how the programme had influenced her thinking of the taste of success, the value of achievement and the plans to reach dreams, and how she is planning to get a bachelor's degree and a master and a PhD as well. This feedback describes the impact of SEL programme on developing students' inner-thinking and motivation towards achievement.

In this regard, another teacher mentioned outcomes related to students' motivation:

In terms of classroom behaviours, I noticed that students have positively changed to have better motivation levels, more interactions and less behavioural issues with the teacher and fellow students. Furthermore, students reflected that they are willing to learn, they ask, share, participate and contribute to the different activities.

In contesting these findings, one teacher reported that:

I am sure that the programme was a very good experience for each student, however, in terms of academic and classroom engagement, I think that students needed more sessions that focus on these dimensions. Thus, I do not think that I had observed significant changes in students' classroom behaviour or academics engagement after the programme.

Another teacher supported this feedback by stating that:

The period of the programme was so short, so I do not think that we can notice a change in this short time.

Interviews of social staff

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, interviews were conducted with the social department staff. The social staff included two sociologists and one psychologist. In the Qatari schools' staff structure, the sociologists' role is to deal with students' behavioural, attendance and different issues raised by their teachers. Upon receiving a complaint from teachers, the sociologist starts to categorize the issue into three main segments; solving the issue with the student, referring the student to the psychologist in case of any mental issues or communicating with parents to arrange appointments to discuss any issues related to their kids. Thus, sociologists' roles in Qatari schools are to address students' behavioural, attendance and classroom issues. Sociologists' role is to deal with students' issues, and they act like students' counsellor, under the title of sociologist. In relation, the school psychologist's role is to assess each student's issue and depending on the type of issue; she would either arrange a session for the student or refer her to the specialized mental health services in Qatar.

Interviews were conducted with the school sociologists and psychologist to explore their perception of the SEL programmes' impact on students. Similar to teachers' interviews analysis, the analysis of social staff's interviews was conducted inductively through thematic analysis to explore the main themes that can address the research questions. As with the teachers' interviews, the main two themes that emerged from social staff's data were; SEL importance and SEL impact.

SEL importance

As a social staff department, sociologists and psychologist assess, evaluate and witness many cases of students' mental, psychological, social and behavioural issues every day. Therefore, involving them in the programme was sought to explore their perceptions and experiences of what outcomes (if any) have been achieved after the SEL intervention. The first theme that was emerged from social staff's interviews was the importance of SEL programmes. As a specialist in her field, the psychologist, mentioned that despite the importance of social and psychological school-based interventions that serve students emotional needs and mental wellbeing development, there is a lack of these programmes in Qatar:

Students' mental health is my area of expertise and I was always hoping to see such programmes in Qatar. Social emotional programmes that are based on related concept or theory can decrease students' anxiety, improve their social relationships and promote their self-management skills. There is a real need for these programmes in our schools and definitely, there is a lack of such interventions.

Furthermore, the psychologist emphasized the need for regular social emotional interventions in accordance with students' age and specific needs:

These programmes need to be planned, implemented and evaluated on a regular and continuous basis to serve students' social and emotional needs to prevent and promote their positive mental wellbeing.

In relation to the psychologist's opinion, the sociologist emphasized that SEL skills are important to be provided in school settings given the needs of students and societal demands; she mentioned that:

If students' social and emotional needs aren't met, they will not be able to perform academically well, face future challenges, maintain their wellbeing levels and contribute to their country.

The second sociologist supported this feedback by emphasizing that:

I think that we need these social emotional programmes in schools for sure. This generation of students are faced with many challenges and are far from their families. They are exposed to different social media and virtual world. Their emotional needs should be addressed in school's settings and at home.

SEL impact

In terms of the *impact* of SEL programmes, both sociologists reported a decrease in students' social related issues in the intervention group compared to other groups that did not participate in the programme. One of the sociologists mentioned that:

From my observation and daily experience with students' issues, I noticed a difference in their behavioural conduct and social interactions. For instance, the number of teachers' complaints about students' behavioural issues (from the intervention group) was significantly lower after the programme than the number of complaints before the programme.

The other sociologist also mentioned in this regard that the programme had a positive impact on reducing students' behavioural issues:

I noticed that students' behavioural issues are less than before; even when I receive complaints from teachers and meet students to discuss the issues, I feel they are calmer, more open to receiving advice and willing to be better. I was amazed by more than one case of students who were faced with behavioural challenges how they were willing to give their own

solutions and promising to be better; I noticed that difference. They are more eager to learn and to achieve more in their life.

She described this impact in more detail by mentioning that:

The positive change was reflected in students' behaviours, reactions and communication approach. For instance, I used to have four students from the intervention group who used to have behavioural problems that affect their relationships with peer students. I was following their cases, calling their parents and arranging meetings with them. Now those four students are much better in terms of relationships with their peers and their classroom engagement.

In relation to the SEL programme's impact, the psychologist supported these findings by giving an example of one case:

The programme can effectively improve students' emotional needs. When those needs are addressed, students will develop more positive attitudes with their teachers, peer students and their educational environment as a whole. In one of the cases that I used to follow up during this academic year, the student was always quiet, does not have the ability to express her feelings, and was always faced with relationship and academic issues. After her participation in the programme, I noticed a significant change in her self-confidence, how she expressed herself and how she was empowered from inside.

In addition, the psychologist mentioned a positive change in the number of students' referred cases:

I noticed a decrease in the number of referred cases in the intervention group compared to the previous semester. I am sure that there is a difference that we can notice now and later.

Discussion of results

Within this study, the third sub-hypothesis was that; *Social emotional interventions can work in school settings and promote students' mental wellbeing and classroom behaviours as perceived and experienced by teachers and social staff.* This information was obtained

through teachers and social staff's interviews to investigate their perceptions and experiences of the SEL impact on their students.

Teachers in the present study did not have prior experiences with SEL interventions in the Qatari schools' settings; however, they had strong beliefs about these interventions' importance. These results are consistent with Esen-Aygun and Sahin-Taskin's (2017) findings, which reported that most of the teachers' knowledge about SEL programmes was very limited and they were not aware of SEL programmes implemented in their schools. However, in this study, all teachers mentioned the need for implementing SEL programmes in schools, especially to serve students' needs at this age. They argued that there is a lack of school-based interventions that serve students' developmental needs through the adolescents' stage of life in Qatar. In addition, teachers reported that social emotional programmes are crucially needed for this generation as they are exposed to different attractions through the social media apps and websites. These different social media sources can expose different values, experiences and challenges that might influence their way of thinking and their mental wellbeing levels. Thus, according to teachers, there is a need to consider SEL initiative as an approach that equips students emotional, social and different life skills.

In relation, the sociologists reported that there is a need for SEL interventions to improve students' relationships with others, schooling engagement and relationships with their teachers. The school psychologist supported these findings by emphasizing the need for social emotional interventions that address students' mental wellbeing and developmental needs. The description of the different cases that the social staff department deal with on daily bases supported this feedback. They receive different complains and issues that reflect the need to nurture students' emotional competencies to be able to face the different social, academic and personal challenges.

These results are related to many previous findings that explored teachers' and school staff's perceptions of the impact of SEL interventions. Triliva and Poulou. (2006) reported in their study that teachers believed that students need a solid foundation to address their social and emotional competencies. Buchanan et al. (2009) revealed similar results that emphasized teachers' strong sense of responsibility to support student's social and emotional abilities. They reported in their study that examined teachers' knowledge, perceptions and practices regarding SEL interventions, that many teachers believed that SEL programmes are important

to serve their students' social and emotional needs. In addition, from a different cultural vantage point Van Huynh, Tran-Chi and Nguyen (2018) revealed that all the Vietnamese teachers in their study were aware of the necessity of social emotional interventions in addressing students' emotional needs.

After the SEL programme, teachers noticed significant changes in students' behaviours in the intervention group. These changes can be categorized within three main dimensions; *classroom behaviours*, *teacher-student relationships* and *student-student relationships*. In terms of the first dimension, the *classroom behaviours*, teachers mentioned in their interviews that they witnessed significant changes in students' classroom engagement, collaboration and participation in the sessions' activities. Students started to participate more in the sessions' activities and shared their thoughts and answers and demonstrated dedication towards achievement. A possible explanation for this result is that when students' self-confidence, self-realization and wellbeing levels were increased, their willingness to participate in different activities were also increased. They demonstrated motivation towards achieving better results in their interviews, and as a result, they started to apply what they learned into practice. These results are related to Gage and Thomas (2019) findings in which teachers perceived a notable difference in students' self-regulation and classroom engagement. Furthermore, Borner (2020) revealed that, based on teachers' perceptions, social emotional interventions positively affected student behaviours in classroom settings and their relationships with teachers and their peer students.

In terms of the second dimension; *teacher-student relationship*, teachers mentioned that they noticed differences in students' approach with teachers and school staff. In some cases, students used to be less respectful, undertaking more arguments and avoiding the teacher's advice and comments. After the programme, teachers observed significant changes in the majority of students' behaviours. They noticed that students are focusing on their learning, willing to listen to their teachers and demonstrating respect skills. These results are similar to many previous studies that consider warm classroom teacher-student relationships as a major component in promoting effective learning, positive social emotional competencies and wellbeing levels (Schonert-Reichl, 2017; Wigelsworth, Humphrey and Lendrum, 2012). Therefore, these results suggest a more holistic approach in investigating the impact of SEL interventions that incorporate teachers as well as students to explore the outcomes from different dimensions.

In contrast, two teachers mentioned that they did not notice a difference in students' behaviours or motivation towards learning in her classroom. One teacher related these results to the relatively short period of SEL implementation in which students did not have adequate time to develop different social and emotional competencies. In addition, the second teacher emphasised the need for more SEL sessions to evaluate any possible impact on students. These results are related to many studies in which teachers did not notice a difference in students' behaviours or classroom engagement. Harrington (2020) revealed that teachers did not report a significant change in students' behaviour after participating in a social emotional intervention. In this regard, Buchanan et al. (2009) revealed in their study that examined teachers' knowledge, perceptions, and practices regarding SEL that teachers believe that SEL is important; however, the academic demand might decrease the effective implementation of SEL interventions and application in school settings. In this study, the SEL programme was implemented within a short period of time by the programme's instructor, therefore, more longitudinal data that involve teachers in the implementation process is essential to assess these issues in more details.

Despite the short term nature of the SEL programme's implementation and evaluation, the school's sociologist and psychologists noticed positive outcomes of the SEL intervention. They mentioned in their interviews that were conducted immediately after the programme that teachers' complaints about students' classroom behaviours issues for the interventions' group were significantly decreased. Furthermore, the psychologist noticed differences in the number of referrals for students with behavioural issues. She noticed during the two months of the SEL programme's implementation that students demonstrated willingness to be better even when faced with behavioural issues that require them to consult the psychologist or communicate with their parents. Furthermore, the psychologist mentioned the importance of SEL interventions for this generation. She emphasised that these interventions are needed to serve the emotional needs of students who are *connected* to their electronic devices and *far from* their families. These results indicate that, despite the short time of implementation, the social emotional programme in this study had a positive impact on students' social and classroom behaviours. In addition, these results reveal that the SEL programme's outcomes can be noticed during the implementation process as well as after the full implementation of the programme.

The third dimension of teachers' interviews revealed that student-student relationships were improved after participating in the SEL programme. Teachers noticed a decrease in students' behavioural issues with their peers. Confirming these results, school's sociologists witnessed positive changes in students' interactions with their peers. They noticed that, even when teachers report students as having behavioural issues, they were calm, willing to solve issues and hoping to avoid any future issues with their peers. In relation, the psychologist mentioned that she noticed a significant decrease in teachers' and sociologists' complaints and behavioural reports after the SEL programme from those students who took part in the intervention.

These results indicate that according to the school staff, the social emotional programme in this study had improved students' social emotional skills from multiple dimensions. Students started to build better relationships with their peers and teachers, they applied what they learned into practice, and they started to develop the sense of belonging to the school's educational environment. In addition, the staff noticed these improvements during and after the programme's implementation by noticing significant decrease in students' social behavioural issues with their peers. Although this feedback was based on a short-term effect, these results indicate that there was a positive outcome of this SEL intervention on students' social relations with others. This aligns with theory and research on the impact of the stability and security of the student-relationship on students' wellbeing and emotional regulation. Hyson (2004) emphasized the need for secure, positive and nurturing student-teacher relationships to form caring attachments and trust with their teachers. Triliva and Poulou (2006) argue that positive student-teacher relationships can foster students' sense of wellbeing by enabling them to feel safe within their learning environment. As a result, students within a safe, friendly and secure environment can learn to become more motivated, collaborative and empathetic to achieve personal and academic goals (CASEL, 2005).

Conclusion

This chapter sought to evaluate the impact of the social emotional programme based on teachers and social staff's perspectives. The study involved five teachers who teach students in the intervention and the control groups, two sociologists and one psychologist. Teachers and social staff's perceptions, understandings and feedback of the impact of SEL were moderately correlated. These comments seem to provide evidence the SEL programme in this

case study had resulted in positive outcomes based on teachers and school staff's perspectives and experiences with their students. These results provided external views of the programme's impact observed by teachers and social staff. Furthermore, these results indicate the need for SEL programmes in Qatar to improve students' classroom engagement and relationships with their teachers and their peers.

CHAPTER 7,
**What factors can hinder or facilitate the implementation of SEL in
schools?**

Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discussions of the observational data and the part of students' interviews related to the programme's dynamics and instructor's characteristics. Observations were conducted in every session of the SEL programme's intervention to capture factors that might facilitate or hinder the successful implementation of SEL intervention. The aim of addressing these factors was important as suggested by Lendrum, Humphrey and Wigelsworth (2013, p.105) "knowing 'what doesn't work' can be just as vital as knowing 'what works'. Knowing what works in the field is related to the programme's fidelity. Fidelity refers to the *form* of delivering an intervention in exactly the same way each time (Santacroce, Maccarelli and Grey, 2004). In relation, fidelity can be related to the *function*, how an intervention is delivered so long as it is achieving the same delivery goal each time. For example, programme's sessions can be delivered to a group of students in exactly the same way each time through a leaflet (fidelity of form), or information can be delivered flexibly using other approaches to other group to achieve the same aim (Santacroce, Maccarelli and Grey, 2004). Within this study, assessing the fidelity of the programme in relation to the form of delivery was not possible because the programme was delivered to the same group of students over 8 weeks using the same approaches of delivery. In addition, the fidelity of function was assessed using the SAFE model by Durlak et al. (2011). Each session of the SEL programme was evaluated to explore how the instructor was achieving the goals and objectives within each session.

As illustrated in the methodology chapter, the observation was conducted in a structured approach based on the SAFE model (Durlak et al., 2011). This model facilitates data collection in relation to the programme's *sequenced* coordinated instructional steps, *active* learning and instructional approaches, *focused* objectives on social emotional skills and *explicit* teaching of specific skills.

Therefore, the observation results were analyzed, discussed and presented in relation to this selected framework. In addition, to answering this question in more detail, students were asked as part of their interviews to explain their experiences with the SEL programme with respect to the main factors that encouraged them to attend the programme's sessions. The aim of these questions was to capture students' perspectives regarding different programme's

dynamics that include; instructor’s characteristics, instructional approach, students’ engagement and implementation process. These programme dynamics factors can provide an understanding of what might have contributed to the SEL programme’s positive outcomes, what can be improved in the future and what factors might have hindered more effective outcomes. This chapter starts with the results of the observational data followed by the results of students’ interviews. Then, these results are combined and discussed in an integrated approach to understanding the main factors that can support or hinder the successful outcomes of social emotional interventions. The structure of this chapter is illustrated in the following figure:

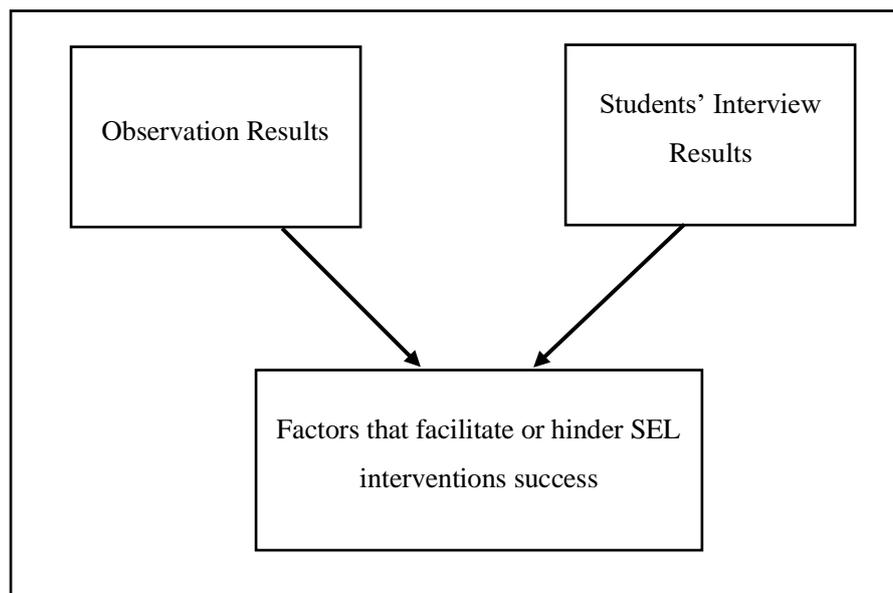


Figure 7.1. Chapter structure

Observations process

The implementation of the social emotional intervention was evaluated by conducting regular observations within the programme’s eight sessions. Durlak (1995) defines implementation as “what an intervention consists of in practice” (p.5). Within the observation of each session, I was trying to capture aspects of the programme that might facilitate or hinder the effectiveness of the programme’s implementation. The observation data was captured according to the pre-developed structured observational code. As a result, the observation included specific information that addressed the research question of this chapter. The process of observation was conducted in the school hall in which the SEL intervention was implemented. The attended participants were the intervention group’s students, IT specialist,

one coordinator and the SEL programme's instructor. During each session, I was attending early before students' arrival, selecting a specific seating area that allows me to capture the implementation process and taking notes every 2-3 minutes. These notes included students' engagement, instructors' approach and programme's content in relation to the SAFE model. This model refers to four themes i) Sequenced set of activities, ii) Active form of learning, iii) Focused content on the instruction of a specific SEL skills and iv) Explicit approach of instruction.

Students' engagement was observed in terms of their interaction with the instructor, connection with the sessions and their participation in the session's activities. The instructor's approach and the programme's content were assessed in relation to the SAFE model by evaluating the sequences of the instructional steps (the design of each session), the active learning methods (allowing students' participation), the focused approach (of social emotional skills development) and explicit teaching of a specific skill (in each session). The generated data from these observations were mainly qualitative. I mainly wanted to find out: first, what were the steps of the session's implementation and the programme's content in relation to the SAFE model, second, how students were interacting with the sessions and third, how the instructor was delivering the sessions.

Results of the observation

As illustrated in the methodology chapter, the SAFE acronym was selected to specify the criteria that capture that programme's dynamics of SEL interventions. This choice of the code manual for the observation was important because it served as a data management tool for organizing different elements in relation to researched context. The SAFE model refers to specific strategies and activities based on evidence-based results. Each letter in the acronym SAFE refers to a recommended practice for effective programme's content and implementation. Durlak et al. (2011) found in their systematic review that addressing these four practices can result in more successful outcomes. Therefore, the observation protocol was based on the SAFE model in addition to the aspects of students' engagement and instructor's approach.

The aim of this set of questions was to capture the dynamics of the SEL intervention from different dimensions. Each question of this list was answered with yes or no and then a detailed description of each answer was recorded in writing. This approach facilitated the focus on evaluating and capturing the dynamics of the SEL programme and identifying the critical ingredients for successful programme development. The results of each dimension of this set of codes are presented separately and discussed at the end of this chapter with the results of students' interviews.

Sequenced set of activities

The programme's activities were planned by the instructor as part of the programme in advance to develop social emotional skills in a sequential approach. This structured approach involved managing the time of each session to benefit from every minute. Upon students' arrival, the instructor was welcoming them and providing them with an ice-breaker activity. This activity was related to the session and the specific selected social emotional skill. Then, the instructor provided a short video or a real-life story related to the session. This video or story was followed by a discussion provided by the instructor to explain the main ideas, objectives and lessons learned from these stories and short video clips. Furthermore, within each session, the instructor was asking students to provide their opinions of the morals and lessons learned from each story or video. At the end of each session, a wrap-up conclusion was conducted to integrate all the provided ideas and to facilitate students' enduring understanding. In general, all the sessions seemed to be pre-planned and organized around these sequential, step-by-step instructional approach. This was evident when the instructor was explaining the session plan, the objectives of the sessions, and the allocated time for activities. She reflected that she was in control by stating that 'we don't have time to waste, each second is planned, so let us explore the skill of today's session'. In addition, the instructor was trying to control the flow of the session by using the pointer of the PowerPoint presentation to move from subject to another in a systematic approach.

Active forms of learning

As mentioned in the first chapter, the SEL programme was implemented on the school's stage, therefore, the 82 students were seated in rows. This approach of seating hindered the group work activities. In terms of instructional approaches, in each session, the instructor was providing students with a set of activities that serve the specified SEL programmes'

objectives. These activities included direct questions provided by the instructor to encourage students' participation in the sessions and to improve their engagements levels. After explaining the objectives or the morals of each part of the session, the instructor was asking students to provide her with their opinions. For example, within each session, the instructor was providing students with a real-life story related to the selected social emotional skills. After each story, she was asking students 'can you tell me the moral of this story?', 'what would you do if you were in the same situation?', 'what do you think is the right action that needs to be taken to improve the situation?'. Students were asked to raise their hands when they wanted to participate or provide their answers to the instructor's questions. Within this approach, the instructor was trying to connect students with the sessions and provoke their thinking of the main morals, values and social skills that can be learned from each story. Students seemed to be engaged with the instructor; however, their participation in the activities was limited. The instructor's approach did not involve other forms of active learning methods such as role-play, behavioural rehearsal or hands-on activities. Including these forms of active learning might improve students' engagement and facilitate their understanding of the sessions by applying what they have learned into practice. Therefore, there was a limitation of the active form of instructional approach.

Focused content on SEL skills

Each session of this SEL intervention was structured to apply activities, stories, and teaching materials within the specified time limit. The instructor was focusing within the whole time of each session (one hour) on promoting a *specific social emotional skill*. In relation, the content of each session was focused and managed around the development of the selected social emotional skill. This focused approach was evident in each session, starting from the ice-breaking story, moving to the different related activities and ending with real-life stories related to the subject of the session.

For instance, the *social relations* session was designed specifically to provoke students' thinking on the importance of positive social relations and how to maintain relations with others. Therefore, all the session's content was focused on activities, short clips and stories related to the importance of social relationships. Furthermore, in the *purpose in life* session, the implementation process was focused on self-realization skills and the importance of

setting targets to achieve. This session included an introduction from the instructor, (in which the lesson topic and objectives are introduced), the main activity based on a related story, and a brief ending in which the objectives of the session were revised with the students. In addition, within this session and all the other sessions, the instructor was trying to link the new learning outcomes with the previous learnings by revisiting the previous topics and encouraging students to participate. Within this approach, the instructor was reminding students with the subject of the session by asking them loudly ‘what is our session about today?’ and students would reply with the related answer to reflect their awareness of the specific taught SEL skill.

Furthermore, despite the traditional way of preparation of the programme using a simple PowerPoint presentation, the focused approach of the instructor was very influential. She was aware of her students’ need and age requirements, and whenever she felt that students were getting bored, she was provoking their interaction with a new story in an exciting approach. Therefore, this SEL intervention was effective in providing specific content in each session that focused on the development of social emotional skills.

Explicit teaching of specific skills

Each session of the SEL intervention in this study was designed to target, address and develop a specific social emotional skill. The first session was dedicated to equipping students with *Emotions’ management and Self-realization* skills that enable them to realize their inner potential, increase their self-confidence and manage their own emotions in different life situations. The second session included different stories that explain to students how to be responsible individuals and the importance of taking responsibility. In the third session, the focus was on *Empowering Interpretations* subject. This concept involved different activities and stories related to students’ empowerment and information of how to feel satisfied and strong from inside. The fourth session was focused on the concept of *Purpose in life*. Within this session, the instructor was trying to explain the importance of having a purpose in life that encourages students’ motivation to achieve. This purpose includes a dream, a target or a mission that can develop the individual’s inner abilities and enable him/her to contribute positively to the development of their society.

In the fifth session, the activities and real-life stories were focused on the skills of *Creating Meaningful Relationships*. Within this session, the instructor provided students with stories and activities related to the skills of respecting others, accepting the differences of others, supporting others and maintaining positive relations. The sixth session provided students with the skills of *Setting Goals*. Therefore, this programme's session included skills of time management, setting realistic objectives and determination of personal plans to achieve future targets. The seventh session included information on *Spiritual Life*. The session included religious, cultural and traditional values that guide individuals to do the best for themselves and for others. The final session was dedicated to addressing the dimensions of *Happiness and Wellbeing*. Within this session, the instructor was trying to integrate all the other seven sessions' objectives to facilitate students' understanding of the programme's objectives. For instance, at the beginning of this session, the instructor provided students with a short story related to the topic. By introducing this story, the instructor was trying to reveal the skill of the session and to capture students' attention. Then, this story was followed by questions in which the instructor was aiming to encourage students to think, reflect and engage with the session to learn the new skills. In addition, this session included aspects of wellbeing, life satisfaction, positive emotions and the positive level of functioning to achieve the best in this life.

Students' engagement

In terms of engagement, the observational data revealed that students seemed to be connected with the sessions and reflected high levels of engagement with the instructor throughout the SEL programme. This level of engagement was at the highest levels when the instructor was providing the short-clips videos or presenting a real-life story. Furthermore, students' engagement levels were increasing after their participation in each session. For instance, in the third session, many students reflected their motivation by stating in a loud voice that 'we are happy to be there, we are excited'. In addition, in the fourth session, the instructor started to receive requests from teachers of the other classes to attend the programme's sessions.

Moreover, and in collaboration with the school management, special arrangements were put in place for students who wanted to leave the programme for any reason. These arrangements included three options; to join another class, to join an art session or to have a break in the sports area. The aim of providing students with these different options was to allow them to

freely decide if they want to carry on with their participation or to withdraw from the programme at any time and to join any of the provided activities. However, students demonstrated higher levels of motivation and dedication to attend the SEL programme's sessions. This motivation was represented by students' willingness to attend each session despite the voluntary participation choice. Furthermore, after each session, a number of students were running to the instructor to share their thoughts, take her contact information and ask for her advice regarding different personal issues. These actions represented students' interest and motivation towards SEL intervention's different sessions.

Instructor's approach

The instructor's approach of delivering the SEL sessions was reflected by her ways of communicating with students and approaches of explaining each skill. During each session, the instructor was trying to keep students engaged by providing them with different questions that attracted their attention, encouraged them to participate and motivated them for the next sessions. For instance, the instructor was asking students to reflect on the session's title to encourage them to think of the session's objectives 'can you guess what we will learn today?', what did we learn from the previous session? Who can give me an example? Therefore, the instructor was ready by pre-planning the content of each session in advance to maximize students' benefits of each social emotional skill. In addition, the instructor was providing various examples and explanations to support students' understandings and perceptions of the sessions. Moreover, as an educational expert, the instructor provided students with some success stories that she witnessed when she was a teacher for students who decided to achieve better. For instance, in the life-satisfaction session, she explained with real-life examples the importance of being feeling satisfied and blessed despite the different life challenges. She supported this session with examples of people who are faced with health or financial difficulties, however, they are happy, satisfied and dedicated to achieve the best in their life. Within this approach, the instructor was confident, organized and focused when she was explaining each subject. Furthermore, she was dealing with students in a friendly and calm approach.

Results of students' interviews

As discussed in the previous section, students' motivation to attend the SEL sessions were evident in each session. This level of motivation was increased after each session and was represented by students' willingness to attend all the sessions, participate in the activities and asking if there was more SEL sessions to be provided in the future. Therefore, and in order to deeply explore students' perspectives of the SEL intervention, students were asked as part of their interviews to provide their thoughts, perceptions and understandings of the main factors that encouraged them to attend the programme's sessions. The aim of these questions was to capture students' perspectives regarding different programme's dynamics like instructor's characteristics and instructional approach, students' engagement and programme's content.

In terms of the *instructor's characteristics* and *instructional approach*, students mentioned related outcomes. For instance, one student (S-3) mentioned that the instructor's approach and her characteristics were the main factors that encouraged her to attend the SEL sessions:

I think that the most fantastic thing in this programme was the approach of presenting the programme and the instructor; she is amazing, interesting, friendly and lovely. The time was passing so quickly. Her approach really touched my heart and encouraged me to attend all the sessions.

Another student (S-12) mentioned that the most effective dimension of the programme was the instructor's personality and kindness:

The instructor was very calm, nice and friendly. I felt at times that she was acting as a mother, not as an instructor. Her kindness was reflected on her approach of teaching us the best practices for better life and better future. Her approach was so touching and she strongly and positively influenced my thinking. She was the reason that I was attending these sessions.

For students' engagement, the majority of students mentioned that the SEL sessions were engaging. For instance, student (S-15) mentioned that each session was engaging, motivating and encouraging students to be part of the session:

The programme was deep; the approach of the instructor, the way of telling stories and the real-life experiences were of great benefit for all of us. She just motivates me when she talks and brings my full attention. Thanks a lot for everything, I love you all, you were kind, magnificent and beautiful. I am proud to be part of this programme.

Another student (S-11) confirmed this feedback by reflecting that:

I was waiting for each session, I was counting the days to reach Tuesday, 10 o'clock in the morning to attend the session, the time was passing so quickly, it was like a short journey out of our schooling routine

In terms of *programme's content*, many students mentioned how the information given in the programme was positively influencing their thinking. The content was based on real-life stories that encouraged students to think, reflect and perceive the values of each story. For instance, one student (S-19) mentioned that:

The programme is amazing, I feel so happy to come to these sessions. The instructor told us real-life stories about people that have succeeded in their life, managed their emotions and faced the different challenges. These stories have a great positive impact on me, I started to imagine myself in similar situations and how would it be if I were that person. I realized the importance of realizing my strength, accepting myself and being me. I learned life lessons and started to have plans to achieve the best personally and academically.

This feedback was supported by many students, for instance, student (S-7) mentioned that the *programme's content, especially the cultural and religious parts* were very effective and encouraged her to attend all the sessions:

The clear approach of explaining the SEL programme's ideas made was very interesting. The programme's different interesting content encouraged me to attend and to be part of all sessions. I was waiting for every Tuesday of the week to participate in the SEL sessions. Stories from Quraan and hadith were amazing, for instance, I learned from a story of hadith the importance of respecting others and taking care of them

In relation, student (S-4) mentioned the impact of the videos and real-life stories of the programme content that were included in the programme in engaging her to the sessions:

The sessions were amazing, especially the videos and the real-life stories. These stories from the history, religious and cultural sources were touching our hearts. Sometimes I was imagining how I would be in the future, how to succeed, how to make my family proud of me and how to improve my inner abilities to achieve as best as I can. I even started to plan these steps.

Another student (S-1) confirmed this feedback by mentioning that the cultural and Islamic based stories that were given in the session supported her to change her attitude with others

The real-life stories were the main things that influenced my thinking. Sometimes I imagined myself to be in the same situation, how would I act, how would I support others. For example, the relation with others session included a story of the impact of bullying on others, and the concept of giving care and love to others based on Islamic concepts. I realized that if I don't love for others what I would love for myself, I will not be a happy and satisfied person in the future. After this session, I completely stopped bullying or saying words that might harm my friends.

Another student (S-8) showed her willingness to participate and engage with any future SEL programmes that enhance her self-discipline

I am really thrilled to be part of this programme, I would recommend it to my fellow students, and I already talk about it to my sister at home every day and share my valuable experience with her. If any of these programmes will be held in the future, I will be so happy to participate. I feel that I am different, I pray on time, manage my day, separate my study and my play time and aspire to be the best women in the future

In addition, many students highlighted the influence of religious, cultural and traditional values that was included in the SEL programme. Students mentioned that religious-based practices highlighted in the SEL intervention represent the main factors that motivated them to attend the programme. For instance, one student (S-5) mentioned that:

The most motivating thing is that the programme was related to our religious and cultural values that my parents have raised me on. The content was easy to understand for our age.

Another student (S-11) supported this feedback by mentioning that:

The programme provided ideas related to our beliefs, cultural and traditional aspects. I feel now that I am responsible for improving myself to contribute to my community and my country Qatar successfully. I was even telling my friends in the other classes that they did not participate in the sessions. Therefore, they were hoping to attend the sessions as well.

In contrast, two students mentioned that the programme content did not impact their way of thinking, the first student (S-2):

I think that the programme was nice but I am not different after participating. Sometimes I felt bored, the instructor was not always giving us the chance to participate

In relation, the second student (S-9) mentioned that the instructor was the leader of the sessions and due to the short time of the sessions, she was not always giving them the chance to participate and to reflect on their learning:

I was hoping to participate in the activities, there was not enough time for our participation, the instructor was aiming to finish on time, so there was no time for reflecting and asking questions. I think that if we participate, ask and interact with the instructor, we can learn more.

Discussion of the results

One of the most important objectives of this study was to investigate factors that might contribute or hinder the success of the positive steps programme within the selected case school settings. Furthermore, the study aimed to explore the characteristics of the interventions that contributed to the study's outcomes. This objective was based on a gap reported in the literature that emphasized the need to view social emotional interventions as a complete integrated process (Durlak et al., 2011). Therefore, this part of the study is shedding light on the programme's implementation process that resulted in the previously discussed

outcomes. These outcomes as discussed in the previous two chapters, included the impact of the SEL programme on student' wellbeing and classroom behaviours. Thus, the question that guided this dimension of the study was:

What factors facilitated or hindered the implementation of a social and emotional programme in a Qatari girls' school?

Based on the results of this chapter, these factors are illustrated in the following figure:

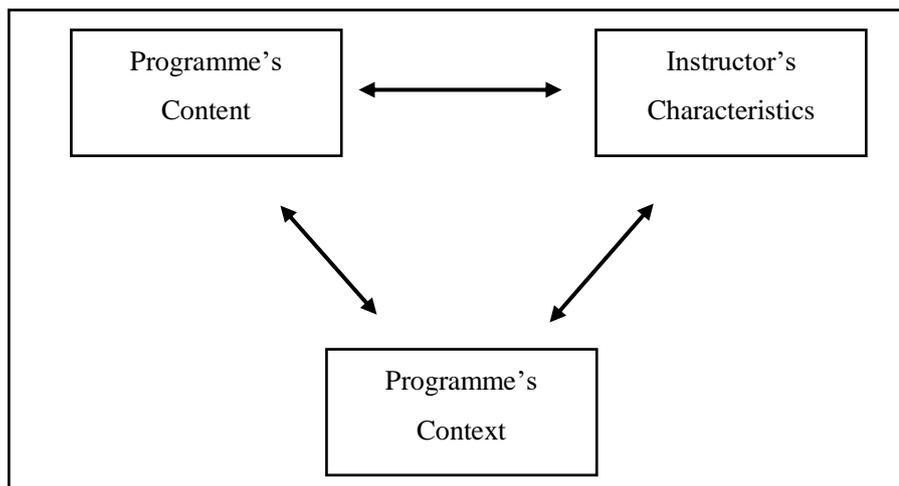


Figure 7.2. Factors of SEL programme's success

Factors of SEL programme's success

The evaluation of the SEL programme's implementation process can inform future programme designs by determining the key factors and critical components of effective interventions (Century et al., 2010). Identifying these factors is increasingly imperative for educators as well as policymakers to obtain reliable, rigour and accessible reviews of what works in educational settings. In a systematic review conducted to explore factors that influence SEL programmes' outcomes in 500 interventions, the most important factor was related to the high quality of implementation (Jones et al., 2018). Therefore, within this section, the main factors that contributed to the programme's success or might have hindered results that are more successful are discussed.

Consistent with the findings of previous research (Greenberg et al., 2005; Durlak and DuPre, 2008), the results of this study revealed a range of factors that facilitate or act as barriers to

the SEL programme implementation. These factors relate to three main categories; instructor's characteristics, the programme's context and the programme's content (Figure 7.2). The complex interaction of these three categories are identified as the main factors for the successful implementation process of SEL interventions (Greenberg et al., 2005).

Instructor's characteristics

In terms of instructor's characteristics, the majority of students' interviews revealed that the instructor's approach, personality and relationship with students were part of the major factors that encouraged them to attend the lessons. Moreover, many students described how the instructor's approach was touching their heart, influencing their thinking and motivating them to attend all the SEL provided sessions. Students also reported that the instructor was acting as an adviser with the care of a mother. Students described how the instructor's calmness, supportive and humbleness characteristics encouraged them to participate, listen, and interact with the programme's activities and content. In contrast, two students found the instructor's approach to be boring and negatively influencing their ability to participate in the programme's activities.

Therefore, the personality of the programme's instructor can lead to a positive impact on students' intrinsic motivation to attend the programme. The positive impact led students to feel safe, happy, satisfied and engaged with the instructor who delivered the SEL sessions. While the negative impact demotivated students' participation, and therefore influenced their learning outcomes of the SEL intervention.

These findings indicate that one of the main elements of SEL programmes' success is the instructor's approach and knowledge of the programme. In this regard, Lendrum, Humphrey and Wigelsworth (2013) reported in their study of the implementation difficulties that might impact the results of the school based interventions that teachers' knowledge of the programme concepts can be a barrier for the effective outcomes. Therefore, they concluded that, the levels of familiarity, awareness and the capacity to deliver the programme are related to positive outcomes. The instructor was the designer of the programme, she had the full knowledge and awareness of each all the sessions' parts which enabled her to deliver the SEL intervention effectively. These results also emphasise the need for future interventions that examine the outcomes of implementing the same SEL interventions by trained teachers.

These findings are supported by many previous studies that reported a relationship between supportive (in contrast to controlling) instructors and student's greater intrinsic motivation, curiosity, and desire for new challenges (Flink, Boggiano, and Barrett, 1990). In this regard, the self-determination theory (SDT) by Ryan and Deci (2000) argues that interpersonal motivation is more likely to flourish in contexts characterized by a sense of security and relatedness. In relation, the Organismic Integration Theory (OIT) relates an individual's internalization and integration to practice, a value or an intervention to the level of engagement, acceptance and connection with those who convey it (Ryan and Deci, 2009). This is consistent with the findings of García and Weiss (2016)'s study that considered instructor's characteristics as the main contributor to the success of SEL interventions. Therefore, the instructor's approach and personality represent important factors that contribute to the SEL programme's success.

Moreover, these results can explain the impact of the SEL programme instructor's involvement in the study. The instructor who delivered that SEL programme was a Qatari, outsider, educational practitioner who has the knowledge and awareness of her students' emotional needs. In this regard, Stallard et al. (2014) suggest that better outcomes of SEL programmes can be achieved when the programme is delivered by an external facilitator. In this regard, Perlis et al. (2005) emphasized that the involvement of the *programme developers* in psychiatric interventions were related to results that are more positive. In relation Eisner (2009) suggests that effective interventions with better outcomes can be found in studies that involved the programme developer. These results indicate the importance of the programme developer's involvements in the implementation process of SEL interventions. However, if these outcomes, as suggested by Wigelsworth et al. (2016) can be achieved only when the programme is implemented by or with the involvement of the developer, issues of sustainability of the programme in different settings might arise. Therefore, there is a need for the evaluation of future intervention that can be implemented by teachers in school settings.

Programme's context

The intervention's context represents one of the main factors that facilitate or hinder the success of the SEL outcomes (Greenhalgh et al., 2004). The school encompasses an active

learning environment that encourages students to explore and learn new activities. (Payton et al., 2008). In relation, Tolan, Guerra and Kendall (1995) emphasized that social emotional intervention beyond the classroom daily settings can achieve better results and sustain new skills developments. Within this study, the implementation of the SEL programme was in the school's stage during the schooling time in place of normal curricular sessions, without missing any other lessons enabled students to feel satisfied and less worried about their learning. In addition, the approach of presenting the PowerPoint on a big screen attracted students' attention to focus and to be engaged with the content of the programme. Students' confirmed these results by reporting the important role of the programme's presentations in connecting them to different activities. Furthermore, the real-life stories, the short video clips, the short songs and the instructor's approach were a crucial part of the programme's success.

The quality of implementation is a critical factor to achieve positive mental health outcomes (Durlak 2016). In this regard, Durlak et al. (2011) reported in a meta-analysis of over 200 school-based SEL programmes that higher-quality implementation's context is associated with better outcomes. The programme's context consists of the *intervention's duration and settings within which it took place*. The duration of SEL programmes is discussed in the literature from different perspectives.

The initial assessments of the programme's impact were planned to be conducted immediately after the programme's implementation and six months after the end of the programme; however, due to the special circumstances associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, investigating the extended programme's impact after six months was impossible. The immediate impact of the positive steps programme was very significant based on the results of the WEMWBS scale, students and school staff's interviews and researcher's observation. These results indicate that short-term intensive school-based interventions can positively impact students' wellbeing and learning engagement. In addition, more future investigations of the impact of SEL interventions are needed to evaluate longitudinal and more detailed interventions.

In terms of programme design, as illustrated in the previous chapters, the programme was structured based on 8 sessions. Each session was designed to provide students with a specific skill that can improved their social competencies and wellbeing levels. Therefore, the positive outcomes might be related to the *structured* design of the SEL programme. This is consistent

with the results of Catalano et al. (2004) in which they have argued that structured approach of programme delivery is related to the successful outcomes of SEL intervention.

In terms of intervention's duration, the SEL programme in this study was implemented over 8 weeks during the first term of the academic year. As discussed in the introduction, the school's management decided to implement the programme in 8 weeks, one session each week, rather than a session every two weeks. Thus, the results of this study report the short-term outcomes of an eight week's intervention impact on students' wellbeing. This is consistent with the findings of Humphrey et al. (2010) that reported positive impact of a short social emotional intervention on a primary school children. This impact was evident at the end of the intervention and at eight-weeks-follow-up.

Century et al. (2010) define the SEL programmes that consist of six to eight weekly sessions of around 40 minutes a *light-touch* intervention that might serve students' social emotional needs. Consistent with these findings, Wilson and Lipsey (2006) argue that short-term intensive SEL interventions that last from 8-16 weeks are more effective than longer programmes. Extended programmes may have less effective outcomes when it is becoming part of the educational routine. In relation, as part of their meta-analyses, Sklad et al. (2012) examined factors related to intervention features and found that programmes of short duration (less than one year) had a higher immediate effect on social skills than longer duration programmes. Therefore, the SEL programme in this study is more related to a short-term intensive intervention as described by Wilson and Lipsey (2006).

Contrary to these results, shorter length interventions might be considered to limit what could be achieved. These results are supported by two students who reported that the limited time and length of the SEL programme did not support their active participation reflected these results. From another dimension, other researchers suggest that longer interventions have a greater impact on students by providing them with learning opportunities throughout the academic year. Jones et al. (2010) suggest that longer SEL interventions might result in better outcomes both in the general population of students and among those at the highest behavioural risk. These results can be achieved by covering more skills, providing students with more opportunities and facilitating longer lasting effects by seeping into the routine of school more effectively than short term programmes. Therefore, the duration of the SEL

programme in this study might have hindered more positive results. This duration is related to the number of the sessions and the time limit of each session. Therefore, there is a need for more longitudinal data to assess the impact of longer SEL programmes on students' wellbeing within the same Qatari context.

In terms of *implementation's settings*, the commitment of the school's management team was vital for the effectiveness of the programme. The school management's support involved; allowing sufficient time for the programme's settings and implementation, facilitating the integration of the programme into the schooling day and assigning teachers to facilitate and manage students' attendance in the lessons. Related to these results, Kam, Greenberg, & Walls (2003) emphasized that intervention effects are the strongest when school management support and implementation quality are high. Holte et al. (2014) support these findings by explaining the importance of considering the role of contextual factors and school management support in the SEL programme's interventions. In sum, all the discussed contextual factors can contribute or hinder the achievement of the effective social emotional interventions' outcomes.

Programme's content

The programme's content including implementation strategies and instructional approaches were analyzed based on the Durlak et al. (2011)'s SAFE model. Within this model, effective SEL programmes are characterized by four main practices; Sequenced coordinated instructional steps, Active learning approaches, Focused instructions on social emotional skills and Explicit teaching of specific skills. According to the systematic reviews' results of Durlak et al. (2011), SEL interventions that meet the SAFE criteria had significant outcomes compared to interventions that did not include all of these practices. Therefore, the hypothesis was that *if the positive steps programme encounters these four recommended practices, successful outcomes can be achieved*. Therefore, within this study, I used these recommended practices to assess factors that might facilitate or hinder SEL programme's implementation. This assessment can also offer recommendations on the effective procedures that can be followed to achieve the best outcomes.

A sequenced programme refers to the set of activities planned sequentially to develop participants' social and emotional skills. The sequential approach of the SEL programme in

this study was one of the main factors that contributed to the programme's success. Each session was provided in a planned, well-structured and focused approach to achieve the specified objectives. These results are related to Catalano et al. (2004)'s study that emphasized a direct association between the pre-planned, structured and consistent programme content and successfully improved outcomes. In relation, Durlak et al. (2011) revealed that sequenced SEL programmes achieved higher outcomes on different aspects of students' wellbeing and social emotional competencies.

The Active component within the SAFE model refers to providing students with active forms of learning and instructional practices to enhance their engagement with the programme. The positive steps programme's activities were based on interactive forms of learning. The programme's activities involved real-life stories and interactive sessions that increased students' engagements with the lessons. Furthermore, the instructor's approach of being active throughout the lesson, asking brainstorming questions and encouraging students to participate was all part of the programme's success. These results were reported by students in their interviews in which they emphasized the impact of the content of each session and the approach of the instructor in motivating them to maintain a connection to the session. Furthermore, students' engagement with the instructor was noticed during the observation process. Students' were completely focused, engaged and interested in the programme's lessons. Successful students' engagements reflect the importance of an active form of learning in facilitating the achievement of positive SEL programme's outcomes. In contrast to these results, the observational data revealed that there was a lack of group activities and hands-on activities with the SEL sessions. Involving these active forms of learning might improve the outcomes of the programme and facilitate greater levels of students' engagements. This approach might be one of the potential obstacles to more successful outcomes.

The lack of students' involvement in the programme's activities might be related to the seating approach and the instructor's way of delivering the SEL sessions. As the SEL programme was implemented on the school stage, students were sitting in rows. This approach of seating hindered the group work activities that might improve students' learning and enduring understanding of the social emotional skills. In addition, as the instructor was trying to focus on the delivery of session on time, based on the selected objectives, she was not allowing more participation of students in the sessions' activities. These two issues might

potentially hindered more active forms of learning. For instance, Dugas (2017) reported the importance of group dynamics, participation and involvement in the activities of effective SEL interventions. Johnson and Johnson (2013) define this approach of involving students in the learning process as the *cooperative learning* in which students are recognized as part of the group to achieve the goals of the SEL programme. Therefore, realizing the importance of active participation of students in future SEL interventions is important to achieve better outcomes.

The Focused component of the SAFE model reflects the extent to which the programme is exclusively designed based on activities and objectives that focus on the promotion of social and emotional skills (Durlak et al., 2011). The SEL programme in this study was mainly focused on promoting students' skills of positive emotions, emotions' management, relationships with others and motivation towards achievements. These skills were provided to students in the age-appropriate approach to facilitate their understanding and perceptions of the lessons. As a result, students reported in their interviews that participation in each session was a great opportunity in which they learned new skills that can be applied in different life situations.

These results indicate that focused, age-appropriate and well-designed programme's content is associated with better outcomes and higher benefits for students. In line with these results, Shoshani and Slone (2017) suggest that students would value social emotional interventions when they see its relevance to their experiences and age levels. In this regard, Ronen and Hoagward (2000) evaluated 47 school-based social emotional interventions and concluded that one of the main factors that lead to higher outcomes are focused, specified and age developmentally appropriate programme's activities.

The Explicit dimension of the SAFE model represents the programme's specific learning goals in relation to the promotion of social emotional skills. The SEL programme consisted of eight sessions; each session was designed to cover a specific objective, value or skill that need to be provided to the students. The content of each session was focused on social emotional objectives to achieve the planned outcomes. For instance, the respect session was started with a short video that illustrated the importance of respect and encouraged students to apply this skill in their everyday life. Then, all the related activities were designed in relation to the values and morals of respect. This approach of applying the SEL programme's

activities facilitated students' understanding, perception and formation of social emotional knowledge. Students explained in their interviews that each lesson looked like a short journey in which they explored the morals, the importance and the impact of adopting the different skills in their everyday life.

These results reveal that the SEL programme in this study incorporated effective implementation practices that formed major components of the programme's outcomes. This is in line with the broad agreement in the literature supporting the notion that applying the four SAFE key variables would facilitate effective programme's implementation and result in higher students' outcomes (Bond & Hauf, 2004). In relation, the results of a meta-analysis of SEL programmes found that programmes' implementation procedures that followed these four recommended practices were more effective, successful and achieved better outcomes (Durlak, Weissberg and Pachan, 2010). This is related to Smith (2004) findings in which they reported that good quality programmes could produce larger effects on youth's social competence, development and wellbeing.

SEL activities need to be context-sensitive and specifically related to the community and setting of implementation. Students reported in their interviews that the programme's content was related to their religious and moral values, which in turn had a greater impact on their thinking. The programme's content was based on Islamic concepts and culturally accepted values. Integrating those values and concepts contributed to the success of the programme as they served students' emotional needs based on their religious, cultural and traditional norms and aspects on which they were born and raised. Therefore, culturally appropriate, age-sensitive and religious related programmes can significantly facilitate the success of the programme in school contexts. Thus, the next section will discuss the content of the programme's lessons in more details.

Religious morals and wellbeing

The results of the SEL programme in this study reported factors related to the impact of religious and cultural values on adolescents' wellbeing. As illustrated in the first chapter, this programme was designed based on values and morals derived from the Islamic and Arabic concepts that form the traditional and cultural norms of the Qatari society. Furthermore, as discussed in the third chapter, the positive steps programme in this study consists of values

similar to the CASEL set of competencies in terms of self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. However, this Islamic based and Arabic culturally adaptive programme is based also on the spiritual and religious dimension of wellbeing. Therefore, the outcomes are discussed in relation to the cultural and Islamic principles that guided this programme.

Two main outcomes of implementing SEL interventions based on cultural values have emerged; *students' self-discipline* (self-management) and *students' wellbeing*. The social emotional skills in the SEL programme in this study were based on Islamic values that set three main factors for an individual's responsibilities in life; the relationship with God, the relationship with self and the relationship with others. The relationship with God enables individuals to shape their moral identity by following the appropriate religious rules. The second role of each individual in this life is the relationship with self. This type of relation enables individuals to realize their inner potential, identify their strengths and weaknesses and focus on improving and discovering their abilities. The third responsibility is maintaining positive relationships with others. This dimension requires each individual to accept others' differences, achieve positive social relations and consider other's rights. These religious rules are designed to guide individuals' practices to the right path when preparing for meeting God in the second life after death. This preparation requires each individual to do the best, reach the optimum and dedicate every single effort to achieve the highest results in every stage of this life.

Applying these religious and cultural perspectives within an age-appropriate approach in the SEL programme of this study facilitated students' understanding of the meaning of life, a sense of purpose and the motivation to move forward. Students mentioned that being exposed to different activities related to their religion within the SEL programme had deeply and positively influenced their way of thinking. Students explained the impact of the programme's sessions, the real life stories and the Qur'anic morals on enhancing their commitment levels, relationships with others and self-regulation skills. They started to understand from a religious, cultural and traditional perspective the importance of setting goals, having a life purpose and working hard to achieve these goals.

Furthermore, the instructor's background, knowledge and experience of her country's cultural, social and religious background enabled her to design an intervention in accordance

to the needs of the Qatari community. This feedback was evident in students' feedback in which they described the impact of the values, morals and social competencies that were provided by the instructor on their way of thinking. Students mentioned that the SEL programme's skills were related to their cultural norms that they were raised on, and therefore, had deeply influenced their way of thinking. Moreover, students reported that they felt emotionally satisfied, more optimistic about their future and less worried after the SEL interventions. As a result, students' wellbeing levels were enhanced after the SEL programme indicating a direct association between religious moral and adolescents' wellbeing.

Therefore, this study points to the direct relation between social emotional programmes that are designed based on cultural and religious practices and the achievement of higher wellbeing levels. In addition, these results indicate that, designing, implementing and evaluating a *home-grown* social emotional intervention within the original context based on the cultural, religious and traditional norms of the country was related to the positive outcomes. In relation, Wigelsworth et al. (2016) found in their study that programme designed, developed and implemented within the national boundaries can achieve higher outcomes compared to international interventions.

The results of this study are related to many studies in the literature. Hecht and Shin (2015) support these results by emphasizing the importance of considering the relationships between cultural context and social emotional learning. In addition, they argue that social emotional programmes are defined by the specific culture of implementation. In this regard, Castro-Olivo and Merrell (2012) emphasized that culturally adaptive social emotional programmes can demonstrate potential preventive effects on students. Harlacher and Merrell (2010) support these results by revealing statistically significant gains in resiliency skills for students who participate in culturally related social emotional interventions when compared to those in the control group. Lopez et al. (2002) reported that when social emotional interventions are related to the cultural context of implementation, positive outcomes that address the unique needs of different students can be achieved. In their meta-analysis, Smith and colleagues (2011) showed that culturally adapted interventions are more effective than non-adapted interventions and can achieve higher outcomes for students' wellbeing and behavioural outcomes.

These results indicate that deeply held moral convictions and cultural-based interventions can provide adolescents with crucial resources for their development. These skills as suggested by Benson et al. (2004) are major parts of an individual's internal personal assets that shape the morals of equality, caring, integrity and honesty. Damon (1999) defines moral identity as individuals' beliefs that determine who the person is, what he/she wants to be and what he/she aspires to achieve. More specifically, Aquino and Reed (2002) define adolescents' identity formation during adolescence as the process of conceptualizing a coherent, systematic and clear sense of self by constructing deeply held moral beliefs that serve as assets for an individual's personal identity. These personal assets, religious beliefs and cultural norms can form adolescents' moral identity that encourages them to have specific perspective about their self, others and purpose in life.

Placing these findings in the context of previous research offers strong support for the impact of religious, cultural and community values on an individual's self-discipline, realization and management. In their longitudinal study, Norman (1983) emphasized that religious faith and moral identity are the personal characteristics that prevented adolescents from trouble issues. Hart et al. (1995) found that strong spiritual and faithful beliefs are the main factors that influence an individual's positive social behaviours. Clark and Lelkes (2003) confirm these results by describing religious morals and beliefs as buffer factors that prevent individuals against different challenges and stressors that can happen at any time, any age and any stage in this life. In this regard, Francis, McKenna, and Sahin (2020, p.189) reported that "it is those young people who think about religious issues who hold more positive attitudes toward socio-economic human rights". Therefore, these results reflect that religious, cultural and traditional norms might contribute to adolescents' attitudes, emotional and social competencies. In addition, these findings highlight the importance of moral, cultural and religious beliefs in shaping students' identities, awareness and perspectives of their selves, relationship with others and their life purpose.

In line with these results, cultural beliefs have been found to be related to adolescents' wellbeing. Diener et al. (1999) emphasize that individuals who adapt to their cultural and traditional backgrounds tend to experience higher levels of well-being. Ferriss (2002) showed in the results of his study that higher life satisfaction and wellbeing levels were found in individuals who practice their religious beliefs. Helliwell (2003) found that across nations, higher rates of cultural, moral and values adoptions are associated with higher average life

satisfaction, and a lower rate of suicide was the case now 2003, which was some time ago now. Sabatier et al. (2011) reported that cultural and moral activities had a positive impact on individual's wellbeing levels across cultures. Kahneman and colleagues (2004) showed that strong traditional values at the cultural level were related to higher levels of adolescents' wellbeing. More specifically, Bond, Lun and Li (2012) reported in their cross-nation study that contextual and cultural values predicted adolescents' wellbeing levels.

These results indicate adolescents' need for structured and well-designed social emotional interventions to serve students social emotional needs. In addition, the findings of this study emphasize that SEL interventions that are designed based on communities' related cultural and traditional values and practices might achieve higher positive outcomes. These results are mostly related to Arabic and Islamic countries that consider cultural values as an important part of their life, and this is the case in Qatar. The Islamic and cultural norms are the basis for the policy, regulations and social norms in Qatar. Furthermore, social emotional interventions are context-sensitive; therefore, the instructor's awareness of the Qatari students' religious, cultural and traditional background supported the achievement of positive outcomes in this case study.

In relation to these findings, Humphries and Keenan (2006) emphasized that SEL programmes need to be responsive to the culture of the school to maximize their success. In relation, Garner et al. (2014) revealed that many SEL programmes are not culturally and contextually relevant to the cultural background of students and their community. Therefore, there is a need to consider the importance of these factors in future SEL interventions. This is in line with the concepts of *cultural-fit* and individual's *cultural match* (Fulmer et al.2010). These concepts emphasise that providing individuals of different ages with warm social support in accordance with their cultural values can foster wellbeing levels in childhood and adolescence cross-culturally. As a result, students can have the opportunity to participate in social emotional interventions adequately designed in relation to their backgrounds, religious beliefs and cultural norms. As a result, more effective and life-changing outcomes can be achieved.

From another dimension, the results can be related to other factors apart from the SEL programme. The results of this study indicate that participation in the SEL programme had an impact on students' wellbeing. The inclusion of a control group aimed to explore whether the

results of the intervention are related to the programme only. However, these results might be attributed to other factors apart from the intervention effects. For instance, students in the intervention group might have had the feeling that they were treated differently by attending special sessions that address their emotional needs. In relation, the positive outcomes of the programme in this case study might be related to the implementation of extracurricular activities within the school settings. Participating in extracurricular activities is usually associated with mental health, physical and academic development (Eccles et al., 2003; Gardner et al., 2008). Furthermore, the fact that the programme was delivered by an outsider instructor might also have contributed to the increased level of students' positive thinking and as a result, improvements in their wellbeing levels. As mentioned in students' interviews, the characteristics of the instructor, her educational background and her cultural knowledge had a positive impact on her students. They mentioned that she was acting like a mother, and her kindness was reflected on her way of teaching. Therefore, different factors might have contributed to students' outcomes in this study.

Conclusion

This chapter explored factors that can facilitate or hinder the success of social emotional interventions. The observational data and the interviews of students revealed results related to the characteristics of successful implementation practices, the content of the programme, the effectiveness of the instructional approaches and students' engagement levels. The SEL programme in this study was delivered in a sequenced, relatively active, focused and explicit approach that facilitated students' engagements with the sessions. Furthermore, the instructor's approach of delivering the SEL sessions and her personality formed major parts in facilitating students' engagement and encouraging them to attend the sessions. However, issues of less active forms of learning, lack of students' participation and the shortness of the SEL interventions were found to be hindrances in this study. The SEL programme in this study was age-appropriate and culturally related to the students. Overall, the results indicate the importance of evaluating the different components of the SEL programme that form important key success factors of the programme's implementation. In the next chapter, the results of this chapter are integrated with the two previous chapters to illustrate the achieved results of this study in an integrated approach.

**CHAPTER 8,
CONCLUSION**

Introduction

This research aimed to evaluate the impact of a social emotional intervention on students' wellbeing in a preparatory public school for girls in Qatar. The social emotional programme in this study was a *practitioner designed social emotional intervention* that aimed to provide students with social emotional skills over a period of 8 weeks. This case study consisted of different sequential steps and multiple data collection methods. These methods included interviews, the WEMWBS scale and observation during the SEL sessions. Based on the results of the different data collection methods and the comparisons between the intervention and the control groups, it can be concluded that the social emotional programmes in this case study improved students' wellbeing levels. Therefore, the results of this study highlight the impact of SEL interventions and emphasize the need for the implementation of more SEL interventions in the Qatari and Arabic settings. This chapter presents the study's main findings, answers the main research question, and discusses the study's limitations and the main recommendations for future interventions.

This thesis consisted of eight chapters. Chapter one introduced this case study's background, settings, context and objectives. This chapter also discussed the Qatari context in detail to understand the main features of the Qatari community, the available mental health services and areas that need to be developed in addressing students' social and mental wellbeing needs. Chapter two provided an overview of the different theoretical and empirical attempts to define wellbeing in the literature. In chapter three, definitions, approaches, designs, implementation process and outcomes of different social emotional interventions are discussed. In chapter four, the methodological design, research paradigms and data collection methods of this case study are discussed. These methods were guided by the main research question and the three sub-questions that were addressed in this study. Chapters five, six and seven were set out to present the findings, results and discussion in relation to each of the three questions. This chapter starts with answering the main research question of this study by integrating the results of the different data collection methods together. Then, the impact and the limitations of this study are discussed.

Do social emotional programmes work?

This case study extends the previous research literature on the effectiveness of social emotional learning programmes in improving students' wellbeing levels. The study was

designed based on the case study approach. The case study design is powerful in allowing the employment of multiple methods and data sources to bring different perspectives together to focus on a specific area of interest to provide a new understanding of the case under investigation. Therefore, different data collection methods were used in this study to explore students, teachers and social staff's perceptions of the impact of SEL intervention and the programme's dynamics. The data collection methods involved the WEMWBS scale, interviews with students, teachers and social staff and observation conducted through the different stages of the programme's implementation. The aim of using the different methods was to investigate the real impact of the social emotional intervention based on participants' perspectives. Therefore, the study was designed to answer the following questions:

What is the impact of a social and emotional programme on adolescent school pupils in a Qatari school?

This question was the base for three sub-questions that guided the research process:

1. Would a social emotional programme in a Qatari girls' school improve students' wellbeing?
2. What is the impact of a social emotional programme from the teachers' and social staffs' perspectives in a Qatari girls' school?
3. What factors facilitated or hindered the implementation of a social and emotional programme in a Qatari girls' school?

According to Yin (2002), one of the main challenges associated with the case study's analysis is how to reconcile the multiple perspectives of knowledge in case study research. One of the methods that address these challenges is the pattern matching technique. The pattern matching approach is a significant step in the meta-synthesis of the results of different data sets in the case study research by combining the outcomes of the study from multiple perspectives (Sinkovics, 2018). The notion of pattern matching concept arose in the 1960s when Campbell (1966) called for a holistic method for analyzing data from multiple sources within the context in which it occurs (Johannesmeyer, Singhal and Seborg, 2002). Although the logic of pattern matching techniques was evolved and drawn from traditional hypothesis-testing strategies, the pattern-matching process is not driven by statistical hypothesis testing methods (Sinkovics, 2018). In this regard, Trochim (1989) differentiates pattern matching

techniques from traditional hypothesis testing in that it encourages the use of more complex or detailed hypotheses in a way that enhance the rigour of the study.

As a process, pattern matching is conducted by identifying patterns in the literature to develop a specific hypothesis to form the proposition of the study. Then, this initial hypothesis is compared against the patterns evident in the empirical data and the results of the study. Almutairi, Gardner and McCarthy (2014, p.3) argue that this approach of data analysis can enhance the rigour of the study by emphasizing that “if empirically-found patterns match the predicted ones, the findings can contribute to and strengthen the internal validity of the study, and result in the confirmation of the hypotheses/propositions”. In contrast, if the predicted and experienced patterns do not match, the researcher must examine alternative explanations for the findings (Yin, 2009). In this case study, the main proposition that was derived from the literature was; *social emotional interventions can work in school settings and promote students’ mental wellbeing and classroom behaviours* (Payton et al., 2008; Lendrum et al., 2009; Durlak et al., 2011).

Comparing this proposition using the pattern matching approach with the overall patterns of results of this study confirms this hypothesis. This comparison reveals that: *the implemented social emotional intervention with the preparatory school settings had a positive impact on students’ wellbeing and classroom behaviours based on students, teachers and social staff’s experiences and perceptions*. Therefore, these results extend the knowledge on SEL implementation, importance, and impact by providing a detailed picture of all specific components in the programme that led achievement of the outlined outcomes.

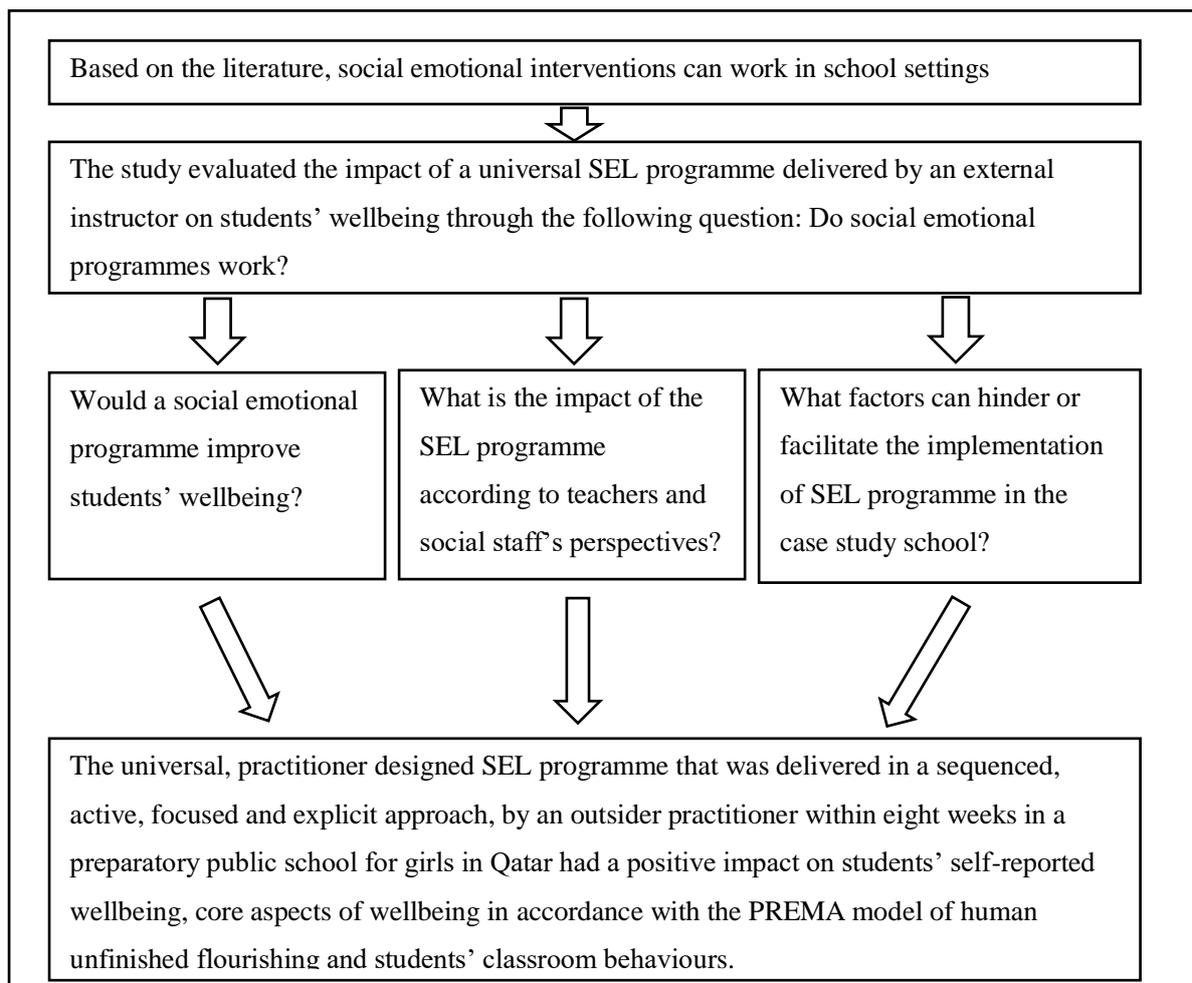


Figure 0.1. Do social emotional programmes work?

Discussion of the results

This study evaluated the impact of the social emotional intervention based on the perceptions, experiences and understandings of participants within three levels; the inner, the outer and the more external level. The *inner perspective* of the social emotional programme's impact is represented by students' own thoughts, understandings and perceptions of the programme's impact on their self-reported wellbeing and their core aspects of wellbeing in relation to the PREMA human flourishing model. These results provided deep insights into how the programme had an impact on students' wellbeing. In relation, teachers' interviews provided the outer perspective of the programme's impact on students' classroom engagements, motivation and relationships with their teachers and peer students. In addition, the social

staff's interviews provided a more *external perspective* of the programme's impact on decreasing students' behavioural and relational issues. Furthermore, the observation data provided an overview of the SEL programme's dynamics by capturing the main factors that can facilitate or hinder the successful implementation of SEL programmes in school settings.

Combining the different results of this study (as illustrated in figure 8.1) provides a *snapshot* of the impact of the SEL programme on students' different dimensions of wellbeing and the detailed dynamics of the programme in this case study. This whole picture of the implementation process of SEL intervention and the achieved outcomes indicate the fine-grained details of the SEL programme's design, objectives, instructional approach, length of implementation, sample, impact, and outcomes based on different outcomes. This information was investigated, explored and evaluated in this study based on the previous research results. In general, all the study's set of data were complementary, consistent and pointed to the same results. The WEMWBS scale results, students and school staff's interviews and the observational data threw the light on the importance, impact and positive outcomes of social emotional learning. These relationships of the programme's dynamics, instructor's characteristics and programme content and the impact on students is covered to some extent in the literature, but the point is made more strongly here. Within this study, the SEL programme was viewed as a whole process by understanding the content, the approaches of instruction, the context of implementation and the impact based on the perceptions of different participants.

The potential impact of the results

These present findings of this study may have wide relevance for the literature by highlighting the importance of SEL interventions in school settings to improve students' wellbeing. This impact can be related to students, educational leaders in Qatar and the wider literature of the social emotional learning. For students, as illustrated in the results and discussions chapters, the SEL programme had a positive impact on students' wellbeing from multiple dimensions. These dimensions included a significant increase in students' self-reported wellbeing levels, an increase in students' core aspects of wellbeing and an increase in students' behavioural and relational attitudes with teachers and peer students. These results indicate the importance of considering SEL interventions as an important aspect that can serve adolescents' social, emotional and mental developmental needs. As such, this

development of social emotional competencies can be beneficial on both individual and community levels.

Students who appraise themselves and their own abilities (self-awareness), regulate their emotions and behaviours appropriately (self-management), maintain positive relations effectively (relationship skills), and make good decisions about daily challenges (responsible decision making) are heading on a pathway toward success in school and later life. This pathway of success can facilitate students' adjustment within their community, schooling environment and social relations with others. Furthermore, SEL interventions can decrease students' behavioural issues, emotional distress (CASEL, 2005; Zins et al., 2004). As a result, higher levels of mental wellbeing can improve adolescents' abilities to face life challenges, motivation to achieve the best in their academic and personal life, and maintain positive relations with others. In contrast, when adolescents are emotionally low, their inner motivation, relationships with others and life achievements will be negatively impacted.

In a similar perspective, the results of this case study emphasize the strong need to empower students' social and emotional competencies for educational leaders. In addition, this case study revealed the need to design, implement and evaluate social emotional interventions in Qatar and in the Middle East in general. By reporting the positive impact on students, these results highlight the need for real investments in initiatives that address students' social emotional, skills and mental wellbeing levels. We cannot stop the different life events, challenges and difficulties from occurring, rather, we can assist our youth to be stronger and empowered from inside in order to be able to stand up whenever they fall, to heal whenever they are hurt and to recover as soon as they can. Moreover, promoting healthier emotional states can prevent students from negative moods, prevent cognitive and psychological struggles and facilitate their participation in their community and society. As a result, adolescents will be better community members who can effectively contribute to the development of their countries.

For the literature of social emotional interventions, this case study emphasizes the need to understand the different components of the programme's fidelity as a whole process by exploring the impact, content, process, instructional approaches and programme's duration. This approach of considering the content of the programme, the context of implementation and the perceptions of participants provides an important lens through which educators can

implement SEL in effective approaches to achieve the desired positive outcomes. For the programme content, this study reported that social emotional interventions need to be culturally related to the context of the implementation, especially in conservative and Arabic communities that base their values on cultural, religious and traditional values. Therefore, values, morals and interpersonal skills underpinning the programme's design that are aligned with the cultural and social background of participants can contribute to the programme's success. Ladson-Billings (2014) defines this aspect as the culturally responsive practices (CRP). Within this concept Gay (2000) emphasizes that social emotional interventions need to be in relation to students' cultural background and traditional norms. In terms of instructional approaches, the programme's delivery and the instructor's characteristics need to be considered as one of the main factors that hinder or facilitate the programme's success. In this case study, delivering the social emotional programme by an outsider instructor contributed to students' interaction with the instructors and facilitated their engagement with the sessions. For the programme's duration, the social emotional intervention in this study was delivered on weekly sessions over eight weeks.

For the Qatari context, the findings of this study are important because critical sources of approaches that contribute to positive youth development are identified. In addition, within this study, the potential benefits of a social emotional intervention in a public school setting in Qatar were evaluated. The results provide meaningful dimensions of the SEL programme in Qatar and uncover patterns, problems, opportunities, perspectives and experiences that can inform and improve educational policy decision-making in this area. This study also reveals the impact of a SEL intervention in one of the richest countries in the world. Students, teachers and social staff noticed a difference in students' wellbeing and social behaviours, reflecting that there is a need for SEL programmes that serve students' social emotional needs regardless of the economic backgrounds levels. Therefore, this study reflects that economic contextual factors might not be the main indicators of happiness and higher levels of wellbeing, and that more affluent adolescents perhaps need some level of school based support in underpinning their social and emotional wellbeing.

Schools in the gulf in general and in specifically in Qatar need to invest in social emotional programmes that foster positive youth development. Furthermore, the results of this study provoke actionable information for policymakers and practitioners by identifying the impact of SEL intervention on students' mental wellbeing and academic performance and identifying

factors that contribute to appropriate SEL intervention strategies. These indicators should be taken into account to plan public policies, particularly policies addressed to evaluate the impact of such policies on children's well-being.

Strengths and weaknesses of the study

The strengths and weaknesses in this section are discussed in terms of the SEL programme and in terms of the study as a whole. In terms of the SEL programme in this study, the results indicate that the practitioner designed and executed a culturally adaptive and age appropriate social emotional intervention, which had positive outcomes on students' wellbeing and social behaviours with peers and with their teachers. The programme's sessions were sequenced, focused and explicit in teaching social emotional skills. In addition, the instructor's approach was attractive and facilitated students' engagement. However, the approaches of providing an active form of learning that encourage students to participated in the different activities were not effective in this programme. A more instructor focused approach might have hindered more positive outcomes.

In terms of the study's strengths. I conducted this research as an outsider researcher (outside the school staff), which enabled me to be fully committed to the study and to focus on the different aspects of the programme's implementation. Another strength of this study was the use of different data collection methods, quantitative and qualitative, allowing the triangulation of different data sources. The use of these different data collection methods facilitated the evaluation of the SEL programme as a whole process to allow a deep understanding of the programme in real-life settings based on the experiences of different participants. Furthermore, the qualitative and quantitative findings of this study were remarkably consistent, and these findings were also consistent with previous studies of SEL interventions. Students, teachers and social staff reported consistent opinions and perspectives of the SEL programme impact. Furthermore, this study consisted of an investigation of the SEL programme in an Arabic and Qatari context, and this is, to the best of my knowledge, the first type of in-depth investigation in the area of social emotional learning in Qatar.

This study had some *limitations* that can be developed in future research. The first limitation was the evaluation of the SEL programme's impact on girl students only. The main reason for

focusing on girls is the restricted environment and limited access of female researchers to boys' schools in Qatar. This issue was discussed in the first chapter by illustrating the gender-segregated schools in Qatar starting from year one. In this regard, many Western studies reported the outcomes base on both genders (Payton et al., 2008; Durlak et al. 2011; Wigelsworth, Humphrey and Lendrum, 2013). Therefore, and in order to gain more holistic understanding of the SEL impact, there is a need to evaluate the impact of social emotional programmes on both genders in future research.

Another limitation was the short time of evaluating the impact of the SEL. These short-term effects might have implications for the children who participated in the programme that need more longitudinal evaluation. However, due to the Covis-19 pandemic, and the need to close schools in Qatar, assessing more long term dimensions such as educational outcomes was not possible. Therefore, more holistic and longitudinal evaluations of SEL interventions are needed in the future. In this regard, Wigelsworth, Humphrey and Lendrum (2013, p.106) argue that more complex SEL interventions “could naturally take longer to become fully embedded—and hence influence student outcomes—in participating schools”

Another limitation of this study was related to eliminating the evaluation of the SEL programme's impact on students' academic performance due to the exceptional circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic. The initial aim of this case study was to evaluate the impact of SEL programmes on students' wellbeing and academic performance to explore the impact on different dimensions. Therefore, the elimination of the academic performance had a significant impact on this case study as a whole and shifted the focus from evaluating both dimensions; students' academic performance and wellbeing to the focus on students' wellbeing only. This limitation can be addressed in future research by planning and conducting studies that address both students' wellbeing and academic performance. A final limitation was related to the difficulty in generalizing the results of this study to the rest of population in Qatar. This limitation is related to the implementation of the SEL intervention in a Qatari public school for girls in which the majority of students are Qataris and the minority are from different Arabic backgrounds. Therefore, the results of this study can be considered to be related to relevant Arabic cultures, while less relevance with respect to other non-Arabic nationalities which represent the majority of the community in Qatar. Therefore, the results of this study might be transferable to similar Qatari and Arabic contexts only,

indicating the need for more holistic studies that involve different public and private schools in Qatar with various nationalities and backgrounds.

Recommendations

To the best of my knowledge, this is the first study that focused on the details of implementation, evaluation and impact of a social emotional intervention on the development of students' wellbeing in school's settings in Qatar. This study's results emphasise the need for investing in national youth services that reach more numbers of adolescents in schools' settings to address their social and emotional needs and improve their mental well-being levels. These programmes provide students with social and emotional competencies that empower them to face future challenges. The second recommendation is to design age-appropriate and culturally related social emotional programmes that serve students' needs at different developmental levels. The development and design of these programmes require a collaboration between education, social and mental health specialists to produce an evidence-based well-designed programme that can positively impact students' mental wellbeing.

The third recommendation is to conduct regular monitoring, assessment and evaluations of SEL interventions in the Qatari schools' systems to create a database of what work in the field and what needs to be developed to achieve better outcomes. In addition, these evaluation methods are needed to focus on the documentation of the implementation process and the outcomes related to positive mental health to identify the key predictors of the SEL programme's success. This information can also facilitate the understanding of the process and principles of programme delivery, capturing the dynamics of programmes in action and identifying the critical ingredients for successful programme development, planning and implementation.

The fourth recommendation is to conduct investigations that evaluate the social emotional programmes' impact on students' academic performance and mental well-being levels. These investigations can provide a holistic understanding of the benefits that can be achieved when social emotional interventions are implemented in school settings. In addition, these investigations need to be conducted over a more extended period of times to evaluate the longitudinal impact of the social emotional interventions on students' academic performance and wellbeing levels. This longitudinal impact can reveal SEL programmes' enduring impact

on students' social competencies and mental well-being levels, facilitating a fundamental understanding of the SEL interventions impact.

Conclusion

The study has implications for both research and practice by pointing toward the need to better understand mental well-being promotion using social emotional interventions in the Qatari context. The promotion of emotional, social and mental wellbeing in teenagers and adolescents is becoming a national priority in a number of countries. The findings of this study demonstrate that SEL programmes implemented by outsider practitioners can improve students' wellbeing, attitude and relationships with others. Given these broad positive impacts, these results necessitate the need for well-designed programmes that simultaneously foster students' social, emotional, and mental wellbeing growth. Furthermore, it is important for schools and educational leaders in Qatar to identify and effectively implement research-based approaches that promote students' emotional and academic engagement and growth in the different years of school. This is consistent with the 2015-2030 Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health of the World Health Organization WHO that emphasizes the need to actively involve adolescents in programmes that improve their mental health and wellbeing. This investment in adolescents' health and wellbeing can facilitate the achievement of sustainable social and economic development.

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Appendices

Appendices A

Appendix A-1: The Ministry of Education ethical approval

وزارة التعليم و التعليم العالى
صنادير إدارة السياسات والأبحاث
التربوية جهات خارجية

92/2019

التاريخ : 22 / 4 / 2019 م

تسهيل مهمة القائم بالبحث الميداني في المدارس

السيد : مدير المدرسة
المحترم

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

نود إحاطتكم علما بأن الباحث / الباحثون المذكورة أسماءهم أدناه، بصدد إجراء دراسة ميدانية في مدرستكم وبياناتهم كالتالي :

- اسم الباحث: نور احمد عدنان الوتاري
- جهة العمل: جامعة قطر
- جهة البحث: رسالة دكتوراه- جامعة ورك - بريطانيا Warwick University
- عنوان البحث: تقييم إثر برنامج قيمي على الصحة النفسية والسلوكية والأكاديمية للطلبة من وجهة نظر الطلبة والمعلمين (دراسة حالة (Case Study).
- هدف البحث: تزويد الطلبة ببرنامج قيمي يحتوي على قيم واهداف ومحاور بناء شخصية ناجحة أكاديميا واجتماعيا ومن ثم تقييم اثر البرنامج على الطلبة من الناحية النفسية والسلوكية والاكاديمية
- عينة البحث: طالبات مدرسة مرحلة اعدادية مستقلة في الصف الثاني الاعدادي
- التاريخ: 2019-9-1-

عليه، يرجى التكرم بتسهيل مهمة الباحث، علما بأن البيانات ستكون سرية ولأغراض البحث العلمي ..

مع شكرنا لحسن تعاونكم معنا

نوف عبدالله مبارك الكعبي
مدير إدارة السياسات والأبحاث التربوية

Appendix A-2: The Warwick University ethical approval



Ethical Approval

For PhD, EdD and

Masters by Research Students

All research undertaken by the students and staff within CES must conform to the University's ethical guidelines. There are separate procedures for staff and students.

All students receive training in research ethics and are required to complete this form before undertaking research, including small projects, dissertations and theses as appropriate. Ethical approval should first be sought early and certainly before any fieldwork. For doctoral students a completed ethical approval form should therefore accompany your upgrade paper.

The completion of the form is an opportunity to discuss ethical issues with your supervisor/tutor and is intended as a learning exercise as much as an administrative process to ensure compliance with CES policy. Your response should be detailed but not overlong. For example, in writing about your methodology you do not need to rehearse the rationale of your research but be specific about the steps you are taking. And if the bulk of your data collection consists of interviews with teachers, explain whether these interviews will be semi structured and whether they will be undertaken in home or school contexts. In writing about confidentiality, explain that you will be using codes but explain that your list of names of interviewees will be stored in a separate physical location. In writing about competence explain which courses and programmes you have attended but ask yourself what will you do when faced with the unexpected. And In writing about integrity go beyond explaining that you will follow recognised procedures in terms of data analysis and consider how you can avoid reporting in ways which are judgemental and / or discriminatory.

Many education students are carrying out projects which, on the face of it, do not pose strong ethical dilemmas. But think this through carefully. In particular consider *what might happen* and how you would deal with it. For example, what you would do if:

-
- in the course of an interview about CPD, a respondent tells you about how another individual is bullying him or her
 - you are observing a class and you feel that there is a health and safety issue arising
 - an interviewee is visibly upset about something that has arisen earlier at work and cannot stop crying
 - you are being pressured by a sponsor to present that organisation in as positive light as possible

You should complete this form, sign it and have it countersigned by your tutor/supervisor. The form should then be returned to the Research Office (C1.10) for processing.

The form will then be reviewed by the relevant member of staff. The proposal may be approved, approved subject to minor amendments, or declined. The form will then be returned to the Research Office for recording and then returned to the Course Administrator who will report the outcome to yourself and your tutor/supervisor. If any changes are required you should undertake these in **consultation** with your tutor/supervisor. The form should then be resubmitted to the Research Office, when it will be reviewed.

Further Guidance

Further guidance and support is available from the University's website:

http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/ris/research_integrity/researchethicscommittees/

Your bench mark for educational research is the code from the British Educational Research Association:

<https://www.bera.ac.uk/researchers-resources/publications/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2011>

Similar advice is offered by subject bodies such as British Psychological Society

<http://beta.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/bps-code-ethics-and-conduct-2009>

And the British Sociological Association: <https://www.britisoc.co.uk/equality-diversity/statement-of-ethical-practice/>

Application for Ethical Approval for Research Degrees

(PhD, EdD, MA by research)

Student number: 1880286

Student name: Noor Ahmed Alwattary

PhD EdD MA by research

Project title: The Power of Social Dimension of Education: An Example of Students' Empowerment Program in Schools in Qatar

Supervisor: Dr. Michael Wyness
Associate Professor
Director of Post Graduate Research

Funding body (if relevant): N/A

Please ensure you have read the Guidance for the Ethical Conduct of Research available in the handbook.

Methodology

The research methodology is a single evaluative case study. The study aims to evaluate the effect of Social and Emotional Learning program, (SEL) on students' well-being, behaviours and academic performance. The data collection methods will include surveys, semi-structured interviews with teachers and social specialists and focus groups with student. Classroom observations might also be connected to assess students' classroom engagement during the

workshop session. In addition, students' reports will be used to assess the effect of the program on students' academic and behavioural performance.

Participants

The sample of this study will include year 8 students only in a secondary government school in Doha. The ethical approval was recently obtained from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Qatar and they are supporting this study by providing me with a signed official ethical form that notifies schools of the Ministry's approval. I started the school selection process after I received the Ministry of Education's approval. I randomly approached different schools with a signed copy of the Ministry's approval and a detailed description of the study. In total I approached three schools, and two of those schools accepted to be part of the program, and I will go with one of them in September 2019.

Students' age is 13-14 in a girl's secondary school in Doha. The number of students will be between 30-50 students depending on the school collaboration and students' willingness to participate. In case of vulnerable students with special learning abilities, special care will be taken with every step of the program. For instance, consent forms will be sent to all parents before the program's implementation and data collection. As with any participating student, parents of any vulnerable or special needs students' can refuse their children's participation or they can provide specific requirements if they are willing to accept their children's participation. The school which accepted to participate in this study does not currently have any special needs students at year 8 level, however, special care will be taken if any new special needs student join the school during the research.

Students' will be asked to fill an Arabic translated version of WEMWBS (Warwick- Edinburgh Mental Well-being scale) before and after the program to assess their level of wellbeing and the level of the program's effect on them. In addition, after the program's implementation, 2-3 focus groups will be conducted with a sample of the participating students to gain deeper insights of the effect of the program from their perspectives. In case of any non-Arabic speaking students, a copy of the well-being scale will be given to them in their own language.

The other participants in this study are teachers, social and psychological specialists in the school, who will be interviewed to gain insights of their experience with the program, future suggestions and the witnessed effects.

Respect for participants' rights and dignity

Special care will be taken to ensure and protect all participants' rights and confidentiality issues. All participants will be provided with a consent form to enable them to be aware of their voluntary participation, respect and data protection. Students and teachers' autonomy will be maintained by providing all participants (depending on their level whether they are students or teachers) with clear information about the research, how the data will be gathered, how the information will be used and how the results will be reported without causing any harm to them.

In addition, the privacy and confidentiality of students will be maintained by allowing them to withdraw at anytime without any penalty if they wish.

The obtained data will be stored in a secure system and special codes will be assigned to avoid using names and maintain confidentiality.

Privacy and confidentiality

Research participants' and school staff's confidentiality and anonymity will be fully respected. Participating students, teachers and social specialists will be informed of the importance of their participation to inform the educational practice. However, participants will be informed that this participation is voluntary and free from any coercion. Furthermore, there is no intention to do any type of harm or discrimination to any human subject during and after this study. All participants will be treated fairly with dignity, and within an ethic of respect free from judgmental issues related to race, age, gender, nationality, faith, disability or any other differences.

Consent

How will prior informed consent be obtained from the following?

From participants: written consent will be given to students to read and sign before the research. The consent will include information about the study and their voluntary participation. In addition, and as the participated students are children under the age of 16, consent forms will be sent to parents to obtain their approval of allowing their children to participate in the research.

From others: written consent forms will be given to teachers and social workers to insure the voluntary participation and the confidentiality of the given information.

Competence

I have four years of experience in the academic and research settings. I studied for a Diploma in Education, Master in Educational Leadership and now I started my PhD at Warwick University. I worked as a graduate assistant in the Research Unit of the College of Education-Qatar University. Within this job, I had the opportunity to work with the faculty there on assisting in different academic and research related tasks. Later, I had a one year contract to work as a Research Assistant for the Center of Humanities and Social Science at Qatar University . Within this role, I had the opportunity to be part of two major nationally funded research studies in Qatar. The first study was '*Addressing Dementia Care in Qatar: Producing an Evidence Base to Inform Policy and Practice*' and the second study was '*Family breakdown in Qatar: from the perspectives of different stakeholders*'. In these two studies, I had the role of applying for different institutional ethical approvals in Qatar. In addition, I conducted many face-to-face interviews with Dementia caregivers' family members and focus group with stakeholders with the study lead. Furthermore, within each stage of those two studies I carefully considered the ethical issues of the research by providing participants with full information about the study purpose and the voluntary choice of participation. For example, when some of the family members refused to record the interviews, I fully supported their decision, and prepared a backup plan with a written version of the questions and I started to write their answers after their approval. In addition, in three cases, and after reaching the house of the participants, they refused to be part of the research after their initial approval, and I fully accepted their decisions and we stopped the interviews immediately.

Recently I started to work as a Teaching assistant at the Population and Behavioural Department at the College of Medicine-Qatar University, which is a new academic challenge for me. Eight months ago, I started my PhD in Education at Warwick University. The first course of *Advanced Research methods* provided me with in-depth understanding of research ethics, design, and methodology and data collection tools. Within this course, we had the opportunity to explore more information regarding the nature of the educational research, the related challenges and rights of the participants that need to be considered in each step. Furthermore, there was a specific session

on research ethics and ethical approvals that need to be taken into account when conducting a research. All of this information within the ARM course alongside with my experience enabled me to be more confident in starting my research by applying the knowledge, skills and research ethics effectively.

Protection of participants

As mentioned above, participants' rights are the priority for me during this research. They have the right to withdraw at any time. Their information will be stored securely in a special hard drive to maintain the confidentiality of their information. In addition, when writing the report, any judgmental or discriminatory approach will be avoided to respect the participated school, staff and students' rights and avoid causing any harm to them in any way.

Child protection

Will a **DBS** check be needed? Yes No (If yes, please attach a copy.) say why, The participating students are under 16, however, consent forms will be sent to parents before starting any activities of the research. In addition, DBS form is not required in Qatar as part of the research process. Here in Qatar, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education requests detailed proposal form the researcher to undergo the process of ethical approvals. I sent this ethical approval in April 2019 and after one week I received the Ministry of Education and Higher Education's formal approval to conduct the research at any secondary school in Qatar without any additional forms or ethical applications.

Addressing dilemmas

During the course of any study, a number of ethical dilemmas and practical problems might arise and it's the researcher's responsibility to address these issues in an ethical approach. Some of these ethical dilemmas can be anticipated before and at the beginning of the research, while others might emerge during the research study. In the event of facing any problem or challenges during the research process, the priority will be protecting the confidentiality and privacy of participants. Conducting a research in a government school in Qatar is a challenging process, however, the early planning alongside with careful consideration of any emerging events or resistance can help me to address these issues. In addition, in the event of any unanticipated ethical dilemmas I will contact

my supervisor to get his advice, consult the head teacher of the school, and try to find solutions that solve those issues while maintaining the confidentiality, anatomy and privacy of the school and participants.

For instance, during my master's project, I conducted an action research in a primary government school in Doha. The action research involved classroom observations and focus groups to identify teachers' professional development needs and later a workshop to address those needs to improve their pedagogical skills accordingly. In one of the focus groups, one of the teachers seemed to be frustrated and she was not willing to answer any question regarding school's professional development activities. In response, I fully supported her willingness not to participate and accepted her withdrawal from the research without informing the coordinator to avoid any sensitive issues. Therefore, I know that it's challenging to address research dilemmas during the research process, however, having a previous experience in the Qatari school context provides me with the skills required to face those difficulties. For instance, if any of the participating students' started to have emotional or personal issues during the research, I will respond in an appropriate manner given my experience as a practitioner and prioritise student's well being over my data collection. Where appropriate I will arrange a meeting with specialist staff in the school pass on any well-being concerns.

Misuse of research

This research is conducted to produce evidence based insight into the effect of SEL on students' well-being to Inform Policy and Practice in Qatar. This research is part of my PhD study and will be used only within the regulations of Warwick University and will be conducted within the ethical rules of both Warwick University and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Qatar.

Support for research participants

The aim of this research is to provide students' with a Social Emotional Program within a school settings to evaluate the effects of this programme on their well-being, behaviours and academic performance. Students will be fully supported at each stage of the research, they will be reassured of their voluntary choice of participating in this study, and that they can withdraw at anytime. In

addition, clear explanation of the programs' information and data collection methods will be provided for all participants to avoid any unanticipated conflicts.

Management of your data

Only I will have access to the collected data. Data will be stored in password protected folders with backup and special codes will be given to the interviews' participants. The data will be used for this PhD study and then it will be destroyed. Research participants will be reassured at the outset and the end of the interviews and focus groups that their views will be kept confidential and that they can withdraw at any time. Considering the social and cultural issues within Qatari participants, all interviews will be anonymized through the use of pseudonyms and encrypted file names.

Integrity

How will you ensure that your research and its reporting are honest, fair and respectful to others?

Special care will be taken when reporting this research. The results of the study will be clearly reported and conclusions backed up with evidence.. The aim of my study is to arrive to evidence based results of the effect of the SEL program on students in a government school in Doha. This in-depth study is the first in Qatar and reporting accurate results is essential.

What agreement has been made for the attribution of authorship by yourself and your supervisor(s) of any reports or publications?

The publications and authorships will be discussed with my supervisor in accordance to the departmental guidelines at Warwick University. In addition, the Qatari Ministry of Education and Higher Education requested a short report of this study once it has finished to inform their policy and practice

Other issues

The Qatari Ministry of Education and Higher education approved this study and all ethical standards will be followed carefully throughout the study. If any issues emerge, I will be in contact with my supervisor to get his advice and I will always put the participants' rights and integrity first.

Signed:	
Student: Noor Alwattary	Date: 15.5.19
Supervisor: Michael Wyness	Date: 14.5.19

Please submit this form to the Research Office (Donna Jay, Room C1.10)

Office use only
Action taken:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved
<input type="checkbox"/> Approved with modification or conditions – see below
<input type="checkbox"/> Action deferred. Please supply additional information or clarification – see below
Name: Michael Hammond
Signature: 
Date: 23 May 2019
Stamped: 

Appendices B

Appendix B-1: The permission letter

Thank you – this email confirms you have permission to use WEMWBS in accordance with the details entered in your registration shown below. We suggest you bookmark this page for future reference: <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/med/research/platform/wemwbs/using/register/resources>
If you have any questions please feel free to contact us via email: ventures@warwick.ac.uk

Question: Organisation name

Answer:

Warwick University

Question: Primary email address

Answer:

Noor.Alwattary@warwick.ac.uk

Question: Planned start date

Answer:

17/09/2019

Question: Planned finish date

Answer:

31/12/2019

Question: Preferred version of

Answer:

WEMWBS - 14 item scale

Question: In which language(s) are you planning to use ?

Tick all that apply

Answer:

Arabic

Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS)

Below are some statements about feelings and thoughts.

Please select the answer that best describes your experience of each
over the last 2 weeks.

	None of the Time	Rarely	Some of the Time	Often	All of the Time
I've been feeling optimistic about the future	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling useful	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling relaxed	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling interested in other people	1	2	3	4	5
I've had energy to spare	1	2	3	4	5
I've been dealing with problems well	1	2	3	4	5
I've been thinking clearly	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling good about myself	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling close to other people	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling confident	1	2	3	4	5
I've been able to make up my own mind about things	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling loved	1	2	3	4	5
I've been interested in new things	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling cheerful	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix B-3: The Arabic version of WEMWBS scale

في الجدول ادناه جمل حول شعورك وافكارك الحالية (المشاركة تطوعية)

يرجى وضع علامة حول القيمة التي تعبر عن تفكيرك وشعورك خلال الأسبوعين الماضيين

دائما	غالبا	أحيانا	نادرا	ابدا	الجملة
5	4	3	2	1	لقد كنت أشعر بالتفاؤل تجاه المستقبل
5	4	3	2	1	لقد كنت أشعر أنى انسان ذو فائدة
5	4	3	2	1	لقد كنت أشعر أنى مرتاح وهادئ
5	4	3	2	1	لقد كنت أشعر أنى سعي بالتعامل مع الاخرين
5	4	3	2	1	لقد كنت أشعر بأن لدي طاقة ايجابية أستطيع ان انشرها على الاخرين
5	4	3	2	1	لقد كنت أقدر أن اتعامل مع المشاكل التي تواجهني بطريقة فعالة
5	4	3	2	1	لقد كنت أستطيع أن أفكر بوضوح
5	4	3	2	1	لقد كنت أشعر بالرضى عن نفسي
5	4	3	2	1	لقد كنت أشعر بالقرب من الاخرين من حولي
5	4	3	2	1	لقد كنت أشعر أنى واثق من نفسي
5	4	3	2	1	لقد كان لدي القدرة على اتخاذ القرارات
5	4	3	2	1	لقد كنت أشعر بأنى محبوب من قبل الاخرين
5	4	3	2	1	لقد كنت أحب ان أجرب خبرات ومعلومات جديدة
5	4	3	2	1	لقد كنت أشعر بالمرح

Appendix C-1: Teachers and school staff's interview questions

Teachers and schools staff interview protocol

<p>The first part: exploring teachers' perspectives of factors that can influence students' mental wellbeing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What factors can influence students' wellbeing? • Is there a relationship between students' well-being, behaviours and academic performance? • How can we support students to maintain their wellbeing levels? 	<p>المحور الأول: استيضاح العوامل التي تؤثر على الصحة النفسية والسلوكية والأكاديمية للطلبة:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ماهي اهم العوامل التي تؤثر على الصحة النفسية والسلوكية للطلبة؟ • من وجهة نظركم هل هناك علاقة بين الصحة النفسية والسلوكية والاداء الاكاديمي للطلبة؟ • كيف يمكن مساعدة الطالب لتخطي الصعوبات التي تواجهه في مسيرته التعليمية؟
<p>The second part: teachers and school staff perceptions of the SEL program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think that the implemented SEL program was beneficial for students? • What are the outcomes that you noticed on students' behavioral and social aspects? • Did you notice any changes in students' behaviors? • What is your evaluation of the SEL program? • Do you have any suggestions for improving SEL programs in the future? 	<p>المحور الثاني: آراء المعلمين والاختصاصيين بالبرنامج القيمي</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • هل تشعر ان هناك فائدة لبرامج او ورش قيمة في المدارس لتحسين أداء الطلبة وخدمة الجانب النفسي والاجتماعي لديهم؟ • كيف تقيم البرنامج؟ هل هناك فرق من جانب معين برأيك؟ • هل حصل تغيير في أداء الطالب الأكاديمي او التفاعل داخل الصف؟ • هل هناك فرق في الجانب السلوكي للطلبة؟ • هل لديك أي مقترحات لتطوير البرنامج في المستقبل؟

Appendix C-2: Students' interview questions

Students' interviews protocol

<p>The first part: the concept of wellbeing</p>	<p>المحور الأول: مفهوم الصحة النفسية</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does wellbeing means to you? • What is your understanding of happiness? • What do you do if you feel sad? • What is your reaction if you are faced with difficulties? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ماذا يعني لك مفهوم الصحة النفسية؟ • من وجهة نظرك، ماهي السعادة؟ • ماذا تفعل لو شعرت بحزن او اكتئاب؟ • ماهي ردة فعلك لو واجهتك صعوبات معينة؟
<p>The second part: how did the SEL program improved the students' social emotional skills:</p>	<p>المحور الثاني: كيف ساعد البرنامج على تطوير الطالب نفسيا واجتماعيا:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there any difference in your feelings after participation in the SEL program? • What do you feel after this program? • Will you participate in similar SEL programs in the future? • What is the most element of the program that had a strong impact on you? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • هل كان للبرنامج أثر عليك؟ • هل يمكن تصنيفها بأي شكل؟ • حسب رأيك كيف يمكن تطوير البرنامج؟ • هل ستشارك في برامج مستقبلية مماثلة؟

Consent form for Teachers/ Parents

Consent form	الموافقة على المشاركة
<p>Dear Participant</p> <p>This individual interview is an attempt to evaluate the impact of the positive steps program on your <i>students/kids</i>. The input is an appreciated element in this study and be will be kept strictly confidential. The given information will be used for research purposes only. The participation is voluntary, you/your kid can skip or withdraw at anytime.</p> <p>I appreciate your time and effort. If you have any question about this study please feel free to contact the researcher</p> <p>Noor.Alwattary@warwick.ac.uk</p> <p>Sincerely, Noor Alwattary PhD student Warwick University</p>	<p>عزيزي المشارك</p> <p>يتم اجراء هذه المقابلة حول تأثير برنامج خطوات ناجحة على طالبات مدرستكم/ بناتكم ، لتقييم مدى فاعلية البرنامج والتوصل الى نتائج من الواقع مبنية على خبرات المشاركين. ونظرا لأهمية الموضوع فان مشاركتكم لها أهمية بالغة في اثراء البحث. علما ان الأسئلة المطروحة اختيارية وتطوعية ويمكنكم الانسحاب في أي وقت خلال البحث. كما ويرجى العلم بان أي بيانات او معلومات سوف تستخدم لأغراض البحث العلمي فقط وستعامل بسرية وخصوصية تامة مع عدم ذكر الاسم او معلومات شخصية للمشاركين على الاطلاق.</p> <p>نشكر لكم مشاركتكم البناءة للإجابة على أسئلة هذا البحث.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Noor.Alwattary@warwick.ac.uk</p> <p style="text-align: right;">شكرا لكم نور الوتاري طالبة دكتوراه جامعة ورك</p>
<p>I have the read the above statement and I fully understand the procedures in this study.</p> <p>Signature of participant: Date:</p>	<p>لقد قمت بقراءة هذه التعليمات وافهم تماما الإجراءات التي سيتم اتخاذها خلال الدراسة ووافق/واسمح لابنتي بالمشاركة.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">توقيع المشارك: التاريخ:</p>

Appendix C-4: Students Interview Analysis Sample

Analysis within the PREMA model	
<p>Positive Emotions (happiness, pleasure and enjoyment and statements related to wellbeing, optimistic, focusing on the positive aspects of life</p>	<p><i>I feel much more confident about myself, when I face any problem, I would not hold inside, I would go to seek help, talk to others, and try to change. This programme enabled me to recognize the importance of emotion's management.</i></p> <p><i>The programme improved my confidence to the highest levels, I can now speak to tell anything that I feel without being afraid of others' opinions.</i></p> <p><i>I learned how to stop saying bad words about myself to value myself and to know my abilities.</i></p> <p><i>I feel now much more confident, I don't care anymore about bullying or bullies, and even if anyone tries to bully me I will not feel sad because my self-confidence has been enhanced with this programme.</i></p> <p><i>The most important thing that I learned from this programme is to feel positive about the future and be optimistic, regardless of any challenges and setbacks. I really like the programme.</i></p>
<p>Engagement students' feelings, sense of belonging and attachment to their learning environment</p>	<p><i>I started to realize my own ambition and to set future targets in my life, I feel that I can</i></p>

	<p><i>achieve my objectives I have energy to spread.</i></p> <p><i>I feel that I am connected with my teachers and my peer students much better than before; I am willing to participate in the classroom activities.</i></p> <p><i>The programme was a great opportunity in which I was able to discover my inner strengths, which as a result, improved my interaction with my teacher. The most effective lecture was about achievement and how to achieve it was really good thing that attracted my attention and motivation.</i></p>
<p>Relationships</p> <p>This aspect refers to an individual’s ability to maintain effective relationships with others, support others and the sense of connectedness to others. Positive relationships and interactions with an individual’s parents, siblings, peers, and friends is a key ingredient to overall joy.</p>	<p><i>I feel that I love others more than before, I have positive energy to share with them.</i></p> <p><i>One of the main things that influenced me in this programme is the impact of bullying on others, so I decided to stop bullying and to stop harming anyone with any word or type of harassment.</i></p> <p><i>The programme taught me how to love others, accept their differences and the need to stop any type of bullying. This is the most crucial thing that I have learned from this programme.</i></p>

	<p><i>Now, I hope the best for everyone, this programme taught me how to be kind, supportive to others and hope them everything good.</i></p> <p><i>I gained new experiences, new ideas, and the most important thing that I learned is respecting others. Now I respect others, solve any problems that might happen with them and avoid harming anyone.</i></p> <p><i>I feel that I am much better than before, I think of others, take care of their emotions, and help anyone in need. I respect my teachers, my peer students and I take care of my family and especially my parents.</i></p>
<p>Meaning</p> <p>An individual's sense of purpose in life. This sense of life leads individuals to achievements and fulfilment in different domains that result in life satisfaction and wellbeing</p>	<p><i>I feel confident that I can improve my behaviours, I can achieve, I can do. The programme changed many things in me. The programme provoked my thinking to value myself, believe in my inner abilities and have a life target to work on and achieve in the future.</i></p> <p><i>One of the lessons involved the subject of having a purpose in life; this subject taught me how to have more self-discipline, depend on myself, values my inner strengths and work on developing my abilities to contribute to my country and society.</i></p>

	<p><i>Now I have a mission to succeed, to study every day, to do better, and to apply what I learned in this programme in my life.</i></p>
<p><i>Accomplishments</i></p> <p>An individual's level of persistence, determination and dedication to accomplish different tasks and goals</p>	<p><i>The programme enhanced my inner motivation towards learning, to study more, to achieve more and to plan everything in advance. I started to plan my studies for each day.</i></p> <p><i>I used to be a careless person; now I feel more committed, determined and devoted to achieving the best, succeed in my life and contribute to my community.</i></p> <p><i>I feel more motivated to plan and achieve my dreams. This is a future oriented programme, I feel motivated to achieve better in my future.</i></p> <p><i>Now, I have daily schedules to do my prayers, plan my studies, and achieve my future plans. I realized the importance of feeling confident, understanding my inner abilities, and working towards my dream. I am happy to be in this programme.</i></p> <p><i>The programme enabled me to learn about myself how to plan my future how to have motivation for studies which I didn't have before. Now I have started to have my own plans two of my academic performance. It was a really amazing opportunity, I hope that my family do the same and assist me in reaching my goals.</i></p>

Appendix C-5: Students Interview transcription Samples

السلام عليكم، مرحبا بك في مقابلتنا لهذا اليوم وشكرا لك على المشاركة.

اهلا أستاذة شكرا

الباحثة: سنتضمن المقابلة أسئلة متنوعة ولك مطلق الحرية في الإجابة عليها كما ويمكنك الانسحاب في حال وجدت السؤال صعبا او محرجا لك

الطالبة: تمام ان شاء الله

الباحثة: طيب، السؤال الأول الذي اود ان اطرحه عليك، ماذا يعني لك مفهوم الصحة النفسية؟ هل يمكنك إعطاء امثلة؟ او شرح لهذا المفهوم من وجهة نظرك؟

الطالبة: الصحة النفسية هي ان اشعر بالراحة والسعادة مع عائلتي واصدقائي ومن احب، وان لا اشعر بالتوتر والقلق والحزن، أكون فرحانة

الباحثة: هل هذا المعنى قريب للسعادة؟

الطالبة: ممكن تشرحين السؤال مرة ثانية؟

الباحثة: ماهي السعادة من وجهة نظرك؟ كيف تفهمين السعادة او كيف تصلين اليها؟

الطالبة: السعادة هي ان اعمل ما أحب واشعر بها من داخلي وتتحقق السعادة بان ارضي ربي ثم والدي ثم ان احقق نفسي بالمعدل العالي في المدرسة واحقق احلامي المستقبلية

الباحثة: اذا السعادة ترتبط بشعور داخلك وشعور مع من حولك؟

الطالبة: صحيح، ان احقق ذاتي وان اسعد من حولي وخاصة والدي ووالدتي

الباحثة: شكرا لك على هذه المعلومات الجميلة، دعيني اسالك سؤالا اخر، ماذا تفعلين لو شعرت بحزن او اكتئاب؟

الطالبة: أحاول ان أتكلم مع امي وأخبرها بما يجول في خاطري، اذهب في نزهة، اقرا كتاب، أصلي، اخرج مع صديقتي

الباحثة: هل يحدث لك شعور الاكتئاب كثيرا، قليلا ام نادرا؟

الطالبة: نادرا ما اشعر بهذا الشعور مثل اكتئاب او حزن، ولكن أحيانا اشعر به عندما اخذ درجة قليلة في الامتحان او يحدث مشكلة بيني وبين صديقاتي او داخل المنزل، كل هالاشياء تؤثر على نفسياتي وتجعلني اشعر بالحزن

الباحثة: ماهي ردة فعلك لو واجهتك صعوبات معينة؟

الطالبة: أحاول ان أحلها بنفسي ولو لم أقدر أخبر معلمتي لو كان الموضوع في المدرسة وأخبر والدي اذا كان الموضوع في البيت من اجل مساعدتي على حل الموضوع

الباحثة: الان سوف اسالك عن تأثير البرنامج، هل احسست بأي فرق بعد مشاركتك في برنامج خطوات إيجابية؟ هل تشعرين بأي فرق؟ الطالبة: نعم اكيد

الباحثة: هل كان للبرنامج أثر عليك وعلى مشاعرك؟
الطالبة: نعم بالتأكيد، اشعر بفرق في طريقة تفكيري وطريقة نظرتي للآخرين والتعامل مع الاحداث اليومية التي امر بها

الباحثة: هل يمكن ان تصفين بأي شكل كان التأثير، ما هو شعورك بعد البرنامج؟ كيف كان التغيير؟
الطالبة: شعرت بعد البرنامج بأشياء كثيرة، أهمها ان اتقبل الآخرين، وان احترمهم، واتقبل اختلافهم، ولا انتقص منهم او اعيب عليهم

الباحثة: كيف تعلمت هذه المبادئ؟
الطالبة: تعلمت ان هذا الامر جزء من ديننا الحنيف كما اخبرتنا الأستاذة نورة ، واوصانا به الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم، في ان نحترم ونحب لإخواننا واخواتنا ما نحب لأنفسنا

الباحثة: هل اثر عليك البرنامج من النواحي التعليمية والتزامك بالدراسة والنواحي الاكاديمية؟
الطالبة: نعم بالتأكيد، اثر البرنامج علي من ناحية الهمة نحو الدراسة والدافعية للتعلم، فقد كنت ابتعد تدريجيا واحاول الهروب من الدراسة، اما الان فبدأت بتحديد حلم كبير اسعى اليه وانطلق له

الباحثة: هل هناك تأثير اخر؟
الطالبة: نعم، من الناحية الدينية، أصبحت اواظب على صلاتي اكثر لشعوري ان الراحة النفسية مرتبطة بمدى تطبيقي للطاعات

الباحثة: ما هو أكثر جزء من البرنامج كان له اثر عليك؟
الطالبة: أكثر جزء اثر في هو طريقة الأستاذة التي كانت تعطينا البرنامج، كانت توفر لنا فيديو قصير يحمل الكثير من العبر، وكلمات عميقة تمس قلوبنا، وكانت اسلوبها ممتع جدا حتى كنا نود ان لا تنتهي المحاضرة، كنا نشعر انها ام وليست معلمة فقط. هذا الأسلوب والمواضيع التي قدمتها لنا شجعتني بشدة ان احضر المحاضرات كاملة

الباحثة: هل ستشاركين في برامج مشابهة مرة أخرى ولماذا؟
الطالبة: نعم سأشارك إذا كان في برامج مماثلة في الصف الثامن والتاسع. أحيانا أكلم اختي وصديقاتي حول البرنامج ويودون المشاركة أيضا

الباحثة: هل تودين إضافة أي شيء قبل ان ننتهي من المقابلة؟
الطالبة: شكرا أستاذة ليس لدي شيء اخر سوى ان اشكركم على البرنامج
الباحثة: شكرا لك حبيبتي، وفقك الله أينما كنتي، شكرا لوقتك ومشاركتك وأتمنى لك كل التوفيق باذن الله

Translation:

Researcher: welcome to our interview today, and thank you for your participation

Student: hello teacher thank you

Researcher: The interview will include various questions, and you are free to answer them, and you can withdraw if you find the question difficult or embarrassing for you.

Student: All right, God willing

Researcher: Ok, the first question I would like to ask you is, what does the concept of mental health mean to you? Can you give examples? Or an explanation of this concept from your point of view?

Student: Mental health is to feel comfortable and happy with my family, friends and loved ones, and not to have the feelings of stress, anxiety and sadness, to be happy

Researcher: Is this meaning close to happiness?

Student: Can you explain the question again?

Researcher: What is happiness from your point of view? How do you understand happiness or how do you reach it?

Student: Happiness is to do what I love and feel from inside, and happiness is achieved by pleasing God and then my parents, then achieving high in school and achieving my future dreams

Researcher: So happiness is linked to a feeling within you and a feeling with those around you?

Student: It is true, that I achieve myself and make those around me happier, especially my father and mother

Researcher: Thank you for this beautiful information. Let me ask you another question. What do you do if you feel sad or depressed?

Student: I try to talk to my mother and tell her what's on my mind, go for a walk, read a book, pray, go out with my friend

Researcher: Do you feel depressed always, sometimes or rarely?

Student: I rarely feel this feeling like depression or sadness, but sometimes I feel it when I take a low grade in the exam or there is a problem between me and my friends or inside the house, all these things affect my mood and make me feel sad

Researcher: What would your reaction be if you encountered certain difficulties?

Student: I try to solve it myself, and if I am not able, I tell my teacher if the issue is in school, and I tell my father if the issue is at home in order to help me solve the issue

Researcher: Now I will ask you about the impact of the program. Did you feel any difference after your participation in the Positive Steps Program? Do you feel any difference?

Student: Yes, sure

Researcher: Did the programme affect you and your feelings?

Student: Yes, of course, I feel a difference in the way I think and the way I look at others and how I deal with the daily events that I go through.

Researcher: Can you describe in any way the effect, how do you feel after the program? what was the change?

Student: After the program, I felt many things, the most important of which was to accept others, respect them, accept their differences, and not bully them or harm them.

Researcher: How did you learn these principles?

Student: I learned that these concepts are part of our religion, as Mrs. Noura told us, that the Prophet Mohammed, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, recommended it to us, to respect and love for our brothers and sisters what we love for ourselves.

Researcher: Has the programme affected you in terms of education and your commitment to study and academic aspects?

Student: Yes, of course, the impact of the programme on me was in terms of enthusiasm towards study and motivation to learn, I was gradually moving away and trying to escape from study, but now I started defining a big dream that I seek and go for it

Researcher: Is there another effect?

Student: Yes, from a religious point of view, I am more committed to my prayers because I feel that psychological comfort is related to the extent to which I practice obedience.

Researcher: What part of the programme had the most impact on you?

Student: The part that affected me the most is the way the instructor was giving us the program. She provided us with a short video that carried lot of lessons, and deep words that

touched our hearts, and her style was so interesting that we didn't want the lecture to end. We felt that she was a mother and not just a teacher. This method and the topics she presented to us greatly encouraged me to attend the lectures

Researcher: Will you participate in similar programs again and why?

Student: Yes, I will participate if it is in similar programs in the eighth and ninth grade. Sometimes I talk to my sister and my friends about the programme and they want to participate too

Researcher: Would you like to add anything before we finish the interview?

Student: Thank you. I have nothing else to do but thank you for the program

Researcher: Thank you, my love. May God grant you success wherever you are. Thank you for your time and participation. I wish you all success, God willing.

Appendix C6- Teacher Interview transcription sample

الباحثة: تحية طيبة لك استاذتي الفاضلة, شكرا لك على المشاركة في هذا البحث
المعلمة: شكرا جزيلًا، سعيدة بمشاركتي معكم
الباحثة: في البدء اود ان استوضح عن العوامل التي تؤثر على الصحة النفسية والسلوكية والأكاديمية للطلبة. وسأقوم
بطرح عدد من الأسئلة لاستكشاف هذه العوامل من وجهة نظرك
المعلمة: تمام ان شاء الله
الباحثة: ماهي برأيك اهم العوامل التي تؤثر على الصحة النفسية والسلوكية للطلبة؟
المعلمة: من اهم العوامل التي تؤثر على الطلبة هي التحصيل العلمي، العلاقات الاسرية والعلاقات
الاجتماعية، ونظرة الطالبة لنفسها وثقتها بنفسها كذلك. هناك طالبات يرفضن المشاركة خلال الدرس لأنهن لا
يتمتكن الثقة بالنفس التي تعزز من وعيهم ومشاركتهم وقد يؤثر ذلك سلبا على صحتهم النفسية وتفاعلهم
الإيجابي مع من حولهم.
الباحثة: اذا، هل هناك علاقة بين الصحة النفسية والسلوكية والأداء الأكاديمي للطلبة؟
المعلمة: بالتأكيد
الباحثة: هل يمكنك توضيح ذلك؟
المعلمة: بالتأكيد، لاحظ على طالباتي انهم يتصرفون بكفاءة عالية وأكبر عندما يشعرون بالتقدير والقيمة النفسية لأدائهم
الأكاديمي. والعكس كذلك، عندما تشعر الطالبة انها لا تؤدي واجبتها الاكاديمية بالشكل المطلوب، فإنها تشعر بعدم
الراحة مع شعور بانها اقل من زميلاتها.
الباحثة: رائع، من خلال خبرتك، كيف يمكن مساعدة الطلبة لتخطي الصعوبات؟
المعلمة: اعتقد من اهم الأمور التي تساعد الطالب لتخطي اغلب الصعوبات هي المتابعة الحثيثة من قبل الاهل، التواصل
الاجتماعي بين الاهل والمدرسة، والتوجيه الأكاديمي والنفسي للطلاب حتى يشعر بالمساندة والمساعدة من قبل الجميع
ويتجنب الشعور بالإهمال.
الباحثة: وماذا عن المجتمع المدرسي؟ هل له دور في ذلك؟
المعلمة: اكيد، هناك دور للموجهات والمرشدات النفسيات في المدرسة حيث هناك حاجة ملحة لدعم الطالبات في مختلف
النواحي الاجتماعية والتعليمية والنفسية
الباحثة: جميل، شكرا لك للمعلومات المفيدة، الان سننتقل الى محور اخر
المعلمة: تمام ان شاء الله
الباحثة: هل تشعرين ان هناك فائدة لبرامج او ورش قيمية في المدارس لتحسين أداء الطلبة وخدمة الجانب النفسي
والاجتماعي لديهم؟
المعلمة: اكيد، بالنسبة لي اعتقد ان هناك حاجة ملحة للبرامج التي تخدم الجانب النفسي والاجتماعي للطلبة. وعلى وجه
الخصوص في هذا العمر، يحتاج الطالب الى الكثير من المتابعة والنصح والتوجيه.
الباحثة: هل تعتقدين ان هناك برامج مخصص للجانب الاجتماعي والنفسي في قطر؟
المعلمة: حاليا، لا يوجد لدينا أي برامج مصممة خصيصا للجانب النفسي والاجتماعي والثقافي للطلبة، نحن بحاجة
شديدة لمثل هذه البرامج في قطر

الباحثة: من وجهة نظرك، كيف تقيمين البرنامج؟ هل هناك فرق من جانب معين برأيك؟
المعلمة: اعتقد ان هناك أثر للبرنامج بالتأكيد على الطلبة، وهذا التأثير كانت بشكل خاص على الجانب الاجتماعي وخاصة السلوكيات الاجتماعية المتعلقة بالآخرين مثل قيمة الاحترام.
الباحثة: هل يمكنك إعطاء مثال على ذلك؟
المعلمة: مثلاً، في احدى الحالات، اخبرت احدى الطالبات (من المجموعة التي شاركت في البحث) والتي كانت تعاني من بعض المشاكل السلوكية، انني سأتصل بوالدتها، قامت مباشرة بالاعتذار، وهذا السلوك الإيجابي وردة الفعل المتعلقة بالاحترام كانت نتيجة مشاركتها في هذا البرنامج وعلى وجه الخصوص محاضرة (الاحترام) ضمن برنامج الخطوات الايجابية
الباحثة: من منحي اخر، هل لاحظت حصول تغيير في أداء الطالب الأكاديمي او التفاعل داخل الصف؟
المعلمة: اعتقد ان وقت تنفيذ البرنامج قصير جداً، لذلك، فان استكشاف الأثر على الجانب الأكاديمي غير ممكن في هذه الفترة. مع ذلك، فقد لاحظت ان الطلبة بشكل عام أكثر اندماجاً مع الحصة التدريسية ويعكسون الرغبة للتعلم والدافعية نحو الدرس بشكل اكبر مما كان قبل البرنامج
الباحثة: وماذا عن الجانب السلوكي؟ هل هناك فرق في الجانب السلوكي للطلبة؟
المعلمة: كما ذكرت في النقطة السابقة، هناك تغير في الجانب السلوكي لبعض الطالبات من حيث التعامل باحترام أكثر مع المعلمة، ومن حيث قلة المشاكل داخل الصف مع بقية الطلبة، مما أدى الى تحسن العلاقة بين الطالبات. ولكن في حال كان البرنامج أطول او تم اعطاؤنا الفرصة لتقييمه على مدى ابعده، من الممكن ان نكتشف اثراً اعمق على جوانب نفسية وسلوكية وتعليمية للطالبات
الباحثة: هل هناك مقترحات لتطوير البرنامج في المستقبل؟
المعلمة: اعتقد ان هناك حاجة لبرامج أطول وقتاً وتحتوي عدداً أكبر من الطلبة وتتضمن جميع الصفوف في المدرسة. من الممكن كذلك ان نضمن البرنامج داخل الصف
الباحثة: كيف يمكن تحقيق اهداف أكثر واقعية وفاعلية للطلبة؟
المعلمة: عن طريق اعطاءهم واجبات تتعلق بالقيم التي تعلموها حتى يستكشفوها بشكل اعمق ومن هذه الواجبات ان يتكلموا مع اخوتهم واخواتهم واقاربهم حول ما تعلموه في البرامج التعليمية التي تغطي الجانب النفسي والاجتماعي مثل هذا البرنامج
الباحثة: هل يمكنك تزويدنا بأفكار من واقع خبرتك العملية والميدانية؟
المعلمة: افكر ان يطبق البرنامج عن طريق إعطاء الطلبة قيمة معينة كل أسبوع ونشجعهم على اكتشاف هذه القيمة خلال الأسبوع ومن ثم عرضها على الطلبة في نهاية الأسبوع ليتشاركوا الفائدة المرجوة معاً
الباحثة: اشكرك جداً لهذه المشاركة المثمرة، وأتمنى لك المزيد من العطاء والتقدم، واذا كان لديك أي شيء تحبين ان تضيفيه تفضلتي
المعلمة: جزيل الشكر لك ولطاقم البرنامج وسعيدة بمشاركتي معكم

Researcher: Greetings, respectful teacher, thank you for participating in this research

Teacher: Thank you very much, glad to be part of this study

Researcher: First, I would like to explore what factors can contribute to the mental and behavioral health, and I will ask you some questions to explore these factors

Teacher: All right, God willing

Researcher: what are the main factors that can impact students' mental health and behaviours in your opinion?

Teacher: the main factors that have impact on students are; the academic performance, family relations and social relations, the student's view of herself, and her self-confidence. There are some students who refuse to participate in the lesson because they do not have the self-confidence that empower them and encourage their participation, and this can negatively impact their psychological health and positive interaction with those around them

Researcher: So, is there a relationship between psychological and behavioral health and students' academic performance?

Teacher: Sure

Researcher: Can you clarify that?

Teacher: Of course, I notice that my students act more efficiently when they feel appreciated and psychologically valued for their academic performance. In contrast, when the student feels that she is not performing her academic duties properly, she feels uncomfortable with a feeling that she is less than her classmates.

Researcher: Great, through your experience, how can students be helped to overcome difficulties/challenges?

Teacher: I think that one of the most important things that help the student to overcome most of the difficulties is the continues follow-up by the parents, the active social communication between the parents and the school, and the academic and psychological guidance for the student so that she feels supported and helped by everyone to prevent her from feeling neglected.

Researcher: What about the school community? Does it have a role in that?

Teacher: Sure, there is a role for psychological counselors in the school, where there is an urgent need to support female students in various social, educational and psychological aspects.

Researcher: Nice, thank you for the useful information, now we will move to another topic

Teacher: All right, God willing

Researcher: Do you feel that there is a benefit for social emotional programs or workshops in schools to improve students' performance and serve their psychological and social aspect?

Teacher: Of course, for me, I think that there is an urgent need for programs that serve the psychological and social aspect of students. Especially at this age, students need a lot of follow-up, advice and guidance.

Researcher: Do you think that there are programs dedicated to the social and psychological aspect in Qatar?

Teacher: Currently, we do not have any programs designed specifically for the psychological, social and cultural aspect of students. We are sure in need for such programs in Qatar.

Researcher: From your point of view, how do you evaluate the positive steps programme in this study? Is there a difference from a particular aspect in your opinion?

Teacher: I think that there is definitely an impact of the programme on the students, and this effect was particularly on the social aspect, especially the social behaviours, social relations with others, such as the value of respect.

Researcher: Can you give an example?

Teacher: For example, in one case, I told one of the students (from the group that participated in the research) who was suffering from some behavioural problems, that I would call her mother, she immediately apologized, and this positive behaviour and the reaction related to respect was the result of her participation in this program, specifically the lecture of (respect) within the positive steps program

Researcher: From another perspective, have you noticed a change in the student's academic performance or interaction in the classroom?

Teacher: I think the implementation time of the programme is very short, therefore, exploring the impact on the academic side is not possible at this time. However, I noticed that students in general are more engaged with the teaching and reflected levels of desires to learn and the motivation towards the lesson more than they were before the program

Researcher: What about the behavioural aspect? Is there a difference in the behavioral aspect of the students?

Teacher: As I mentioned in the previous point, there is a change in the behavioural aspect of some students in terms of dealing more respectfully with the teacher, and in terms of the lack of problems in the class with the rest of the students, which led to an improvement in the relationship between the students. But if the programme is longer or we are given the

opportunity to evaluate it on a longer term, it might be possible to discover a deeper impact on the psychological, behavioural and educational aspects of the students.

Researcher: Are there suggestions for developing social emotional programs in the future?

Teacher: I think there is a need for programs that are longer in time, have a larger number of students, and that include all grades in the school. It is also possible to include the programme in the classroom

Researcher: How can more realistic and effective goals be achieved for students?

Teacher: By giving students duties related to the values they have learned so that they can explore them more deeply. One of these duties is to talk to their brothers, sisters and relatives about what they have learned in educational programs that cover the psychological and social aspect such as this program

Researcher: Can you provide us with ideas based on your practical and field experience?

Teacher: I think that the programme should be implemented by giving students a certain value every week and encouraging them to discover this value during the week and then presenting it to the students at the end of the week to share the desired benefit together

Researcher: I would like to thank you very much for this informative participation, and I wish you more achievements and progress, and if you have anything you would like to add, please

Teacher: Thank you very much and for the program's staff, and I am happy to participate in this study.

Appendix C7- Teacher Interview thematic analysis

Theme	Categories	Sub-Categories	Exemplary quotes
Importance of SEL programme	Knowledge about SEL programmes	SEL is new in Qatar	<i>No specific or real interventions were conducted in our school or in the other school that I worked with before in Qatar</i>
		No previous participation in SEL	<i>I did not attend or participate in any workshop that is especially dedicated to students' social, emotional</i>

SEL impact according to teachers	Beliefs about the need of SEL programmes	The need for social emotional programme for adolescents	<i>These programmes are especially needed for students at this age because students are experiencing a transitional period from childhood to the teenage stage, and they need to learn how to be responsible, respectful and successful candidates.</i>
		SEL to empower students	<i>These programmes are needed to empower students while they are experiencing a transitional period from childhood to the teenage stage, and they need to learn how to be responsible, respectful and successful candidates.</i>
		SEL to implant social competencies	<i>I think that this programme is like planting a seed and leave it to grow- the impact can be immediate, or longer time effect will be shown at different life stages.</i>
	The available interventions in Qatar.	Lack of SEL interventions	There are no available structured programmes that address students' emotional needs from different dimensions; we really need these programmes in Qatar.
		How SEL might fit in the curriculum	I am sure that SEL interventions are essential and needed for our kids and there is a lack in such
	Teacher-student relationships.	SEL programme increased students' awareness of respect	<i>I feel that the programme had a positive impact on students' social skills, such as respect; for instance, in one incident; I told a student (from the intervention group) who was faced with behavioural issues that I will call her mother- she immediately apologized - this reaction was a result of the respect lecture that the student attended in this programme</i>
		Student's communication with the teacher	<i>I think that students are calmer, happier and ready to listen and to follow their teachers' instructions. This is one of the main differences that I noticed in this regard in the intervention group students</i>
	Student-student relationship	Dealing with others with respect	<i>Students learned how to respect others, and I have noticed that in their classroom behaviours, they used to be more aggressive, less respectful while now they</i>
		Less bullying issues	<i>I noticed that students are calmer, dealing with their peers in more positive attitudes and the number of conflict between students were significantly decreased.</i>
		Sharing the SEL experience with peers	<i>I noticed that they convey the information and the lessons learned to other students from the other classrooms that did not participate in the programme-</i>
Students' classroom behaviours	Motivation towards learning	<i>The programme effectively encouraged the majority of self-isolated and less-active students to be part of the classroom activities, participate, and express their feelings. I feel that students are better now in terms of their self-confidence levels, they are more responsible and that is reflected in their classroom behaviours.</i>	

		Students' engagement with the teacher	<i>I noticed a difference in students' behaviours, specifically towards their academic engagement. Before this programme, when I was asking questions in the classroom, the majority of students would not participate or share their thoughts; now, I noticed a significant improvement in their classroom engagement; they have the confidence to share their answers, thoughts and opinions regardless of whether</i>
Critical commentary - against SEL- no impact	There was no impact	No obvious outcomes	<i>I think that the programme had a positive impact on some areas; however, I did not notice a difference in students' relationship with their peers for me as a teacher.</i>
		Short time of implementation	<i>I think that there is a need for more frequent and longer-lasting programmes to achieve higher and more effective outcomes.</i>
		No impact on the academic dimension	<i>I am sure that the programme was a very good experience for each student, however, in terms of academic and classroom engagement, I think that students needed more sessions that focus on these dimensions. Thus, I do not think that I had observed significant changes in students' classroom behaviours or academics engagement after the programme.</i>

Appendices D

Appendix D-1: Template for Intervention Description and Replication (TIDieR) checklist

Item No	
Brief name:	
1	Provide the name or a phrase that describes the intervention

Item No	
	The Positive Steps, a Social Emotional Learning Intervention in schools' settings
Why :	
2	<p>Describe any rationale, theory, or goal of the elements essential to the intervention</p> <p>This intervention is designed based on Islamic concepts that aim to shape individuals' inner positive thinking towards the right direction in life, improve their social relations and enhance their motivation levels to achieve their best in this life. By improving these different competencies, this SEL programme's aims to improve students' wellbeing and mental health. Many research studies reported a direct relationship between social emotional competencies and positive mental health and wellbeing levels (Durlak et al., 2011; Payton et al., 2008). Therefore, the main objective of this programme is the development of students' inner capacities to be empowered to face different challenges and reach their success socially and academically.</p>
What:	
3	<p>Materials: Describe any physical or informational materials used in the intervention, including those provided to participants or used in intervention delivery or in training of intervention providers. Provide information on where the materials can be accessed (such as online appendix, URL)</p> <p>Students in the intervention group attended the positive steps programme. This intervention included eight weeks sessions by the programme's instructor. Each session was presented using PowerPoint presentations. These sessions included short videos to convey key messages of the session to students. In addition, the programme included set of real-life stories that were presented by the programme's instructor to achieve the set of social emotional-driven learning objectives.</p>
4	<p>Procedures: Describe each of the procedures, activities, and/or processes used in the intervention, including any enabling or support activities</p> <p>The positive steps programme's activities were implemented by a Qatari instructor who designed this programme. Each session was started with an ice breaker activity to engage students with the session. These activities included Q&A, short video clips and short stories related to the objectives of the session. Then, students were provided</p>

Item No	
	with the learning objectives, what they were going to explore and what were required from them during the sessions. During the session, the instructor started to explain the SEL skill of the day, how to apply it in students' everyday life and what is the importance of this skill in particular. Later, the instructor provided students with related videos to assist them in constructing their knowledge effectively . Each session was concluded with a short story and another Q&A activity.
Who provided	
5	<p>For each category of intervention provider (such as psychologist, nursing assistant), describe their expertise, background, and any specific training give</p> <p>The programme's instructor delivered all the sessions of the positive steps programme. As per the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Qatar, only qualified instructors can provide extra-curricular activities within school's settings. Therefore, the instructor of this programme was a qualified, master holder and a practitioner in the Qatari field of education.</p> <p>The programme's settings were organized by the students' academic advisor and learning specialist. In addition, the IT team were involved in the settings of laptop, voice, video and presentations' equipment. Furthermore, the class teachers of each group of the participating students were responsible for students' arrival the session, seating during the session and the leaving process.</p>
How	
6	<p>Describe the modes of delivery (such as face to face or by some other mechanism, such as internet or telephone) of the intervention and whether it was provided individually or in a group</p> <p>The positive steps programme sessions were held on weekly bases for eight weeks. These sessions were facilitated in a face to face approach to a group of 82 students in the school hall by the programme's instructor. The instructional approach was a deductive approach of teaching and students were engaged with the instructor.</p>
Where	
7	<p>Describe the type(s) of location(s) where the intervention occurred, including any necessary infrastructure or relevant features</p>

Item No	
	The intervention was implemented in the settings of a preparatory school for girls in Qatar. Students at year 7 were recruited randomly to serve as an intervention and a control groups. The majority of students were Qataris and the minority were non-Qataris. All students were Muslims and from Arabic backgrounds.
When and How Much	
8	<p>Describe the number of times the intervention was delivered and over what period of time including the number of sessions, their schedule, and their duration, intensity, or dose</p> <p>The programme was delivered one time a week for 8 weeks for one hour in the settings of the case study school. The sessions were scheduled and started by the 15th of September 2019 and were finished by the 15 of November 2021.</p>
Tailoring	
9	<p>If the intervention was planned to be personalised, titrated or adapted, then describe what, why, when, and how</p> <p>Not Applicable</p>
Modifications	
10	The SEL programme in this case study was not modified or changed. It was specifically designed by an educational specialist to target students' emotional and social needs at the age from (13-16). The only change within this study was the longitudinal evaluation of the programme's impact. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the evaluation of the intervention impact after the duration of 6 months were not possible.
How well	

Item No	
11	Planned: The SEL programme’s fidelity was assessed through structured observation for each of the eight sessions based on the SAFE model. This model refers to (Safe-Sequenced-Active and Explicit) approaches of instruction.
12*	Actual: The SEL programme in study was delivered according to the pre-planned objectives. The programme’s instructor delivered each session on weekly basis within a period of eight weeks. The programme’s objectives, approaches of instruction, duration, dosage and content were adhered to the programme’s initial plan.

Appendix D-2: Sample Session of the Positive Steps Programme

<p>Positive Steps Program Maximize Learning Center Doha-Qatar</p> <p>Instructor: Mrs. Noora Bu-Hindi</p> <p>Session title: Emotional Management and wellbeing</p> <p>Session duration: 1-2 hours</p> <p>Session objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable students to realize how the level of happiness can impact their life • To encourage students to realize their own emotions • To explore the term of wellbeing • To provide students with emotions management and positive thinking skills • To enable students to accept their negative feelings and deal with it in the appropriate approach <p>Session materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real life stories • Short video clips • Stories from Quraan and Hadith • Islamic concepts of wellbeing and happy life <p>Session description:</p> <p>This session is part of the positive steps programme course that includes 8 sessions provided one-hour a week. The sessions’ titles are: (1) Transforming Stress Into Resilience (2) Taking Responsibility (3) Focusing on Empowering Interpretations (4) Purpose in life (5) Creating</p>
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Meaningful relationships (6) Setting Goals (7) Spiritual life (8) Emotional management and wellbeing. This session is designed based on cultural, traditional and religious values in accordance with the Qatari community. The session consists of an ice- breaker video to bring students' attention to the session. Then, the instructor will provide students with examples of how to maintain life satisfaction and the how to deal with stressful situation and carry on to achieve their goals. In addition, skills of emotional management, positive thinking and stress management are provided to students. As this session is provided to students with an Islamic and Arabic background, the main stories, examples and values are derived from Quran and Hadith.

Session implementation:

- *Opening session* –The meaning of wellbeing, life satisfaction and happiness
- *Exercise 1* – Before exposure to the session, students will be given examples of positive feelings, negative feelings, and the impact on overall thinking
- *Discussion and presentation*- The instructor will give students focused and clear explanations of the concepts of wellbeing and positive emotions. This part of the session includes quotes from Quraan and Hadith that describe:

- The impact of faith on inner feelings
- The need to work on managing emotions
- The need to face challenges with positive energy
- Spreading happiness and hope to others is part of the Islamic aspects
- When you make someone happy, you will be rewarded with the same feeling
- Each individual is promised by God to have a happy life, as long as he/she is doing good for him/her-self and others
- Muslims need to be strong from inside and outside, to be supportive, to be humble and to assist anyone in need, in order to achieve the real happiness

- *Introduction to emotional management skills*- The strategies of emotional management are given to students as follows:

- Realizing the inner feelings
- Speaking with someone close to you
- Write down the negative feelings as an approach to remove them from the memory
- Consult you school psychologist
- Read Quraan and do the Islamic daily prayers
- Support others so you can gain the satisfaction of giving
- Take a break
- Do something that you like to do
- Appreciate all the blessings that you have and you might not realize
- Stop overthinking and focus on improving your self
- Be provide with your simplest achievements

Conclusion: the session will be wrapped up by repeating the objectives, summarizing the main points and asking students if they have any questions or concerns to share.

