

## **Teacher Education between Globalization and Traditionalism: The case of the Emirati Context of Abu Dhabi**

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This paper presents an interpretive pilot study on the perspectives of a range of Emirati teachers and a senior education leader in order to identify the reasons for the exceptionally high attrition rate of Emiratis in teaching profession in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. This problem takes place in a time of rapid social transition and under an Emiratization policy of employing locals as a crucial national need. It also takes place during a period of globalization where the educational system and teacher education is at the heart of a complex equation between embracing Western education and curriculum and Arab-Islamic beliefs, values and traditions, jealously preserved and very present in the Emirati societal edifice.

The interpretation and analysis of the data collected from semi structured in-depth interviews will provide answers to how the current situation affects the performance and the morale of Emirati teachers. It will shed light on readjustments to teacher education and the reconciliation between the various needs of the modern but conservative Emirati society and the external pressures brought to bear on it through globalization.

This qualitative research is considered within a multidisciplinary theoretical framework, which will inform the many facets of the study:

Based on the personal views, experience and perspectives of the participants the study is hermeneutic as it interprets meaning. Being a study on teachers and teachers' education it will stand on Freire's (2005) theory of teachers as cultural workers, Cochran-Smith's (2008) theory on teacher education and English's (2008) work on educational leadership.

This paper will also consider on one hand the social perspective of the research questions referring to Habermas's (1976) critical theory of society; and the globalization and western influence on imported education through the lenses of Huntington's (1996) and Said's (1993) work on globalization and new world order.

The research questions are: what are the reasons behind the high attrition of Emirati teachers from the teaching field? What can be the consequences of this high attrition on the future generations and the Emirati society? and How can the nation leadership help improve this critical situation?

The first section of the research paper will present the Emirati context with a focus on the social, cultural and the political leadership profile (Al Suweidi, 2011 & Rugh, 2007) this will help set the background of the study and help the interpretation of the research findings within this specific context.

The second section will examine the interpretation of the data collected from the interviews and compare it to the findings of similar studies in other countries (Billingsley,2007; ChangYing, 2007; Kelly, 2004; Ndoye,, Imig & Parker, 2010).

The third section will examine the possible readjustments to teacher education and suggest solutions based on studies conducted in similar context and informed by the research participants.

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