

A Future Vision for Child Education in the UAE

Mohammad Salman AlKhaza'leh¹, Bilal Fayiz Obeidat², Samer Abdel-Hadi³, Reema Al-Qaruty⁴

Abstract

This study aims to envision an approach to the upbringing and education of children in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Using research methods, we explore key questions regarding the future of education;

What are the core principles that should guide education in the future?

What are the most important goals for developing Emirati children in the future?

How will Emirati Child Schools evolve in the first century?

Our study emphasizes the principle of "Humanity," which includes values like openness, comprehensiveness, balance, accumulation, flexibility, appropriateness (PRIVACY) and AWALO. We also highlight key objectives for nurturing children in the future;

Respecting and upholding childrens universal rights.

Encouraging childrens sense of achievement and independence.

Fostering self awareness among children.

Strengthening their sense of belonging and social identity.

Developing their sensibility to adapt to change.

Cultivating adaptability to changing circumstances.

Nurturing creativity in children.

Raising awareness about citizenship, among children.

Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of implementing a "self-education" approach in Emirati Child Schools for the first century. This approach aims to empower students with skills and abilities such as;

Fostering critical thinking abilities among students.

Providing scientific thinking training to students.

Achieving a balance between individualism and teamwork.

Cultivating values in young minds.

Preparing students for constructive participation.

Encouraging students to evaluate their progress.

Developing thinking planning skills, in students.

Enhancing information acquisition skills in students.

Ensuring proficiency in foreign languages among students.

Developing adeptness in utilizing technology and modern learning media.

Offering adaptable curricula that reflect changes and scientific advancements.

Preserving and honouring cultural identity.

Pioneering novel roles for teachers in the future.

Preparing students for comprehensive and specialized paths.

Providing training in future-oriented thinking to students.

¹ Al Ain University, Al Ain, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. E-mail: mohammad.alkhazaleh@aau.ac.ae Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2826-9127>

² Al Ain University, Al Ain, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. E-mail: bilal.obeidat@aau.ac.ae Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1527-3349>

³ Assistant Professor College of Education, Al Ain University, United Arab Emirates, ORCID NO: 0000-0002-4111-0084

⁴ Assistant Professor, General Requirements, University of Dubai, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. ORCID NO: 0000-0003-2128-2580

Introduction

The educational philosophy in the UAE is deeply rooted in the consolidation of religious principles, as well as the promotion of human values and freedoms. It also places great importance on fostering Arab unity. Various factors have contributed to the adoption of this philosophy. Consequently, the overarching objectives of education are dedicated to preparing citizens who hold steadfast beliefs, loyalty to their ruler, country, and nation.

Looking towards the future, the UAE is committed to providing its citizens with education and equipping them with scientific knowledge and modern technology. This forward-looking perspective stems from the nation's aspiration to become a hub of modern trade in the region. To realize this vision, the UAE has undertaken an ambitious plan to comprehensively modernize its economy and society. The integration of information and communication technology across all educational and professional domains is a central part of this plan. The country views its vast opportunities and knowledge as invaluable national assets, empowering individuals to contribute to building a sustainable, knowledge-based economy. This approach seeks to elevate the standard of living for all citizens, while concurrently providing a secure means to address future challenges. As a result, the UAE aims to establish itself among the ranks of developed and progressive nations, exporting distinguished human competencies capable of regional and global competition. The pursuit of this vision has given rise to several initiatives designed to advance the process of educational development.

Key aspects of these initiatives include promoting lifelong education to align with national economic development, ensuring access to modern information and communication technologies, elevating the quality of learning experiences, and enhancing the overall educational system. The underlying concept of future education embodies a civilized development project that embodies universality. It is characterized by fostering the individual's self-awareness, nurturing a sense of accomplishment and control, reinforcing a sense of belonging, refining aesthetic sensibilities, and instilling adaptability to change and creativity. Additionally, it seeks to awaken a sense of global citizenship that strives for a harmonious balance between the individual's inner world and the external world (Al-Khazaaleh, 2012).

Study Questions:

This research aims to address the following key questions:

What are the fundamental principles that should govern education for the future?

What are the primary objectives and goals in raising Emirati children to thrive in the future?

What constitutes the future vision for Emirati Child Schools in the twenty-first century?

Hypothesis:

The underlying hypothesis of this study is predicated on the imperative for Emirati schools to embrace continual development and dedicated efforts in fostering educational human development that bridges the scientific gap with the global landscape.

Importance of the Study:

The significance of this study lies in its ability to elucidate the extent to which current Emirati schools rely on traditional knowledge paradigms and the ensuing transition towards more advanced scientific thought. This paradigm shift necessitates a reconfiguration of the roles of both students and teachers, curricular design, and teaching methodologies aimed at cultivating critical thinking and nurturing the future generation.

Methodology:

To explore the theoretical dimensions of future education encompassing its goals and principles, along with the evolving prospects of Emirati education, and the role of schools in nurturing human capital, the researchers have chosen a qualitative approach characterized by "theoretical information collection." This methodology facilitates an in-depth examination and interpretation of the multifaceted aspects surrounding the envisaged educational landscape for the future.

First: Principles of Education for the Future:

Humanity:

The principle of humanity stands as a paramount tenet in shaping education for the future. Rooted in individual development, these principles emphasize the unique cognitive distinctions that set human beings apart. It demonstrates a humanitarian outlook, safeguarding the fundamental dimensions of human rights encompassing survival, growth, and protection. Furthermore, it exhibits concern for specific groups, such as the gifted and disadvantaged, thus encompassing all segments of society.

Openness:

Embracing openness as a fundamental principle, future education aims to transcend isolation by engaging with global experiences and diverse cultures. This approach encourages active interaction with the world, attuning individuals to the spirit of the age and the myriad information it offers.

Comprehensive Awareness:

Education for the future mandates comprehensiveness, encompassing the entirety of an individual's physical, mental, and social aspects. Rejecting a narrow focus, it encompasses political, economic, cultural, social, psychological, and educational dimensions in its pursuit of holistic development.

Balance:

At the core of educational principles, the notion of balance commands attention. It advocates for a multifaceted approach that ensures no aspect of an individual's development is overshadowed by others. Striving for equilibrium between physical and mental growth, inner and outer worlds, these principles foster a sense of harmony and contentment.

Accumulation:

The principle of accumulation adopts a positive and sophisticated orientation, seeking to create desired futures based on the promotion of constructive values. By highlighting positive foundations, this principle envisions a world that thrives on technological advancements, societal progress, and the influence of human endeavours. It empowers individuals with choices in thinking, emotions, and actions, propelling them to shape a future that aligns with their aspirations.

Flexibility:

Education for the future acknowledges the necessity of adaptability and civilizational renewal to synchronize with changing times and evolving societal needs. Resisting rigidity and stagnation, it embraces dynamic approaches to learning, aligning with the fluid nature of the contemporary era.

Privacy:

Considering the essence of society's heritage, nature, and aspirations, the principle of privacy underlines the significance of respecting cultural distinctiveness. Education for

the future takes into account the unique attributes of each society, nurturing a sense of identity and safeguarding privacy while advancing human development.

Symmetry:

The concept of symmetry envisions recurring patterns in incidents, emphasizing the cyclical nature of certain phenomena over time. These principles acknowledge the inherent predictability in certain aspects of human experiences, providing insights into shaping educational strategies that recognize patterns and embrace informed decisions.

In summary, the principles of education for the future embody a humanitarian approach, global openness, comprehensive awareness, balanced growth, positive accumulation, adaptability, cultural sensitivity, and a nuanced understanding of recurring patterns. By adhering to these principles, education activities to shape individuals capable of navigating an ever-changing world and contributing to the betterment of society. (Education Forum in the Jordan of the Future, 2002).

Second: Objectives of Raising Emirati Children for the Future:

Respecting Children's Rights:

A critical objective in nurturing Emirati children for the future revolves around safeguarding their human rights, ensuring their basic needs are met, and preserving their inherent dignity. Recognizing the pivotal role of rights preservation, this objective underscores that children's ability to innovate and achieve is continuing on a nurturing environment that respects their fundamental rights. (Trustworthy, 2002)

Respecting Child's Sense of Achievement and Control:

An essential aspiration for the future man lies in achieving the developmental aspirations of the society through productive work and fruitful accomplishments. Aspiring for a future education that aligns with these visions, this objective emphasizes the integration of realistic perspectives and data-driven approaches in pursuit of these development goals. (Al-Hardan, 2001)

Raising Child Awareness:

This goal aims to cultivate a child's sense of self-reliance, encouraging the adoption of a self-referential framework that fosters feelings of adequacy and independence. By promoting self-awareness, curiosity, and experimentation, this objective empowers children to interact confidently with their external surroundings. It encompasses the child's discovery of their bodily sensations, emotions, and cognitive processes, enabling them to express their feelings and form a conscience while becoming aware of their social identity and dimensions. (Education Forum in the Jordan of the Future, 2002)

Reinforcing Belonging and Social Identity:

Crucial in the education for the future project is the goal of strengthening Emirati children's connection to their rich Arab roots. As globalization underscores the imperative of firmly establishing cultural roots, this objective becomes pivotal in preserving the child's sense of belonging. It initiated with the exploration of their family identity, gradually encompassing a broader sense of national identity. Cultural media play a crucial role, indirectly enhancing the child's sense of belonging through the utilization of language, clothing styles, cultural occasions, holidays, and historical heroes. (Education Forum in the Jordan of the Future, 2002).

Refining the Child's Aesthetic Sense:

Enhancing the child's aesthetic sense becomes paramount in the future. Encouraging a balanced appreciation of their inner world and the surrounding universe, this objective aims to foster a universal language of aesthetic expression shared between the child and other human beings. Emphasizing artistic expression as a means of communication, this

goal seeks to refine the child's aesthetic sensibilities, contributing to their holistic development.

Getting the Child Used to Adapting with Change:

The future human being must be equipped with high-level skills and capabilities to effectively navigate the challenges of the dynamic and technologically driven future. This objective emphasizes achieving a harmonious balance between the individual and their environment, arming children with adaptability as they face the uncertainties of the future. By nurturing resilience and agility, this goal prepares children to confront and embrace the inevitable changes brought about by rapidly advancing informatics. (Education Forum in the Jordan of the Future, 2002)

Developing Child Creativity:

Numerous studies investigating the impact of family socialization methods on a child's creativity have highlighted certain stimuli that foster creative development. These methods include encouraging independence, nurturing imaginative thinking, granting freedom for decision-making, and providing an environment devoid of coercion and oppression, as creativity diminishes in the absence of respect for the child's rights (Pleasure, 2000).

Awakening Human Awareness and Citizenship:

A fundamental tenet of future education is to embed the human dimension in its content, objectives, and methods, encompassing a profound concern for environmental preservation amid the global threat of pollution. In this context, current education strives to instil in children a sense of continuous cleanliness from their homes to schools, towns, and beyond, ultimately extending it to safeguarding the global environment. Future education aspires to realize a pollution-free world and cultivate a sense of belonging and responsibility in individuals toward the environment. To achieve this, kindergarten curricula should incorporate activities fostering global citizenship awareness.

Within this global perspective of future education, individuals are nurtured to embrace openness, reject fanaticism, isolationism, and racism, transcending artificial boundaries. This worldview is driven by several justifications outlined by Becker (1997):

Emphasizing the unity amidst the diversity of the global community.

Ensuring the survival of the human species.

Enhancing the diversity of human life on Earth.

Recognizing that the fate of the world's peoples is interconnected.

Assuming responsibility towards future generations to inherit a sustainable planet, preserving its time and resources.

Upholding the rights of individuals.

Striving for global peace and security.

Incorporating these principles in future education paves the way for the emergence of individuals who are conscious global citizens, driven by a profound commitment to preserving the planet and fostering harmonious coexistence among diverse cultures and societies.

Third: The Future Vision of the Emirati Child School in the Twenty-First Century

The future vision of the Emirati Child School in the twenty-first century is centered around the goal of providing high-quality education through forward-thinking educational institutions with clear educational objectives aimed at achieving excellence in academic outcomes. The overarching aim is to equip students with the essential skills required for success in the dynamic landscape of the twenty-first century.

Implementation of Self-Education Methodology:

The Emirati Child School embraces the self-education approach, emphasizing the cultivation of students' ability to become autonomous learners rather than relying solely on traditional rote memorization and passive learning. By imparting self-education skills, the school empowers students to continue acquiring knowledge and learning even after their formal schooling years.

Fostering Critical Thinking Skills:

Critical thinking is prioritized within the school's curriculum, with a focus on developing students' ability to utilize reasoning and deduction methods to arrive at logical conclusions and sound judgments when confronted with various situations and challenges (Johar, 2008).

Cultivating Scientific Thinking Competence:

The school places significant emphasis on honing students' problem-solving abilities through a systematic and scientifically-driven approach. By training students in sound scientific thinking, with an emphasis on logical processes and rigorous exercises, the school equips them to make well-informed decisions when confronted with diverse situations.

Striking a Balance Between Individual and Teamwork:

An important facet of the school's educational vision involves instilling in students the value of productive collaboration within cohesive teams. While encouraging individual growth and potential, the school also emphasizes the importance of teamwork, ensuring that students develop the ability to strike a harmonious balance between working independently and thriving in a collaborative environment.

Through the implementation of these principles, the Emirati Child School aspires to provide an educational experience that prepares students to excel academically and thrive in an ever-evolving world, equipping them with the necessary skills and competencies to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. with confidence and capability.

Fostering Democratic Values in Students:

The Emirati Child School places a strong emphasis on instilling democratic principles in its students. Through a comprehensive approach, the school cultivates in its students the skills of embracing and constructively critiquing differing perspectives, promoting respect for others' opinions, and fostering an ethos of tolerance, thereby nurturing democratic values among the student body.

Preparing Students for Active Participation:

With a commitment to promoting holistic development, the school optimizes its educational approach by reducing excessive academic workloads, allowing students the opportunity to actively engage in various school activities. By addressing negative attitudes that may hinder participation, the school seeks to empower students to actively contribute to the school community and beyond.

Encouraging Self-Evaluation:

The school promotes a culture of self-evaluation among its students, providing them with the experience of assessing and critiquing various aspects of their educational journey. Through this process, students develop their ability to evaluate the quality of the school's services and educational experiences they encounter.

Developing Future Planning Skills:

A key focus of the school is to develop students' ability to plan for their future. By training students in decision-making, setting goals, and devising strategies to achieve

these objectives within defined timeframes, the school equips students with essential life-planning skills.

Enhancing Information Acquisition Skills:

The school places a premium on honouring students' information acquisition capabilities. By guiding students to discern reliable sources of information and teaching them how to effectively utilize and benefit from gathered information, the school aims to foster information literacy.

Mastering of Foreign Languages:

Recognizing the importance of proficiency in foreign languages in an increasingly interconnected world, the school ensures that students attain mastery in a foreign language that facilitates their absorption of modern technology and global communication.

Embracing Technology and Modern Learning Media:

The school equips its students with vital skills to harness modern learning media and technology, going beyond mere consumption to become both producers and consumers of knowledge. By nurturing creativity through technology integration (Scott, 2007), the school prepares students to be adaptable and innovative contributors in a rapidly evolving society.

Through the implementation of these strategic objectives, the Emirati Child School endeavours to empower its students with the necessary competencies and dispositions to excel in an ever-changing world while embodying democratic values, technological prowess, and an enduring commitment to personal growth and societal progress.

Tailoring Adaptive Curricula to Foster Scientific Progress:

The educational institution employs an engaging and permanent curricula designed to equip students for the dynamic landscape of the twenty-first century. These curricula strike a harmonious balance between theoretical knowledge and practical applications, thus preparing students for the evolving demands of modernity.

Safeguarding Cultural Identity:

While embracing advancements in science and technology, the educational system remains steadfast in safeguarding and preserving cultural identity. Recognizing the potential risks of a society solely reliant on scientific progress, the education system assumes the crucial responsibility of preserving cultural heritage without succumbing to isolation and regressive tendencies.

Redefining Roles of Future Educators:

The paradigm shifts in learning methodologies and the demands of the twenty-first century necessitate the emergence of new roles for educators. These roles encompass several vital functions, including: a) discerning students' inclinations and aptitudes, b) nurturing problem-solving skills and adaptability, c) equipping students with technological proficiency for real-world application, and d) transforming into active facilitators who foster Continuous interaction and engagement with students, transcending the traditional role of mere knowledge transmitters. Furthermore, educators actively pursue their own learning and professional development, exemplifying continuous improvement (Zhao, 2005).

Balancing Comprehensive and Specialized Preparation:

The educational milieu strikes a judicious equilibrium between comprehensive education and specialized training, strategically aligning with the demands of the workforce and the swiftly evolving career landscape. Students are holistically nurtured while simultaneously receiving specialized instruction tailored to their chosen career paths.

Cultivating Forward-Thinking Mind-set:

The educational system enables students to play a meaningful and constructive role in shaping the future. Teachers play a pivotal role in painting positive visions of their students' potential future contributions, inspiring proactive participation in shaping their destinies. This approach empowers students to identify, nurture, and actualize their own aspirations, thereby fostering an engaged and forward-thinking citizenry, well-prepared to steer their future with a sense of purpose and conviction.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the vision for raising the future generation is rooted in an inclusive and transformative educational approach. As scientific progress continues to shape the world, education becomes a vital tool in providing individuals with opportunities for a dignified and prosperous life. The education of the future embraces a strong moral foundation, aiming to nurture generations with values of peace and tolerance, fostering a unified global community.

Key characteristics of future education lie in its creativity and adaptability to the rapidly changing world, embracing scientific and technological advancements. It equips future generations with a wealth of accumulated knowledge, empowering them to confront challenges, solve problems, and navigate the uncertainties of their personal and professional lives.

Moreover, education for the future is expected to be diverse and accommodating, recognizing cultural, social, professional, and sectarian differences. It emphasizes individual-centered learning, catering to different types of intelligences, nurturing personal strengths, and fostering a sense of efficiency and community service.

The school of the future strives to instil a forward-thinking mind-set, preparing individuals to confront economic, social, and global challenges, while preserving cultural heritage and embracing the promises of technology and future studies. This educational philosophy fosters creativity, innovation, and excellence, leading the UAE towards a new era of learning in the twenty-first century. It seeks to establish a profound connection between the UAE's illustrious past and the promising future, achieved through an education system that rises to meet challenges and catalyses remarkable achievements.

In conclusion, education stands as the cornerstone of progress and miracles for the UAE, propelling the nation towards a brighter future and a renewed civilization that echoes the brilliance of its heritage and embraces the possibilities of tomorrow. The journey towards a new age of learning, enriched by creativity and adaptability, is the transformative path to overcome challenges and shaped a remarkable destiny for the UAE and its future generations.

References

- Al-Hardan, Abdel Aziz (2001) *School of the Future*, Education Bureau for the Gulf States.
- Al-Khazaleh, Muhammad Salman (2012). *The development of educational thought*, Dar Safaa for publishing and distribution, Amman, Jordan.
- Al-Surour, Nadia, (2000) *An Introduction to Creativity*, Amman, Dar Wael for Publishing and Distribution.
- Education Forum in Jordan of the Future (2002) *Towards a future vision for the educational system in Jordan*, Jordanian Research and Development Department.
- Gohar, Ali Saleh, (2008) *Reflections of contemporary challenges on education in the Arab world*, Al-Asriyyah Library, Mansoura, Egypt.

- Mutman, Emad Al-Din, (2002) Towards a future vision for the educational system in Jordan, The Teacher's Message, Volume (41), Number (1), Amman, Jordan.
- Scott, C. (2007) "learning for the future; developing information services in an Australian School" in school libraries worldwide, VOL. Z, NO. 1.
- Zhao's, y.o. (2005) "toward the school of the future: An exploration of primary and secondary models of education" in Chinese education and society, VoL. 27, no. 1, Jan.
- Bearer, H. (2005) Education for the twenty-first century, Rutledge, New York.