

**IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**

MASTER THESIS

**THE INFLUENCE OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS'
WESTERN CULTURE ON EGYPTIAN MUSLIM
STUDENT IDENTITY**

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THESIS SUPERVISOR

PROF. ALEV ERKİLET

ISTANBUL, 2022

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by

NEVEEN FATHY MOHAMED ABOUELDAHAB

**A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in
Sociology**

**THESIS SUPERVISOR
PROF. ALEV ERKİLET**

ISTANBUL, 2022

APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of in Sociology.

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This is to confirm that this thesis complies with all the standards set by the School of Graduate Studies of Ibn Haldun University.

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ÖZ

ULUSLARASI OKUL BATILI KÜLTÜRÜNÜN MİSİRLİ MÜSLÜMAN
ÖĞRENCİ KİMLİĞİNE ETKİSİ

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Bu çalışma, uluslararası eğitim sisteminin Mısırlı Müslüman öğrencilerin dinsel kimlik ve kimlik üzerindeki etkisini incelemektedir. İngilizce eğitim veren uluslararası okullara katılmak son yıllarda Mısır'da dikkat çeken bir durum haline geldi. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda, kimlik geliştirme süreci ile batılı okul kültürü arasındaki ilişkiyi inceler. Bu durumun incelenebilmesi için saha çalışması yapılmalıdır. Bu çalışmada, farklı veri toplama teknikleri, detaylı görüşmeler ve katılımcı gözlemleri kullanıldı. Bu çalışmaya farklı uluslararası okullarda bulunan öğretmen, öğrenci ve velilerden oluşan 31 katılımcı dahil edildi. Elde edilen verilere göre kimlik, eğitim ve kültür ile dinamik bir biçimde etkileşim halindedir. Bu çalışmada, uluslararası batı okul kültürünün, öğrencileri yerel kültürlerine sınırlı maruz kalmalarının etkisi ile aşırı derecede batı kültürüne maruz bırakarak yerel kültürlerinden uzaklaştırdığı öne sürülmüştür. Bu çalışmanın bulgularından biri, öğrencinin kimlik geliştirme sürecinin ve dini kimlik oluşumunun engellendiği yönündedir. Bunun yanı sıra, öğrencilerin yerel kimliklerini korumalarının zorlaşmaktadır. Ek olarak, Literatür bulguları öğrencilerin batı okul kültürüne yoğun bir biçimde maruz kalmaları ve İslami eğitime sınırlı bir eğilimle, İngilizce kullanımının okullarda Arapçadan daha yaygın olması, öğrencilerin dini kimliklerini oluşturma sürecini engellediği öne sürülmektedir. Bunun sonucu olarak, öğrencilerin kimlik oluşturma sürecinde istikrarsızlığa ve dinsel kimlik oluşturma sürecinde bozukluklara neden olduğu görülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Batı Kùltürü, Din, Dinsel Kimlik, Mısır, Uluslararası Okul, Yabancılaşma.



ABSTRACT

THE INFLUENCE OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS' WESTERN CULTURE ON EGYPTIAN MUSLIM STUDENT IDENTITY

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This study examines the influence of the international education system on Egyptian Muslim student particularly in terms of their religious identity. Studying in international schools that provide English-medium education is an increasingly prevalent aspiration in Egypt in recent years. This study examines the relationship between the identity development process and such schools' Western culture. To be able to examine the question empirically, I have conducted fieldwork using in-depth interviews and participant observation. 31 participants were included in this study—parents, teachers, and students who were attending different international schools. The data I obtained indicates that identity dynamically interacts with education and culture. The subculture of international schools is found to be heavily influenced by Western culture. The limited exposure of students to their local culture, compared to the Westernized one they are exposed to at school, results in alienation from their local culture. Such alienation was found to hinder students' identity development process as well as the formation of their religious identity. In fact, as I demonstrate in this thesis, students struggle to maintain their local identity. The literature suggests that students' experience of excessive exposure to such schools' Western culture and use of English language significantly more than Arabic language, combined with limited exposure to Islamic education has led to a significant dysfunction in their religious identity formation process. Hence, their identity as Muslims is found to be unstable.

Keywords: Alienation, Egypt, International schools, religion, religious identity, Western culture.



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

In fact, however, each society, considered at a given stage of development, has a system of education which exercises an irresistible influence on individuals.

Durkheim 1956, 65.

It's above all as a sociologist that I shall speak to you of education.

Durkheim 1956, 28.

Students often represent their identity of the community they belong to and where they come from. Which is represented by the language, religion and local culture. For some occasions, this is not always being the case for instance when students are excessively exposed to a different culture, in the case of my study, Western culture, more than the local culture. Practicing foreign language (English language) more than their native language (Arabic language). This is where the influence of international schools' Western culture occurs.

In this study I specifically focus on students speaking, reading and writing in a foreign language, that is, English) more than their native language. The effects of Western culture, found in international schools that I focus on, can therefore be understood by observing and analysing the school environment.

This study examines the influence of the social environments of English-medium international schools on Egyptian Muslim students' identity and religious identity. I chose the older students, between grade levels 9 to 12 (who were aged between 12 and 16 years). I worked as a volunteer instructor in an after-school activity. While engaged in the activity with students, I observed their attitudes and behaviours, which I noticed were closer to Western attitudes with a noticeable deficiency of local cultural attitudes. Even when they spoke Arabic, they included English words in their daily interactions. In addition to that, they expressed pride in being able to

read and write in English more than in Arabic. Their interests appeared to converge on Western-style school events and Western fashion trends. They expressed a greater desire for Western culture. The common thing among these students was that they all were in international schools.

Egypt is an Arab Muslim country and the Arabic language is the dominant language in the society. In recent years, however, a relatively high level of exposure of Egyptian society to Western culture compared to the local and Islamic has become an increasingly widespread phenomenon. As a result, students have established their own social community where they can interact in social activities within a Western-style environment, including using more English than Arabic. Thus, I argue, causes them to feel alienated in their local society. In addition to that their struggle to maintain their local identity. Hogg and Abrams have argued that “In social identity theory, a social identity is a person's knowledge that he or she belongs to a social category or group” (Stets and Burke, 2000). In general, one's identities are composed of the self-views that emerge from the reflexive activity of self-categorization or identification in terms of membership in particular groups or roles. However, students tend to be confused when they face a different culture (Western culture) as they are influenced to accommodate and adopt the colonial language and its culture into their sense of identity and this leads to uncertainty.

These observations triggered my curiosity to investigate this topic. I continued observing the community around me to get knowledge and become more aware of the issue. I casually had some discussions with friends and family members to examine if the issue exists a large scale or on only a small scale. Most of the people I talked to seemed to affirm the problem, which motivated me to investigate it in this thesis. My observations seemed to be confirmed when I approached some young and adult students to enquire about their school, and they proudly answered by emphasizing the word “international”, prior to stating the actual name of the school. This appears to reflect the problem in terms of the young Egyptians’ desire to associate themselves with “international” or Western concepts more than local concepts.

Further to these observations, I began to examine the problem in-depth through the existing literature in order to understand the nature and form of the Western culture in these international schools, along with its impact on a student's local identity and religious identity.

1.2. What Is the Influence of International Schools?

Prior to understanding the influence of international schools on Muslim students' identity within Egypt, I will begin by considering the role of international schools in general. In terms of schools' extracurricular activities including events and ceremonies, social life within the school, language and religious orientation and acts of worship. I examine student identity by exploring identity and religious identity. Before going further, let me outline the theories that have been crucial to my study.

Fanon's theory about colonization and post-colonization trauma, Erikson's identity theory and Durkheim's contributions to education and sociology helped me to delve in and investigate the relationship between identity, culture and education. To examine the problem, fieldwork was conducted using in-depth interviews and participant observations. 31 participants were interviewed, including parents, teachers and high-school students. Questions this study is attempting to answer revolve around three aspects: First, schools' Western culture and its influence on student's identity. Second, the effect of the hegemony of the English language in the school system and its influence on both student's native language and student's local identity. Third, the extent to which Westernization of Egyptian society has an effect on Muslim student identity development process.

Interviews with parents, students, and teachers revealed the existence of the problem and these interviews were essential to the formulation of the research topic. The initial data gathering uncovered that issue has two attributes: the first is related with the history of modern Egypt and the other is related to the motives and reasons behind the wide reach of this phenomenon. Therefore, this study will examine the impact of modernization and Westernization on Egyptian society. In addition to that, this research will demonstrate the different types of schooling systems of Egypt. In order to investigate the process of Western culture's penetration of the Egyptian education

system represented by these international schools, we should examine the root of the problem.

Thus, this research focuses on the relationship between Western type-education and identity and religious identity. This study will give insights into the historical background of Egyptian education system through an analysis of the cultural transformation from the era of Mohamed Ali pasha (1805-48) until the contemporary era. However, the significant influence of Western culture beginning during Egypt's colonization continues in the post-colonial period. Fanon eloquently addresses the issue by saying:

“All colonized people, in other words, people in whom an inferiority complex has taken root, whose local cultural originality has been committed to the grave position themselves in relation to the civilizing language; i.e., the metropolitan culture” (Fanon 2008, p.2).

On the other hand, the empirical data shows the students who are enrolled in the international education system and trying to adapt their identities to cope with the ideological differences that the school cultivates. The demand of enrolling Egyptian students in international schools has increased in the twenty-first century. With the massive increase in the number of international schools in Egypt, which are said to provide high quality education and deemed the gateway to better future careers, an enormous change can be observed. Consequently, most of the upper-middle class and elites are doing their best to enrol their children in international schools. In turn, graduates of these international schools become the elite and influencers of Egyptian society.

International schools are of different types in Egypt: American, British, French, and German, with licenses and certification programmes from different foreign institutions. Our primary focus will be on American and British institutions as they are the majority in Egypt. Another factor considered in this study is the family pressure on children to get education in international schools.

Considering all these factors mentioned above, I argue that the international schools in Egypt obstruct Muslim students' identity development process. It does so by alienating students from their local identity and religious identity, causing students to show instability towards their identity.

1.3. Significance of the Study

This study focuses on identity and religious identity issues, thus it targeted students in high school, grades levels 9 through 12, as the identity development process becomes an issue in adolescence. As Erikson (1968) pointed out, "Identity ... is as unfathomable as it is all-pervasive. It deals with a process that is located both in the core of the individual and in the core of the communal culture. As the culture changes, new kinds of identity questions arise." (Erikson).

By documenting how schools play a fundamental role in shaping student identity and its impact on religious identity, this study seeks to draw wider social attention to redress young Egyptians' alienation. One way to address this would be for international schools to adopt more elements consistent with local identity and religious identity.

There are two main reasons for choosing this topic. First, as I can see in the society around me, new generations adopt Western culture more than local culture. For instance, their use of Arabic language has suffered, and many of the daily words are being replaced by Western or English words. This phenomenon arguably not only devitalizes local identity but even more, it imperils religious identity as the Western lifestyle found within these schools promotes secular values. The second reason is, as I clarified above, as an observer who observed student's attitudes in the field, having a close interaction with them enables me to know about their tendency to be attracted more to Western- style, more than local-style.

To date, few studies have been conducted concerning the relationship between education and identity and religious identity. Moreover, very little attention has been given to the student identity and the schools' Western culture specifically.

In the following review of the literature, Durkheim's (1956) sociological analysis of education, Erikson's (1986) theorization of identity formation, and Fanon's (2008) discussion about colonization will be presented. Later, the paper will describe the parents' anxieties between providing and ensuring the best quality of education and developing their children's identity and religious identity. Further, I expand the investigation of local identity to include religious identity and the identity-formation process. I use social identity theory, cultural alienation and language acquisition using Guitart's theory (2019) of the relationship between education and the identity-formation process.

Thus, for a significant discussion of the topic, I will first outline a literature review in chapter one following which in the second chapter, I will present and elaborate the impact of modernization and Westernization on Egyptian society and the education system in Egypt. In the third chapter, I will explain the methodology. The last chapter will provide a conclusion.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The Interrelationships between Identity, Language and Religion

Education plays a fundamental socio-cultural role in developing student identity. Durkheim argued that each society is responsible for determining the suitable education that should be provided to its people (Durkheim 1956). He states: “In fact, however, each society, considered at a given stage of development, has a system of education which exercises an irresistible influence on individuals” (Durkheim 1956, 56). In the same vein, Fanon (2008) makes a significant argument regarding learning the language of the colonizer and its effect on culture and identity. Fanon diagnosed how it affects identity and individual’s self-acceptance.

In this chapter, I will explain Durkheim's (1956) contributions to the sociology of education and moral education. I contrast these with Fanon’s theories of colonization from the book *Black Skin, White Masks* (2008). Finally, I will elaborate on the identity formation process using Erikson’s theories of identity. I use Smith’s (2007) definitions of culture to elaborate.

The following part will investigate the factors that affect a student's culture and identity by demonstrating and discussing different studies of the students' attitudes while markedly exposed to Western culture and English language. This part of the thesis aims to investigate the relationship between culture, education, identity, and religious identity deeply. I do this through an elaboration of theories of different scholars and contrasting them with previous studies on the relationship between education and identity. I begin with the definition of culture, followed by the definition of identity and religious identity. The second aim of this chapter is to show the link between education and identity. To do so, Durkheim’s theory of education (1956) and Guitart’s theory of the interrelationship between education and identity (2019) have been

applied. Following this is a discussion of cultural alienation by explicating the theory of alienation. The last section in this chapter will discuss the interrelationship between language acquisition and identity formation.

2.2. Culture

Smith offered different definitions of culture from different scholars. Culture is defined as all means of life that have been determined by society (Smith 2007, 1-27). Culture, according to Tylor, is the combination of knowledge, morals, and customs (Smith 2007). For Keller, culture is a shared way of life by individuals within a certain society, in terms of mode of thinking which appears in religion, language and customs (Robert 1976, in Smith 2007, 1-27). On the other hand, Geertz said that culture is the transferred heritage of meanings, systems and attitudes by ancestors (1973, in Smith 2007 1-27). Meanwhile, Hutchins argued that culture is a cognitive process that occurs in the mind of the human being. That is to say, “It is the process in which our everyday cultural practices are enacted” (Hutchins 1995, in Smith 2007 1-27).

In sum, culture is a fundamental element of social life, which has been created and developed by individuals within the same society. However, as we mentioned above, some scholars referred to religion as a fundamental element in culture. In this regard, Smith discussed the significance of the classroom culture. He argued that school is a “cultural creation” (Smith 2007, 11), in which individuals come together with different backgrounds and experiences into the same room; it is through the sharing of these experiences and knowledge that culture is created. In light of this, school is not just a place for academic learning and knowing about sciences. That is to say, school is a place for sharing, interacting, and adding to one another’s experiences. It is a combination of the above that reflects the culture of each society. Schools nevertheless not only reflect different societies' cultures, but it also has other crucial roles in the formulation of the student's culture. Smith believed that schools enforce individuals to act and behave in certain ways (Smith 2007, 1-27).

In that context, the importance of school culture affecting students’ culture is clarified by Smith (2007). According to him, the classroom is a fruitful environment for interaction amongst students and students with their teachers, in which both students

and teachers affect each other and contribute with their different experiences. Meanwhile, teachers come to class with their own ideology and own perspective. Perspectives and ideologies get formulated based on previous cultural practices (Smith 2007, 1-27).

To conclude, when students and teachers contribute and share different cultural experiences, they create a culture. Teachers and students influence one another, albeit not equally, as the school year progresses. In the school, the main actors, students and teachers, are encouraged to share and contribute with their knowledge, values, experiences, and beliefs. The classroom culture will consist of all of these elements (Archer 1986, 3-35). That is to say; school is a cultural creation as Smith stated it (Smith 2007, 1-27). However, when teachers are foreigners to a certain culture, they will contribute with their ideologies and different cultural perspectives. In some of the international schools, though students are from the local Egyptians, the teachers and the management are Mainly Europeans and Americans, their perspective usually is a Western perspective, and often they teach with a Eurocentric bias. As students are inexperienced, they are often unable to navigate such cultural differences with a cohesive sense of their local or religious identity, often leading to varying degrees of alienation from their local and religious culture.

To give an example in Egypt, youth at this age are concerned with the type of music and quality of movies. When they encounter Western music and movies, they are very attracted to it. Not only do they have it alongside their traditional music and movies, but in many cases they also replace the traditional with the Western.

One crucial factor among many other factors behind this attraction is the Western type of education that is considered as one window to a Western life. Including celebrating and give a huge concern to Western cultural events on the expense of local and religious events. For instance, reflecting on Egypt international schools' Western culture' celebrations, the bellow pictures are example of some cultural events.



Figure 2.1. Dress-up Day Malvern College Egypt

Source: Malvern College Egypt 2021



Figure 2.2. Christmas Decoration Day Malvern College

Source: Malvern College Egypt 2021

By looking at these images in figure 1 and figure 2 above, they illustrate that students from a very young age join international schools and witness how school gives a huge concern and dedicate noteworthy effort to make these events happen. They perceive in their mind the importance of these Western events way more than

their local or religious events. Meaning that, students practice Western culture more than local and religious culture. A thing that has an impact on their identity development process.

On the other hand, another aspect has to be considered while discussing culture, the teachers' influence over pupils as Durkheim argued:

“The ascendancy that the teacher naturally has over his pupil, because of the superiority of his experience and of his culture, will naturally give to his influence the efficacious force that he needs” (Durkheim 1956, 86). Teachers, aside from academic contributions, they share with the students their social life details. Students got affected with these social actions and attempted to imitate them (Durkheim 1956). Teachers, aside from academic contributions, they share with the students their social life details. Students got affected with these social actions and attempted to imitate them (Durkheim 1956). To sharpen the point, according to Durkheim, education and society are tightly intertwined, on the one hand, education offers students the essential physical learning that are considered to be fundamental to this specific society (on the bigger scale). On the other hand, it's the role of education to provide students with essential physical and mental health education to this specific social group on a smaller scale, such as family or class (Durkheim 1956). To conclude, society is the main determiner of the type of education that should be provided to its students. However, when the school decides to follow other society's criteria and impose another culture parallel to the local culture, here is where the problem occurs.

Durkheim pointed out the crucial concept of “homogeneity of the society”. Durkheim claimed that a society could not survive without homogeneity; and education promotes the homogeneity of the society (Durkheim 1956, 70). According to Giddens, Durkheim claims “Society can survive only if there exists among its members a sufficient degree of homogeneity; education perpetuates and reinforces this homogeneity by fixing in the mind of the child, from the beginning, the essential similarities that social life demands” (Giddens 1972, 203).). Meanwhile, schools are responsible for enriching the child with the collective needs of society (Durkheim 1956). In the meantime, when students within a society get exposed to a different culture rather than the local culture of their society, it could hinder the homogeneity of the society. The school as a social

institution has a fundamental role in shaping and affecting individuals personalities and identities. Schools are the platforms that foster interaction between students and teachers. In the school, the main characters, students and teachers are encouraged to share and contribute with their knowledge, values, experiences, and beliefs. The classroom culture will consist of all of these elements (Archer 1986, 3-35). The school has a significant influence on the student's culture and student's character development.

2.3. Identity

As this study investigates identity and religious identity. Thus, different identity' concepts will be discussed in-depth throughout this chapter. Through illustrating what constructs one's identity and the factors that affect individual's identity formation. Many scholars have defined identity. Schwedler said that identity is a process in which individuals define who they are and the relations between them and others (Schwedler 2001, 1-17). Schwedler described identity as an expressive way in which people define and express themselves to other people (Schwedler 2001-17). Alghorani referred to identity as a crucial concept to humans. Surroundings, nevertheless, have a significant influence on forming one's identity, in which it affects the way individuals interact and behave with the surrounding environment (Alghorani 2003). Notwithstanding, Identity can be a tool that helps individuals to understand their relationship with their surroundings (Alghorani 2003).

However, Erikson explained the identity formation process as a reflection process that is mentally possessed. That is to say, it is the observation phase in which individuals undergo through many stages of their life. Erikson pointed out the importance of the adolescent stage in the identity formation process. Youth during the adolescence stage can define themselves based on cognitive functioning. In addition to that, they can define themselves in terms of who they are and are freer to take decisions away from their parents (Alghorani 2003).

In this context, students get affected by the atmosphere around them. Thus, for students to formulate their identity, they have to be surrounded by an environment that enriches and helps develop their identity. However, in some cases, the

environment is not harmonious and doesn't match the student's own culture, which causes incoherence in the identity development process, e.g., a Western environment in non-Western countries. On the other hand, identity formation process encompasses stages and certain elements, for instance, the social element in socialization theories, in which individuals get influenced by social relationships. An individual as a child has a very narrow relationship, by time, these relationships begin to extend when he or she enters the school (Kerckhoff 1986, 93-112). The school in structure is different from home; a school is a structured organizational entity. In terms of setting and nature, students meet peers based on their age, following a specific pattern provided by the school system. Students during the school year are mainly influenced by teachers and peers of the same age (Kerckhoff 1986, 93-112). Meanwhile, students seek a sense of membership; thus, they act and behave similarly to their peers. In that context, students in some cases, act and behave in the school in a different way than their behaviour at home. In this regard, In the realm of social identity theory, Hogg and Abrams said that social identity is the person's ability to recognize in which group he or she belongs (Hogg and Abrams 1988, in Stets and Burke 2000, 224-25). Meanwhile, a social group is a group of people who share a common identification. In social group comparison, two groups have to be taken into consideration. First groups contain individuals who share similarities to each other, the other groups include individuals who show differences. Similarities and differences are based on emotional and psychological features (Turner et al. 1987, in Stets and Burke 2000, 225-27). However, social identity means an individual's level of awareness and his ability to recognize his or her belongingness to a specific social group (Hogg and Abrams 1988, in Stets and Burke 2000, 225-32). In that sense, Hogg and Abrams defined social group as "is a set of individuals who hold a common social identification or view themselves as members of the same social category" (1988, in Stets and Burke 2000, 25). Within the social identification context, two groups exist, as we mentioned earlier, the in-group, which includes people who share similarities to oneself, and the out-group, which includes people who share differences to oneself. Based on these two groups, individuals tend to label and categorize themselves (Hogg and Abrams 1988, in Stets and Burke 2000, 225, 32). Individuals are closer to categorizing themselves within groups for the sake of a sense of belonging and membership, in order to do this, they have to act and behave in a similar way to a certain social group. This type

of categorization is common among peers and students in the adolescence stage, at this age, students are more attracted to their peers than their parents.

In sum, identity is a fundamental concept to human beings, in which individuals are able to define, express and share experiences within a specific community, group or society. Identity helps people to answer the crucial question of who he or she is, and to determine their relations with other people. The formation and development of identity can and should be enriched. There are some external factors that influence the identity formation process, with religion, and education among the main factors. The following sections will discuss educational and religious factors affecting the identity formation process.

Experiencing cultural confusion affect person's personal identification which in turn leads to significant dysfunction in identity formation process. Which can be represented by *cultural alienation and acculturation*. As we mentioned above, culture is the strong tie between an individual and his community. Thus, keeping one's culture is an essential matter for all society members. However, there are some factors that constrain preserving culture, which lead to cultural turbulence for instance, bicultural identity and cultural alienation and acculturation. *Bicultural identity* exists when, in some circumstances, when subordinate culture groups are unable and struggling to maintain their cultural identity. That is to say, when a group of people is facing a challenge to survive in conditions that prohibit their right of self-determination and demand assimilation to a different external way of life (Darder 2011, 201). However, Martin et al. claimed that some biculturals perceive their dual cultural identities as compatible and integrated, whereas others see them as oppositional and difficult to integrate (Benet-Martinez et al. 2002,493-96). Examining Marteinze's explanation, we can say that Egyptian and Western cultures are the opposite characters here. That is to say, in the Egyptian' case, the process is conflictual. On the other hand, *cultural alienation* some scholars expanded Marks and Engel's theory of alienation to include different aspects of public life other than work domain (Sztompka 1993, 77-82).

Usually, people attempt to have a sense of belonging and membership to a specific societal group. Belonging feeling is a necessary feeling for humans in order to feel safe and feel part of the community. Through participation in collective activities, sharing

similarities, people gain a sense of feeling of belonging. On the contrary, alienation means, individual's feeling detached to his culture or his community. Hajda described alienation as "an expression of non-belonging or non-sharing, an uneasy awareness or perception of unwelcome contrast with other" (Hajda 1961, 758-77). In the same regard, and according to Alienation theory, people by virtue are active and sociable creatures. However, due to some conditions, people are unable to practice these normal activities. For instance, some work conditions by modern capitalism prevents individuals from behaving according to their nature, due to being exploited by capitalism. As a result, workers feel alienated and separated from work, groups, family members and the community as a whole. On that sense, according to Marx and Engels, alienation means that employees lose the sense of belonging and feel isolated from their community and social groups. "He denies himself, feels miserable instead of happy, expends no liberal physical and intellectual energy, but mortifies his body and ruins his mind" (Marx and Engels 1960, vol. 1: 553, in Sztompka 1993, 77-82). Thus, they are not motivated to participate in any social activity, hence, they feel as strangers in their community (Sztompka 1993, 77-82). Hence, they don't have a motive to seek belonging or membership.

However, alienation as a feeling differs from one situation to another and from one circumstance to another. It can be on a very small scale in a peer group, or it might include a wider scale in society. Moreover, alienation might be a temporary feeling or might last for a long time. Integration, on the other hand, enhances the sense of belonging and eliminates alienation. By sharing the same culture and traditions, individuals feel more connected and integrated (Hajda 1961, 758-77). When individuals become alienated, they are likely to become demotivated to accomplish collective achievements.

In expanding Marx and Engels theory of alienation, Gereluk argued that one of the connected themes of alienation' is *estrangement*, in which "schools separate the "real people" who come to school from their lives as they are forced to lead them while in school. That is, the student is estranged not only from other people but from himself" (Gereluk 1974, 36). In the light of this, we may argue that students feel alienated from their own culture when exposed to a different culture more than their original culture. He or she will have the feeling of estrangement within the local culture, family and

community. They may feel distant from local cultural practices; hence, they may feel like strangers.

2.4. Education and Identity

Learning is a process of transformation of identities (Guitart 2019, 164). Guitart eloquently explains the relationship between the identity formation process and education. He argued that learning is not only the process of understanding and remembering. Instead, it should be the investment of identities. Students should go to the classroom to learn about different sciences and to learn about themselves as well. Thus, schools should work on developing student identity (Guitart 2019, 159-76). “This is why, for me, personal connections are a mediating strategy in the learning process, as is the creation of identity artefacts” (Guitart 2019, 165). Guitart referred to personal interactions and its role in constituting one’s identity. For him, besides learning, studying and performing activities, students interact throughout the learning process, and these interactions produce a culture, which plays a fundamental role in forming a student's identity.

“A learning process can—indeed it should—lead to a twofold process of transformation: one is behavioural, relating to action, and the other is identity” (Guitart 2019, 164). Moreover, Guitart emphasizes that in the realm of education, the learning process involves not only meaningful learning but also sensual learning, including subjectivity and identity transformation (Guitart 2019, 165). Students through schools and through the learning process adopt and practice the meaning and feeling of identity; identities are not about words to be taught, but about practicing. Guitart also highlights an important concept which is an investment in identity. He argues that the process of learning aims at transforming identities among learners (Guitart 2019, 166). That is to say, during the learning process, cultural aspects have to be considered, as “human identities are culturally situated and distributed” (Guitart 2019, 159). Moreover, there are strong, deep ties between learning and identity (Guitart 2019, 159-73). The learning process as a whole should incorporate other educational activities to foster and enhance identity. For example, extra-curricular activities should be directed to foster one’s identity. In light of this, whether curricular or extra-curricular, school activities should include activities based on one’s culture

and local norms to effectively develop an individual's identity. On the other hand, if these activities contain a different culture's activities, then students' identity development would be retarded (Guitart 2019, 159-76).

One of the learning process functions is that it serves as a means of transformation. One process is transforming behaviour in terms of actions, and the other is identity in terms of representation of oneself (Guitart 2019, 162). Abbasi links the time spent in the school and the student's identity formation. He said that students spend number of hours in school, and this period is a crucial element that plays a significant role in shaping the adolescent's identity (Abbasi 2016, 83-104). For example, students spend eight to nine hours per day in school, learning, studying and socializing with their peers and teachers. Meanwhile, when they go home they still practice some of the school activities including homework and projects, that is to say, students are continuing school life. Education not only has a significant role on enhancing student identity, but also it plays a vital role on enriching and shaping religious identity. On that sense, religious identity will be discussed in the following section.

2.4.1. Religious Identity

In the realm of identity discussion, many aspects have to be considered. Religion and education are among the major aspects (Azmi et al. 2020, 467-77). However, according to Erikson, religion has a significant role in forming adolescent identity. Erikson argues that religion provides a clear vision towards life. This vision is a keystone of the morals and behaviours that constitute one's ideology (Erikson 1968, in Armet 2009, 280). Speaking about identity and sense of belonging, King argues that religious rituals enhance the sense of belonging to the community (King 2003, 197-204). King gave an example of one of the Islamic rituals which is *salat* prayer as a fundamental tradition that Muslims practice five times a day. In the same regard, Erikson refers to the importance of the specific timing of *salat* he said, "In this repetitive act, believers experience themselves in solidarity with other Muslims prostrating themselves toward Mecca" (King 2003, 200). In other words, Muslim believers, by practicing this act every day within a specific time, feel a sense of belonging and feeling part of the Muslim community (King 2003, 200). In the light of

this, we understand the importance of school's role in enhancing Islamic rituals by encouraging students to practice Islamic rituals.

In the same context, students have to practice Islamic rituals to develop a sense of belonging. Sherman refers to the importance of religion in providing advanced arenas more than what society provides. In this, it helps individuals to have a wider vision of different aspects of life. Thus, it constitutes a vision that assists in developing one's identity (Sherman 2000). In the same regard, Rissanen argues that religious education should have a fundamental role in fostering a student's identity, as through religious education, the student would be able to acquire knowledge and experiences which will help him or her to better understand different life situations (Rissanen 2014, 123-38). Therefore, religious education is essential to enable students to acquire knowledge and experiences which will lead him or her to reach an appropriate level of religious commitment (Azmi et al. 2020 767-77).

Sherman, on the other hand, conducted a study to investigate the relation between religious orientation and identity formation among adolescent girls. The targeted students were all Jewish (Sherman 2000). The participants were divided into two groups, with one group attending a religious school (in the Jewish Orthodox tradition) and the other group attending non-religious (secular) school. The findings revealed that students who attended religious school (Jewish Orthodox) had a more positive attitude toward religion. Meanwhile, they showed a stronger 'ideological identity'. Moreover, study results showed that the more religious the student is, the less she faces "a diffused identity" (Sherman 2000). In light of this study, we interpret the importance of a religious orientation and practice, and how religion provides an instrument for formulating a strong ideology that will in turn help develop a strong identity. Religion nevertheless helps individuals have a clear vision of life and reduces confusion, as mentioned earlier. On the contrary, as this study examines Muslim students' identity, it's worth mentioning Islamic identity. In that sense, Alghorani defined Islamic identity as being based on the relationship between Allah (God) and his creation. He defined a Muslim as one who testifies that Allah is the only God worthy of worship and that Muhammad is His slave and messenger" (Alghorani 2003, 17-18). Thus, for Muslims to consolidate an Islamic identity, they should adhere in accomplishing the required Islamic components (Alghorani 2003). Islamic identity consists of a group of

thoughts and ideas that formulate Muslim's vision towards God and humanity and towards the world as a whole. For individuals to formulate these ideas and thoughts, a specific kind of education needs to be provided to individuals throughout their different life stages starting from childhood till adolescence stage.

In this regard, the role of the school is manifest in how the school would contribute to formulate and foster student's Islamic identity (Dar Al-Ifta Al-Missriyah, n.d.). Hence, schools should act as facilitators that provide students with the proper Islamic knowledge. That is to say, through acquiring and understanding Islamic components, Muslims should be able to answer the most pressing existential questions, including "Why am I here?" and "How did I come here?". To be able to answer these questions, individuals need to learn and get exposed to the appropriate components of Islamic knowledge. Moreover, throughout years of study school environment should be directed to serve this goal. This can be achieved through school activities and curriculum (Dar Al-Ifta Al-Missriyah). "The answer to questions like where we came from, what are we doing in this life and where are we going after death creates in the Muslim mind dimensions of time and place beyond the confinement of earthly time and the limitedness of present place" (Dar Al-Ifta Al-Missriyah). It also enables humans to have a wider scope by opening new windows of what is beyond the *dunya* (earth life). These scopes activate human minds to find answers for the existential questions. It helps focus on and find Islamic answers to common human conditions. For example, those who lost loved ones and suffer loss may, as a result of acquired knowledge find it helpful in understanding the meaning of life and death and to overcome the crisis (Dar Al-Ifta Al-Missriyah).

Many Muslims all over the world adhere to five pillars of Islam. These pillars are: "The profession of faith, the five times daily prayers, the payment of religious taxes for charitable purposes, the daytime fasting during the month of Ramadan, and finally, when possible, the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in one's lifetime" (Schwedler 2001, 3). In the light of this, Lewis argued that practicing and committing to these pillars by Muslims constitute a universal Islamic identity (Schwedler 2001, 1-17). While the above refers to the traditional understandings found within Islam, students studying in English-medium schools may not always have the same notion. A study was conducted by Azmi et al. to examine the "influence of English language learning

and environment in the process of Islamic self-identity formation” (Azmi et al. 2000, 767-77). The findings revealed that Islamic identity was influenced by the school environment, culture and language. The findings showed that students believe that the prayers (five times daily), conducting oneself in an appropriate way and wearing modest clothing are to be considered among the main pillars of Islamic identity (Azmi et al. 2000, 767-77). Alghorani for his part argued that a Muslim’s self-view depends in the first place on how strong is her or his Islamic identity. Islamic identity is a critical element which affects a Muslim’s attitude (Alghorani 2003).

Alghorani conducted another study as well to investigate the interrelationship between Islamic identity and adjustment of adolescent students in one of the schools in the US. All participants were Muslim students. (Alghorani 2003). The findings of the study confirmed the correlation between religious ideology and Islamic identity formation process. That is to say, religious ideology is a fundamental element of constituting Islamic identity (Alghorani 2003). To conclude, for individuals to gain an Islamic ideology they should adhere to learning and seeking Islamic knowledge. Nevertheless, practicing is essential to acquire knowledge. Thus, Muslim students throughout the school years should learn, practice and acquire proper knowledge about Islam to be able to formulate a strong Islamic identity.

Alghorani discusses the importance of religion as a fundamental factor to a human's attitude in which religion has an impact on the heart and feelings of the individuals, religion nevertheless constitute crucial element of the society (Alghorani 2003). That is to say, “we may readily agree with those who say that the study of religion is the study of mankind” (al-Faruqi 1984, vii, in Alghorani 2003, 5-6).

In the same context, Azmi et al. conducted a study to investigate the influence of learning a foreign language, English, on a student's Islamic identity. The study results showed that a student's Islamic identity got affected by many factors, with school environment and societal norms among them. Students of this study said that one of the elements that constitute their Islamic identity is “wearing proper Islamic attire within their school environment, they learn how to wear ‘proper Islamic attire’”. In the light of this, schools have a role in guiding students towards enhancing Islamic rituals. (Azmi et al. 2000, 767-77). Meanwhile, Language is one of the most important

components of culture. As Keller pointed out language is an essential element in culture and plays a crucial role in identity formation process. Thus, language and identity acquisition will be discussed in the following section.

2.4.2. Language and Identity Acquisition

Frantz Fanon, a great African-French scholar who was born in Martinique in 1925 and fought colonialism through his writings, especially after his visit to Algeria during French colonialism (Fanon 2008). Moreover, he fought racism against blacks through his famous book *Black Skin, White Masks* and. Fanon, in his book *Black Skin White Masks* (2008) emphasized the complexity of colonialism on indigenous people. In particular, he investigated the problem of the superior-inferior relationship between colonizers and colonized and how it affects individuals' self-perception and acceptance. At the same time, he diagnosed the “civilized west” and its impact on the vision of the colonized. His main concern was the relationship between blacks and whites, and how it influences self-perception by the blacks. Another factor Fanon examined is the language of the civilized. He emphasized that we study language to understand the black position compared to others. He argued: “To speak is to exist absolutely for other” (Fanon 2008, 1).

Fanon claimed that black men are divided into two parts, one part with blacks and one with whites. According to him, this dichotomy is a direct consequence of colonization. Fanon expressed a great concern about speaking the colonizer's language. In his view, when speaking a language, we do not simply use vocabulary and a certain syntax. Above all we adopt a culture. In addition to that, the more the black individual assimilated the colonizer's language, which in his case was French, the more he transformed and got closer to white culture. Transforming into a white person is a dream of any black man, according to Fanon, as he would then be a “true human being”. “To speak means being able to use a certain syntax and possessing the morphology of such and such a language, but it means above all assuming a culture and bearing the weight of civilization” (Fanon 2008, 1-2). Nevertheless, language is one of the factors that affect his attitudes while dealing with people, whites or blacks (Fanon 2008). Language helps black men to wear a white mask while dealing with whites. The black man is always trying to reach the level of the white man; thus, he

tries to imitate his attitudes. Language is obviously crucial in the process. The black man believes that if he speaks like the white man, he will become like him; and he would accept himself more.

In the same regard, Durkheim claimed that when people learn a language, they adopt a complete system in terms of ideas and grasp different experiences (Durkheim 1956). In other words, it is not only language acquisition, it is about attitudes, behaviours, and above all, ideology acquisition. In light of Fanon's and Durkheim's claims, we understand that when individuals within a society excessively expose and learn a different language other than their origin language, the consequence will be that this person will likely consciously or unconsciously adopt the culture of the other language acquired, more than adopting his or her own original culture.

Learning a language means adopting a culture. What I mean here is that students come to school with their own culture, including their language, but a clash between culture and identity occurs. Prior to joining English-medium schools, students would tend to comfortably express themselves and share their feelings in their mother tongue. But, when students go to school, they are exposed for a long duration to a foreign language and culture, they get confused. As we have seen above, learning a language in the first place is strongly associated with learning the culture as well. Thus, we do not only learn how to write and read, we learn about all the aspects of the culture (Cakir 2006, 154-57).

Therefore, Cakir has argued, "Gestures, body movements, and distances maintained by speakers should foster cultural insights" (Cakir 2006, 156). In the same regard, each culture has its own patterns, behaviours, and traditions. Language constitutes an important factor of a culture. Thus, Cakir referred to Lado's argument that if language is a fundamental element of the culture, exposing and learning a foreign language will affect the original culture. That is to say, as language is a fundamental pillar of a culture, and each culture has its own behaviours, values, and patterns. Therefore, learning a language will determine the learner to learn the values, behaviours, and patterns of the culture of the foreign language (Cakir 2006, 154-57). In light of this, while acquiring a new language, learners acquire behaviours and values of this language, excessively exposed to another language rather than the original language,

will cause adopting values and behaviours of the other language more than the original language. To conclude, learners have to pay attention to the new language they acquire so as not to exceed the limit of exposure.

A study has been conducted by Brown to investigate the relationship between language heritage and identity of Korean American students in the U.S. The findings revealed that individuals with strong language heritage presented a strong sense of personal identification (Brown 2009, 2-12). Brown claimed that there is a strong relationship between heritage, language, and identity, and to be more specific ethnic identity. He found that students who perceived strongly and proficiently in their original language showed a positive ethnic identity. In addition to that, students in this study who were able to speak their original language (Korean) enabled themselves to feel positive towards their Korean identity (Brown 2009, 2-12). Nonetheless, Western languages are seen as desirable by students. In a study by Azmi et al. in one of the schools in the US, it was revealed that “the students believe that those who master the English language feel proud of themselves” (Azmi et al. 2000, 767-77).

Changing the words of a certain language means changing the value of the word. In this context, the problem of translating books and novels is a recognized issue. To sharpen the point, Muslims use certain words with specified meaning and value these words. For example, the word *salah* (prayer) has only one meaning to Muslims, associated with a physical set of specific acts, in addition to the spiritual meanings of these acts. It is often translated as “prayer” which is inapt, as prayer suggests supplication (*dua* in Arabic). As we can see, when these words are translated in English, the signification of the word are completely lost. On the other hand, people from different cultures use different words. When individuals are exposed to Western culture, they start to mix local and English words. At that point, the meanings of words have been lost.

As this study investigates identity, thus its inevitable to discuss factors that affect identity. Inspired by the discussion above, we can see that identity, culture and education are intersected. As Erikson demonstrated the elements that shape one’s identity. And as he emphasized culture as one of the crucial elements among those elements in constructing one’s identity. In the same regard, according to definition of

culture as mentioned above culture is a combination of knowledge morals and customs. That is to say it's a shared way of life and heritage system. In terms of language, religion and customs. Schools on the other hand, not only a venue of acquiring knowledge and sciences. But it's above all a place of sharing, interacting and adding to one another. Thus, school should enhance individual specific community' culture. Meanwhile, identity according to Schewdler is a way in which people express and define themselves. In addition to that, social element has to be considered while mentioning identity, Hoggs and Abrams claimed that social identity is person's ability to recognize in which group he/ she belongs. As students seek sense of membership therefore, learning is not only for science; it should be investment of identity. Students should go to school to learn about science and themselves as well. School should work on developing one's identity. Guitart referred to school's extracurricular activities as it should be directed to foster and enhance identity formation process, these extracurricular activities should be inspired by one's culture and norms. Religion on the other side, has a significant role in shaping adolescent identity as Erikson pointed out. In addition to that it provides a clear vision towards life. This vision is the keystone of morals and behaviours that constitutes individual's ideology. Moreover, religious rituals and acts of worship gives a sense of belonging, for example, prayer (Salat). Meaning that individuals should practice religion and acts of wordship. In the meantime, Erikson emphasized the importance of the specific timing Muslims' prayer (salat). With this act Erikson argued, Muslim experience solidarity with other Muslims and they feel sense of belonging and membership.

CHAPTER III

MODERNIZATION' IMPACT ON EDUCATION SYSTEM OF EGYPT

This chapter will examine the different stages that affect the education system of Egypt, throughout defining the modernization and Westernization processes. The first part of this chapter will demonstrate the historical background of the Westernization of Egyptian culture. In a nutshell, the education system in Egypt has witnessed significant influences by the modernization and Westernization processes that took place since the colonization period. To understand the transformation of the Egyptian education system we should investigate modernization, Westernization and their impact on Egyptian society and Egyptian education system. This chapter will elaborate on the different types of education systems in the contemporary Egypt. Meanwhile, it will diagnose to what extent Westernization and modernization affect a student's culture and identity. Finally, I will highlight some of the consequences of Westernization on the Egyptian Islamic community.

3.1. Historical Background of Westernization of Egyptian Culture

Egyptian culture has witnessed a critical transformation since the era of Mohamed Ali, who invited Western experts into Egypt for the purpose of introducing modern secular education. In addition to that, an outflow of foreigners accompanied the British invasion and with the help of the Westernized upper class, ordinary Egyptians first encountered Western culture. In this regard, many factors have to be considered while addressing the impact of Westernization on Egyptian society. Mass advertising, mass production and above all, the emergence of a secular national education. may be said to be the main factors for the widespread Western culture. During the time of Mohamed Ali, the state acted as the mediator to bring the culture of the West to Egypt. Meanwhile, secular national education was provided and introduced to Egyptian society by the state: "It was the state that introduced modern secular education, sent

students to study abroad, built the opera house, built Western-style places and changed the official costume from Ottoman to Western attire” (Baraka 2016, 136).

In the name of modernization, many artists, scientists and politicians took up the mission of introducing a Western-style life to Egyptians. It is noteworthy that the bourgeois already had an ideology, and their ideological goal was to replace the old system with a secular system in terms of forms of authority (Baraka 2016, 136-37).

On the other hand, not only foreigners who accompanied the colonizers facilitated transmission of Western culture into Egypt, but the upper class also had a significant role in supporting this mission by first acquiring foreign culture and later facilitating its adoption leading to further transmission of Western culture to Egypt. As Waguih described it:

“In the milieu in which I grew to know Egyptians Cairo and Alexandria were cosmopolitan not so much because they contained foreigners, but because the Egyptian born in them was himself a stranger in his land” (Waguih 1964 as cited in Baraka 2016, 141).

Nevertheless, Westernization has taken different forms in contemporary times by the upper class, meaning that the new form of Westernization is not about European influence any long but has been replaced by the global trend of Americanization. The same is reflected in the international English-speaking schools which have a large segment of followers and children in these schools speak English in an American accent (Baraka 2016, 135-142).

3.2. Modernization of Egypt

The modernization process has been defined by many scholars. Sztompka argues that modernization is “a rich complex of social, political, economic, cultural, and mental transformations occurring in the west from the sixteenth century onward, and reaching its apogee in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It involves processes of industrialization, urbanization, rationalization, bureaucratization, democratization, the ascendancy of capitalism, the spread of individualism and achievement motivation, the

affirmation of reason and science” (Sztompka 1974, 129). The process of modernization invokes the idea of ‘modernity’ (Sztompka 1974,129).

While mentioning modernization, we have to refer to its sister concept, Westernization. Modernity, according to Giddens, emerged in Europe in the seventeenth century. Modernity on the one hand, reflects a social way of life, attitudes and habits. On the other hand, it has become a worldwide trend whose influence reaches the whole world (Giddens 1990:1 as cited in Sztompka 1974, 69). In this regard, “Modernization meant 'Westernization' and was construed as the adoption of European material culture; including its technology, economic institutions, and political structures” (Gershoni and Tankowki 1995 as cited in El-Nagar and Smolska 2011,59). Not only does Westernization mean the adoption of the materialistic way of life of the West, but also it was about the adoption of Western intellectuality, civilization and, ‘the mentality of the west’ (El-Nagar and Smolska 2011, 59).

Countries that were colonized by European empires, in particular those in the Middle East, have also been ideologically transformed by the West even after the end of colonization. Muslim states initially encountered Western military and economic superiority during colonization. Later, modernization became the main issue for Middle Eastern intellectuals. Therefore, the Muslim communities' decline had begun (Syah 2016, 86). In the meantime, policymakers and social leaders of Muslim communities attempted to link modernity with ‘Western modes’; that is to say, in order to be modern, you have to Westernize the way you do things (Cook 2000, 483-87).

To sharpen the point, reflecting this hypothesis in the Egyptian case, whatever the leaders of the community are attempting to do, they do so in Western style. That’s because they are Western themselves, and initially educated in a Western-type education. However, the modernization issue in Egypt has been debated since the era of Mohamed Ali Pasha. However, most developed countries after World War II endeavoured to gain their independence including Egypt (El-Nagar and Smolska 2011, 57-72). Let us recall that Egypt has been colonized by the French and British empires (1798-1956) for many reasons both economic and political. Notwithstanding, with each invasion voices of reformation or modernization were strengthened. The reason behind these voices has been best discussed by El-Nagar and Smolska, as they argued

that the relationship between colonizer and colonized is always controversial. On the one hand, the occupied compares the two different cultures, the indigenous culture, and the foreign culture; on the other hand, Egyptian culture, through this comparison, has undergone a difficult test (El-Nagar and Smolska 2011, 57-72). Western institutions had a significant role in the formulation of the “reforms introduced in the Tanzimat period (of) the Ottoman Empire by Mohamed Ali in Egypt” (Patai 1995, 3). It is worth noting that the upper class in Egypt was the segment most compatible with Westernization, as they were rich and had all the required funds that facilitated acquiring Western civilizational codes. In addition to that, they had direct contact with Western people (Patai 1995, 3). The West also targeted this class as they were potential followers of it. Thus, they became very attracted to all Western culture and products to the extent that they started to refuse the local culture and products (Patai 1995, 4-5).

On the other hand, Ali Pasha’s period (1805 to 1849) witnessed many changes, as he believed in change; thus, he was tremendously concerned about education by which he meant modern education. This was a system that was differed from the local system that existed at the time, which was the Al-Azhar system, a prominent Egyptian educational religious institution (El-Nagar and Smolska 2011 2011, 58). Ali Pasha, "the father of modern Egypt" (Silvera 1980, 1) opened the country's doors to the West. He also encouraged educational missions that were sent to France for the first time in Egypt upon his command to pursue their studies there. The aim of these missions was to transfer knowledge from the West to Egypt.

Meanwhile, intellectuals during this time were making endeavours toward modernizing the state. They were concerned with European education, methods and techniques that, according to them, would enable them to establish a modern state (El-Nagar and Smolska 2011 2011, 58). Mohamed Ali Pasha founded many schools (Silvera 1980). A medical school was also established in 1826 during his era (Zeghal 2012, 125-148). He created a well-educated class of people (Egyptian government).

On the other hand, British occupation “facilitated the contact between Egypt and Western culture” (El-Nagar and Smolska 2011, 60), that could be considered as a window to modernization, and a gate to modernization. Anwar Al-Sadat, Egypt's

president in the 1970s, tried to guide the country back towards modernization. He encouraged foreign investment and revived the private sector. Mubarak (the previous president of Egypt 1981-2011) followed the same steps as Al-Sadat and thus Mubarak's priority was modernization by welcoming more foreign investments in the private sector, including educational institutions (Hargreaves 1997).

The government relied on schools for the fast expansion of modernization (Morocco and Morocco 1987, 66). That is to say, for Egypt to modernize, Zeghal argued, many factors had to be considered for the development of the country in terms of economic and political developments (Zeghal 2012, 125-148). A real change had to be made in the education system, which is the "expansion of secular education" (Zeghal 2012, 125-148). As Syah explained, "Modern educational institutions were established as colonial powers continued to penetrate the Muslim world" (Syah 2016, 86). This explains the vast increase in the numbers of international schools established in Egypt since the post-colonial era. This can be seen in the increasing number of international schools in recent times as we will discuss later throughout this study. In this regard, the issue of the expansion of secular education will be discussed in detail throughout this research.

In discussing modernization, Morocco and Morocco (1987) argued that two approaches had been brought forth. The first approach concerned individuals and individual characteristics, referring to the fact that for modernization to occur in a society, there must be changes in an individual's personality, and individuals should acquire specific values and attitudes to "be ready for" modernization. That is to say, individuals must change before modernization takes place (Morocco and Morocco 1987, 66). As mentioned above, to be modern or to adopt modernity, one has to adopt a certain way of life and behaviours. Meanwhile, colonizers brought their governance to Muslim societies. These systems were new to Muslim society and could be defined as a "set of values learned through interaction with the West over the past two centuries" (Syah 2016). The second approach concerning institutions and organizations is to delegate and promote modernization supervised by the state (Morocco and Morocco 1987, 66). In this context, we can say that schools are considered to be one of these organizations responsible for the delegation of the modernization process.

A part from being modernized, during the twentieth century, in Muslim countries, a group of the elite was created. The mission of this elite group is to preserve and safeguard Western culture and traditions. The elite groups used to act and behave in Western attitude to an extent, in which they were neither totally foreigners nor totally Egyptian. Thus, they were able to import Western attitudes alongside their Egyptian attitude (Cook 1999, 341). However, the importation and promotion of Western ideas were some of the main features of these groups.

3.3. Schooling System of Egypt

It has been argued by many scholars that since the nineteenth century and during the growth period of European colonialism, the leaders of Egypt, the Ottoman and Russian empires thought of the need to adopt a new system of education for the to bring in reform. The first priority was to modernize their armies and economy (Herrera 2004, 319-21). Meanwhile, a European-style education system was chosen due to “European-style schools in Muslim-majority societies embody the fusions, tensions, aspirations, and negotiations inherent in processes of institutional and cultural adaptation” (Herrera 2004, 320). Some critics voiced that a European-style education system should not be imported. For instance, Khan pointed out the dangers of such a system as a ‘cultural threat’. He justified his concern by saying that girls who receive European education might refuse to wear the hijab (veil). He gave an example of Turkey, as some women who received Western type education during the era of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk refused to wear hijab. He warned of the repetition of the same scene in the Arab world (Ringer 2004, 319-21).

The *Kuttab* (Muslim elementary school until twentieth century) system was the traditional education system before the 19th century. It continued side by side with the new modern system. The modern system had begun to change to include three stages starting from primary to middle school and then high school, inspired by the European system (Harby and Affifi 1958).

In contemporary times, Egypt has different types of schools, including public schools, national institution schools, embassy schools, and private schools (El-Meshad 2012). Public schools are managed, supervised, administered, and fully funded by the

government. They are free of charge for all Egyptian students equally (El-Meshad 2012). Public schools teach Egyptian national curriculum with a low level of English language as a subject starting from the age of six. Meanwhile, a report by UNICEF revealed that public schools lack quality of education and teaching techniques (El-Meshad 2012). In this regard, Egyptian parents and teachers think of *thanaweya amma* (High school Egyptian diploma) as a monster due to its difficulties. The difficulties revolve around of the crucial role it plays in determining youth' future university and career opportunities (Hargreaves 1997). Exams are very difficult due to the high level of competition for joining university, and students need to get high scores in order to join the university they aspire to. "This national selection examination determines each student's future financial and social opportunity: it is therefore hardly surprising that it breeds the 'diploma disease' and takes on monstrous proportions" (Hargreaves 1997, 161). "The diploma disease, or paper qualification syndrome, meant that selection for higher education and then employment became the driving force behind schools" (Hargreaves 1997, 162). As mentioned earlier, joining university depends on one's score at the secondary level. It is an accumulation of both scores of the last two years of the secondary level. Noting that the secondary education phase lasts three years, which is equivalent to a high school diploma certificate or secondary education.

National institutions schools are a type of school which are neither public nor private, but can be defined as semi-private schools run by institutions, not individuals. Students in these schools have to pay fees though less than the fees of private schools. Al-Azhar is considered to be a national institution of this type, i.e., neither public nor private, it provides its own curriculum to their students, in addition to that, it provides religious studies. They are not under the supervision of the Ministry of Education (El-Meshad 2012).

Meanwhile, missionary schools are a type of religious school, also providing a national curriculum. Embassy schools are a type of school related to another country. Although they are in the Egyptian lands, they do not follow the Ministry of Education or Egyptian curriculum, but following their own curriculum (El-Meshad 2012). Private schools are classified into two types: private national and international. Private national schools are under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. They offer a national curriculum with some advanced English language in some subjects. Students

in private schools have to pay a high/low? amount of fees (El-Meshad 2012). Private schools have better teaching techniques and resources though less than international schools. International schools are under the supervision of the Ministry of Education but do not provide a national curriculum or Egyptian high school diplomas *thanaweya amma*. They offer a particular type of diploma of curriculum accreditation: an American diploma or British (IGCSE) by the international system. In this system, students have to pay a high amount number of fees.

English-medium international schools in Egypt have the best techniques and educational tools, and technology resources with up-to-date teaching methodologies (Oxford Business Group 2020). International schools in Egypt are becoming more attractive in the contemporary times due to the benefits students are gaining and getting in return in terms of attractive future careers and opportunities (Hargreaves 1997). As foreign schools based on “imported” education, these types of schools were introduced to Egypt by ‘secular groups’ (Harby and Affifi 1958). In addition, Harby and Affifi claimed that “these different systems of education – among which the children of one nation were divided – ended to create in the children conflicting attitudes and loyalties” (Harby and Affifi 1958, 428).

In Egypt, students or graduates have to acquire skills to be qualified to work in the foreign sector for better career opportunities. International schools focus and dedicate huge effort to provide these skills to students. "In foreign affiliated firms, graduates may earn twice as much as in local private enterprise" (Hargreaves 1997, 164). Therefore, Egyptian parents are encouraged to enrol their children in international schools. Socioeconomic factors play a vital role in students joining international schools in Egypt and they usually come from a high socioeconomic level due to the high fees requested by the school and the selection process of both student and his parents. International schools give importance to the parents' status, their background of education and their abilities in the English language.

Since they endeavoured towards modernization in the time of Al-Sadat, international schools were established with the increasing investment in the private sector. This policy facilitated the spread of Western education all over the country. Western systems include American, British, French, and German systems, though the American and

British remain the most famous in Egypt. International schools are characterized by high fees compared to other types of schooling systems.

The following figure 3 indicates the ratio of international schools that were established between 2011 and 2020 (Statista 2021)

Egypt's international schools in 2011, 2017, and 2020.

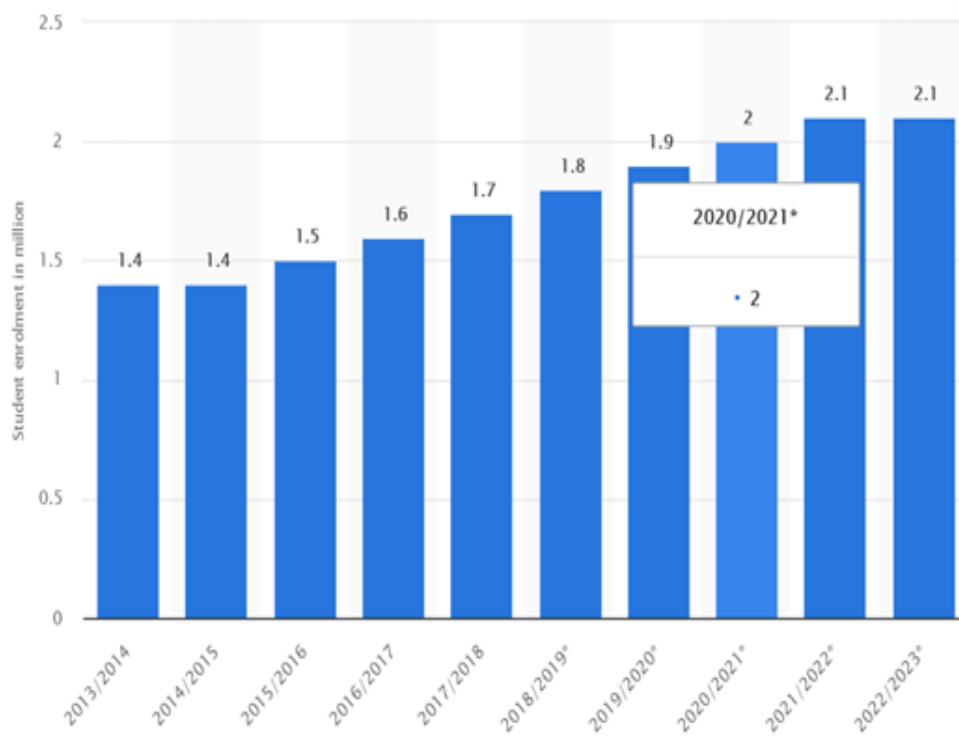
	Governorates	2011	2017	2020
1	Cairo	82	286	379
2	Giza	41	136	172
3	Alexandria	23	94	137
4	Qalioubiya	8	24	30
5	Red Sea	4	18	21
6	Daqahliya	–	4	15
7	Gharbiya	1	5	12
8	Sharqiya	4	4	9
9	South Sinai	1	5	6
10	Port Said	1	4	5
11	Ismailia	3	2	4
12	Luxor	–	2	2
13	Minya	–	3	2
14	Qena	–	2	1
	Total	168	589	795

Figure 3.1. The Ratio of International Schools in Egypt between 2011-2020

Source: Statista 2020

As illustrated in figure 3, we can notice the increasing number of established international schools in Egypt between 2011 and 2020. This indicates the interest of Egyptian parents in enrolling their children in international schools.

The data indicated in the following figure 4 represents the number of grade 1 to 12 students enrolled at private schools in Egypt from academic year 2013/14 to 2022/23 in millions.



© Statista 2021

Figure 3.2. The Number of Enrolled Students between 2013-2023

Source: Statista 2020

“The total number of grades 1 to 12 students enrolled in private schools in Egypt for the academic year 2017/18 was 1.7 million. It has been estimated that the number will rise to about 2.1 million by 2022/23” (Statista 2021).

Guided by the data above, we can see that Egypt has witnessed several changes in all levels in the colonial and post-colonial period. Foreign cultural penetration that accompanied colonization and the post-colonial period has had a significant effect on the education system in Egypt. It passed through different phases of changing systems, starting from the traditional Kuttab which included traditional and Islamic teachings, till the international schooling system that deploys European-style education. Changes in the education system not only affected the students in schools, its effects also reached the whole of society. Hence, students’ identities were also affected, as we will discuss throughout this research.

3.4. Westernization and Western Education

- *Student Attitude Towards School Western Style and Culture*

In the discussion of the importation of foreign education, scholars have argued that the more students expose and acquire a Western-type education, the more a student feels like a stranger in his/her community (Morocco and Morocco 1987, 67-69). This means that students, when exposed to a different culture more than exposed to their original culture. That is to say, they practice the other culture more, hence, they feel they belong to the other culture more than the local culture. As times goes by, they feel distanced from their local culture. Hence, they feel like strangers in their own community.

Meanwhile, international schools in Egypt are targeting a specific group (the upper class), based on their ability to promote and preserve Western culture and ideas. The systems they follow, the curriculum they adopt, the school's environment is Westernized the events and ceremonies. In international schools, the calendar of the school follows the Western calendar plus the Egyptian calendar.

The problem of Westernizing the Egyptian community is likely to increase. In the meantime, the younger generations believe they have to get knowledge and receive education in an international school, the more Western-type mentality the Egyptian community will face. The more identity conflict problems will arise.

3.4.1. Westernization Produces Secular Education

Syah argued that modern schools were established to penetrate the Muslim world, consequently traditional Islamic schools (madrasas) dramatically decreased. Meanwhile, only a few mosque-based madrasas survived (Syah 2016, 86). On the one hand, Western education is transmitted to Muslim countries through colonizers under the name of modernity; on the other hand, it is implicitly based on secularism and separates religion and life (Abu Bakar and Abdullah 2015, 363).

To sharpen the point, one of the fatal problems of colonization consequences and importation of foreign systems, ideas, and ideologies is that it creates an image that

represents the powers of the colonizer and its institutions (Morocco and Morocco 1987, 65-68). Meanwhile, the prestige that commanded by foreigners creates a complex relationship of inferiority and superiority in which the colonizer's ideas and institutions are superior to traditional ideas. This discourages indigenous people to take any initiative for internal or local development (Morocco and Morocco 1987, 65-68). For example, in international schools in Egypt, students prefer foreign teachers; parents believe that foreign teachers are better than Egyptians, especially in a language context. They trust foreign teachers to teach their children well regardless of their different backgrounds and ideologies.

In a nutshell, Egypt, by virtue of being an Islamic nation, requires an education system that is comprehensive, integrated and in alignment with the doctrine of Tawhid (Cook 1999, 340). Meanwhile, the importance of religion within education and its impact on students' personalities has been discussed by many scholars. Nevertheless, *'ilm* is one of the fundamental concepts in Islam. As Rosenthal states, “*ilm* is one of those concepts that have dominated Islam and given Muslim civilization its distinctive shape and complexion” (Rosenthal 2007, 2).

Hammond referred to Durkheim's notes about the importance of religion in social life. On the one hand, religion facilitates a fruitful environment that enhances the sense of membership, which strengthens the unity and sense of belonging through participation in rituals (Hammond 1988). In this regard, Klitmøller and Jensen have conducted a study in a school in Denmark. The school was chosen based on its cultural and religious diversity. The study investigated students' attitude towards religion within school activities throughout the month of Ramadan (Klitmøller and Jensen 2019, 37-40). Muslim students showed religious tendencies while doing the activity and shared a discussion with each other and with their teacher as a reflection of the activity. The results of the study revealed that religion enhances the sense of unity “we” and sense of membership. Thus, the school has an important role in promoting the environment for students to enrich the sense of unity and membership. However, religion should not be restricted to the religious session, but it should be practiced during the entire day through daily life practices.

On the contrary, secularism aims at enhancing the sense of individuality. In the Egyptian case, students' answers revealed that the discussion about religion during normal classes or normal activities is unthinkable. In the same sense, King argued that religious rituals enhance the sense of belonging in the community (King 2003, 197-203). King gave an example of one of the Islamic rituals, which is *salat* prayer as a fundamental tradition. Muslim practice *salat* five times a day. King refers to the importance of the specific timing of *salat*. She said, "In this repetitive act, believers experience themselves in solidarity with other Muslims prostrating themselves toward Mecca" (King 2003, 200). In other words, by practicing this act every day within a specific time, Muslim believers feel a sense of belonging and feeling part of the Muslim community. Therefore, marginalization of religion is also another aspect of Westernization that clearly appeared in international education institutions, as we will discuss in detail in this section.

Modern education or Westernization has produced secular education. One of the main outcomes of Westernization is to separate religion and state, as Cook argued, "there is always another agenda of alienating the state and religion" (Cook 1999, 340-41). In order to achieve this separation, there must be a strategy for education in which religion is perceived as an 'individual responsibility'. The state and its organizations including educational institutions, would no longer practice religion within its organization (Cook 1999, 341). Hence, the interview's results of parents and students revealed that religion whether Christianity or Islam has no place in international schools as it is an optional and individual responsibility. The interview's findings revealed that students are not encouraged to pray or practice religion, and the school did not institute any Islamic atmosphere. Meanwhile, students felt shy to practice religion in front of their peers, that is to say, one might be labelled as an 'odd' person, which is problematic. On the one hand, the fundamental value of religion will be lost, and on the other hand, students would not practice religion throughout the school day. Students practice religion after returning back home cementing religion as an individual responsibility. The effect of placing religion as a personal role or responsibility has a tremendous impact on students' Islamic identity formation (Cook 1999, 341).

However, Durkheim was concerned about religion as a fundamental factor in morality. He argued that morality and religion are intertwined. Without religion, one cannot

achieve complete morality (Prus 2011, 57-103). Moreover, he asserts the importance of morality to the education system itself. Morality and religion are defined as God's worship (Prus 2011, 57-103). Secularism, however, aims at separating morality from religion, and separating religion from education. As Durkheim emphasizes, "When we learn a language, we learn a whole system of ideas" (Durkheim 1956, 77). That is to say, when students are exposed to another language for the purpose of learning, they adopt culture and ideas. In light of this notion, international schools that provide either the American or British systems teach the English as a language to be used, but they through it transfer a culture and a system of ideas. In other words, they teach the 'mentality of the West'.

3.5. Bicultural Identity

Bicultural identity exists when in some circumstances, subordinate culture groups are unable and struggling to maintain their cultural identity. That is to say, when a group of people is facing a challenge to survive in conditions that prohibit their right of self-determination and demand assimilation to a different external way of life (Darder 2011, 201). However, Martin et al. claimed that some biculturals perceive their dual cultural identities as compatible and integrated, whereas others see them as oppositional and difficult to integrate (Benet-Martinez et al. 2002, 493-96). Examining Marteinze's explanation, we can say that Egyptian and Western cultures are the opposite characters here. That is to say, in the case of Egyptian students, the process is conflictual.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research aims at investigating the influence of international schools on Egyptian Muslim students' identity. However, the literature showed the shortage of studies that have been conducted about the topic in Egypt or even in the Arab region. Some studies focused on the relationship between language acquisition and identity, but still very few studies addressed the problem of the relationship between foreign culture (Western culture) and identity and religious identity. Thus, due to these reasons, it is appropriate to investigate this topic. The study on this topic could be helpful to other researchers in the region to conduct further studies and provide comparisons between findings.

4.1. Methodology

Identity, culture and education are intertwined. The English-medium international schools are the target of this study. To investigate the issue, fieldwork has been done for this topic. Interviews have been conducted throughout one year, 2020-21. A semi-structured to unstructured method was used in the conducted interviews, in addition to the participant observation method. According to Clifford et al., the semi structured interview method involves conversational-answer style and promotes open responses rather than yes or no-type answers (Clifford et al. 2016, 145). This method was chosen for this research as the interviewer settled some guided questions, then sub-questions and other discussions came up during the interviews. The questions of the interview were open-ended questions, thus interviewees had the opportunity to express and address their beliefs and feelings towards the research topic. Interviews were carried out on a one-one basis. All interviews were conducted in Arabic. Collected data from interviews were transcribed in Arabic then translated into English. The reason of conducting interviews in Arabic was that it is the mother tongue, which allowed interviewees the space to express and share their feelings and ideas freely.

The researcher gave the interviewees the freedom to answer the questions in the way they want. Some of the interviews were conducted via Zoom application with an open camera and this is due to the pandemic conditions, as it was difficult for some interlocutors to have a face-face interaction themselves or due to sickness of others. Meanwhile, for participant observations, it has two stages, first stage this was before starting working and even thinking of my thesis topic. In which I was participating in the after-school activity with students, I was able to closely interact with them and observe their attitudes. I used to have conversations with them about their life and in particular social life asking them about their schools and the activities they have in the school. Second stage, during my thesis' writing journey I participated with students in some social gatherings, during these participations I took notes and documented my observations. I also observed the language they use and how they were trying to accommodate and adopt gestures while speaking English language. Not only speaking and accommodating, but also the pride they show as they speak in a very good accent very close to native's accent. On the contrary, they don't mind or even question their low level in reading and writing in their native language which is Arabic.

On account of all the reasons mentioned above, thus, the qualitative method was used. According to Burns, "qualitative forms of investigation tend to be based on recognition of the importance of the subjective, experiential lifeworld of human beings" (Burns 1997, 11, in Kijima 2005, 131). Focusing on their everyday life in the school and outside the school, the study provided real life examples of students' identity, instability and struggle between two cultures. The research asked students to casually answer the interview questions to extract information. Questions types revolved around school extracurricular activities, school cultural atmosphere, the dominant language in the school, local cultural identity and religious orientation in the school and the reasons behind joining international education system. It has been proposed that the excessive exposure to Western culture imposed by the school affects students' identity and sense of belonging. All interviews took place in Cairo, the capital city as it encompassed the largest number of international schools in Egypt, as I illustrated above in chapter two.

4.2. Research Questions

This study is focused on students who are studying in English-medium international schools in Egypt. It examined the influence of the international education system on student's identity and Islamic identity. The study's central question is: What is the influence of the international education system on student identity and their Islamic identity?

- What is the influence of international school culture on Egyptian Muslim students' identity?
- What is the impact of Western education on a student's religious identity?
- What are the parent's motivations to enrol their children in the international education system?
- How does English language hegemony affect a student's native language, hence affecting their identity?
- To what extent do schools alienate students from their local culture?

4.3. Research Design

Data analysis of this study began with fieldwork, observations and follow-up interviews. This study aims at investigating students' daily life interactions in school and outside the school. A qualitative data research design has been used in this study. "Qualitative content analysis emphasizes an integrated view of speech/texts and their specific contexts" (Zhang and Wildemuth 2009, 1). In addition, "it allows researchers to understand social reality in a subjective but scientific manner" (Zhang and Wildemuth 2009, 1).

4.4. Participants

The study targeted senior high school students who attend English-medium international schools. The participants came from different international schools and

different district areas of living. 31 participants were interviewed, varying between parents (females only, as male parents were busy and it was not possible to schedule a meeting with them), students (males and females) and teachers (males and females), one school director (female) and one school owner (male). The interviews took place in some parents' houses or in public places such as restaurants. All interviews were conducted in Arabic, and I personally translated them into English. Some of the interviews were recorded upon the interviewee's permission. Student participants of this adolescent stage (ages 12-16) have been chosen because the identity development issue becomes relevant to individuals through adolescence. I will be referring to participants by nicknames in the table below for the sake of privacy of the interlocutor's personal information (check appendix A).

4.5. Findings

This study included 31 participants, who were females and males, including parents, students and teachers. Six male students and six female students were interviewed; five male teachers and five female teachers were interviewed. 5 female parents were interviewed, 1 school director and 1 school owner. The researcher found difficulties in reaching male parents, due to their work conditions. Students of this study are attending grade 9, 10, 11 and 12-grade levels in different international schools in Cairo. The targeted students were chosen randomly for enhancing group diversity and avoiding biases. The first section of the interview was the “introducing yourself section” encompassing their name, age, grade level, school name and school type (American or British), and how many years the students have spent in this school. Data are shown in diagrams and charts in this section. All participants answered the questions and provided positive feedback about the interviews.

4.6. Discussion and Analysis

This research study's question was to investigate the influence of the international schooling system on Egyptian Muslim students' identity in Egypt. In the meantime, the results of this research will be discussed and analysed. With reference to interview data and literature reviews discussion, the findings will be evaluated and discussed throughout this chapter. This part will discuss the relationship between identity,

Islamic identity, and each language, culture, teacher's influence, and Islamic teachings and acts of worship.

4.6.1. Students' Cultural Alienation within School Culture (Cultural Instability)

The relation between schools' Western culture and its influence on students' local culture will be discussed here. The majority of interlocutors (parents) agreed that school culture was different from the local culture they encounter at home; according to them, it was closer to Western culture, which appears in their children's attitude and way of thinking. Majority of participants asserted that the school is not enhancing local culture enough through the school's extracurricular activities; one interviewee (a student) clarified that his school culture was closer to the local culture. Nevertheless, he clarified that the school imposed Western culture through events, ceremonies, and extracurricular activities. For example, interviewees during the interview addressed that the school was dedicating huge effort to celebrate events such as Christmas and Halloween. Such events did not exist in the local culture. Meanwhile, one student during the interview revealed that the school did celebrate some local events, but the dedicated effort is not equally the same. For Western events, more effort was being dedicated. In the same regard Mohamed, a school teacher, commented: "The school dedicated too much effort to prepare for a huge party for both ceremonies, something that affects student perception, as if we are adopting American culture in the school." (Mohamed, school teacher).

The researcher proposed that international schools alienate students from their local culture. The literature review confirmed the empirical data's results that the school's culture alienates students from their local culture. From the literature, according to Moracco and Moracco's argument on the impact of excessive exposure to Western-style education which leads to greater alienation from his own culture. That is to say, a person will become a stranger in his own community (Carnoy 1972; Galden 1957, in Moracco and Moracco 1987, 68-69).

The parent or the student himself may not notice this alienation during the years of education. Let us recall that in our literature discussion on alienation theory it was mentioned that alienation theory could be expanded to touch upon different domains

such as the educational domain. By expanding the theory of alienation, Gereluk argued that one of the themes of alienation is *estrangement*, in which “schools separate the “real people” who come to school from their lives as they are forced to lead them while in school. That is, the student is estranged not only from other people but from himself” (Gereluk 1974, 36). That is to say international schools impose Western culture by excessively exposing students to Western culture; hence they feel dissociated from their original culture. They no longer feel they strongly belonged to their local culture. Moreover, students’ answers corroborated this by expressing their feelings toward school culture:

Students in my school are interacting in a very strange way; they are trying to be Western, their way of joking is very different from how we interact at home. The culture of the school is no doubt Western. As they join the school from a very young age, students think that they feel that they are foreigners, not Egyptians.

(Ahmed, student in high school)

Ahmed expressed his feelings which he described as “strangeness” though this time not from his home culture but from his peers’ community as he stated it is “Westernized”. Noticeably, students act as if they are originally Western, dreaming of being better than or as good as Western individuals. In other words, to be from the elite. The West remains the dream for youth. In terms of better life standards and better education, students are aware of this. In fact, most of the students who are in international schools have visited Western countries, either on school trips or with their parents. They had the chance to compare life in Egypt and in Western states.

The environment of my school is closer to Western culture. The culture around my friends and me is Americanyia (American). The way we dress and the way we talk are close to the American way of life. Everyone of my age is listening to English music and watching English movies; we imitate each other.

(Celin, a high school student).

Celin describes her lifestyle and her peers at the school as “Americanyia” which is the American lifestyle. She is admitting their attempts to stimulate the American lifestyle. As the indicated date of the literature revealed, according to Baraka, “Americanization” is the ongoing process nowadays in Egypt (Baraka 2016, 135-42).

On the one hand, some students unconsciously adopt and follow the American lifestyle, including the American accent which they do their best to adopt, guided by school language criteria.

On the other hand, consistent with the literature discussed, the reasons for the adoption of Western culture in colonized societies as Fanon analysed the adoption of all European culture and lifestyle, including wearing European clothes and using the same expressions as the Europeans. It is a colonized people way of hope to gain equality with European accomplishments. Meanwhile, while analysing the black man's attitude, Fanon refers not only to blacks but to all colonized people (Fanon 2008). According to him, the consequence of colonization is the same, whether it is black people or Arabs, or any colonized race (Fanon 2008).

My study also examined the reason for celebrating Western events more than local or Islamic events. I have proposed that imposing Western culture is a systematic process for propagating Western culture, and as Cook argued, the outcome of Westernization was to create a group of elites. Features of the elite group are to act and spread Western attitudes through different channels (Cook 1999, 340-54). Schools were among these channels. Guided by the discussion above, it is clear that international schools aim to create elite groups.

Israa as a school principal, examined the phenomena of “celebrating Western events” as a way of proving that “We are an international, not national”:

Schools celebrate Western events to impress parents. Parents want to see the difference between national and international systems. Thus, we celebrate events such as Halloween and Christmas to prove that we are international, not national. It's one of the marketing strategies.
(Israa, school principal).

It is worth noting that Egyptians have been suffering from many problems related to the quality of education. The emergence of private schools has not increased the overall quality of education. The low quality of education has pushed many Egyptian parents to pay a good deal of money to access quality education for their children. Such an investment also heralds a better future career. They want to guarantee their children a

better place in the job market. Consistent with the literature, modes of Westernization are adopted by the rich, who can financially acquire and preserve Western culture (Baraka 2016, 135-42), which explains the vast fees required by international schools.

My study has also proposed that students behave in Western style to cope with their peers, aiming to gain a sense of membership with a particular social group. Which aligned with the indicated data of the literature. As the revealed data showed that in the context of social identification, two groups exist, the in-group, which includes people who share similarities to oneself, and the out-group, which includes people who share differences to one-self (Stets and Burke 2000, 224-37).

In light of the interviews' results and the literature review discussion, individuals are closer to categorize themselves within groups for the sake of a sense of belonging and membership. In order to do this, they have to act and behave in similar ways with respect to a particular social group. This type of categorization is common among peers and students in adolescence. During this age, some students may be more attracted to their peers than their parents. Indicative results of the interviews confirmed Hogg and Abrams' argument. According to Stets and Burke, students are more attracted to join in-groups of school peers than joining in-groups of the home and family (Stets and Burke 2000, 224-37). That is to say, students are motivated to participate in school Western events they share with their peers leading to a sense of membership:

“Every one of my age is listening to English music and watching English movies, and we imitate each other” (Celine, student). “Mohamed in that sense, said School culture is very toxic for me” (Mohamed, student).

Celine explained during the interview her attraction towards English culture, as she wanted to act the same as her peers. She said that they motivated each other; she felt belonged when she acted like her peers at her age. On the contrary, during the interview, Mohamed explained the culture of his school as "toxic". He noticed the difference between the culture of the school and the home culture. He was under stress all the time to cope with school culture, which, according to him, was totally different from the culture at home. Hence, he felt instability towards his local identity.

I have proposed that individuals create their own culture within the same society. And that school is a culture creation (Smith 2007, 4-27). Meanwhile, the interviewed parents' answers demonstrated that students adopt a distance from the home culture, which is the local culture of the society. In the literature review we have discussed Durkheim's concept of homogeneity of the society (Durkheim 1956). Durkheim referred to homogeneity as an essential element of any society to survive. Hence, education should promote the homogeneity of the society. The results of my research suggested that the school constrains homogeneity for the society by excessively exposing students to a Western culture more than their local culture. The study also confirmed students' cultural instability regarding what they faced in school and what they practiced at home. During the interviews, interviewees expressed this confusion:

My daughter thinks I belong to an old school of thought, and [that I am] very traditional. She doesn't like traditions, she wants to be modern and wants me to be modern too. She is very attracted to English singers and pop Western music in general. [There is] no Arabic culture in her lifestyle. My daughter wants to live abroad; not in Egypt.
(Eman, mother)

“The confusion appears obviously, when I discuss with my kids about Egyptian tradition and Egyptian culture, they say to me there is nothing called traditions, they tell me, “You belong to an old school, mom.” (Samer, Mother). Western culture's effect on student identity must be seriously discussed. It may be said to be an inner struggle as students are not directly instructed to be Westernized. However, the more the student is exposed to Western culture, the more she/he goes deep into it. Hence, students start to disassociate from their local culture and replace it with Western culture. As the literature review showed, when individuals are exceedingly exposed to a different culture, one of the possibilities is assimilation. Students reject their own culture to be closer to the new culture (Sam and Berry 2010, 472, 481). Hence, they become alienated from their local culture and community. Alienation here leads to demotivation towards participating in social activities. As has been suggested in the literature, they are not motivated to participate in local social activities, and hence they feel like strangers in their community (Sztompka 1993, 77-82). As I mentioned above, students, as a consequence, created their own community. They could share and interact with each other in a Western-style way, different from the way of the local

community. They spoke and behaved with their peer-group differently than with their family members.

4.6.2. Language Acquisition and Identity

To sum up, the literature review related language with culture, and Durkheim's analysis (1956) confirmed the results of my study, that speaking a language means adopting a culture. Durkheim asserted that "When we speak a language, we adopt a whole system of ideas" (Durkheim 1956).

The vast majority of the participants in my study confirmed that English is the dominant language in the school. Only one participant said that Arabic and English are equal languages in terms of conversation, though not in curriculum. All participants asserted that curriculum is provided in English for all subjects except the Arabic language class and a religious studies class if it existed, both of which follow the Egyptian Ministry of National Education Curriculum. According to them, Arabic and religious studies have the least number of sessions per week among the other subjects. Meanwhile, they demonstrated that students do not speak in English only in the school, but they mix both languages outside school, especially with peers of their age. All of the interviewees agreed on the weakness of students in writing and reading in Arabic, which is due to the hegemony of the English language in the school education system. On the other hand, during the interviews interlocutors indicated that the school's communication language was always English whether it was announcements or emails to both parents and students.

Some participants clarified during the interviews that school assessments and interviews were in English. Thus, the school was assessing the level proficiency of the English language for parents too. That is to say, the accent of the spoken English language was very important according to the school's criteria.

In this section, the relation between identity and foreign language acquisition will be discussed. It has been suggested earlier that in learning a language, individuals assimilate a culture as well. The literature review and interview results confirmed a strong relationship between a student's attitude and mastering the English language

more than Arabic, which is the local language. This has a significant effect on a student's identity. From the literature, Ali's examination of the test of English as a second language (ESL) newcomers into U.S. schools demonstrated that new ESL learners undergo a stressful phase when entering the school, as they have to assimilate with the school culture. Causing them to lose and deny their language and identity (Ali 2006, 628-639). My data from the interviews is consistent with Ali's approach.

“When I express myself, I use the English language, I find it easier, and I feel more comfortable expressing myself in English”. The school [too] warns us [that] if we speak in Arabic, we will have to pay a penalty”. (Hamza, a high school student). Hamza showed in the interview his willingness and attachment to express himself using the English language more than using his native language (Arabic language). Moreover, he revealed that he has to master the English language to perform well in academics and activities. Like many other participants, Hamza joined the school from a very young age. In school, he learned about the importance of the English language hence it's the importance to him. Schools obligate students to speak in English at all times, while putting constraints on speaking Arabic. He realized the importance of mastering the English language, and hence integrated into the school culture. Language is the gate of integration into school culture. Moreover, the majority of participants (students) revealed that they prefer the English language over the Arabic language in terms of reading a book, listening to music or watching a movie, as Jasmeen clarified, “When I choose a book to read, I choose English books, English music and English movies. It's easier for me to read in English”. (Jasmeen, a high school student). During the interview, Jasmeen expressed her desire to choose English as a first choice of medium for doing an activity. The majority of participants corroborated Jasmeen's answer. English books, music or movies were the first priority, and Arabic came as a second option or even not necessary to be an option.

Consistent with the literature, there is a positive relationship between a strong identity and language. According to Brown's study on Korean students in the U.S, it was argued that the more the student preserves the original language, the more he shows a strong sense of belonging, hence the stronger he or she feels positive towards his or her identity (Brown 2009, 2-12).

However, some factors play a significant role in the importance of the English language to the Egyptian local community. One of the main reasons for choosing an international education system according to interviewees is the “language proficiency” acquisition. The participants asserted that the level of language proficiency provided by international schools was very good compared to the level provided in national private or public schools.

I chose an international school because of the language, and the most important reason for joining is my career and future life. This is priority number one for me. the application form for any job is in English, my kids have to master English very well, to be able to apply for a good job.

(Eman, mother of a 15 year old-daughter)

Eman, like many other Egyptian as, was very concerned with her daughter’s future career. Due to the high level of competition in the job market, the applicants have to be competitive. A high level of English language is preferable in the Egyptian job market. Thus, parents push their kids to acquire and master the English language from a very young age. Therefore, parents are highly concerned with enrolling their kids in an international school. They hope that their kids will master the language that will qualify them for a better future career. On the other hand, Egyptian elites have put language proficiency criteria for jobs, so that this is now a requirement for a job in a reputable position in the Egyptian job market. This exactly what Essam revealed during the interview as he said “In the work domain, they don’t care about the sciences you have acquired, they care about your level of proficiency in English”(Mr.Essam teacher in high school).

It has been proposed that the lack of exposure to the native language led students to have a weak relationship with their native language. Thus, students’ answers revealed their weak relation with the Arabic language, which in turn had a negative impact on their identity formation process. Reem in this regard said, “While expressing myself, I have a small mental process, as if internally in my mind I think in English, but then when I speak, I phrase it in Arabic. I don’t know what to call this process”(Reem, a high school student).

Many participants like Reem explained their sensitivity towards expressing themselves in their native language. Nevertheless, they felt more comfortable expressing themselves in English. The English language is the main target and significant factor for Egyptian parents to choose a school for their children.

Guided by the discussion above, my study's results were consistent with the literature review. Interview answers affirmed the strong relationship between language acquisition and identity formation. Meanwhile, international schools excessively expose students to the English language at the expense of their native language, Arabic. Despite this fact, they institutionally limited students' exposure to their mother tongue by warning them not to speak in Arabic within the school campus. All of these factors resulted in significant dysfunction of the student's identity development process. Moreover, it had a negative impact on students' self-description of their identity. It's worth noting that adolescence is a crucial stage of a student's identity formation development, as Erikson (1968) has pointed out that youth during adolescence are able to define themselves in terms of who he or she is and are freer to take decisions away from their parents (Erikson 1986, in Alghorani 2003).

4.6.3. The Loss of Arabic Language

The vast majority of the participants affirmed that schools limited student exposure to the Arabic language. Some parents showed a disinterested stance towards preserving the native language (Arabic language). i.e., they were neither very concerned about its loss nor concerned about their children acquiring or preserving it. They justify this stance as they believe in the importance of the English language for the contemporary age, while Arabic language bears little importance. Other parents showed concern about engaging their children with Arabic language by bringing private tutors home to compensate for the weak role that their children's day schools play in introducing and developing the native language. However, they admitted that the substitution solution was not enough, but that this was the maximum they could do. At the same time, they showed their satisfaction with the quality of education the international school provided, regardless of the weak exposure to the original language. Samer said, "I enrolled [my children] in this school and I was fully aware that the school will not provide proper Arabic teaching. I try to compensate at home". (Samer, parent).

From the literature we have seen that the native language is a significant element of identity. Arabic is the only official language spoken in Egypt. In the realm of the importance of the Arabic language to Muslims, the 14th century historian-philosopher Ibn Khaldun, who made an outstanding contribution to the field. States explicitly in his famous book *The Muqaddimah*, that Muslims' interest in Arabic language comes as a result of the desire to learn and read the Qur'an and religious texts (Osman 2003).

However, international schools do not give great importance to teaching Arabic to students, and the Arabic language is marginalized. All of the participants agreed on the marginalization of the Arabic language in international schools. Such an act gives a negative sign to students of the little importance of their native language. It is a kind of superior-inferior relationship, but in the language context. This affects students' identity and how they perceive themselves as Arabs, revisiting Fanon's discussion about how black men perceive themselves as inferior to white men. Thus, Egyptians are speaking the white man's language to perceive themselves better. It is an ongoing attempt to speak the Western language to have a better self-image. "Students in my school cannot write or read Arabic in a proper way. In fact, they don't care. They show off that they are not good enough in Arabic and they are better in English". (Essam, teacher in high school).

The literature confirmed the results of my study regarding the problem of taking pride in speaking a colonial language over the native language. Azmi et al. demonstrate that students have a sense of pride in mastering the English language and show off their English language skills over their original language (Azmi et al. 2020, 767-77). Fanon's language discussion claimed that all colonized people are directly related to civilizing language (Fanon 2008). He explained the need for the colonized to learn the colonizer's language. By mastering this language, he or she becomes civilized as well. Guided from the discussion above, we can see Egyptian students felt a sense of pride while mastering the English language, or the language of the civilized West.

On the other hand, they do not practice the Arabic language during the limited time determined by the school. This affects their ability to read the Qur'an. Ali, a teacher of religious studies, explained this issue when he said:

Due to students' weakness in the Arabic language, I have to use English words to explain Islamic terms in the Islamic studies session [which is] one of the two sessions per week that is in the Arabic language. Students are not interested in reading the Qur'an because it's in Arabic. Arabic language has become a difficult language for them. Moreover, they don't feel its importance. So, the environment around them is concerned with the importance of the English language, ignoring the significance of Arabic.

(Ali, a religious studies teacher)

Ali highlighted the problem of less exposure to the native language and more exposure to the English language, which leads to students' inability to practice or study in their native language. During the interview, he justified his views by saying, "I have nothing to do, I want students to understand. I ceded one of the subject's significant aims, which is practicing the Arabic language for the sake of students' understanding" (Ali, a religious studies teacher).

4.6.4. Islamic Teachings and Islamic Identity Development

Interlocutors agreed on the marginalization of religion within the international schooling system. The majority of the participants asserted that school did not provide minimal systematic Islamic teachings or introduction to Islamic rituals. Meanwhile, twenty-five percent of the participants acknowledged that while school provided a place for salah prayer, no one was calling for it, it was optional and an individual responsibility. Few participants revealed that the school was trying to provide only minimum Islamic teachings, like calling for salah. For their part, during interviews the parents showed various stances toward the low or entirely absent level of Islamic teachings provided by the school. Some parents expressed their concern about the school's inadequate effort towards teaching and fostering Islamic teachings. Thus, they had to appoint a sheikh (a type of religious instructor) at home to compensate. Other parents felt they were not so concerned about Islamic teachings being provided by the school. They elaborated that religion should be taught at home, as it is a family responsibility.

This section has discussed the interrelationship between Islamic identity and the importance of acts of worship. It was proposed that international schools do not foster religious identity within school activities, which has a negative effect on the student's identity development process. Many

participants revealed during interviews that religious awareness is very little or doesn't exist as Samar clarified "There is no religious awareness or guidance in the school, they don't mention anything about religion at all".
(Samer, parent).

The literature review suggested that religion is a significant factor that enhances an individual's sense of belonging. According to Klitmøller and Jensen's study, students need discussion of religion between each other and their teachers while doing any activity, though not necessarily only during religious activities. The findings of the study confirmed that students through religious discussion develop a sense of unity and membership (Klitmøller and Jensen 2019, 29-46).

It was suggested by this study that school plays a significant role in fostering a student's Islamic identity, which needs strong Islamic knowledge and regular acts of worship to be formulated. From the literature, identity is about practicing, in addition to that, Islamic rituals practices are essential for forming Islamic identity. The literature confirmed results of my study that the importance of practicing Islamic rituals and enhancing Islamic teachings in the school are crucial to developing a student's identity. King has argued that Islamic rituals enhance a sense of belonging (King 2003, 197-203); thus, it enhances identity. In the same context, Erikson and King pointed out the importance of practicing Islamic rituals in enhancing a sense of belonging and membership. Both referred to *salah* (prayer) as an example of repetitive acts that bring people close to their community. With this act, Muslims experience solidarity with other Muslims (King 2003, 197-203), hence feel they belonged. Belonging, on the other hand, is one of the main factors of formulating one's identity.

Meanwhile, the interviewed students clarified that there was no call for *salah* (known as *adhan*) throughout the day in the school. Hence, the school did not consider Islamic rituals as worthy of ex-classroom instruction on a regular basis during school days. However, every day in the school, students are at school during the *salat al Dhuhur* time (i.e., the afternoon prayer). Although there was a prayer room in some schools, there was no *adhan*. Interlocutors also expressed that neither teachers nor school administration dedicate any effort to introduce the importance of religious practices,

including salah. If a student decided to pray during the school day, they would be considered as odd:

There is no religious teachings or awareness [of it] in the school. If one of the students attempts to pray, he will be considered odd to his peers. My daughter feels shy to pray at school; thus, she prays when she gets home, even if she would miss praying on [the specified] time.
(Rola, parent).

During the interview Rola addressed her concern about her daughter's knowledge about another religion more than her own religion (Islam). She said, "My daughter knows about Christianity more than she knows about Islam, which worries me a lot". Rola's daughter's school celebrated Christmas events but not Islamic events. Like many other parents, Rola has been trying to impart religious teachings to her children from a very young age. Meanwhile, school was working in another direction whereby it did not introduce the importance of religion to students. By not encouraging the religious practices within the school, Rola said, students risked losing the value of religious rituals and religious knowledge.

She expressed her helplessness of her child's school only celebrating Western events and not Islamic events. The problem here is that if students are not exposed to proper religious teachings or do not practice religious rituals, the value of the act would be lost. Prayer is considered one of the fundamental pillars of Islam. One of its main features is that it has to be performed at specific timings. Moreover, "one-way religion promotes a sense of belonging, is through religious rituals" (Erikson 1965, in King 2003, 200).

The results of this study demonstrated that religious ideology is an important domain of identity for Muslims. The findings of this study revealed the interrelationship between religious ideology and Muslim identity, in which religious ideology plays a fundamental role in constituting Muslim's identity.

While some parents accepted the status quo, and they believed in compensating religious teachings at home by hiring a sheikh. They felt that this would not be the ideal solution, but it could be an ad-hoc solution. They believed that Islamic teachings should be a shared responsibility between school and home. Meanwhile, other parents

argued that the school is not responsible for providing any Islamic teachings and this is entirely a private or home (family) responsibility. By not providing any type of Islamic teachings, international schools deliver the message that religion is a personal responsibility, which is one of the main aims of secularism. By also establishing a place for prayer but not referring to or mentioning its existence, it links religious acts with individuality. The literature review confirmed the findings of this study, as the literature review indicated that Westernization aims at separating religion from life, as Cook argued, religion becomes a personal responsibility.

The literature discussed above supported my study's findings, as reflected in Sherman's study on Jewish students (Sherman 2021). Sherman's study's findings (2021) revealed that students who study in religious schools and practice religion showed a positive attitude towards religion. They showed a strong religious ideology. In the same context, more discussions of the literature review supported that adolescents by nature tend to feel a sense of membership and act, and behave the same way as their peers. Meanwhile, from the literature and according to a study conducted by Azmi et al. (2020) the results have shown that practicing Islamic rituals, which includes praying five times a day and learning to wear proper Islamic attire, helps them construct a strong Islamic identity. My study revealed in a similar vein that students are taught in the school to wear Western clothes, for example, to wear specific costumes in the Western-style events conducted by the school or by imitating foreign teachers.

4.6.5. Parents Motivation Towards Enrolling Their Children in International Schools

Interviewed parents indicated that the motivation towards enrolling their children in the international education system depended on many factors. The majority affirmed that the most significant reason is the high level of quality of education provided by these schools. In terms of advancement of education techniques, technological equipment and facilities and the qualified teachers they hired. Answers from half of the parents' interviewed revealed that the most fundamental factor for them was escaping from the national education high school (*Thanweya amma*). One common answer was provided by most of the Egyptian parents during the interview, when asked

about the reasons behind enrolling their children into the international education system, this answer was very common: “The future career” or “We want to guarantee a good future career for our children”. discussion in the literature review was confirmed by my study’s results and the findings from the interviews. These answers support the commonly-held belief in the superiority of the Western foreigner over the locals. In other words, parents trust Western teachers more than the local ones. Consistent with the literature review, the competition in the private sector is very high in Egypt. In the foreign sector, candidates can earn double what they can make in the local private sector (Hargreaves 1997, 161-76). On the other hand, parents explained their interest in joining international schools due to the belief that the school enhances and the high level of proficiency in English. The indicated results of the interview demonstrated that international schools have adequate facilities and they hire professional teachers (El Mashad 2012).

Meanwhile, the teaching techniques and the high level of language proficiency are advanced advantages for the international system that makes parents aspire to join the international education system. The literature addressed the fact that international schools in Egypt are becoming more attractive in the contemporary times due to the benefits students are gaining and getting in return in terms of future careers and opportunities (Hargreaves 1997, 161-76). The following are some of the views expressed by my participants in this regard “The quality of education is super. It enables critical thinking and helps students to have a wider vision towards life” (Heba, parent). In the same sense, Eman said;

The international education system has many advantages, it enhances self-taught study and project-based learning. The quality of education is also one of the advantages. And the most important reason is the “career”, the future life, this is priority number one for me.
(Eman, mother)

In the same regard, “In my point of view people are attracted to the international education system due to its ease compared to the national system plus the quality of education of the international system” (Ameen, a high school teacher). Guided by the data presented above, guaranteeing an excellent future career is the main reason parents choose an international school. The job market in Egypt requires certain

qualifications for the better jobs, with mastery in the English language a significant one. Meanwhile, one of the interlocutors, a school owner, clarified four main reasons for establishing new international schools every year. One of these reasons is the parents themselves, as they sought good quality of education and were willing to pay a lot of money to get this service. This also encouraged investors in Egypt to invest in this field.

Investors now have the motive to establish new international schools every year. They are sure that they will find customers (parents). International schools in Egypt have doubled their growth rate in the last five years.
(Mohamed, school owner)

4.6.6. Influence of Excessive Exposure to Western-style Education on Student's Identity (Students' Culture and Identity Instability)

My study investigated the relationship between identity and the influence of international education among adolescents. The existing literature indicates that there is a strong relationship between the identity formation process and the education system. In this section, the correlation between school and identity formation will be discussed. The vast majority of interlocutors agreed that school was not performing any role in enhancing students' identity.

At the same time, as we have seen above, schools hindered students' Islamic and Egyptian Arab identity development process. That is because according to them, the hegemony of Western culture and the Western-type atmosphere in the school. And students show instability towards their identity According to Bucholtz, there are two different types of identity practices, positive and negative. The negative is the one in which individuals detach themselves from a specific identity, and the positive when individuals attach themselves to a particular identity (Bucholtz 1999, 203-23). My study's findings and interview results confirmed this approach. Students are experiencing a dysfunction in their identity development process as they detach themselves from local culture and attach themselves to Western culture.

Nonetheless, some parents believe that exposure to an extent to different cultures may help students be more open to the other world, and thus, it has a positive impact

on their character. Meanwhile, they want the school to do more to foster local identity.

It has been proposed by this study that the adolescence phase is essential for the identity formation process. Consistent with my findings, Erikson (1986) has also established the importance of the adolescence stage in the identity formation process. Thus both the literature and my study concur that education either has a positive influence or negative influence on the identity formation process. Moreover, during the adolescence stage youth are better able to define themselves based on cognitive functioning. In addition to that, they are able to define themselves in terms of who they are and are freer to shift the decision-making away from their parents (Alghorani 2003). Guitart confirmed the strong relationship between the identity formation process and education. He argued that students through education years should practice identity. He also argued that the learning process should aim at two main transformation goals, behavioural and identity (Guitart 2019, 159-76). In the same context, investment in identity was one of the main arguments Guitart tackled. He argued, learning aims at transforming identities among learners (Guitart 2019, 159-76).

With respect to identity formation within the school, participants showed different stances towards the process. Some believed that the school has a significant role in enhancing a student's identity, but their school is not performing this role. Nevertheless, it enhances other subcultures as Jana revealed during the interview, "The school culture is closer to Western culture, and sure, it has an effect on student's identity (Jana, high school student).

During the interview, Jana explained her relation to the local identity in terms of lack of experience with it". She noted that "everything around me is very Western, the school, the places I go to with my peers, and the music I listen to and the movies I watch. I have not fully experienced local culture. I was exposed to Western culture along with my friends. I joined school when I was five years old, speaking most of the time in English. Practicing Western culture, this is what I have become."

It was hypothesised that students are not practicing identity in the school, and neither the curriculum nor school culture support Egyptian identity, which correspond with my study's findings and interview results. The literature showed according to Guitart, that identity should be practiced throughout school years. Moreover, identity is not about words to be taught, it's a process of practicing (Guitart 2019, 159-76). The interviews revealed that students were not practicing their local identity at school, they were not even exposed to it, rather they were exposed to and practiced Western culture, in that sense Israa said, "Due to the deployment of Western culture in the school, the student's identity has definitely been affected" (Israa, school principal).

Israa confirmed the relationship between school culture and identity. During the interview, she described the school environment as a non-Egyptian environment, in addition to which she indicated the school's desire to apply Western culture while neglecting local culture, which has a substantial effect in enhancing students' identity.

Rola, a mother of a high school girl in an international school, expressed her feelings by saying: "School doesn't help me to strengthen my daughter's local or Islamic identity". During the interview, Rola stressed that the school was not performing any role in fostering her daughter's identity the responsibility for which lay at home alone, though it is not sufficient.

The indicated data of the findings of the interviews show that schools were not dedicating any effort in enhancing a student's local identity. Hence, the school was not performing its major role of reinforcing student's identity formation development, and that students were not practicing identity in the school.

This aligns with the literature review. According to Abbasi (2016) who linking the school day and the identity formation process, has referred to the amount of time spent in school as a crucial factor in shaping student's identity. Thus, school activities should be designed based on this aim. Moreover, the school's mission and vision should serve to accomplish this aim.

Confirmed with the indicative data of the literature, according to Darder, bicultural identity exists when subordinate culture groups struggle to maintain their cultural identity (Darder 2011, 199-212). It was suggested by this study that Egyptian students are closer to “assimilation strategy”, as they acquire the Western culture at the expense of their local culture. Based on Berry and Sam’s argument, assimilation strategy means that individuals reject their local culture for the sake of getting closer to an Other culture aimed at social change. That is to say, they act, dress and speak more comfortably in a Western culture than their local culture (Berry and Sam 2010, 472-81).

4.6.7. Teachers’ Role in the Student’s Identity Development Process

My study hypothesized that teachers have a fundamental role in affecting students in many aspects. Most of the interlocutors (parents and teachers) expressed their concern towards Western teachers’ attitude. Parents addressed their point of view of the importance of having foreign teachers to teach their students, especially for language (English language). However, they were greatly concerned about the Western teachers’ backgrounds and culture. “The students learn and master the language from the foreigner teacher. But, foreigners have their own ideology which is different from ours as Egyptians and Muslims” (Rola, a mother of a high school student).

Meanwhile, some students expressed their desire to have Egyptian teachers for the sake of intimacy, as they felt more intimate with Egyptian teachers. Raghda for example said, “I prefer to have Egyptian teachers rather than having foreigners, to feel more intimacy with them” (Raghad, a student in high school).

The study’s findings are consistent with literature review; it was proposed by this study that school’s Western culture constrains student's local/Islamic identity development process. From the literature, Illich emphasized the impact of teachers over pupils, he argued that the teacher should be the role model for the student; meanwhile the teacher should guide students towards right and wrong not only in the school but in the social life as a whole (Illich 1973, 15). In the same regard, Gunderson emphasizes the teacher’s role in affecting student’s culture while

teaching academics. He argued “Identity relates to how well a student does well in school and society” (Gunderson 2000, 693). What Illich and Gunderson pointed out confirms the study results, that teachers have a huge influence on student’s identity. The relationship between student and teacher is not only an academic relation, but it is above all a social relationship. That is to say, when students and teachers contribute and share different cultural experiences, they create a culture. Teachers and students influence one another as the school year progresses (Smith 2007).

Teachers come to class with their own ideology and own perspective. Perspectives and ideologies have been formulated based on previous cultural practices (Smith 2007, 4-27). When the teachers are foreigners to a certain culture, they will contribute with their ideologies and different cultural perspectives. In some cases, though “The ascendancy that the teacher naturally has over his pupil, because of the superiority of his experience and of his culture, will naturally give to his influence the efficacious force that he needs” (Durkheim 1956, 86).

In same regard of foreign teacher’s influence Mustapha has contributed as he said, “There is another fundamental problem from my point of view, the foreign teachers with dual nationalities. They have different backgrounds and different ideologies, they transfer these backgrounds and ideologies to students, which is problematic. The topics of discussions usually contain alcohol, relationships and smoking which we find difficulties dealing with”. (Mustapha, religious teacher). Meanwhile, Marwa as a parent has interpreted the issue as she said, the problem of the foreigner teachers is that they discuss any topic without considering cultural and religious differences (Marwa, parent).

The indicated literature findings revealed that teachers are a fundamental means of affecting a student’s culture and affecting his identity formation process. As we mentioned above, the identity formation process consists of culture as an essential element. A student’s ideology gets influenced by the teacher’s ideology. To conclude, international schools do not limit the borders to foreign teachers; they do not consider cultural barriers. Thus, foreign teachers act and behave in the same way as they are in a Western country, neglecting cultural differences. Teachers freely share their ideology in the classroom; students absorb this ideology, which affects

their identity formation process. On one hand, this creates an internal struggle within the student. On the other hand, it causes students to show instability towards their local identity.

In the teacher-student relationship discussion, Alsaati argued that due to cultural colonialism many changes have been made in society, and one of the main factors of for these changes was that foreign teachers' impact on students. "cultural dependency is transmitted from teachers to students" (Abaza 2002, 146-147).

Guided by the discussion above, a teacher significantly impacts students not less than the culture or language. The social relations that arise in the classroom are one of the factors that constitute the culture, and as we mentioned earlier school is a culture creation. Parents and school management have to pay attention to these important factors. They should consider the cultural differences and different ideologies of the foreign teachers.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

The overall aim of this study was to give an advanced understanding of the interrelationships between international schools' Western culture and Muslim students' identity. Joining international schools that provide Western education has become an aspiration in Egypt particularly among upper-class or the elite nowadays. This study attempted to provide an understanding of the historical background of Egyptian society in terms of modernization and Westernization including cultural and educational aspects by analysing cultural transformation from the era of Mohamed Ali Pasha till our contemporary time. The rising status of Western-style education started with the time of colonization and continued till the post-colonization period. The historical context of Egypt was a motive for me to search in this topic. However, Western education was transmitted to Muslim countries through colonizers under the name of modernity; on the other hand, it has been implicitly based on secularism and separates religion and life (Abu Bakar and Abdullah 2015, 363). Modern schools were established to penetrate the Muslim world, consequently traditional Islamic schools (madrasas) dramatically decreased. The mission of this project has been to contribute to a broader analysis of the relationships between identity, religious identity and school culture.

This thesis focused on investigating identity issues within international schools' Western culture. Thus, the main question I attempted to answer in this study was, how have schools' Western culture influenced Muslim students' identity development process? Furthermore, what is the impact of Western education on Muslim students' identity? How does English language hegemony hinder students' Arabic language development as a native language? To what extent do Western-type life practices within the school alienate students from their religious identity?

With these aims in the first chapter I began with a review of literature about culture and education and their relation to identity and religious identity development process. I examined in the first chapter the factors that affect a student's local culture and identity. I showed how school culture has a huge influence on student's identity formation process by demonstrating different studies of students' attitudes while excessively exposed to a Western culture. The first chapter also showed the importance of education as an essential element of student's identity formation. I also clarified how language plays an essential role in shaping a student's identity. One of the main points highlighted by interlocutors was that they prefer to read, write and express themselves in English more than in Arabic. I found that preference as a threat to a student's local or Islamic identity development process. As Fanon argued, when one speaks a language, one assumes a culture (Fanon 2008, 1-2).

In the second chapter I discussed the effect of modernization and Westernization of the education system of Egypt by analysing different stages since the Egyptian society encountered modernization at the time of Ali Pasha. The study's findings confirmed the spreading of English-medium international schools. A thing that Al-Baraka referred to, Westernization has different forms not only European influence. Such as the ideology of Americanization trend which appears clearly in international English-speaking schools. One crucial point interviewees highlighted during the interview was that the school's culture and peers' attitude are "Americanyia" which indicates the hegemonic role of the English language and English culture in Egyptian society.

The results of the study answered the research questions. For the first question, the results revealed that the international education system influences students' identity and religious identity. Meanwhile, the findings confirmed the negative influence on the student identity development process as students showed instability in their identity development revealed by the interlocutor's answers. The majority of students showed potential attraction towards practicing the Western culture in terms of Western events and ceremonies such as Christmas, Halloween, etc. Meanwhile, there was an obvious absence of local cultural and Islamic events, such as national ceremonies, Ramadan (the holy month) and Eid (feast). As this study confirmed, culture and identity are about practices.

The results of the study revealed different attitudes of parents towards their children's identity development process within the school culture. Some of them believed that it is the school's mission to develop student's identities. Others think that it is the family and private responsibility to foster student's identity development.

This study answered the question of the research of Western education weakening Muslim students' religious identity. The study showed that Western education had a fundamental influence on a student's Islamic identity. The findings of this study proved that students did not experience any Islamic rituals or acts of worship within the school and don't get proper knowledge about religion (Islam). As Lewis argued, practicing and committing to the main pillars of Islam by Muslims as so constitute a universal Islamic identity. Also, students did not receive adequate Islamic orientation within the school system. This is what Azmi et al. pointed out to, that introducing Islamic rituals to students is essential for their Islamic identity. Consistent with this study's findings, students believe practicing prayer five times a day and wearing Islamic attire positively affects their Islamic identity (Azmi et al. 2000, 767-77).

This study helped to answer the question of English language hegemony in international schools and its impact on students' identity. The results showed that Egyptian parents showed different stances in the paradox of students' limited exposure to the native language (Arabic language), and excessive exposure to English language. Some parents did not feel concerned on the lack of learning Arabic in the school, as they saw the Arabic language as being of little importance and English language as being of a high of importance. In the meantime, it delivers a negative message to students, which affects their self-perception as Arabs and Egyptians. As Brown's study results are consistent with this study result; findings revealed that individuals with strong language heritage presented a strong sense of personal identification (Brown 2009, 2-12). In addition to that, according to Brown, there is a strong relationship between language and identity. He found that students who perceived strongly and proficiently in their native language show a positive identity (Brown 2009, 2-12).

The study examined the question of: 'to what extent international school alienates students from their local culture by overexposing them to a Western culture and

limiting their exposure to their local culture. This is what the interview results revealed as the majority of the interlocutors asserted that they noticed the difference between their children's behaviour towards their native culture and family members after joining the international education system, and their behaviour with their peers. This is what Gereluk referred to as "expanding alienation theory"; he emphasized the estrangement feeling, in which school separates individuals from their original life. Moreover, in alienation theory, people who got alienated felt demotivated to participate in any social activity. This is exactly what the interviewees' results mirrored; while parents confirmed that their children are not anymore attached to local culture and traditional activities.

To conclude, this study succeeded in answering and investigating research questions. On the one hand, this study shed light on the problem of identity and the international education system which is Western system. On the other hand, it paved the way for other researchers to conduct further studies on the same issue using this study's findings. This study may be eye-opening for parents and school owners alike in reconsidering children's local and Islamic identity within the school culture. As this study proposed, graduates of these international schools become the elite of the society which indicates the importance of giving a great attention to the culture that will shape their minds and construct their identity and ideology.

5.1. Limitations and Significance for Further Studies

This study focused on high school students' grade levels, 9 through 12. Due to time constraints, it was not possible to investigate other grades. Meanwhile, this study focused on English-medium international schools only; though Egypt encompasses other types of international schools such as French, Dutch and German schools. It would be significant if other researchers examined other grade levels and compared and contrasted with finding of this study. This study has only examined the school's culture and English language hegemony of the schooling system. Further studies can be done to investigate other factors such as the school curriculum and media influence on student's identity development process.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

The table below indicates interviewees' nicknames.

Participants' name	Sex	Grade level	Job
1 Rana	Female	High School	Teacher
2 Essam	Male	High School	Teacher
3 Mustapha	Male	High School	Teacher
4 Yousra	Female	High School	Teacher
5 Reem	Female	High School	Student
6 Kareem	Male	High School	Student
7 Rola	Female		Parent
8 Mohamed	Male	High school	Student
9 Eman	Female		Parent
10 Hamza	Male	High school	Student
11 Ahmed	Male	High school	Student
12 Marwa	Female		Parent
13 Muhamed	Male	High school	Student
14 Rasha	Female		Parent

15 Celin	Female	High school	Parent
16 Samar	Female		Parent
17 Alia	Female	High school	Student
18 Kareem	Male	High school	Student
19 Heba	Female		Parent
20 Ghada	Female		Parent
21 Ameen	Male		Teacher
22 Alia	Female		Student
23 Jasmin	Female		Student
24 Jana	Female		Student
25 Manal	Female		Parent
26 Ahmed H	Male	High school	Student
27 Israa	Female		School principle
28 Muhamed A	Male		Student
29 Ali S.	Male		Teacher
30 Amira	Female		Teacher
31 Ghada B	Female		Teacher

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