

**Towards an understanding of the *caring* phenomenon- why is
it so topical? A search for its role and its attributes in holistic
education**

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In the name of Allah the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

1. Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created.
2. Created man from a clot.
3. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous.
4. Who has taught man that which he knew not.

Al-Alaq (The Clot)
(Qur'an 96:1-4)

Dedicated to my parents

my wife - Faiza

my daughters – Maryam, Eshaal and Minnah

*and my teachers that have done the work which is specifically the domain
of the Prophets who were sent in this world to guide the human race with
knowledge and wisdom.*

May Allah bless you all.

Amen.

ABSTRACT

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Traditional liberal education has provided one-size-fits-all schooling, followed by neoliberal policies in the past 30 years, resulting in losing the purpose of education to build well-rounded personalities and to ensure quality education for all. Instead, the ideal today is the homo economicus able to further personal goals on self-interest, and the global divide between the haves and have-nots has increased.

The research problem rises from the alternative view to the purpose of education, to fostering the learner's full human growth, and focuses on holistic education as expressed in the ethics of care theory of Nel Noddings and my life experiences in four diverse learning cultures.

Meta-analysis and auto-ethnography were used as research methods. Noddings' work on the *care* phenomenon was studied with meta-analysis. Auto-ethnography based on my educational experiences from four different cultures was employed to spot the holistic education interrelationships with the care theory of Noddings.

Noddings' themes of care are interwoven into holistic education via inquiry, dialogue, response and reflection. These and the auto-ethnographic data correspond with the conceptual framework of holistic education created from relevant theory in the study, connecting the physical, intellectual, emotional, social, creative, and spiritual, into interconnectedness and self-actualization. The author's voice lends insightful support to Noddings' propositions of care into the development of a holistic individual, emphasizing equality, purposefulness and meaning of education.

Keywords: care, attributes, holistic education, wholeness, neoliberal education, auto-ethnography

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The master thesis is the gradual culmination of the entire two year degree program. It has been the reflection of the two year academic rigor that has resulted out of the courageous, creative, humble, professional and caring efforts of all those involved in the teaching and learning process. All those from whom I was continuously inspired to learn have been the source of light in an effort to search for intellectual excellence that has been immeasurably satisfying.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Branson and Gross (2014, p. 1) assert that unethical leadership has no limits. The globalized world has become increasingly complicated, less tolerant and intensely contested. In the past couple of decades an increasing number of phenomenally extensive white collar crimes have been disclosed, with the common feature of unscrupulous individual gain and bottomless harm to the wider society. In the wake of the Panama Papers, the global ethical collapse has only further exposed yet another truth. This development is widely attributed to neo-liberalist economic global order. Paulo Freire in his seminal work – *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, voices the continuous demise of human dignity due to abhorrent social injustices. As a radical educator, Freire (1970, p. 25-26) argues:

We need to say no to the neoliberal fatalism that we are witnessing at the end of this century, informed by the ethics of the market, an ethics in which a minority makes most profits against the lives of the majority. In other words, those who cannot compete, die. This is a perverse ethics that, in fact, lacks ethics. I insist on saying that I continue to be human ... I would then remain the last educator in the world to say no: I do not accept. . . history as determinism. I embrace history as possibility (where) we can demystify the evil in this perverse fatalism that characterizes the neoliberal discourse in the end of this century.

In the perspective of recent events there is substantial evidence of unrest both at the global and regional, as well as at the social level, e.g. war in the Middle East and the migration crisis, Islamic terrorism, drug trafficking, sex related disease, gender related violence and so on.

Education is always about power, about whether it reproduces the existing society, renews it or leaves it astray. As education is claimed to be the foundation for the sound development of humans into responsible and knowledgeable individuals and citizens conducive to their communities, organizations and societies, the question in regards to the said circumstances is whether the kind of education that is provided throughout the world is missing the point. (Branson & Gross, 2014).

This research focuses on exploring the care phenomenon and its importance for holistic education, exploring the ethics of care theory of Noddings, specifically. The research tools used are meta-analysis of the texts of Noddings and auto-ethnographic account of the author's voice.

1.1 My personal motivation

Before I go on further to point towards the motivation for selecting the topic on *care*, I wish to give some information of my background, since I consider it important that lifelong learning experiences have contributed to my interest in the topic. At the moment it will be brief, however, in the due course of this write-up, I will include from the repertoire of my life experiences.

I was born in a West African country, Nigeria, in a small town called Minna in the early 1970's. Both of my parents were employed, my father a civil engineer worked for the Ministry of Housing and Environment and my mother was a teacher at the Women Teacher's College (WTC). I could fluently speak the local language, Hausa, and knew the cultural norms. I spent time in Minna for the major part of my teens and returned to Pakistan in the year 1990. For me Pakistan was a totally new country and the initial years were quite rough as a young adult. As the years passed I began to feel at home. I received my primary and secondary education from Minna Nigeria, my college and university education from Lahore Pakistan, a master's degree from Sweden and am now studying in Finland. During my teaching years from 2007 to 2013, I deeply felt the need to learn about education systems tagged with best leadership practices that cater to the changing learning needs. My studies in Finland in the field of educational leadership have been pivotal because they overarch the education system and the dynamics of leadership within that domain. During the studies, I got introduced to the concept of *care* in education, and I almost immediately began to realize its impact on learning and development by re-evaluating my past to the present day. The opportunity came by when I read Nel Noddings' book "The Challenge to Care in Schools—An alternative approach to education". I felt that it was describing my life, especially the time I had spent in Minna, Nigeria. I began to configure bits and pieces of *care* wherever I could spot them by reflecting back and forth in the fabric of my life.

2 CONTEXT OF STUDY

2.1 On neoliberalism

I will first provide an outline into the white collar crimes along with others as I referred to above, since I see a connection between them and the lack of holistic education; a detailed account of my examples is available as Appendix 1 of this thesis. I also discuss the economic inequalities and inequalities of education. The main objective is to highlight the intensity of such events disclosed since the early 1980s as a grounding for my research topic that revolves around holistic education.

The wealth of the huge white collar crimes disclosed in the recent decades come from a wide range. In banking and finance, money laundering and accounting scandals such as WorldCom, BCCI, Tyco, Yukos Oil Company, Adelphia, Enron, HIH Insurance, Urban Bank Philippines, Parmalat etc., are some of the few, topped by only the financial meltdown at the global scale. The same goes for the lethargic response of governments in supporting their people when natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina strike, the inequalities in education, arms and drugs trafficking, the sale of nuclear technologies, management of prostitution, the commission and facilitation of tax evasion, supporting terrorism, bribing key officials, smuggling, illegal immigration and the illicit purchases of banks and real estate. At this moment we are witnessing the evasion of humanitarian responsibility e.g. in the European Union and the Gulf Arab countries in the face of migrations of peoples resulting from years long warring in the Middle East and environmental catastrophes.

In a globalized world, the human population is faced with a continuous divide between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' for reasons such as poverty, lack of sufficient quality of and access to education, lack of basic health services, ineffective social security, social injustice, unemployment etc. These inequalities have become pandemic in nature and no country is completely safe though admittedly, access to basic education increased during the Millennium Development Goals (UN, 2015, p. 4). Relative to their individual country circumstances of the present times, there exists a great variation of the threat that is working its way to cease the collective good of any society. Even the 'land of opportunity' which is commonly referred to the United States of America is gripped with raging inequalities sprouting from unequal distribution of wealth. The

world houses 1,826 billionaires each with an average wealth of \$3.8 billion, and out of these United States has 536 billionaires (Kishore, 2015). Early in 2015 Oxford Committee for Famine Relief, Oxfam, an anti-poverty organization, reported that by 2016, the wealthiest 1% would possess more than the remaining 99% of the global population wealth; over a billion people globally earn less than \$1.25 per person per day where 1 in 9 people remain hungry (Oxfam, 2015a). As of 2014, the wealth of the top 80 billionaires of the world increased by \$600 billion in 4 years with their aggregate wealth of \$1.9 trillion (Oxfam, 2015b, p. 3).

“Inequality Watch” (2012) elucidated in its article, “The rise of income inequality amongst rich countries” that in the most egalitarian rich societies - the Nordic countries, income inequality has increased significantly. For the first time the trends in the 2000’s revealed a widening gap between the rich and poor, especially in the traditionally low-inequality Nordic countries with inequality surpassing elsewhere. What does this mean? Table 1 shows that in a period of 25 years, the Gini-coefficient¹ on average increased from 0.216~0.22 in 1985 to 0.255~0.26 in 2008 (Inequality Watch, 2012). Also according to the OECD (2012, p. 30), the rise of inequality in most high income countries since the 1980s is a fact.

TABLE 1 Trends in Income Inequality in Countries Where it Increased Significantly.
(Adapted from Inequality Watch, 2012)

	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2008
Finland	-	0.22	0.22	0.25	0.27	0.26
Sweden	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.24	0.24	0.26
Denmark	0.22	0.23	0.21	0.23	0.23	0.25
Norway	0.22	0.23	0.24	0.25	0.28	0.25

Another indication of the rising disparity is the wage difference. In the United States the wage difference between CEO’s and average workers is a multiple of 331 and with minimum wage earners it is a multiple of 774 (Dill, 2014). From the period 1978 to 2013, the high tide of neoliberal economic policies, CEO compensation increased by 937%, a rise more than double the stock market growth while the typical worker’s

¹ Gini-coefficient: A measurement of the income distribution of a country's residents. This number, which ranges between 0 and 1 and is based on residents' net income, helps define the gap between the rich and the poor, with 0 representing perfect equality and 1 representing perfect inequality.

compensation growth rate was 10.2% for the same period. In the year 2013, the average CEO pay was \$24.8 million and the CEO to worker compensation ratio was 510.7 to 1. (Mishel & Davis, 2014, p. 2). In contrast to the United States, the CEO to worker pay ratio in other countries is: Austria, 36 to 1; Denmark, 48 to 1; France, 104 to 1; Germany, 147 to 1; Norway, 58 to 1; Sweden, 89 to 1; Switzerland, 148 to 1; United Kingdom, 84 to 1 (Gavett, 2014).

Established in North America, New Zealand, Australia and Western Europe (Branson and Gross, 2014, p. 70), the late 1970s saw neoliberal policies give rise to a competitive market economy based education system that has gripped many nations globally. The theory of *neoliberalism* is based on the claim that competitive markets totally free from state regulation are superior in terms of efficiency, justice or freedom or a combination of them (Patomäki 2009, pp. 432-433). Harvey (2005, p. 2) gives an account of neoliberalism as an economic model or paradigm:

Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. The state has to guarantee, for example, the quality and integrity of money. It must also set up those military, defence, police, and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets. Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture. State interventions in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum because, according to the theory, the state cannot possibly possess enough information to second-guess market signals (prices) and because powerful interest groups will inevitably distort and bias state interventions (particularly in democracies) for their own benefit.

Similarly, Steger and Roy's (2010, pp. 10-11) description of the basic tenets of the theory is as follows:

They (neoliberals) justified their arguments by explaining to the world that all over the industrial countries in the 1970's were faced with high inflation and poor economic growth as a result of the crippling government regulation, exorbitant public spending and high tariff barrier to international trade. (...) it was the logical next step to claim that these factors remained the key obstacles to economic development and, this gave birth to the global neoliberal development agenda based primarily on so-called structural adjustment programs and international free-trade agreements, rising to its prominence in the 1980's.

Steger and Roy (2010, p. 11) highlight the three interconnected dimensions of neoliberalism as an ideology, a mode of governance and a policy package. *Ideology* has been defined by Parel (1983, p. 4) as the category of belief and commitment and by

Malesevic and MacKenzie (2002, p. 11) as collections of ideas and events such as for example actions, practices, habits which shape the world. Wolf (1999, p. 32) referred to ideology as the ruling ideas of the ruling class. Van (1998, p. 2) elaborates ideology as a false belief that conceals real social relations and serves to deceive others, leading to the definition of truth and falsity being self-serving. Ideology has a negative connotation; few describe their own belief systems or convictions as ideologies, whereas the concept is reserved to the adversaries (Van, 1998). Steger and Roy (2010, p. 11) posit that:

Ideologies are systems of widely shared ideas and patterned beliefs that are accepted as truth by significant groups in society. They not only offer a more or less coherent picture of the world as it is, but also as it ought to be. In doing so, ideologies organize their core ideas into fairly simple truth-claims that encourage people to act in certain ways. These claims are assembled by codifiers of ideologies to legitimize certain political interests and to defend or challenge dominant power structures. The codifiers of neoliberalism are global power elites that include managers and executives of large transnational corporations, corporate lobbyists, influential journalists and public-relations specialists, intellectuals writing for a large public audience, celebrities and top entertainers, state bureaucrats, and politicians.

These advocates of neoliberalism flood the mainstream public dialogue with idealized images of a consumerist and free-market world, and skillfully interact with the media in order to sell to the public their favored and approved side of the story of a single global marketplace by positively and constantly glorifying globalizing markets as an essential step towards shaping a better world (Steger & Roy, 2010). To any of those who control and dehumanize the populous treating them as mere objects, Freire (1970, p. 60) refers to them as ‘oppressors’, and argues that the oppressors are increasingly using science and technology instruments to manipulate and repress in order to maintain the drive to dominate, and only prescribe to the oppressed what they wish to.

Mode of governance refers to the art of government (Foucault, 1991), certain foundational principles are stipulated with regards to running the government. These are vested in the deeply rooted ideology, and in the case of a neoliberal government, Steger and Roy (2010, p. 12) state that these are the entrepreneurial principles that revolve around competition, self-interest and decentralization of state power into smaller localized units. Instead of enhancing qualitatively defined public good by strengthening social justice, civil society and political governance, the self-regulating free market enhances individual empowerment and governance technologies adopted from the business world such as e.g. quantitative targets for efficiency and close monitoring of outcomes. The ideal public servant exhibits the entrepreneurial spirit and the citizen is redefined into the identity of a customer or client. In the early 1980s, a novel model of

public administration known as ‘new public management’ took the world’s state bureaucracies by storm. The declared objective was to cut ‘government waste’ and increase administrative efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability. (Steger & Roy, 2010, pp. 12-13).

As for *policy package*, neoliberalism manifests itself as a set of public policies expressed in what Steger and Roy refer to as the D-L-P Formula: (1) deregulation (of the economy); (2) liberalization (of trade and industry); and (3) privatization (of state-owned enterprises). Related policy measures include massive tax cuts especially for businesses and high-income earners (see the Oxfam and Inequality Watch statistics above), reduction of social services and welfare programs, replacing welfare with ‘workfare’, use of interest rates by independent central banks to keep inflation in check even at the risk of increasing unemployment, the downsizing of government, tax havens for domestic and foreign corporations willing to invest in designated economic zones, new commercial urban spaces shaped by market imperatives, anti-unionization drives in the name of enhancing productivity and labour flexibility, removal of controls on global financial and trade flows, regional and global integration of national economies, and the creation of new political institutions, think tanks, and practices designed to reproduce the neoliberal paradigm. (Steger & Roy, 2010, p. 14).

Harvey (2005, p. 72) suggests that neoliberalization creates the climatic condition necessary to harness class formation. Harvey’s (2005) critical analysis and conclusions of neoliberal policies leading to quick aggravation from the 1980s onwards of the deep divide between the haves and the have-nots, illustrated by statistical facts has proved very precise, and is substantiated by e.g. Oxfam (2015a, b) and Inequality Watch (2012). This is the same time span from which we witness the huge white collar crimes I referred to earlier. In 2008 the world witnessed the failure of the neoliberal theory in the breakdown of the global financial market, and the appeal of neoliberalists for the state to bail out their huge failures shaking the entire world economic balance. Stiglitz (2012) calls this the price of inequality: the increase in loss of human and social capital because of poverty and violation of human rights, loss of viable environments, and warring at the same time as the 1 percent have come to own 99 percent of the world’s wealth.

2.2 Inequalities in education impacted by neoliberalism

The ideological perspective of neoliberalism in education is a philosophy (productivist approach) that emphasizes student performance rather than considering student needs, thus enabling governments to micromanage schools by exercising the various performance measurement tools (Marginson, 2006, p. 209). The Education Reform Act (ERA) in England is fundamental in propagating the neoliberal philosophy in education. Initiated in 1988, the ERA's philosophy revolved around improving student learning through competition and information as the primary drivers of improvements (Fullan & Levin, 2008, p. 289). The Anglo-Saxon countries primarily and a few others have made use of the ERA framework in varying degrees, however, it would be inaccurate to believe that the world has followed the philosophy (ideas) behind the UK reforms (Fullan & Levin, 2008, p. 290). Nevertheless, education systems around the world more or less operate with some portion of the ERA DNA. See Appendix 2 for a detailed account on the key features of the ERA.

During the 1950's and 1960's, the search for a globally competitive business climate or economic model remained rather insignificant up until after 1970 when more bolder and prominent systems of business relations were initiated. Still, strong economies tend to pressurize weaker nations or regions to follow their guidance, and thus rented policies are imported per se. However, strong nations try their best to implement the neoliberal model on thriving economies as well. Scandinavian countries govern the critical sectors of their economy such as education, health, infrastructure etc.; with a practicing philosophy that access to basic human needs should neither be based on arbitration through market forces nor curbed by the individual's purchasing power. (Harvey, 2005, pp. 71 & 87).

Harvey (2005, p. 88) argues that the United Kingdom and the United States are distinctly the epicenters of export of neoliberal policy. The policies are exported primarily under the umbrella of IMF, the World Bank and high profile NGO's channeling conditional loans to developing nations under the title of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) (Stiglitz, 2012; Harvey, 2005; Konadu-Agyemang & Newman, 2002, p. 245). For instance the United Kingdom has initiated numerous partnership initiatives in education such as independent specialist schools, private schools in partnership with state schools, state schools run by private firms, local education partnerships etc. (Green, 2005, p. 6). In Pakistan for example such neoliberal

policies are imported under the public private partnerships. To name a couple, ‘community support program’ in Baluchistan province initiated in 1992 funded by USAID and the World Bank with a focus on increasing girls’ enrolment; the other is ‘promoting private schooling’ in rural Sindh province funded by the World Bank with a focus on access and quality (Ali, 2012, p. 11). Even in these private schools students hardly attain the expected skills level, e.g. the Annual State of Education Report in Pakistan indicates that up to 36% of 5th graders in private schools are not able to read a sentence in English something they should have learnt in the 2nd grade (UNESCO, 2013/4, p. 32).

2.3 GERM, its elements and impact on teaching and learning

The Finnish educationist and school improvement activist, Pasi Sahlberg conceived the phrase GERM, the acronym for *Global Education Reform Movement* that highlights the prevalent agenda of the global education policy as a result of the borrowing and lending of education that has gripped the education reform practices in most countries around the world (Sahlberg, 2006, p. 264; 2009, p. 2). The GERM ideology provides a framework where public education is built upon neoliberal policy, the free market economy, where private organizations run schools (Graham, 2013, p. 30) as commercial entities. During the 1980’s, the leading global governments with England being in the forefront to implement the neoliberal education policy was the primary goal for the years to come. Based on the outcomes of the much appreciated Education Reform Act of 1988, the basic elements of GERM and its impact on teaching and learning in education are:

Standardizing teaching and learning through centrally prescribed performance standards at the cost of creativity and innovation in teaching and learning is one tenant of GERM. This disturbs the spirit of teaching deemphasizing mutual inquiry and exploration, and the process becomes non-fluid with casual results. (Sahlberg, 2011, p. 180).

Focus on literacy and numeracy by emphasizing test scores in mathematics, reading and science as prime targets signifying educational performance at the cost of over emphasis on test scores and reduced importance of other subjects such as art, music, drama, etc. (Sahlberg, 2011, p. 180). Similarly, school curricula in most

countries point out the irrelevance of social sciences, aesthetic and moral education etc., and over emphasize a great deal more on the importance of reinforcing teaching of the fundamental core subjects which are, mathematics, natural sciences and language (mother tongue) (European Network of Education Councils 'EUNEC', 2011, p. 67).

Teaching for pre-determined results as a standard for the desired attainment comes at the cost of reduced risk-taking and teaching, and reducing overall classroom creativity as teachers only use those methods that enable them to achieve predetermined results (Sahlberg, 2011, p. 180). Education thus becomes linear. Students patiently receive chunks of information to store and memorize through continuous repetition (Freire, 1970, p. 72).

Renting market-oriented reform ideas from the business world (such as competition, efficiency, productivity) and incorporated in schools at the policy level happens at the cost of the moral purpose of the profession, hampers teacher motivation and in general puts at risk the passion of teaching (Sahlberg, 2011, p. 180). Such importation does not quite rightly get along with educational needs as it is understood through the political and business lens to fulfill the objectives overnight (Branson & Gross, 2014, p. 85). Ravitch (2010, p. 33) posits that the current trend of education in the United States is obsessed with the idea of running schools like business entities. The titans of corporate America - Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Walton Family Foundation, the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation heavily influence the education system on their whims by offering millions of dollars, and in the wake of doing so simply reflect their own personal experiences in education such as deregulation, choice, competition, incentives (Ravitch, 2010, pp. 31-32; Branson & Gross, 2014, p. 72) etc. Ravitch (2010a) asserts that it is exactly this amalgamation of policy options such as school choice, accountability, private sector involvement, and teacher incentives / high stakes testing that is worsening the situation. In order to improve the overall quality in education for the sake of strengthening economic competitiveness, Sahlberg (2006, p. 259) shuns the adoption of market mechanisms (e.g. competition, etc.) in education and emphasizes interconnectivity, collaboration, accessibility and open sharing of ideas at the various levels amongst education systems, schools and students. Similarly, Ravitch (2010, p. 33) also believes that in order to deliver public service (education), the market is not the best approach to deliver it.

Test-based accountability is testing all students in the core academic subjects and based on the results the governing authorities either reward the schools, students, teachers etc., that attain the pre-determined goal (high score), whereas those that do not perform as per the prescribed standards are simply punished (Hamilton, Stecher & Klein, 2002, p. 3; Fullan, 2011, p. 5). Rewards are in the form of promotions, financial gifts, increased funding for the school, positive media publicity etc., whereas punishment is in the form of negative publicity, termination from employment, demotion, reduced funding etc. When the destiny of schools, school leaders, teachers, and individual students pivots upon high-stakes testing, the focus drifts away from teaching and learning to the test itself (Lipman, 2001), something that Ravitch (2010a) refers to as the corporate education reform movement.

Garipey, Spencer and Couture (2009, p. xvi) claim that, accountability often implies adhering to a higher authority to avoid potential inefficiencies or wrong doing. They also argue that accountability is referred as the simple notion of ‘countability’, a method of comparing numeric performance scores which has given rise to choice, rise in competition amongst schools and raising educational standards (Garipey et al., 2009, p. xvii). An unintentional outcome of this policy is increased teaching to achieve the desired results, and the higher possibility of potential malpractices in testing and reporting as the stakes include rewards or punishments for teachers or the school (Sahlberg, 2011, p. 180; 2007, p. 152). In the United States, 18 states were studied to observe whether standardized testing impacted student learning and the evidence indicated that the intended policy led to the decline of student learning upon the implementation of high-stakes testing policies (Amrein & Berliner, 2002, pp. 1-2). The continuous application of such policies has led to unethical practices as a route to survival compelling teachers and schools to collectively cheat on exams while others quit the teaching profession, and at the same time have a negative effect on the drop-out rates (Amrein & Berliner, 2002). With regards to the issue of ‘dropouts’, a superintendent of Danville City Public School said, “the Commonwealth’s accountability exam system actually encourages higher dropout rates ... It is actually to the school’s advantage to drop slow learners and borderline students from the school, because they are usually poor test-takers” (Borja, 1999, p. 2). In England’s education system, West et al. (2011, pp. 46 & 54) found out that the market principles deeply influenced the accountability framework, having up to seven types of accountability

measures ('in relevance to who is accountable, to whom, for what and by what mechanism') which overall focuses on performance data and examination results. They also found that 'participative accountability' that involved discussion and inquiring for instance, had almost a non-existent presence and simply pushed into the background (West et al., 2011).

Sahlberg (2011, p. 183-184) says that:

I am particularly concerned, with many others, of the growing number of those who believe that people from the corporate world have the answer to educational change and that they know best where to go next. Among them are those who insist for more data and performance targets. These same people believe that more competition between schools is the key to more effective education and that pay per-performance for teachers will attract better people to teaching.

Competition for success sits at the heart of neoliberalism. Schools that would not be able to compete rigorously on the lines of privatization would simply lose the reason to exist. As the hub of stability, schools occupy a special place in the lives of children; however, a significant part of a child's life is disrupted when a school is shut down. The child is left in disarray with numerous unanswered thoughts e.g. would I find my friends there? Which school will I now attend? Will this school face the same fate of closing down? How far or close is the new school and how will I get there? Would I like the teachers and who would they be? (Noddings, 2005, p. 19).

The neoliberal education model has created much of the inequalities in education at all levels of education. In developing economies, low government spending and corrupt political and dictatorial regimes have negatively affected the overall quality of education. For instance, particularly in the struggling economies education has remained inaccessible to many for reasons such as gender lines, poverty, lack of teacher training, poor school infrastructure and services, insufficient and inadequate resource allocation, etc.

There is no doubt that the number of children in school has considerably increased but what they learn in school is inadequate in terms of quality (UNESCO, 2013, p. 3). The 130 million children that are in school significantly face difficulty in reading, writing or solving basic mathematics (UNESCO, 2013/4, p. 5). For instance, in Liberia almost 33% of grade 2 students were not able to read a word; almost 20% of primary aged children in Chile are not able to solve basic mathematics (UNESCO, 2013/4, pp. 27, 192). So quality is crucial.

According to a UNESCO report, *quality learning* includes all those processes in which people attain the breadth and depth of knowledge, skills and attitudes essential to entirely connect with their communities, whereby expressing their ideas and talents and contributing positively to their societies (UNESCO, 2013, p. 1). The overall goal of quality education is to enhance learning to transform the society parallel to the dynamics of change, as inadequate learning leaves young people unprepared for the world of work (UNESCO, 2013, p. 3). Fullan (2011, p. 3) argues that if the strategies do not enhance learning good skills and capacities, they are futile. A society that deprives large segments of its population of learning cannot thrive in a knowledge based economy (Darling-Hammond, 2009/2010, p. 9). Now there are 775 million illiterate adults globally and women represent two thirds of all illiterate adults worldwide (CIA, The World Factbook, 2010). The lack of school facilities such as black boards, textbooks and stationary, furniture, boundary wall for the provision of security, etc., are growing concerns of education quality especially in the low income countries. With regards to out-of-school children, as of 2012, 58 million children of primary school age and 63 million adolescents of lower secondary school age are out-of-school (UNESCO, 2015, p. 18). The out-of-school children live in extreme poor conditions and on a daily basis face numerous challenges such as combating hunger, malnutrition, disease, lack of available clean water, etc.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Mission of education

The general overview given in the introduction section of this paper highlights the diversity of misconduct that has evolved with time primarily from the neo-liberal economic policy model. Consequently, mechanistic education follows a linear track that trains people developing in them predatory consciousness that is fundamentally based on greed, materialism and self-centeredness (Nava, n.d. a). Often it is seen that the most talented and skillful people engage in fraudulent activities to become successful and since this revolves around greed, they are least concerned how their actions influence other people's lives (Noddings, 2005a). Freire (1970, p. 58) argues:

Money is the measure of all things, and profit the primary goal. What is worthwhile is to have more, always more, even at the cost of the oppressed having less or having nothing. For them (oppressors), to be is to have and to be the class of the "haves".

Competition is at the heart of education today and everyone especially teachers, students and schools are competing head-on with one another. The model of competition when taken to its ultimate expression exercises asserting self-objectives 'no matter what' and in education tends to get rid of the opponent through exclusion, inequity, dislike, expulsion, humiliation etc., (Soriano, 2001, pp. 6-7). Researchers widely acknowledge that in the age of information the existing education model is primarily not catering to our diverse educational needs (Fullan, 1993; Schlechty, 1990; Caine & Caine, 1997; Duffy, Rogerson, & Blick, 2000; McCombs & Whisler, 1997), but the education establishment is stubbornly sticking to the traditional approaches of imparting education amidst such numerous demands overarched by the phenomena of an interconnected global economy and new frontiers in technology.

3.1.1 The paradigm shift

In the wider concept, globally, there has been a significant shift in thinking—from the Newtonian world view to the quantum view. The *Newtonian view* reflects simplicity where entities are controllable, thinking is linear (in a straight line), logical and rule bound, whereas the *Quantum view* revolves around complexity where thinking is

original (creative) and insightful that progresses to discover meaning out of the collaborative activity (Zohar, 1997, p. 43). For instance during the industrial revolution, organizations (factories) had mechanistic features such as centralized authority, management as oversight (control, command), routinization, lacking to accept and the failure to address the changing business environment (Bennett, 2003, p.46). Zohar describes this perspective as the dynamics of machines (Oliver, 2014). Workers were meant to listen and obey the instructions as Taylor focused on workers' efficiency by making workers work at their maximum capacity level. Taylor considered workers as being passive (submissive and obedient) units of production that were put under strict control of the management (Zohar, 1997, p. 69, 86). Thinking and learning followed a linear track. But in a digitized global world, some of the central features are participation, cooperation and sharing where learning tends to be non-linear. This is the quantum philosophy that Zohar describes as the dynamics of ideas (Oliver, 2014). Table 2 gives a picture of the alteration of the world paradigm.

TABLE 2 Change of World Paradigm (Zohar, 1997, pp. 46 & 86)

Newtonian Thinking	Quantum Thinking
Passive workers	Partners
Competition	Collaboration
Holistic and integrated: emphasizes on collective and inter-connected relationships.	Atomistic and fragmented: emphasizes on individual parts and eventually leading to specialization.
Hierarchy and top-down	Networks and decentralization: several power hubs.
Predictability and certainty	Unpredictable and uncertain
Efficiency: focusing on one given task without the element of deliberation.	Purposefulness and meaning: adding value in context to collaborative efforts.

On a parallel note, Reigeluth and Garfinkle (1994, p. 5) argue that over the years there has been a paradigm shift in society that evolved from an agrarian society to an industrial one and now the information era. Table 3(a) and Table 3(b) exhibit the sociological perspective with respect to time and economic development, and also highlight the dire need for a new educational system for the new age.

TABLE 3(a) Major Paradigm Shift in Society (Reigeluth & Garfinkle, 1994, p. 5)

<i>Society</i>	1850s ²	1950s ³	
	Agrarian	Industrial	Information
<i>Transportation</i>	Horse	Train	Plane & car
<i>Family</i>	Extended Family	Nuclear Family ⁴	Single-parent family
<i>Business</i>	Family	Bureaucracy	Team
<i>Education</i>	One-room school house	Current system	?

TABLE 3(b) Stages of Societal Change (Rosado, 1997, p. 4)

<i>Society</i>	Agrarian	Industrial	Information
<i>Economy</i>	Agricultural	Manufacturing	Service
<i>Work Time</i>	Nature	Clock	Flex Time
<i>Education</i>	Grade School	High School	College/Grad School
<i>Learning</i>	Kinesthetic	Auditory	Visual

Reigeluth and Garfinkle (1994, p. 5) explain the paradigm shift in education by the example of the transportation system in use in the different eras e.g., the beginning of the information age, transportation needs are fulfilled with a combination of the automobile and the airplane both side by side. The 21st century educators and policy makers are frantically in search for an education system that would likely grow parallel with the current system, be separate from it but coexist with it, and will slowly grow while the current system slowly declines. Just briefly, in the agrarian economy, agriculture was the main profession that employed people that were able to plough the fields using simple tools and the only education they received was from the close circles of the family. In the industrial age, manufacturing was the predominant economic

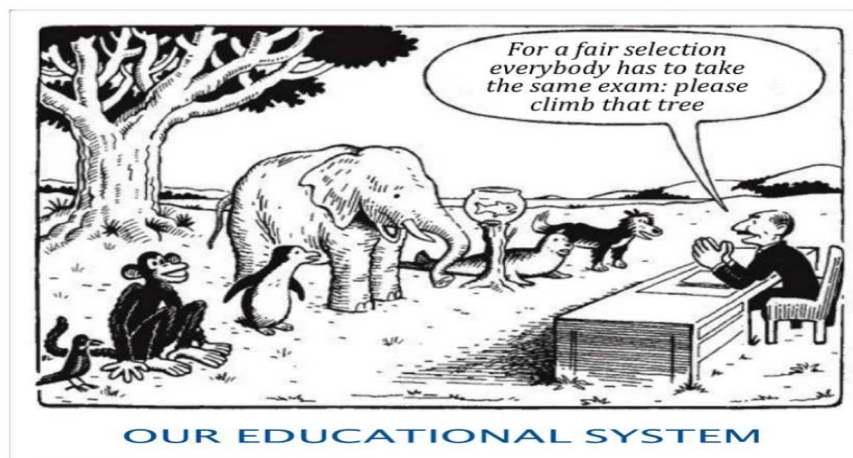
² 1850 onwards was the shift to an industrial society (Rosado, 1997, p. 8)

³ 1950 onwards was the shift to an information age (dawn of the information age) (Reigeluth & Garfinkle, 1994, p. 5)

⁴ *Nuclear Family: a family group that consists only of father, mother, and their children*
Source. Merriam-Webster.

activity and people worked on assembly lines on the specific task they were given. The emphasis was worker efficiency and the workers of the production houses were trained for specific tasks for maximum capacity output. The outcomes were measurable and standardized, simply to measure quality. In contrast, in the information age, the economy is based on human ingenuity and knowledge where the workers are referred to as knowledge workers. The information age has revolutionized drastically the way we live today as compared to the previous eras solely due to the opportunities arising from technological advancements, available of cheap and skilled labor. The information age is in a hurry. Competition and development are fast and ferocious and the consumer is more than ever hungry for new products and services. The knowledge workers need to continuously learn new skill sets and learning does not stop with a university or a vocational degree, it has to remain progressive in continuity with the dynamics of the information age. Therefore, for the overall benefit of the economy, the existing education system needs to change radically and remodel into one that focuses on maximizing collaborative learning with a focus on responsiveness. (Reigeluth & Garfinkle, 1994).

3.1.2 Prevailing education model, *what is it?*



Picture 1 Our Educational System (n.d.)

Picture 1 illustrates the one size fits all education modality. There is a raft of research available that indicates to the historical perspective of why the current education model is the way it is. It points to the industrial age, and thus the dominant model of education

has been referred to as the factory model of education. (Toffler, 1971; Bowles & Gintis, 1972; Miller, 2000; Lipman, 2001; Christensen, Horn & Johnson, 2008; Ash & D'Auria 2012).

In the pre-industrial age, education was home based where the head(s) of the family passed on necessary skills of the time to their children, through religious institutions where moral education was taught and apprenticeships were sought outside the immediate family based on social status. So education for the public in general was not the need of the society and therefore did not exist. (Toffler, 1971; Bowles & Gintis, 1972; Miller, 2000; Lipman, 2001; Christensen, Horn & Johnson, 2008; Ash & D'Auria 2012).

The industrial age brought with it new dynamics to life. Rapid inventions led to the creation of different products which created massive opportunities in entrepreneurship and employment. Factories were therefore a wide scale phenomenon. It became the central focus and life was to be shaped around it. The challenge was that the numerous factories required tons of workers and they had to be skilled in certain skills that focused on producing mass products efficiently, getting the workers to work at their maximum capacity in the shortest possible time, and produce uniform products whilst maintaining standardized quality. And to achieve this way of working, certain skills were required that could not be learnt at home or at church. Education was conducted in a one-room school house and the learning mode was kinesthetic. The family structure changed from the extended family to the immediate family—the nuclear family, and so did other things. See (Table 3a) and (Table 3b). So people were largely not educated in line with the demands of industrialism. And since industrialism was the occurring phenomenon of the time, this shift was bound to happen as people shifted to seek a better way of life. For the factories, the challenge then was to seek workers that were skilled according to the requirements of the factories. Thus training at a massive level became a movement to enable a constant supply of trained workers for the factories. The movement was public education. (Toffler, 1971; Bowles & Gintis, 1972; Miller, 2000; Lipman, 2001; Christensen, Horn & Johnson, 2008; Ash & D'Auria 2012).

To train children as efficient workers for the factories in the mechanistic age posed an extremely complex challenge for conditioning them for this new world where the work protocols and environment included repetitive (dull and boring) indoor toil,

noise, smoke, machines, collective discipline, crowded living conditions where time was strictly regulated by factory whistle and clock and not by the natural cycle of the sun and moon (Toffler, 1971). One aspect of molding children to learn the employable skills at the factories were through disciplined rote learning, continuously repeating a task long enough to become an instinctive response. Toffler (1971, p. 204) claims:

The whole Idea of assembling masses of students (raw material) to be processed by teachers (workers) in a centrally located school (factory) was a stroke of industrial genius. The whole administrative hierarchy of education, as it grew up, followed the model of industrial bureaucracy. The very organization of knowledge into permanent disciplines was grounded on industrial assumptions. Children marched from place to place and sat in assigned stations. Bells rang to announce changes of time.

Ash and D'Auria (2012) elucidate that while the standardized curriculum was deeply ingrained in the education system during the late 1800's by strictly following textbooks, the beginning of the 20th century experienced a population influx triggered by the phenomenon of industrialism which demanded to educate a mass number of people. The one-room schoolhouses were not able to cater to the education of the masses and as a result multiunit schools were established and standardization dominated the education system. Students in the multiunit schools were taught according to their age group, irrespective of their aptitude in the curriculum. Based on the factory model, the multiunit schools were exactly operated like factories: ringing bells, specialized subjects and children taught in batches (age group or date of manufacture). The objective of the factory model of education was never to help the students attain high levels in terms of learning and creativity; it was not designed that way - creativity was neither acceptable nor tolerated. Public education system was based on compliance with certain standards, rules or laws where it was mandatory for students to learn certain skill-sets to be able to perform in strict conformity with the norms of the factories. Miller (2000) argues that originality in thinking, analytical and entrepreneurial skills were not the objectives of the educational outcome in the industrial based economy. Interestingly, in the current education system/model, the belief still reigns strong as ever, even today, that some children simply cannot learn. (Ash & D'Auria, 2012, pp. 27-28, 31). To this model of education, Freire (1970) refers to as the banking concept of education where the teacher-student relationship is fundamentally that of the 'giver' and the 'taker' – the depositor and the depository, respectively. He explains the fundamental structure of this model of education:

The theory and practice of banking education comprises of verbalistic lessons, reading requirements, the methods for evaluating “knowledge”, the distance between the teacher and the taught, the criteria for promotion: everything in this ready-to-wear approach serves to obviate thinking (Freire, 1970, p. 76).

The current education model approach revolves around the factors of industrialism. If we look closely, we would see that schools are in reality modeled on the production line or assembly line system. (See Pictures 2 through 4). Bowles and Gintis (1972) claim that education is merely a response to the capitalist system, and is not by accident that the social relations of both the mode of production and schooling act reciprocally. Students are recruited by schools segregating them by age cohorts which is synonymous to the batch systems used in factories, schools today still regularly employ the use of ringing bells to stimulate specific information, students line up during movements into the different areas of the school, there are separate facilities for different students, separate subjects are categorized as ‘specialized’ subjects being taught in isolation of other disciplines, and the seating arrangement of a classroom replicates the assembly line, etc.

This has led to the increased acceptance and application of standardized tests and curriculum that are still dominant in the present time. Standardized tests tend to relate education as a commodity with a commercial value, “measuring worker productivity as in the factory, quantifying learning, and acting as quality controls on the educational system” (Ash & D'Auria, 2012, p. 31). On a similar note with regards to high-stakes testing, Lipman (2001) postulates that schools are operationalised using business principles such as accountability, control, regulation and quality assurance; and education policies based on such principles presents education merely as a commodity where production could be measured and controlled. *Standardized tests* are tests where test takers are assessed on the same parameter such as answering the same questions under firm uniform conditions, which are scored using the same guidelines for all the candidates (What is a standardized test, 2003, p. 7). *High-stakes testing* (also referred as accountability tests) are tests where school leaders (Principals), teachers and students are held accountable in strict conformity to student performance, for instance, a good test score would mean awards, public celebration, positive publicity, grade promotion / graduation for students, increase in salary and bonuses for school staff, whereas a poor performance would result in reduced funding, poor public image, sanctions or penalties, shutting down a school, shaming schools, leaders, teachers, students and eventually

parents (Marchant, 2004, p. 2). The common and prevailing attributes associated to the factory model of education are: command and control; power interplay—top down management control and instruction; students and teachers are alienated both within and external to the system; intolerance to new ideas leads to frequent de-motivation and burnout; preparing students strictly in conformity to meet the needs of the society; centralized management with the intention to maximize profits and cut costs. This is congruent to Bowles and Gintis of the early 1970's and my personal experience of studying in Nigeria in the 1980's and education in Pakistan in the 2000's:

The school is a bureaucratic order, with hierarchical authority, rule orientation, stratification by 'ability' as well as by age, role differentiation by sex (physical education), home economics, etc., and a system of external incentives (marks, promises of promotion, and threat of failure) much like pay and status in the sphere of work (Bowles & Gintis, 1972, p.87).

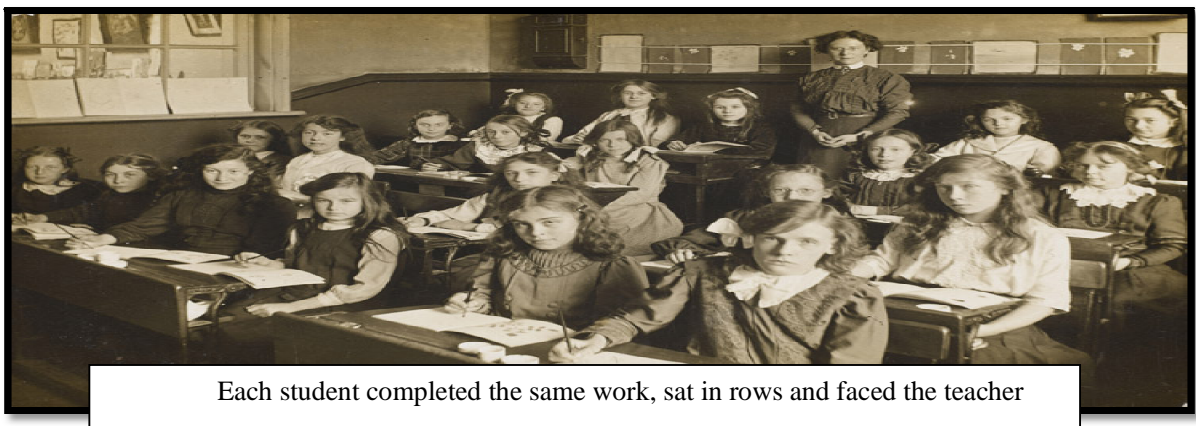
Freire (1970, p. 71) asserts:

Education is suffering from narration sickness. The teacher talks about reality as if it were motionless, static, compartmentalized, predictable, and expounds on a topic completely alien to the existential experience of the students.

Schools are thus being challenged in the present time to educate students to be able to address the emerging issues, an education system that orients students' dynamic attributes that would be able to address the complexities of the future in the world they would live as adults. With regards to the current educational system, Christensen, Horn and Johnson (2008, pp. 37-38) state that the very manner in which teachers are trained, the manner in which students are graded or categorized, the manner in which the curriculum is developed, and the approach with which the school infrastructure is built are all encased in the very essence of standardization. And with standardized methods, for example the United States cannot aspire to achieve the goals it seeks to achieve with the No Child Left Behind legislation (NCLB) (Christensen et al., 2008). Initiated by George W. Bush, the idea underlying NCLB was to reform education with the hypothesis of neoliberalism that market competition would undoubtedly create better schools and compel the poor performing schools to improve (Lipman, 2001). The central elements of NCLB act are high-stakes testing, vouchers and various support programs for the privatization of schools (Lipman, 2001).

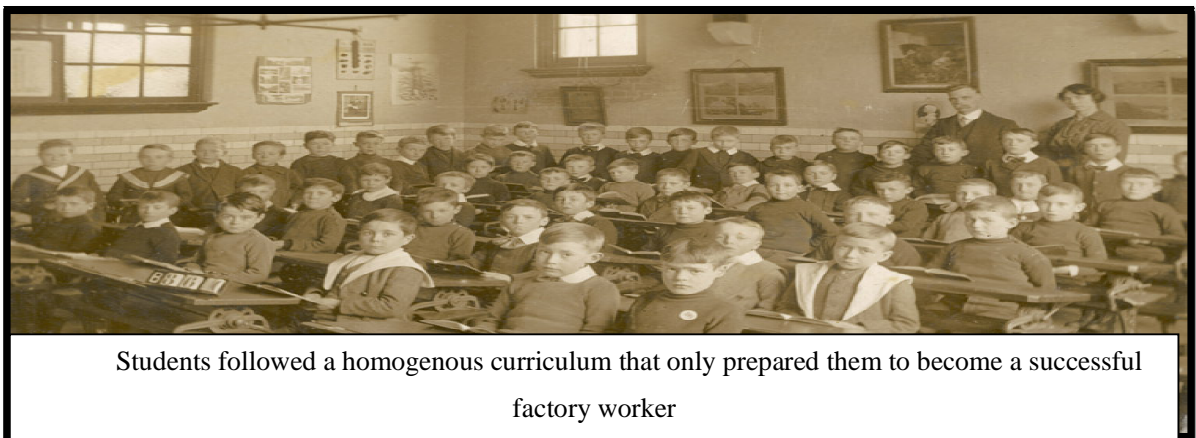


Picture 2 Factory Model of Education n.d.



Each student completed the same work, sat in rows and faced the teacher

Picture 3 Factory Model of Education n.d.



Students followed a homogenous curriculum that only prepared them to become a successful factory worker

Picture 4 Factory Model of Education n.d.

3.2 Clarifying key concepts

In light of the research topic, the key terms or concepts required to address it comprise holism, holistic learning, holistic development, caring, ethics of care theory and holistic education, which will be clarified as follows.

Smuts is widely attributed to have coined the word *holism*, and used it in his seminal book titled *Holism and Evolution*. He has defined the term as follows:

Every organism, every plant or animal, is a whole, with a certain internal organization and a measure of self-direction, and an individual specific character of its own. This is true of the lowest micro-organism no less than of the most highly developed and complex human personality, and ...that serves as the principle which makes for the origin and the progress of 'wholes' in the universe. Smuts also states that, *holism* is a specific tendency, with a definite character, and creative of all characters in the universe, and thus fruitful of results and explanations in regard to the whole course of cosmic development. (Smuts, 1926, pp. v, 98, 100)

The New World Encyclopedia (Holism, 2014) derives *holism* from the Greek word, 'holos' meaning 'all', 'entire', 'total'. Holism means that all the properties of a given system (biological, chemical, social, economic, mental, linguistic, etc.) cannot be determined or explained by the sum of its component parts alone. Instead, the system as a whole determines in an important way how the parts behave. This view is shared by Miller (1990, p. 6) who defines holism as a search for wholeness in a culture that limits, suppresses, and denies wholeness. In view to education, Kim (2005, p. 82) frames holism as a functional, integrated and generalized model that focuses on the whole teaching-learning situation, and varies the teaching-learning strategy to meet the needs of the learner, the teacher, and the situation in an effort to attain educational outcomes greater than the sum of their parts. Similarly, from a holistic perspective McCombs and Whisler (1997, p. 9) argue that to serve in the best interest of all learners, it is crucial that educational systems focus on the individual learner and the learning process – a learner centered approach. McCombs and Whisler (1997, p. 9) describe their viewpoint on this approach:

The perspective that couples a focus on individual learners (their heredity, experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities, and needs) with a focus on learning (the best available knowledge about learning and how it occurs and about teaching practices that are most effective in promoting the highest levels of motivation, learning, and achievement for all learners).

The above definitions imply that holism relates to entirety, completeness, being integrated with component parts so to speak, and as Miller (1990, p. 6) points out, the

quest is for the search of the missing link, 'wholeness' and the effort required to unleash the change in any society that practically is restrictive of such explorations.

As for *holistic learning*, Preston (2012, p. 253) considers that holistic learning and holistic education are hybrid terms, which are used interchangeably in the modern context of education. Preston claims that holistic learning in a formal education setting is to progress beyond where limits set for specialized subjects such as English, math, art, biology etc., tend to restrict learning, rather, "subject specific knowledge is transformed into experiences that are interrelated, interconnected, intersected, integrated, incorporated, interdisciplinary, and interdependent" (Preston, 2012). She states:

An underlying principle of holistic learning is that education is effectively acquired when individual parts of knowledge are synergistically connected to each other (Preston, 2012).

Holistic development refers to the experience of the individual learner and their emerging self-actualization and learning at the mental, physical, social, emotional and spiritual levels (Raj, 2015, p. 4).

Sander-Staudt, (n.d.) argues that there tends to be moral significance in the interconnections between human relationships and the reliance on one another in human life. Noddings (1984, pp. 4-5) emphasizes our quest for the moral basis, positing that our desire is to be in a caring relation irrespective how it is derived, either out of love or a natural inclination. She further clarifies that this is the ethical ideal which is the true picture of ourselves to care for and be cared by, thus providing the basis for motivation to be in that special relationship (Noddings, 1984). Also Held (2005, p. 10) shares the view that the ethics of care lies on our moral responsibility to respond to and to meet the needs of the other for whom we take responsibility or who is dependent on us.

In regards to *caring*, the Oxford Dictionaries render the definition of "displaying kindness and concern for others" and Merriam-Webster describes it as an "effort made to do something correctly, safely or without causing damage" or 'things that are done to keep someone healthy, safe etc., or 'things that are done to keep something in good condition'. Let us look at definitions at a general level, and in the fields of the so called caring professions, nursing and education.

Tronto's (1993, p. 103) definition of caring at a general level considers caring to comprise everything we undertake to sustain our world. "That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environments, all of which we seek to interweave in a

complex, life-sustaining web” (Tronto’s, 1993). In Mayeroff’s terms (1971, p. 2) *caring* is to enhance someone else’s development toward self-actualization. Mayeroff (1971, p. 76) sees caring as a continuous evolving experience of belonging characterized by commitment, trust, hope and courage.

In the field of nursing, Chinn and Watson (1994, p. xvi) describe the art of nursing as the capacity of the nursing person to feel compassion. Nursing “as art is lived, expressed and co-created in the caring moment” (Watson, 1998). Watson (2011, p. 44) rounds up that the most abstract characteristic of a caring person is that he or she is somehow responsive to a person as a unique individual, perceives the other’s feelings, and sets apart one person from another from the ordinary. Furthermore, Watson (2011, p. 71) defines that “*caring* is a moral ideal rather than an interpersonal technique and it entails a commitment to a particular end. This end is the protection, enhancement and preservation of the person’s humanity and human dignity which helps to restore inner harmony, wholeness and potential healing”. The following citation further sums up the meanings given to caring by Watson (1999, pp. 102-103):

Caring can be most effectively demonstrated and practiced interpersonally and transpersonally. A caring relationship and a caring environment attend to caring of the soul: the spiritual growth of both the one-caring and the one-being-cared-for. A caring relationship and a caring environment preserve human dignity, wholeness, and integrity; they offer an authentic presencing and choice. Caring promotes self-growth, self-knowledge, self-control, and self-healing processes and possibilities.

Noddings (2005, p. 41) describes *caring* as relational, not a set of specific behaviors. For Noddings, caring is reciprocal and based on mutual consent and commitment, connecting to and fro with the other the sense of compassion (Noddings, 1984, p. 30).

It is an encounter between two human beings—a carer and a recipient of care, or cared-for where both parties are significant in maintaining the caring relation. A failure on the part of either carer or cared-for blocks completion of caring and although there may still be a relation, that is, an encounter or connection in which each party feels something toward the other, it is not a caring relation (Noddings, 2005, p. 39).

In regards to *holistic education*, ‘holistic’ derives from the philosophy of ‘holism’. The definition is grounded on the objective that we educate for the learner to find self-actualization, meaning and purpose in life, intrinsic respect for life and a love for learning (Miller, 1997, n.d.). In other words, we teach the whole person for the cognitive, emotive, physical, spiritual being to develop and in ethical balance (Orr, 2005, p. 87; Neda Nobari Foundation NNF).

Aristotle said that, “educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all”⁵. Besides encapsulating the concept of holistic education as briefly mentioned above, Miller also gives an overview about the pioneers in the field of holistic education. He argues that the critics in the field have suggested that to educate should stretch beyond the practice of casting students into workers of the day (Miller, n.d.). These critics such as Johann Pestalozzi, the American Transcendentalists, Francis Parker, John Dewey, Maria Montessori and Rudolf Steiner and others asserted that education ought to be understood as the capacity of nurturing the moral, emotional, physical, psychological and spiritual dimensions of the development of children (Miller, n.d.). These radical educators were years ahead of their time and their teaching philosophy revolved around the ‘child’ by allowing to freely navigate and harness the creative element of human development (Miller, 1990, p. 9). It was interesting to find that the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2001) of Singapore at the policy level has described the role of the Singaporean as an individual and a citizen based on the philosophy of holistic education:

Education does two things: it develops the individual and educates the citizen. Education is about nurturing the whole child. Indeed, this is the traditional Asian understanding of the term. Education means developing the child morally, intellectually, physically, socially, and aesthetically. The foundation of a person is his values. From these spring his outlook on life and his goals in life. Together with the home, our schools have to work carefully and painstakingly to shape the morals of our children. Our children also have to learn to relate to other people—their elders and their peers, people who are like us and people who are different. Education also develops each child’s unique talents and abilities to the full. Education teaches him to keep fit and healthy for life. And education teaches him to appreciate the finer things in life and the beauty of the world around him. (Looi & Hung, 2004, p. 31)

Similarly, Nava has suggested a multi-dimensional perspective of holistic education. This integrative model encompasses six dimensions critical to holistic education. These are: cognitive, social, aesthetic, spiritual, corporal/physical and emotional (Nava, n.d.).

3.3 Models of holistic education

To elaborate on the models of holistic education, I have selected Lincoln’s letter to analyze along side Pestalozzi, Froebel, Montessori and Steiner’s philosophy of education. The reason I have chosen Lincoln’s letter is that it reflects my auto-

⁵ Goodreads

ethnographic experience. Selecting from amongst the pioneers of holistic education, a choice had to be made for this study. I decided to follow Miller's (n.d.) line of thinking and focused on the four. Undoubtedly there are others in the field of holistic education, however, after reading most of them I assessed that the work of these four educationists actually provides sufficient support in the quest of my research. These pioneers have brilliantly illuminated the concept of holistic education and I analyze them as follows.

3.3.1 Lincoln's letter as a preamble to holistic education

I wish to begin by quoting the classic letter of Abraham Lincoln that he wrote to the school teacher where his son was studying.

"Respected Teacher

My son will have to learn I know that all men are not just, all men are not true. But teach him also that forever scoundrel there is a hero; that for every selfish politician, there is a dedicated leader. Teach him that for every enemy there is a friend.

It will take time, I know; but teach him, if you can, that a dollar earned is far more valuable than five found.

Teach him to learn to lose and also to enjoy winning.

Steer him away from envy, if you can.

Teach him the secret of quite laughter. Let him learn early that the bullies are the easiest to tick. Teach him, if you can, the wonder of books, but also give him quiet time to ponder over the eternal mystery of birds in the sky, bees in the sun, and flowers on a green hill –side.

In school teach him it is far more honorable to fail than to cheat.

Teach him to have faith in his own ideas, even if everyone tells him they are wrong.

Teach him to be gentle with gentle people and tough with the tough.

Try to give my son the strength not to follow the crowd when everyone is getting on the bandwagon. Teach him to listen to all men but teach him also to filter all he hears on a screen of truth and take only the good that comes through.

Teach him, if you can, how to laugh when he is sad. Teach him there is no shame in tears. Teach him to scoff at cynics and to beware of too much sweetness.

Teach him to sell his brawn and brain to the highest bidders; but never to put a price tag on his heart and soul.

Teach him to close his ears to a howling mob... and to stand and fight if he thinks he's right.

Treat him gently; but do not cuddle him because only the test of fire makes fine steel.

Let him have the courage to be impatient, let him have the patience to be brave. Teach him always to have sublime faith in himself because then he will always have sublime faith in mankind.

This is a big order; but see what you can do. He is such a fine little fellow, my son.

Abraham Lincoln" (CiteHR)

The core values that Lincoln wants to inculcate in his child are universal values, accepted by all. There is a great lesson in this letter with regards to holistic education, which is analyzed in chapter 6.

Miller (n.d.) suggests that amongst others, Pestalozzi, Montessori and Steiner contended that education should nurture the moral, emotional, physical, psychological and spiritual dimensions of the developing child. Froebel who is considered to be the father of early childhood education, his philosophy of education is child centered and consists of the elements of holistic education as are clearly emphasized in the chapter about Friedrich Froebel later in this report. To understand the dynamics of holistic education in the development of the *whole child*, it is rather important to know what it is. Nava (2001, pp. 29-30) argues that for a balanced development of the whole child there are six interconnected essential elements pivotal to the learning process. There is a need of balance between these elements – physical, emotional, intellectual, social, aesthetic and spiritual, as holistic educators recognize students as a whole being rather than programmable brains (Nava, 2001).

According to a report of the commission on the whole child, a whole child is “intellectually active; physically, verbally, socially, and academically competent; empathetic, kind, caring, and fair; creative and curious; disciplined, self-directed, and goal oriented; free; a critical thinker; confident; cared for and valued” (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development ‘ASCD’, 2007, p. 10). I have illustrated this information in Figure 1 and have expanded upon it further as follows:

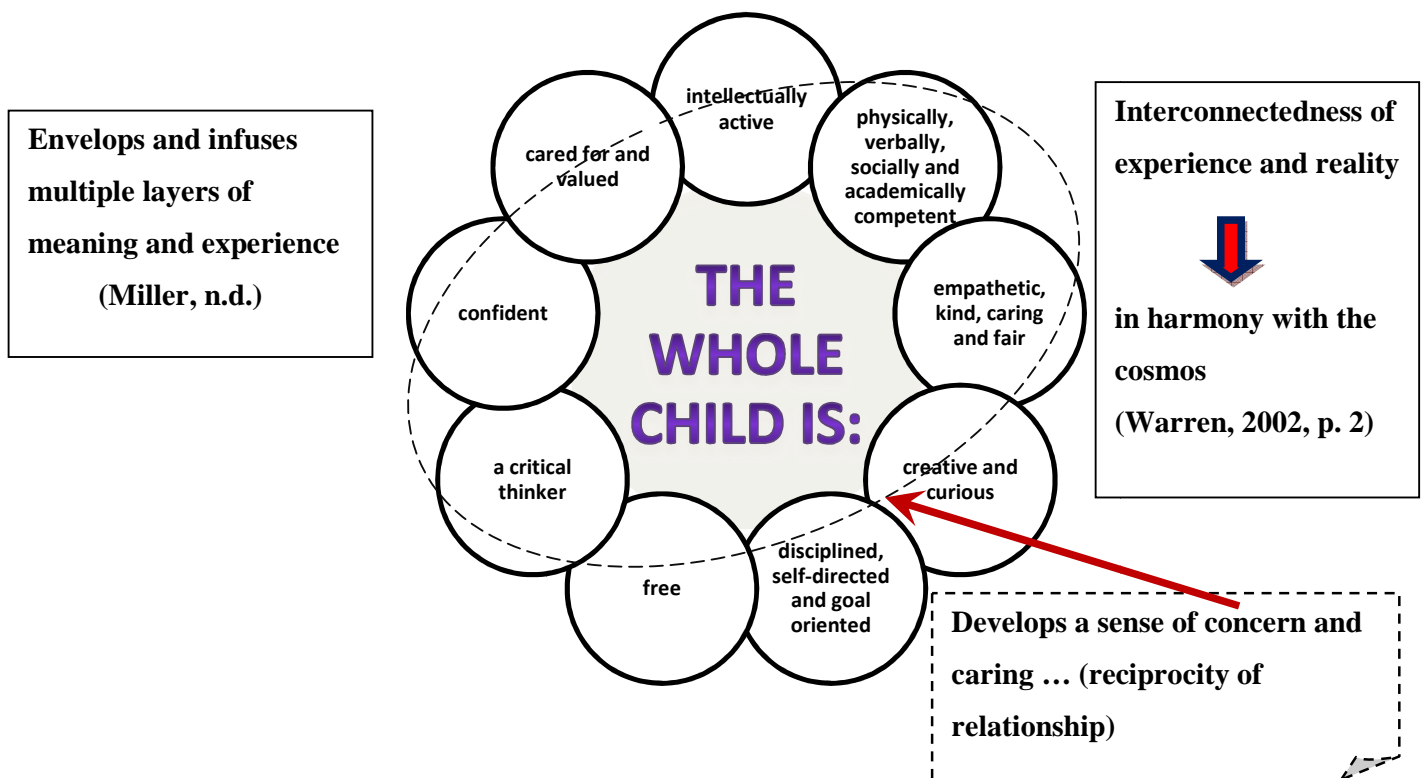


FIGURE 1 Elements of the Whole Child in Congruence with the Philosophy of Holistic Education (ASCD, 2007, p. 10)

As Figure 1 illustrates, Miller (n.d.) argues that the holistic approach overarches and amalgamates multiple layers of meaning and experience instead of defining human possibilities narrowly. Similarly, Warren (2002, p. 2) argues that “there is an interrelation or reciprocity of experience and reality in harmony with the cosmos”, which is integral to the development of the whole child. With regards to holistic education, I quote yet a few more definitions:

First, “holistic education is based on the premise that each person finds identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections to the community, to the natural world, and to spiritual values such as compassion and peace, thus nurtures a sense of wonder” (Miller, n.d.)

Second, holistic education “is an effort to cultivate the development of the whole human being. The holistic approach recognizes that to become a full person, a growing child needs to develop—in addition to intellectual skills, physical, psychological, emotional, interpersonal, moral and spirited potentials. The child is not merely a future citizen or employee in training, but an intricate and delicate web of vital forces and environmental influences.” (Miller, 2008, p.5)

Third, “the basic premise of holistic education is the belief that our lives have a meaning and purpose greater than the mechanistic laws described by science, and greater than the ‘consensus consciousness’ of any one creature. This transcendent purpose is a creative, self-guiding energy which we ought not attempt to suppress. No ideology, no social order devised by wealth or power-seeking factions be allowed to corrupt the delicate, miraculous unfolding of this creative energy.

Ultimately, a spiritual worldview is a reverence for life, an attitude of wonders and awe in the face of the transcendent source of our being.” (Miller, 1990, p. 154)

Orr (2005, p. 87) argues that, “holistic education means that we strive to teach the whole person as a human soul which includes mind, body, emotions and spirit”. As an integral characteristic of holistic education, the mind, body and soul encapsulate holistic education. The relational interplay with oneself both internal and external to the mind, body and soul has to be equally reciprocal. The fundamental principles and concepts of holistic education are: connectedness, wholeness and being and education in the 21st century should be built around them. (Holistic Education Network, 2003). These are further explained as follows.

Connectedness is composed of four parts—interdependence, interrelationship, participatory and non-linearity. *Interdependence* means that the functioning of the entire system is reciprocally dependent on each element of the total system. *Interrelationship* is the interconnected network of relationships to and fro. *Participatory* refers to the participants involving themselves wholly by thoroughly connecting with their surroundings. *Non-linearity* refers to organizations bundled with people creating an intricate pattern of communication which is explained through self-organizing systems and feedback loops etc. (Holistic Education Network, 2003).

Wholeness consists of four parts—whole systems, multiple perspectives, independence and multiple levels (Holistic Education Network, 2003). *Whole systems* have emergent properties and Lawler (1992, p. 52) argues that, each part of an organization cannot be evaluated individually or collectively without knowing its function in the whole system. Thinking about whole systems involves shifting our attention from the parts to the whole, from objects to relationships, from structures to processes, from hierarchies to networks and also includes shifts of emphasis from the rational to the intuitive, from analysis to synthesis, from linear to non-linear thinking (Holistic Education Network, 2003); *Multiple perspectives* indicates that there is simply no single solution to the complexity and diversity that complex systems offer; *Independence* refers to the well connected systems that has a propensity to function mainly as self-governing wholes. *Multiple levels* are the sub-systems that interact through networks that tend to form composite parts of whole systems that are interconnected and interact in complex ways (Holistic Education Network, 2003).

Being consists of four parts—fully human, creative expression, growth and responsibility (Holistic Education Network, 2003). *Fully human* refers to recognizing the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual dimensions of being human. *Creative expression* is about identifying the creative talent of individuals and large groups (communities). *Growth* refers to the expansion or development through the exploitation of opportunities. Assuming *responsibility* for actions at all levels - local, global and at the cosmic level. (Holistic Education Network, 2003).

3.3.2 Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746 – 1827)

Considered to be the father of modern educational science, the Swiss Pestalozzi's philosophy triggered various educational reform movements of the nineteenth century (UNESCO, 1994). During his life time, Pestalozzi was aware of the drawbacks of the inflexible education system that was not contributing to the society. Out of the ordinary, as his basic premise for educating, kindness and affection were the tools he used. He would educate war orphans treating them with kindness and affection coaching them to take care of others in need. He stressed the children to learn by according to their own capabilities. (Pestalozzi World, 2008). Pestalozzi believed that teaching should be based on a “psychological method of instruction” that is parallel to the laws of human nature. He argued the importance of spontaneity and self-activity in the academic setting and the necessity to refrain from providing children ready-made solutions. Pestalozzi encouraged education of genuine humanity through harmonious development of the intellect, morals and the body, emphasizing to keep a balance between the head, heart and hand (3H)- the essential components of a whole child (UNESCO, 2004, p. 230).

In his introduction to Pestalozzi book titled *The Education of Man—Aphorisms* (1951), William Kilpatrick (n.d.) summarized Pestalozzi's six ideologies with regards to schooling as a general overview. However, their significance to teaching and holistic education today are grippingly applicable.

Pestalozzi argues that *personality is sacred*, and this symbolizes the inner dignity of every individual in true spirit equally for both the young and the adult (Kilpatrick, n.d. a). Pestalozzi uses the metaphor of the *seed* to explain the hidden treasures of the child; the little seed containing the design of the tree, so in each child is the promise of his potentiality (Kilpatrick, n.d. a). The educator only takes care that no unpleasant influence shall upset nature's progress of developments (Kilpatrick, n.d. a). Pestalozzi

observed that school practices were commonly based on student physical punishment, rote learning and cruel teachers. He said love is the only and everlasting foundation on which human nature could be educated to humanness (Paras, 2002, p. 30), and without it, both the physical and the intellectual powers cannot develop naturally (Dhawan, 2005, p. 187). The dominant features of Pestalozzi's school were kindness and respect, and he shocked outsiders when he put an end to the practice of flogging students (Kilpatrick, n.d. a). In practice in his school, Pestalozzi got rid of verbosity (wordiness) referring them as meaningless words and developed his own doctrine that he called *Anschauung*⁶ (Kilpatrick, n.d. a). Fundamentally it meant direct concrete observation... and no word was to be used until absolutely necessary. With this philosophy, Pestalozzi's followers developed different interpretations such as from the known to the unknown, from the simple to the complex, from the concrete to the abstract (Kilpatrick, n.d. a). Pestalozzi emphasized *learning by action* (doing) and elaborated further by stressing on repetition, not blind repetition but repetition of action following the *Anschauung* (Dhawan, 2005, p. 188).

3.3.3 Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852)

Considered to be the father of kindergarten, the German Froebel developed the first formal curriculum for early childhood education for 5 year olds. Froebel's love for nature and the mysteries hidden as he used to roam the forests and meadows of his indigenous land together with the belief in God, made him to observe the interrelationship between animal, vegetable and mineral, and based on this he developed a series of play materials and activity book to teach children about the interconnectivity in the diverse elements of nature (Provenzo, 2009, pp. 85, 87). Froebel formalized play into instructional routines for the pre-school year before regular school commenced at age six in grade-1. He believed that children at this age learnt at a fast pace and their personality (character) was formed during these years and the bad habits prevented. (Schickedanz, 1995, pp. 4-6). Besides the inclusion of play Froebel's Kindergarten model is based on moral education and family involvement, and he thus encouraged his teachers to visit parents of their students on a frequent basis to establish the crucial link

⁶ *Anschauung*: Meaning: intuition, standpoint, opinion, immediate perception etc

Source: Thesaurus

of the child's learning environment (Jeynes, 2006). The four cornerstones of Froebel's philosophy of education are, free self expression, creativity, social participation and 'motor expression/skills'⁷. Apart from the ones mentioned see Appendix 3 that highlights the essential elements of Froebel's education system.

3.3.4 Maria Montessori (1870 – 1952)

Referred to the House of children or Children's House, the Italian Montessori education commenced in the early 1900's. Through years of observation, Montessori designed a curriculum that appealed to all of the child's senses. Montessori schools encourage divergent thinking instead of convergent thinking, and innovation instead of standardization. Maria Montessori asserts that cosmic education (CE) is vitally important for children's education. She writes:

Let us give the child a vision of the whole universe...If the idea of the universe be presented to the child in the right way, it will do more for him than just arouse his interest, for it will create in him admiration and wonder...The knowledge he then acquires is then organized and systematic; his intelligence becomes whole and complete because of the vision of the whole that has been presented to him...No matter what we touch, an atom, or a cell, we cannot explain it without knowledge of the wide universe. (Montessori, 1973).

The importance of the environment for learning (Thayer-Bacon, 2012, p. 17), as Montessori referred to as cosmic education enables children to have a transparent comprehension of the natural world as an interconnected entity. Thus Montessori believed that children receiving CE would be better equipped moving from the different stages of human development—children to adolescence to mature adults as sovereign, confident, responsive, emotionally intelligent, mentally and physically balanced people etc.

The philosophy of the Montessori school is based on the learning experience encountered in class which is hands-on, self-paced, joyful, challenging and collaborative in practice. Playful learning is integral to the Montessori method, for instance, making use of small objects of learning, individual learning plans for lessons, free choice, peer participation, fun and lack of external rewards (Lillard, 2013, p. 179). Humorous and playful learning is child centered, constructivist, affectively positive and applied (hands-on) (Lillard, 2013, p. 158), where children play independently and learn naturally out of

⁷ Motor Skills: Mean the ability to perform complex muscle-and-nerve acts that produce movement. Source: Dictionary.com

their individual interest. While in the conventional schooling, the teacher directly instructs children (didactic instruction) (Lillard, 2013, p. 157), Montessori education on the contrary assumes that children do not need to be forced to learn and only learn willingly (Lillard, 2013, p. 165). If one looks at children, one would notice that children are naturally interested in almost everything they see around themselves and their curiosity is super explorative. By the time children get into the first grade or at pre-school year, they have already learnt how to move around, walk, run, stand, taste, use their hands in picking up things developing their motor skills, learn to ride a bike, the swings, the jumping pad, to swim, to count, speak, laugh, learn rhymes and so on. The achievements in terms of children to learn this fast is astonishing and extraordinary. Therefore, a teacher carefully monitors the child and interacts by questioning to help guide the learning process keeping into consideration the child's own interest and learning speed (Lillard, 2013, p. 158). And once teachers observe that children could function more independently, they move away as children learn to control themselves (Lillard, 2013, p. 162).

The learning materials of children should be interesting, appealing and self-correcting (Thayer-Bacon, 2012, p. 17), and specifically with regards to *playful learning*, the Montessori education systems have scientifically conceptualized children learning through the use of toys and have designed them accordingly. The toys or the materials are carefully designed so that the children could identify when they have made an error and rectify the mistake on their own. For instance, the wooden knob cylinders that requires children to position the ten graduated cylinders into the appropriate slots. There are four different sets of knob cylinders each with different dimensions. The children learn to focus on the slight variations in the scope and size and of the cylinders and the slots. Later in life the practice with knob cylinders helps to apply in formal mathematics and thereby learn to judge, reason and act on their decisions. If the child places the cylinder in the wrong slot, the task will not be completed until the child by recognizing the subtle variations of the cylinders width, depth, breadth and height rectifies the error and puts the cylinder in the right spot (Lillard, 2013, pp. 164-165). Similarly, in order to give the children an environment that practically orients reality into their daily school activity according to their heights, the furniture, equipment (broom, mops, toilets, wash basin etc.), shelves for storing their belongings all are child-sized (Thayer-Bacon, 2012, p. 17).

The basic Montessori principles are: respect for the child, absorbent mind, sensitive periods, prepared environment and auto-education (Morrison, 2007, p. 4). Staying in the same class for three years, the Montessori education system focuses on diversity of age of children from infant to three year olds, three to six, six to nine, and nine to twelve (Thayer-Bacon, 2012, p. 17; Lillard, 2013, pp. 158-159). The diversity in the age group in a single class provides an opportunity for older students to be leaders and mentors and helps younger students in the different lessons accordingly, while younger students have the experience of working with older classmates. For instance, for senior students, it boosts motivation to help the junior ones; establishes a sense of belonging by taking responsibility; develop an aptitude of teaching and leading; and makes them more self aware. For the junior students, it provides a scenario of learning from someone with not much of an age difference, thus the perspective is important; it provides a moment when they might get interested to be in a similar situation as their seniors. The benefits for the teachers is that it is a moment to cherish the skills of the pupils they have taught for three years and having in-depth knowledge, the teachers share important insights in relevance to educational excellence. The teacher becomes familiar with the students and their families, and the relationship is built on pure trust. Thus, the entire cycle of learning is simply enhanced due to the prolonged existence of the relationship.

Conventional schools assume that children need incentives for learning, for instance, grades, honorary ribbons, medals, certificate of honor, gold stars, certificate of participation etc., and if they do not respond to achieve the benchmark, they should be dealt with or punished in the form of poor grades or giving an explanation to the teacher etc., (Lillard, 2013, p. 167). However, in a Montessori school, classes are *ungraded* (Thayer-Bacon, 2012, p. 17). The Montessori teacher does not direct students to learn according to a conventional lesson plan but rather to follow the student's interest—wherever that passion leads and regardless of what other students are working on (Thayer-Bacon, 2012). In a Montessori school, the teacher frequently moves in the classroom attending to the different tasks the children are engaged in. This interaction could be one-on-one or in small groups from two to six children.

By carefully observing the learners interaction with materials, the teachers establish the children's readiness in terms of knowledge/skills attainment of previous lessons and when the teacher concludes that a child has mastered one lesson in the

sequence, the teacher considers them ready to move on to the next (Lillard, 2013, p. 165). So in a single class there would be students engaged in different activities, for instance, in a maths class a student would be doing multiplication and the other doing an addition task etc. This is possible due to the age mix in a single class, for instance, 3-6 year olds in one class. Therefore, in a single class, each student can experience the variety of learning activities what they have learnt in the present and what they would be learning in the coming days. This way of learning allows students to take ownership which is a critical element in nurturing each child's natural desire to learn.

The fact that children search out for genuine pleasure in learning and real learning also involves doing things for oneself (Thayer-Bacon, 2012, p. 17). Montessori school system allows students to learn joyfully and effectively, learn independence, self-discipline, responsibility, initiative, leadership, sound academics etc. And all of this is overarched by a lifelong internal quest to learn and share.

3.3.5 Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925)

Steiner's education philosophy was based around the whole child—head, hands and heart (3H) to educate holistically. His philosophy paved way into the spiritual aspect of the education practice by inspiring children's natural quest of wonder and curiosity, of love for nature and belief in goodness. (Morrison, 2007, pp. 4, 28). During the formation of his school, he stressed that:

There was to be no classification of children into intellectual 'streams', no class lists, no examinations, no holding back in a grade or promoting to a grade, no prizes, no honors boards, no reports, no compulsory homework, and no punishments of additional learning material. It was to be a school where teachers and children meet as human beings to share and experience the knowledge of human evolution and development in the world (Morrison, 2007, pp. 28-29).

The essential principles of Steiner's education philosophy are anthroposophy, respect for development, eurhythmy and nurturing imagination.

Anthroposophy is the philosophy of gaining new understanding of the human body by tapping the spiritual dimension that provides an opportunity for higher and more meaningful learning (Morrison, 2007, pp. 28-29).

Respect for development consists of the activities of children that are planned and intended to inspire, admire and respect for the space in which they spend their time working in activities such as caring for the plants, cleaning or sweeping, taking care of the play area (Morrison, 2007, p. 32) etc.

Eurhythm is the artistic expression, a dance like art form, combining the spoken words and music through bodily movements such as gestures, colors, rhythms etc. For the children, eurhythm is a way to stimulate the growth motor movements where children express their awe and wonder of the things they see around themselves. One example could be the finger games where the children learn to use part of their body's rhythmically, thus developing a sense of harmony both internally and externally. (Morrison, 2007, p. 30). Eurhythm builds coordination and reinforces the capability to listen. Working in a group, for instance an orchestra, children learn by doing and seeing themselves as an individual participant, and as part of a larger group that creates a comprehensible rapport in space with each other resulting in social strengthening (Carroll, 2003, p. 27).

Nurturing imagination is to instinctively stimulate the wonder of imagination in children, folk and fairy tales, fables and legends are integrated into the curriculum. Children become aware and are motivated to investigate the different customs of the diverse cultures globally, thereby supporting a multicultural approach to education and boosting the child's creative life instigating free thinking. (Morrison, 2007, p. 30).

3.4 The common ground between Pestalozzi, Montessori, Froebel and Steiner

I have not included Lincoln's letter in this context because by profession Lincoln is not a mainstream progressive educationist whereas the other four are. However, Lincoln's letter holds great insight and provides support in understanding the holistic perspective of education which is analyzed in chapter 6. In this section I wanted to see how the education philosophy of Pestalozzi, Montessori, Froebel and Steiner pertaining to the different aspects of holistic education converge with regards to care in schools. This is explained in Figure 2.

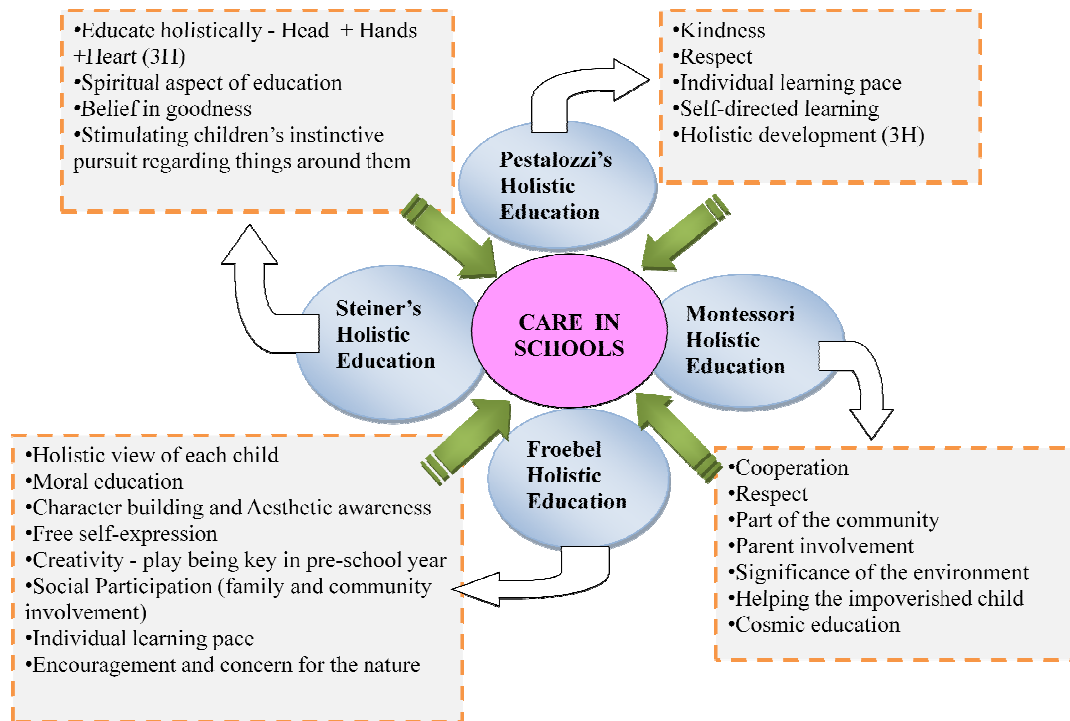


FIGURE 2 Care in Schools

3.5 Conceptual framework for holistic education

Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 18) define the conceptual framework as a written or visual presentation that “explains either graphically, or in narrative form, the main things to be studied, the key factors, constructs (concepts) or variables and the presumed relationship among them”. A conceptual framework enables to break down complicated research phenomena into small components that could be based on their relationship of relevancy. Therefore, enabling the researcher to view the problem from the specific angle of the research. Reichel and Ramey (1987, p. 167) describe the conceptual framework as “a set of broad ideas and principles taken from relevant field of enquiry and used to structure a subsequent presentation”. Each one of us possesses a conceptual framework about the dynamics of reality making it possible to make assumptions and evaluate them based on the premise of the inquiry (Svinicki, 2010, p. 5). A conceptual framework could take the form of flow charts, tree diagrams, triangles, overlapping circles, mind maps etc., and the structure of the framework could be basic or complex, theory-driven or based on rationality, be descriptive or causal (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 18).

With regards to my research, the following is the diagram for the conceptual framework for this master thesis research. From the theories (Nava, 2001; Warren, 2002; Looi & Hung, 2004; UNESCO, 2004; Orr, 2005; Orr, 2005; Dhawan, 2005; Miller, n.d., 2008; Morrison, 2007; Thayer-Bacon, 2012; Lillard, 2013; Lincoln; Noddings; Pestalozzi; Montessori; Froebel and Steiner) discussed in the previous sections, researchers argue that the individual is a responsive person built on the 'elements of holistic education' which forms a completely caring person. The conceptual framework (Figure 3) has been represented by different colors. Since every color represents a different meaning ("Empower yourself with color," n.d.; "Art Therapy," n.d.; Olesen, n.d.), the color categorizations are:

- PHYSICAL represented by **RED**
- INTELLECTUAL represented by **BLUE**
- EMOTIONAL represented by **TURQUOISE**
- SOCIAL represented by **ORANGE**
- CREATIVE represented by **YELLOW**
- SPIRITUAL represented by **PURPLE**
- Balance, harmony, safety, freshness and fertility are represented by **GREEN**
- CARE represented by **PINK**
- WHOLESOMENESS represented by **BROWN**
- INTERCONNECTEDNESS and SELFACTUALIZATION represented by **SILVER**

We can now formulate the conceptual framework as shown in Figure 3.

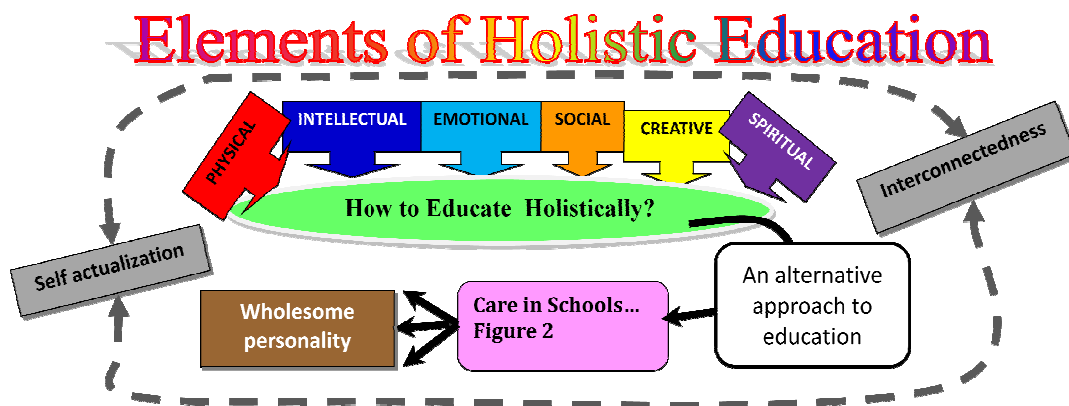


FIGURE 3 Conceptual Framework

The elements of holistic education correspond to the attainment of self-actualization as concluded by Maslow in his hierarchy of needs, where the potential to self actualize is the highest level of human attainment (See Appendix 4). According to Maslow, some of the characteristics of self-actualized people are, “efficient perception of reality, fellowship with humanity, reflective interpersonal relationships, non-hostile sense of humor, comfortable acceptance of self, others, nature” etc., (“Printable Maslow’s Hierarchy,” n.d.). This is what holistic education aims to develop in students.

4 RESEARCH DESIGN

The use of plentiful citations may call for justification in this thesis. During the phase of writing this thesis, I came across highly insightful research texts that called for being placed as direct quotations. I am well aware that in an academic text, it is recommended as a thumb rule to avoid direct quotations as much as possible. Driscoll and Brizee (1995-2016) argue that around 10% of direct quotations should be included in the final document. There may be others that might give a bit of flexibility on the total count of direct quotations based on the individual institutional policy. However, often it is impossible to avoid a direct quote and paraphrasing it poses considerable challenge. The actual concern is that e.g. paraphrasing the author's precise and extraordinary language might lose the originality of the author in the relevance of the moment (Betts, Farquharson & Seitz, 2005, p. 52; to paraphrase or to quote, 2014, p. 2; The Writers Handbook, 2014; "Decide when to quote", n.d.).

4.1 Aim of study and the research questions

The discrepancy in the current education model is evident through the inequalities it has created in the society as a failure to address the holism of human beings. Based on the reflections of my life experiences, this research explores and brings together the care phenomenon and its importance for holistic education, by specifically analyzing the ethics of care theory of Noddings and my own voice.

The early years of childhood are the benchmarking phase of a person's life that serves as a determinant for the future in terms of holistic development. During the early years, the child is most vulnerable. Considering the content in the introduction part and the relevance of the topic, neither the highly educated nor the least educated societies are exempt from unbridled social problems that plague the society. Most of these social problems are committed by people that have acquired some form of education during their lives. For example, Noddings claims that we need to control the impulse to perfectly educate, and focus on addressing multiple identities by supporting multiple talents and curiosity of students (Noddings, 2005, p. 185). Miller (2008, p. 5) argues that in contrast to holistic education, traditional education approach requires the child to

become a passive receiver of information synonymous to the computer like processor of information. Bowles and Gintis (1988, p. 18) argue:

The hierarchical order of the school system, admirably geared towards preparing students for their future positions in the hierarchy of production, limits the development of those personal capacities, and reinforces social inequality by legitimating of students to inherently unequal 'slots' in the social hierarchy.

During my basic education years, I had a few teachers that were unkind, exercised control and simply did not care. Watson (2011, p. 44) argues that the *uncaring* person is numb to the other person as a unique individual, does not understand the feelings of others, and does not essentially make a distinction of one person from the other in any noteworthy manner. In the class, there was fear, calmness was absent and in order to try to keep things straight, I tried to stay quiet by trying to hide behind the front row students from the teacher's pointing finger. In my later years, when I reflected back, I saw the teacher and student (me) as two ends that should have met in harmony, a gut feeling I had that only then the objective of education could be considered to be on the right track. Being introduced to Noddings has enticed me to expand my knowledge by virtue of my master thesis.

With my personal life experiences, a cohesive social transformation is only possible by inducing the philosophy of care into the education system beginning early in childhood education till the end—right through the academic career. Only then can the world expect to see the wide scale chaos in all facets of life to settle down and possibly take a U-turn.

Schools are constantly faced with such matters and it is clear that the neo-liberal education model is significantly failing to provide options for the much needed eradication of the social evils. To yield a healthy society this becomes a formidable challenge. Drawing from my own experience as a student in four countries and as a parent it is a serious concern. The only way is a life changing education model that blends in with the interests of the students because in this change process, children are the most fundamental and promising change agents. Researchers argue that for significant transformation in teaching and learning practices it is important to consider students' views, however, their opinions are largely ignored. (Freire, 1970; Fullan, 2007).

Having had the privilege to be educated in four countries made it possible to understand the *ahaa* moments when I deeply felt that 'essential learning' was taking

place. This had nothing to do with how much was taught but rather how the teacher emotionally and intellectually connected with the students in search for creating a new meaning to learning. And this was not all to it. Being able to practice tolerance by the options provided by the school and the community granted an expansive opportunity to experience closely the people with different faiths where each strand of the societal structure was intertwined in a peaceful and progressive coexistence. This is the foundation and leads down to my research questions:

1. Why is the concept of *caring* so topical?
2. How does Noddings' theory of care attribute to the concept of holistic education?
3. How does my auto-ethnographic experience connect to Noddings' theory of care and its attributes to holistic education?

4.2 Research data

In the field of education, Noddings is a well-known figure whose work has significantly contributed to theory and practice by exploring the implications of the theory of care on education (Smith, 2004). Noddings expresses her concern with regards to its importance in terms of teaching and learning from a reciprocal standpoint. Noddings' inspiration to her work is intensely influenced from her own experience as a student being taught during the early years of her education. Experiencing *care* from her teachers impacted positively in intriguing and awakening her interest ultimately into a lifelong interest in student-teacher relations.

The seminal work of Nel Noddings in regard to the *care* phenomenon in education is the primary source of data of my thesis. To investigate into the research question, the type of study that I have chosen is meta-analytic from a qualitative perspective and I have specifically chosen Noddings' book "The Challenge to Care in Schools—An alternative approach to education" to serve as the primary data source. However, also the following texts of Noddings have been probed in:

- *Caring, a Feminine Approach to Ethics & Moral Education* (1984).
- *Teaching themes of care* (1995).
- *Philosophy of Education* (1998).
- *Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy* (2002).

- What Does It Mean to Educate the Whole Child? (2005a).
- Moral Education in an Age of Globalization (2010).
- The caring relation in teaching (2012).

During the process of sifting information relevant to my research topic, I found that the concepts that I was probing were similar and at times repetitive in the different texts of Noddings'. This however does not imply that Noddings is doing a cut and paste job merely for an academic purpose. Consequently, the defining data with regards to my research with the different texts of Noddings eventually comes from the book "The Challenge to Care in Schools—An alternative approach to education", but as Glass (1976, p. 4) debated, it is my challenge to find, unearth and grasp knowledge from the richness of the information in her writings.

The second source of data in studying the concept of care and the attributes relevant to holistic education come from my auto-ethnographic experience in three continents and four learning cultures. The relevance of personal experience as data source is acknowledged by several ethnographic researchers for example, Atkinson (1997), Holt (2003, p. 3), Reed-Danahay (1997, p. 3). As Chang (2008, p. 69) posits, I am an author, an informant and an investigator.

4.3 Meta-analysis and auto-ethnography as data analysis tools

In this thesis, meta-analysis was conducted by sifting through the texts of Noddings and the guideline came from the research question(s). The concept of care from the perspective of Noddings, and other authors were used to study the dynamics of care, whole human being, holistic education and the interlinkages.

In 1976, Gene Glass was the first that coined the term 'meta-analysis' referring to it as a philosophy and not a statistical technique (Bangert-Drowns & Rudner, n.d.). With regards to building the philosophical concern of meta-analysis, Glass (1976, p. 4) said:

Before what has been found can be used, before it can persuade skeptics, influence policy, affect practice, it must be known. Someone must organize it, integrate it, and extract the message. A hundred dissertations are mute. Someone must read them and discover what they say. We face an abundance of information. Our problem is to find the knowledge in the information. We need methods for the orderly summarization of studies so that knowledge can be extracted from the myriad individual researches.

Qualitative meta-analysis is also referred to as qualitative meta-synthesis (Sandelowski, Docherty & Emden, 1997), qualitative meta-data-analysis (Paterson, Thorne, Canam, & Jillings, 2001), and meta-ethnography proposed by Noblit and Hare (1988) as a method of synthesizing qualitative research. Developed in the field of education as an approach to educational research (France et al., 2015; Britten et al., 2002), meta-ethnography is the most commonly used method of qualitative synthesis (Hannes & Macaitis, 2012).

Qualitative meta-ethnography or meta-analysis or meta-synthesis is a way of formally collecting, blending and composing the results and conclusions from completed qualitative studies in the relevant field, elucidating into theories, grand narratives or generalizations (Sandelowski 2004, p. 892; Barroso et al., 2003, p. 154; Sandelowski et al., 1997, p. 366). Qualitative meta-analysis or meta-synthesis does not signify that the results and conclusions are merged on a standard scale (Wolf, 1986, p. 33), as mere integration would not be appropriate (Barnett and Thomas, n.d., p. 5), but rather it is a point of departure of establishing broad spectrum theories (Sandelowski, et al., 1997, p. 369).

Noblit and Hare (1988, pp. 9-10) state that meta-ethnography can be considered a comprehensive study in itself as it compares and analyzes texts, creating new and a holistic interpretation from the entire process of study, something synonymous to the study of culture by an ethnographer. They believe that “meta-ethnography is firmly based in the interpretive paradigm that includes research that is termed ethnographic, interactive, qualitative, naturalistic, hermeneutic or phenomenological” (Noblit & Hare, 1988, pp. 11-12), “reflective, inductive or action research” (Ticehurst & Veal, 1999, p. 20). In order to preserve the depth of analysis and protect the interpretive validity of the findings, Sandelowski, et al. (1997, p. 368) recommend a maximum of ten studies in a single research study. Britten et al. (2002, p. 213) conclude that it is possible to synthesize the results or findings of qualitative research by using meta-ethnography.

The method of analysis of my data was not content analysis or thematic analysis but an overarching narrative in line with researchers on meta-ethnography (Sandelowski 2004, p. 892; Barroso et al., 2003, p. 154; Sandelowski et al., 1997; Noblit & Hare, 1988, pp. 9-10). I have created a personal narrative of lived experience.

The early scholars of the term *auto-ethnography* were Heider (1975) and Hayano (1979), however, Hayano (1979, p. 99) writes that he first heard the term from Sir Raymond Firth at the London School of Economics in 1966. During this period the

definition of the term was explained as the study of the culture of a certain group(s) where the researcher acts as an insider in the element of investigation as a member (Hayano, 1979) in an effort to examine the views that people have of themselves (Wolcott, 2008, p. 211). Rapidly expanding outside the domain of anthropology, auto-ethnography is becoming widely popular as a method and is blending into other fields of study such as sociology (Ellis, 2004). The primary distinction of auto-ethnography from ethnography is that the researcher in actual fact is the insider with their own context as part of the research (Duncan, 2004, p. 3), whose personal perspective (experiences) and responsiveness paves the way for the research process (Eisner, 1991), thus writing personal stories and self narratives.

The term *auto-ethnography* in part refers to auto, ethno and graphy, and Carolyn Ellis explains it as a method to research and writing that methodically examines (graphy) individual experience (auto) to be able to identify with the cultural experience (ethno) (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011). Auto-ethnography is a type of writing in qualitative research that approves and recognizes the power of the researcher both as an instrument and object of study to investigate and unravel several layers of consciousness / personal experiences by connecting within the confines of the perspective of the culture under investigation providing the reader with a valuable experience (Duncan, 2004; Keefer, 2009; Chang, 2008; Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Ellis and Bochner (2000, p. 737) describe their perspective on the auto-ethnographic method:

I start with my personal life. I pay attention to my physical feelings, thoughts and emotions. I use what I call systematic sociological introspection and emotional recall to try to understand an experience I've lived through. Then I write my experience as a story. By exploring a particular life I hope to understand a way of life.

The process of auto-ethnography goes beyond simple commentary of self by actively participating and elucidating the study of culture(s) (Chang, 2008, p. 43). Some of the similar features of auto-ethnography relate to storytelling, self or personal narrative, lived experience, evocative narrative (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, pp. 739-740; Chang, 2008, p. 43) etc. In an auto-ethnographic account, an element of interest is the researcher's own autobiography which is inclusive of countless life experiences that could be related to varied concerns ranging from personal identity to the social and cultural construction of human lives (Given, 2008, p. 46).

Anderson (2006, p. 375) argues that in qualitative research there has always been an element of auto-ethnography. Goldschmidt (1977, p. 294) posits that "all

ethnography is auto-ethnography”. It is common to see that in the present times academic writers combine autobiography into ethnography in the different areas of research where the ethnographer plays a dual role—as participant and observer collectively (Reed-Danahay, 2009, p. 29). Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011) argue that by converging the precise and passionate life experiences and connecting them with the researcher’s cultural location and identity, auto-ethnography has great deal of potential for creativity. The overall aim is to create academic texts that intrigue interest in the reader by amalgamating personal and cultural experience which create meaning and connects with the audience, thus presenting to them in a new way (Ellis et al., 2011). Considering auto-ethnography as an important research tool in a number of fields including education, I therefore intend to utilize the author’s voice (my experiences) in a self-reflexive manner to enlighten to the reader the diverse life worlds.

4.4 Reliability, validity and ethical considerations in qualitative inquiry

Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 17) argue that qualitative research is one where the findings or conclusions are not drawn by using statistical measures. Developing idiographic knowledge, qualitative inquiry focuses on unraveling subjective phenomena since reality is diverse and consists of interrelated parts or an entirety of all things which may or may not impact other parts of the inquiry (Guba, 1981, p. 77). Using a combination of techniques, qualitative studies could be used for narrow studies as well as holistic studies that tend to examine the completeness of a social situation, allow the researcher to recognize and clarify personal internal or external experiences of individuals situated in real world settings, and is presented in a narrative form that provides a broad array of interest for readers as the phenomena or reality unfurls naturally (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe 1991; Gummesson 1991; Patton, 2002). To derive meaning in a socially bound context, the qualitative researcher is the prime instrument for data collection and analysis (Patton, 2002, p. 14) and for this reason the credibility of the researcher is of utmost importance as the pinching question always surfaces - whether the study could be replicated in the same way? For a qualitative research to be trustworthy, Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose a criterion of four important elements – credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility refers to the research design and practice, and Patton (1999, p. 1190) asserts three important aspects to it: well known research methods in qualitative inquiry to be used for the collection of high quality data that are analyzed in depth; researcher's credibility which is based on training, work or life experiences, presentation of self, etc., and a philosophical conviction in the value of the qualitative study. *Transferability* refers to the extent when the findings or results of a qualitative study could be transferred to other settings (Gasson, 2004, p. 98) where readers could make an informed judgment that the findings relate to their context. The possibility of high quality transferability could be provided through thick descriptions. These are rich descriptions that are in depth and contextually bound in the multiple layers of culture deeply rooted in the experiences (Morrow, 2005, pp. 252, 260). Also, Morrow (2005, p. 256) posits the necessity of clear presentation of writing, subheadings, tables, and figures that would simplify the interpretation process for the reader. The *dependability* criterion in qualitative study refers to whether the results or findings tend to remain stable with the passage of time and whether they could be repeated in a similar context (Bitsch, 2005, p. 86; Gasson, 2004, p. 94). Patton (2002, p. 546) argues that dependability is a systematic process which is pursued methodically and analytically. Dependability could be enhanced by keeping a thorough record of the research processes and the outcomes of the research by maintaining an audit log to be assessed by experts in the field for consistency (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Hoepfl, 1997). *Confirmability* is when the findings of a qualitative inquiry could be confirmed or authenticated by other researchers (Baxter & Eyles, 1997), and the audit log lends support to the researchers to follow the research trail (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). Morrow (2005, p. 252) suggests that the data, analytic processes and findings should interconnect and weave through in a manner that allows the reader to certify the appropriateness of the research study.

Reliability in an auto-ethnographic work implies to the credibility of the narrator (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011). Traditionally, in the field of science, quantification has been central while conducting research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 105). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argue that too frequently well established qualitative research methods are constantly questioned about their dependability as valid science due to the strong and prevalent tradition of the positivist research paradigm (applied, experimental or lab-simulation etc.). Ryan and Bernard (2000, p. 780) assert that there is no such monopoly

on the analysis of research data whether it is the humanistic or the positivist research paradigm. An auto-ethnographic work is reliable if it provides relevant information to readers that truthfully and practically relates to their own experiences or concerns the lives of people they know (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

With regards to *validity*, Chang (2008, p. 54) raises concern regarding some of the downsides of the evaluative process of auto-ethnographic work, such as “too much focus on the researcher itself and excluding others; too much emphasis on commentary instead of analysis and cultural interpretation; over reliance on personal memory and relating as a data source; and neglecting ethical standards regarding others in the personal commentary”. The auto-ethnographer is part of the research process, and Quicke (2010, p. 242) argues that the researcher’s ‘closeness’ or convenience may hinder adequate distancing to reflect upon. Auto-ethnography tends to get a critical review with regards to the authenticity of the research because the researcher utilizes personal experience as the only data source (Holt, 2003, p. 3). It may therefore be considered self-indulgent, individualized, and introspective, with the possibility of being lost in thought rather than in deep thought, however, if personal experience is to be excluded from the research, then it would not be auto-ethnography (Atkinson, 1997; Coffey, 1999). The author’s voice as that of the insider is considered more accurate, lifelike and spot-on than the voice of the outsider (Reed-Danahay, 1997, p. 3). The validity in auto-ethnographic research could be identified and tested in terms of the rich experience or the value of the narrative gained as an outcome of the research process and that the beneficiaries (i.e. readers) associate the phenomenon described closely to life, which is convincing and offers something unique that the readers could utilize to bring improvement in their lives (Ellis, 2004, p. 124; Bochner, 2002, p. 282; Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 751). To continuously reflect back and forth on the reflections provides a continual set of opportunities to probe in depth and discover new meaning out of the analysis (Midgley 2008, p. 23). According to Spry (2001, p. 713), a good auto-ethnographic account is characterized by a stimulating blend of story and theory and not merely a confessional self-account.

With regards to *ethical considerations*, Kvale (1996) categorizes three ethical issues in any research design - scientific dependability or responsibility of the researcher, researcher-participant relationship and researcher’s autonomy in the elucidation of results. Ellis (2007, p. 26) argues that even though there are ethical issues

that need to be considered during auto-ethnographic study, still, an auto-ethnographic process is an ethical practice. Being ethical, Ellis (2007) argues that real life scenarios are meshed with ambiguity, sad and happy moments, difficult choices etc., and this is what auto-ethnography is about - interweaving the lived experiences into meaningful interpretation in the given social context. In an auto-ethnographic account, Chang (2008, p. 69) argues that the researcher tends to play various roles - as an author, an informant, and an investigator, however, it is important to be mindful that the self narrative is never constructed in space and there are contributory participants that make up the story whole. It is ethical to consider that the others that make the story whole will be kept safe (Ellis, 2007). For instance, Medford (2006) suggests refraining from writing anything about the others that the researcher would not otherwise show to those participants of the story. And in case there are chances of causing potential harm to self or the others, caution should be taken, since the narrative account is the interpretation of one's own sociological imagination with the others (Tolich, 2010), the objective should be to minimize it either by using a pen name or literary double (Chang, 2008), creating fiction of the narrative, seeking and acquiring proper consent etc., (Ellis, 2009). The outcome of an auto-ethnographic study should reveal a positive change in the life of the reader transforming the world into a better place and thus the research should be conducted from an ethic of care (Ellis, 2007, p. 25).

5 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Noddings in her book, “The Challenge to Care in Schools, An alternative approach to education”, argues that educators should aim to support the growth of capable, compassionate, loving and adorable persons, a moral priority that is absent in education (Noddings, 2005). Noddings’ basic premise of revolutionizing schools is through the inclusion and practice of care, suggesting that education should be structured around the elements of care - caring for self, care for intimate others, global others, plants, animals, the environment, the human made world and ideas, rather than on traditional and popular disciplines (Noddings, 1998, p. 124; 2005, p. 173). I wish to remind here that the data consisted of another seven writings of Noddings (see chapter 4.2).

Noddings in her book “The Challenge to Care in Schools—An alternative approach to education”, expresses boldly her concern about the great vacuum that exists in today’s schools on the strict emphasis of the curriculum taught rather than focusing on the heterogeneous interests of children. Of course one can simply question that how a homogenous curriculum could be fit for a heterogeneous audience? Noddings proposes the concept of ‘caring in schools’ as a phenomenon integral to human development rather than ‘mass production out of an assembly line’ as is the state of the current education system. In her book, Noddings provides a solution against the conventional school system suggesting harnessing an academic environment founded on care and the acceptance of wonder and curiosity of children and addressing them per se.

Noddings expresses her concern of the utter chaos in schools in the United States, however, her concern could be regarded equally relevant for schools globally. This is because the education model globally is based on the neo-liberal economic model or the factory model discussed earlier. She gives a brief sketch of the current scenarios of the happenings in and around schools. Noddings (2005, pp. 26-27) argues some of the salient features of a typical school. *Children’s home conditions* refers to children that come from homes where both parents are employed, have single parents, have foster parents, have related or unrelated siblings, and those children that are orphans. With regards to television programs, children usually watch commonly shown programs, ‘entertainment and news ‘such as murder movies, assault, love making, war making, competitive sports etc. *Children’s school conditions* is the transportation of children to school by bus and most teachers aren’t aware where they live. For the children to trust

their teachers is not a dominant culture and therefore there is no respect in the relation. Schools are overcrowded, up to 2000 or even more, and teachers are faced with the daunting task of differentiating them from outsiders, in some cases there are security guards and strict protocols about entering and exiting the campus. As an outcome of this, children strongly feel isolated in studies, from their teachers and the environment in general.

5.1 Noddings' view of holistic education

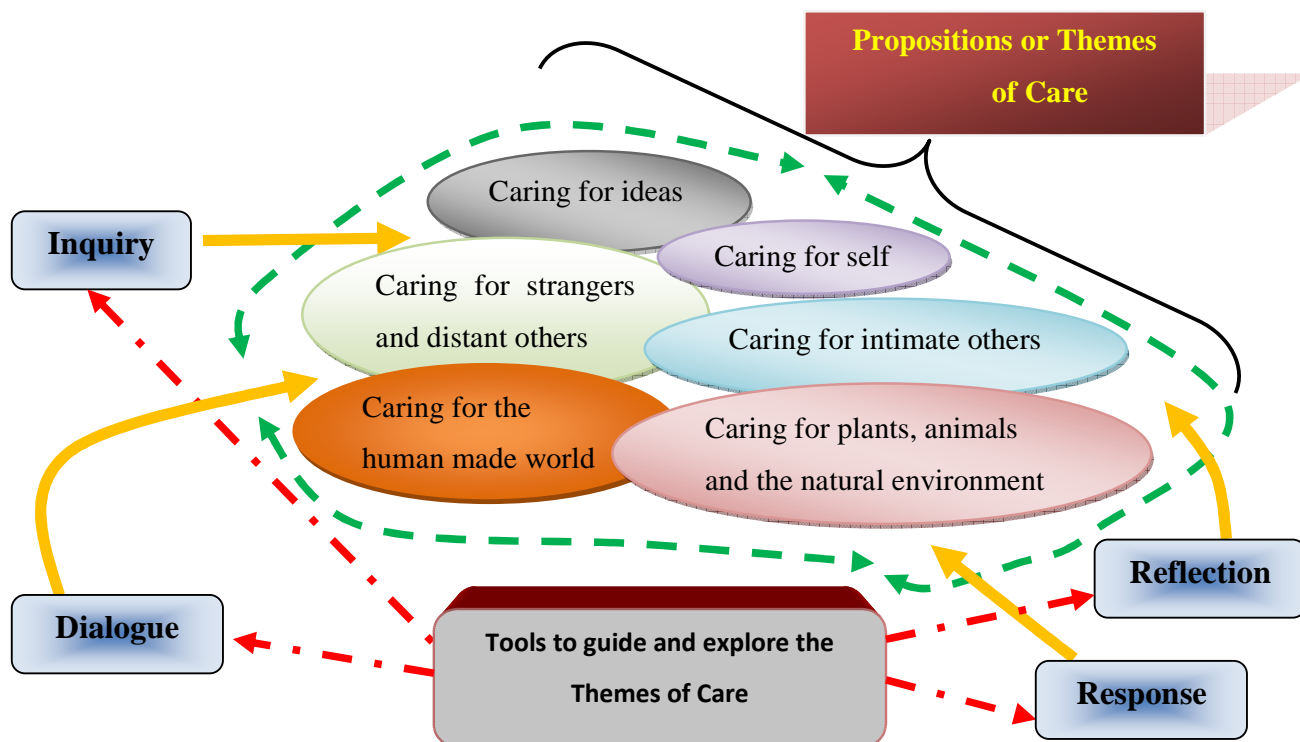


FIGURE 4 Noddings' View of Holistic Education (Adapted from Noddings, 2005, pp. 21, 90)

Relating to Figure 4, Noddings specifies themes of care beginning from the self and then moves outward in reciprocity to the relationship either with a living thing or a non-living entity. In order to nurture these themes in the academic setting, Noddings suggests tools to guide and explore these propositions. She writes, "it is the inquiry, dialogue, reflection, and response—not a particular set of books—that guide our exploration of themes of care" (Noddings, 2005, p. 21). Noddings' philosophy of caring is aimed to ascribe "caring" in a relational context surrounding basic human relationships referring to as the carer and the cared for (Noddings, 1998, pp. 49, 114).

Both children and adults also engage in a caring relationship with a non-living thing too. For instance, children like to take care of their belongings such as toys, and adults love to care for their property such as cars, furniture, house, etc. Noddings asks some intriguing questions about caring; “what characterizes the consciousness of a carer in a caring encounter, or what is our mental state when we care?” (Noddings, 1998, p. 49). Whether children or adults, when they engage in a caring relationship either with a living creature or things, our emotional state tends to become emotionally sensitive. We find ourselves grossly engaged in a “caring encounter”, experiencing the joys of an outward flow of energy to the subject, and vice versa.

Stemming from the prevalent inequalities in education, Noddings advocates her concern to completely remodel the school curriculum where the central focus of the curriculum would highlight questions and issues that are paramount to human existence (Noddings, 1995, p. 675). Noddings’ concern is quite natural as a response against the gruesome realities that plague schools at present. Her emphasis on the realistic application of care in education is absolutely a pre-condition for children and the society, to act as responsive caring individuals. Why this is terribly important, Noddings (1995, p. 675) gives a horrendous narrative of the real world:

In an age when violence among schoolchildren is at an unprecedented level, when children are bearing children with little knowledge of how to care for them, when the society and even the schools often concentrate on materialistic messages, it may be unnecessary to argue that we should care more genuinely for our children and teach them to care. However, many otherwise reasonable people seem to believe that our educational problems consist largely of low scores on achievement tests.

In the context of schools in the United States, Noddings pins down three major inequalities: in resources, in relationships and in the curriculum (Nodding, 1998, pp. 114-120). She argues that *inequalities in physical resources* (Nodding, 1998, p. 115) include faulty heating systems, dysfunctional toilets, sewage backing up into kitchens and cafeterias, paint peeling from walls and ceilings, crowded rooms where teachers have to count on high absenteeism, lack of reading materials—books, maps, instruments, etc. With regards to *inequalities in basic relationship*, Noddings (1998, p. 118) argues that due to the children’s socio-economic background, schools tend not to be responsive and do not care to provide an environment where children are surrounded by academically competent and loving adults. She further asserts that schools seldom consider situations when poor children are faced with problems at school, and there is little to no emphasis on the value of relationships necessary for the healthy intellectual,

emotional and moral development of children (Noddings, 1998, p. 118). Considering the *inequalities in the curriculum*, Noddings (1998, pp. 114 & 120) asserts that even twins are least alike and their interests, thinking, etc., vary a great deal. So should a curriculum be the same for heterogeneous students? And whether the students should be given the responsibility to choose what to study based on their interests?

5.2 Practical application for the themes of care

To educate children in schools from the perspective of care, Noddings suggests four elements essential for bringing about the philosophy of the care themes into practice. These are modeling, dialogue, practice and confirmation (Noddings, 1998, p. 131).

Modeling is practicing the art of teaching virtues (intrinsic worth) by demonstrating our caring relations with students such that they would participate positively and effectively in caring relations as carers and cared-for (Noddings, 1998, p. 131). Like the famous quote, ‘charity begins at home’, students cannot learn to care if teachers teach them only theoretically, for instance, by “giving them texts to read on the subject” (Noddings, 1998, p. 131). Noddings argues that, it is through practice that teacher carers set an example practically by doing rather than through sermons or preaching (Noddings, 2010, p. 394). It is to practice what you preach.

In order to cultivate caring relationships, it is vitally important to engage in *dialogue* (Noddings, 2012, p. 775). Noddings argues that, dialogue in its very nature tempts the participants (carer and cared-for) to naturally adjust to the common platform for receptivity, gratitude and accommodating the other, etc. It has to be unrestricted and/or open-ended and the natural flow of the dialogue provides to all participants the opportunity to inquire the ‘why’ aspect in the discussion, thus collectively progressing towards a unified resolution (Noddings, 2005, pp. 45-46). In lieu to the Socratic method of teaching, the classroom experience is a shared dialogue between the teacher and students in which both are responsible for pushing the dialogue forward through questioning, thus, the teacher is merely a participant in dialogue who is always open to learning (Ross, 2003, pp. 1-3). Expert teachers use questions to channel thinking as questioning tends to be the central feature in promoting the development of conceptual abilities, analytical techniques and the synthesis of ideas (Napell, 1976, Fixation at a Low Level of Questioning section, para. 1). Probing questions tend to make children

aware of conflicts and inconsistencies in their thinking (Driscoll, 2014, p. 221). Corey (1996, p. 4) argues that class discussion promotes rigorous thinking—‘thinking on your feet’, the process of expressing and defending your views is a rigorous and tension building experience that becomes one of the most valued arts of the educational experience.

Dialogue could take place under different moods, for instance, in a cheerful manner, in a serious manner, rationally or imaginatively etc., no matter what forms it takes, it is the candid pursuit for something that is unsettled (Noddings, 2005, pp. 45-46). “When we care, we receive the other in an open and genuine way” (Noddings, 1998, p. 131), and Noddings uses the word *engrossment* (Noddings, 1998) to exemplify receptivity or being candid. Noddings (2005, pp. 45-46) elucidates that, “dialogue is implied in the criterion of engrossment—to receive the other is to attend fully and openly” where “neither party knows at the outset what the outcome or decision will be”.

In order to educate people that they become capable to care for others, it is important that learners should rehearse in caring by actively participating in caring apprenticeships and assess the feedback on that *practice* (Noddings, 1998, p. 132; 1984, p. 188). Children need to be harnessed by teachers (or adult models) that exhibit how to care, experiencing the entire process of it and then have a meaningful discussion on it. She explains in detail the possibilities how students could engage in such training programs:

Students might be expected to participate in regular service activities. Some might work with a custodial master, learning how to replace window panes, repair damaged furniture and appliances and keep the physical surroundings clean and comfortable. Others might work outdoors, learning how to plant, groom, and maintain the grounds. Some might work in the kitchen, some in offices, some in classrooms as aides to teachers and some might work off campus...(Noddings, 1984, p. 187).

In a caring relation, *confirmation* is to acknowledge the other thus putting faith in them achieve their goals. It is important to know the other person enough to the extent that we are able to identify what the other person is seeking to achieve, something commendable or adequate that is striving to sprout in each person in the caring relation (Noddings, 1998, p. 132). In other words confirmation is reassurance, an effort to reassure the other that the dubious or vague act may have a superior intention (Noddings, 2010, p. 395). Noddings (1998, p. 132) argues that in confirmation there is no place for formulas and slogans, and to have snooty expectations from our students is not confirmation (Noddings, 1984, p. 196); consequently, it is neither a strategy, a

recipe, fiction nor a fantasy (Noddings, 2010, p. 395). Confirmation does not mean to justify an excuse for the other, or imagining that a poorly motivated act was done with good intentions (Noddings, 1998, p. 134). Noddings suggests that, confirmation is “amongst the loveliest of moral gestures” (Noddings, 2010, p. 395).

5.3 Noddings’ relational interpretation of ‘caring’

Noddings philosophically explains the phenomenon of caring in the following way.

“Perhaps the first thing we discover about ourselves as carers in caring encounters is that we are receptive, and second we are attentive in a special way” (Noddings, 2002, p. 13). She uses the word “engrossment” to explain the relational context of caring and elucidates that the cared-for receives some special attention from the carer which is entirely receptive or responsive and the message clearly channels through to and from (Noddings, 1998, p. 50). Once through, the expression of care and its receptivity is being processed by both parties as energy flows in both directions and we are immediately moved, and move into a constructive phase to offer a caring response (Noddings, 1998, p. 50). “Engrossment” is not entirely characterized as emotional feeling (Noddings, 1984, p. 33) and does not imply “infatuation, obsession, or single-mindedness, but rather a nonselective form of attention that allows the other to establish a frame of reference and invite us to enter it” (Noddings, 1998, p. 131). I now discuss the findings with regards to Noddings’ view of holistic education through the themes of care as shown in Figure 4.

5.4 Caring for self

As indicated in paragraph 1 of chapter 5, the themes of care advocated by Noddings as being of fundamental importance in reforming schooling start from *caring for the self*. The other themes of care are: caring for intimate others; caring for plants, animals and natural environment; caring for strangers and distant others; caring for the human made world and caring for ideas. These are addressed in subchapters 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9 in practice. These findings are the culmination of Noddings’ thinking from eight of her texts. However, the text book “The Challenge to Care in Schools, An alternative approach to education” plays a pivotal role in the core of the analysis in this study.

5.4.1 Findings from meta-analysis

The fundamental elements of *caring for self* according to Noddings are physical, spiritual, occupational and recreational life (Noddings, 2005, pp. 94-95, 97-99).

Physical life relates to considering the importance of our bodies. Noddings suggests that equal importance should be given as is given in terms of developing the mind at school. Schools have physical education (PE) and teachers of PE enforce every right in their authority that every student work out as instructed. However, after graduating school, children in their later lives are not bound by any authority to exercise and seldom engage with it. She suggests that education relating to the different issues such as physical education, driver education, sex education, drug education, health, hygiene, parenting, nutrition, substance abuse, tobacco usage, appearance, an understanding of life stages, birth and death etc., be integrated in open discussions under scientific and technological themes within the care premise. These subjects should be treated as any other subject and teachers should encourage open continuous discussions on issues of fitness, ways of monitoring the condition of bodies and recommend options of exercise and recreation, thus individually motivating students based on their physical requirements developing in them the capacity to utilize the exercise facilities at school as per need. Similarly, the framework of competitive sports at school should be part of the entire educational program in which competition and cooperation be mutually discussed and analyzed. Through discussion, children should be able to learn how to force down their questions and how to get information that they are entitled to. Children would learn to reflect and ask the necessary and related question(s), such as why am I doing this? And so on.

Caring for self deeply connects the physical and the *spiritual life*. In part, spirituality or religiousness is both an individual and a communal concern. To encourage critical thinking in schools, Noddings suggests that spiritual life studies as part of the curriculum would help in building understanding on a broad spectrum of the insensitivities, truth, confusion and myths that are associated with spirituality or religion. She argues that religious studies taught under the umbrella of the care themes could help to provide common ground for open discussion amongst participants of diverse religious beliefs, and teachers prepared to teach mythology could be able to handle such varied topics in religion. And thus, children that are well informed/up to date are less likely to engage in extremism (Noddings, 2005, p. 102).

Occupational life implies that children of different age groups have different interests, and the learning experience both at school and home should be spurred by wholeheartedness (Noddings, 2005, pp. 103-104). The fact that children engross themselves with the developmental task during play could suffice the core of a study concept (Noddings, 2005, pp. 105-106). The element of doing things that we love to do would enable children and adults to easily switch from one occupation to another during their life stages, and not circling in the vicious belief of their misfortune (Noddings, 2005, p. 107).

Recreational life caters to care for the self as it revitalizes the lost energies. Again, recreation too, should be what the children or adults feel like doing (Noddings, 2005, pp. 103-104). These activities should fulfill the purpose of satisfying a need and could range from being physically rigorous to being serene and cozy. To be able to learn how to keep ourselves socially creative, physically and mentally fit during the entire stretch of our life is rather important (Noddings, 2005, pp. 107-108).

5.4.2 Findings from auto-ethnography

Being born and raised in Minna, Nigeria, spending a considerable amount of time of my life in the Nigerian culture, the model of my primary and secondary education was based on the conventional model of education—standardized curriculum and testing. Beginning in the late 1970's schools were publicly funded and followed the traditional schooling system, however, there were detailed instances that I could relate to holistic education to what Noddings has stated in her book “The challenge to care in schools—An alternative approach to education”. It is interesting that Noddings does not specifically use the word “holistic” in her book, however, in closely analyzing the text, I understand whatever she discussed under care is a practical toolkit that leads to holistic education.

The conventionality of my schooling was grounded on the factory based education model. Overall, at school, there was strict discipline, uniforms to be worn every day in immaculate condition, bells ringing, shoes shining and clean white socks. Students were regularly inspected for hygiene mostly checking the nails whether they were clipped or not. The education was free, some part of it. For instance, the school provided books and writing materials for free but not the school bag; there was no school transport and my parents had to commute us to and from school; the state was responsible for the

vaccinations and we got them free during school hours; the school did not provide meals so my mother prepared lunch for us to take to school. Flogging was common if students would not follow the instructions so I had to keep myself to follow the instructions. Froebel and Pestalozzi during the 18th and 19th century abolished flogging in their schools as they believed that students needed encouragement, kindness and respect rather than corporal punishment for enhanced learning (The Froebel Trust, 2013; Dhawan, 2005, p. 187, respectively).

Nevertheless, during my primary and secondary education, there were traces of some elements of holistic education. Both the school and home provided a complete mix of the elements of holistic education that interconnects with the themes of care. The propositions or the themes of care that Noddings has suggested, I will now discuss them in relevance to my experience (author's voice).

The core elements of *caring for self* according to Noddings are physical life, spiritual life, occupational and recreational life (Noddings, 2005). The most popular sport in Nigeria is football. At school, there was a football team that regularly played football, however I was not part of the team as I was not athletic. The school did not pay attention to regularizing different sporting activities, and students during recess would play their own games. I participated in the 'catch and run' type games and since being not athletic I and my other two friends were the last ones to be picked in for the team. I always felt that the treatment was not fair. Also, there was no guidance from the school to help students understand the dynamics of our bodies, relate it with exercise, sports, nutrition, issues of fitness, etc., as Noddings argues (Noddings, 2005). It was the same story in the secondary school too.

With regards to the spiritual life, the two dominant religions are Islam and Christianity and schools teach these courses. This point is discussed under caring for global others – strangers and distant others.

In relevance to occupational life, the studies in school were based on a linear curriculum. On a daily basis we had a fixed number of courses that we had to follow despite our interest in what was being delivered. The method of teaching in class was predominantly instructional e.g. in subjects of physics, mathematics, chemistry, biology. Noddings (2005) suggests that not being able to swing away and respond to individual interest is the foundation for not learning to switch from one occupation to another, thus adapting to get fixated in the vicious cycle of pessimism.

Similarly, recreational life allows us to revive our lost energies through different activities. For me, taking care of my animals was the most energizing activity. In Nigeria, Friday is a half day, meaning that school closes at about noon, which in fact was the best day of the week. So the weekend lasted for two and a half days – half of Friday, a full Saturday and a Sunday. Visiting friends or going for a picnic or climbing the mango trees to pluck them, raking dried leaves and burning them were all fun activities. The only similar activity that I enjoyed at school was on the sanitation day. This is discussed under caring for the environment.

5.5 Caring for intimate others

As pointed out in paragraph 1 of chapter 5, the themes of care advocated by Noddings are of fundamental importance in reforming schools. The theme – *caring for intimate others* is addressed in practice and the findings are the culmination of Noddings' thinking from her texts. However, the text book “The Challenge to Care in Schools, An alternative approach to education” plays a pivotal role in the core of the analysis in this study.

5.5.1 Findings from meta-analysis

Caring for self extends into caring for intimate others (Noddings, 2005, p. 108). The word intimate has many synonyms and Noddings illustrates the importance of caring for those that are close to us. However, with the perspective of my research, I will touch on friends and colleagues.

Friendship is an essential element for a fulfilling life and students go through the formation process of ‘friendship making’ where they experience and continuously explore its true meaning. The phenomenon of ‘friendship’ causes to draw the action to care for and be cared by. There are a number of driving forces that compels people to engage in establishing friendship with others. Aristotle has categorized friendship into three types. Friendship based on utility, based on pleasure and based on goodness. These are discussed in the next chapter (findings from auto-ethnography).

The type of friendship that is cultivated out of reciprocal recognition and adulation is exceptional that demands the friendship a moral obligation e.g. to possess good virtue (Noddings, 2005, p. 116). In other words the primary obligation is to promote the

participants moral growth as a reciprocal act, however, this act should reflect steadfastness of caring acts (Noddings, 2005, p. 117). Thus, if our friend is involved in stealing or murder, from the perspective of care it is important to question the involvement of caring in the act committed, in this case theft or murder. At times it is necessary to discontinue a friendship where students or people are exploited, abused or compelled to do things they consider as damaging or wrong (Noddings, 2005). Students and adults should have a proper understanding of the meaning of friendship and develop the capacity to judge their relation of friendship, in terms of taking responsibility for the moral growth of others but also to demand of others to accept responsibility for their acts (Noddings, 2005).

Noddings (2005, p. 118) discusses that, the key aspect of moralistic life is living together nonviolently and compassionately even in the face of disagreement. *Colleagues* is that category of people that are never likely to become our friends (Noddings, 2005, p. 117), and yet we have to learn how to progress smoothly and calmly in our professional and social life. Thus, it does not mean that caring for our colleagues in any way implies to shrug off morality from our daily lives. Professional and social life offers practical difficulties that at times create a sensitive position where one has to choose between the ethical lines of right and wrong. And as such to prepare students for adult life, schools should teach children “how to reason with principles, assess values and argue for various positions” (Noddings, 2005, p. 118).

5.5.2 Findings from auto-ethnography

Noddings’ proposition of *caring for intimate others* is an extension of caring for self. Friendship is an integral factor for people in general as it satisfies the human need to socialize, connect, share, help, to prove oneself, seek help and perhaps mobilize people based on mutual interests. Children, teenagers and adults, all need to satisfy the need to be considered important in that relationship. What exactly drives friendship? Is it moral values, survival, domination, presence, popularity, or loyalty as a compulsive outcome of mutual interests? I somehow believe that “friendship is a highly over rated commodity”. I have experienced that true friendship requires a careful analysis of it which is a continuously evolving process as the time goes on. However, the reciprocal acknowledgement of the set of rules are the founding pillars of friendship that are somewhere inherently hidden within the members of the group that serves as a guiding

principle when the phenomenon of friendship is active. This at all times is making a careful analysis of whether the relation is being exploited or not.

Working at the University, in my classes I saw that students distributed themselves in groups that called themselves “friends” and seemed to be quite united. I never saw the entire population of the class as one big group of friends. And within the smaller groups, there were disagreements and the students often repositioned themselves with others. Study groups were simply formed on the basis of current friendship. And if the teacher made random study groups, students would have a difficult time to become part of that group as a team working for the project. Most important for most students were to change their existing group formation due to the perceived indifference rather than considering the project or group task more essential. Often I would begin to receive complaints of sheer inconvenience and dissatisfaction from the students simply being in a different group. Based on the premise of having a friendship relation, students even had their credits transferred to other universities where their friends were studying. In my opinion, based on my experience, the formation of friendship is most of the time “a consequence of an eventuality”, for instance, at a new school or university, at a new work place, at the sports center and so on. I have seen total strangers become so-called friends perhaps really good friends due to having similar habits. Having a similar academic background or work experience, the same name, same birth year, same home town etc., is a sufficient condition for people to begin a conversation that could eventually convert into a friendship, however the friendship remains to be tested. In terms of similar habits, one of the most notable one is smoking. Since in most societies smoking is disallowed in public places, people usually get out of the confines of the premises to have a smoke, and most of the time the conversation begins by asking for a light. These days’ recreational drugs have become a trendy pursuit amongst young people and both genders excitingly pursue such activities. The formulation of friendship emanates from such pursuits. The relationship of friendship is subject to questioning. The entire friendship scenario is a consequence of an eventuality, I just happened to be there... and so on. Noddings (2005, p. 116) argues that “some friendships do not extend beyond a football season, army service or common work in the same company”. Aristotle explains the second type of friendship as *Friendship based on pleasure*:

Friendship between the young is thought to be grounded on pleasure, because the lives of the young are regulated by their feelings, and their chief interest is in their own pleasure and the opportunity of the moment. With advancing years, however, their tastes change too, so that they

are quick to make and to break friendships; because their affection changes just as the things that please them, this sort of pleasure changes rapidly. Also the young are apt to fall in love, for erotic friendship is for the most part swayed by the feelings and based on pleasure. That is why they fall in and out of friendship quickly, changing their attitude often within the same day. But the young do like to spend the day and live together, because that is how they realize the object of their friendship. (Doyle & Smith, 2002)

In the work environment what are the signs of friendship to be detected amongst colleagues? Is it necessary to engage in a friendly relation at the work place? And often at the workplace, even if not willing to engage in friendship, situations arise such that colleagues demand to become friends one way or the other depending upon the culture. Then what? Could it be a fatal trap towards being exploited later?

At a private university where I had worked, I found out that the necessity to survive in a tight job market compelled the junior staff members to take measures to become part of the favored inner circle of influential faculty. Also as the dominant culture each faculty member considered themselves as strong competitors of one another and because of this there was tremendous fear that existed at the workplace. So on a daily basis, these friends would spend considerable personal time on campus discussing over a cup of tea the power and politics of the university. This group enjoyed the benefits, mostly financial and the freedom from the threat of being terminated suddenly without adequate reason, which was common. Consequently, there was backbiting, hearsay's were common and there was a lack of any investigation to solve conspiracies. This group of influential friends would have informal and formal parties, were not subject to termination, had timely salary increments and promotions, enjoyed extra remuneration on corporate training programs and on the extra courses taught, versus all those that were not part of any such group. They were not given courses, no corporate trainings, and no timely increments etc., with no official explanation to the inequality. Thus teaching and learning as a core objective drifted into the background, and the focus of the influential teachers was to keep the students happy that meant being extremely flexible in terms of teaching and assessments at the cost of learning and creativity. Active lobbying as a potential tool was used to get in a group and this could be linked to the satisfying of the human needs as explained by Abraham Maslow in "A Theory of Human Motivation 1943". This group of friends were ensuring all possibilities to secure their physiological and safety needs, and as a result are somewhere between stage 1 and stage 2. (See appendix 4 - stage 1&2 of Maslow's

Hierarchy of needs). Dwight Eisenhower (1890-1969) said that “a people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both”⁸.

I argue that friendship is pure and transparent and the moment it loses this characteristic, friendship becomes murky. What exactly do I mean by this? Friendship by all means has to be unconditional and the instant it loses its attribute and becomes conditional, the relation becomes a dirty occupation, and in order to save it people become bureaucratic and political, as Aristotle refers to it as the first type of friendship as *friendship based on utility* (Doyle & Smith, 2002). Aristotle explains:

Utility is an impermanent thing: it changes according to circumstances. So with the disappearance of the ground for friendship, the friendship also breaks up, because that was what kept it alive.... People take pleasure in each other's company only in so far as they have hopes of advantage from it.

When we speak of friendship, we are categorically speaking about care. Aristotle said, that “my best friend is the man who in wishing me well wishes it for my sake”⁹. It is important to safeguard the interest of the people that no one is subjected to a moral compromise. Friendship revolves around the welfare of the people in general—both members inside and outside the relation. If this is affected in any way, it would primarily signify the lack of friendship in the group and the impact it would have external to the group will certainly not be in the interest of all the concerned, thus the presence of exploitation is highly likely. Therefore, when colleagues rush to become friends considering themselves in a friendship relation simply to exhibit themselves as a major force in an organization as a precursor to survival or some other hidden interest versus the drive to achieve the primary objectives of the organization as a whole, is not true friendship. Here the interest external to the friendship is being compromised and there is possibility of signs of immorality within the group. Consequently, true friendship has ceased to exist. The occupation that has become now is exchanging undue favors, “you scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours”. Albert Einstein (1879-1955) said that, “weakness of attitude becomes weakness of character”¹⁰. The third type of friendship that Aristotle describes is *friendship based on goodness*:

Only the friendship of those who are good, and similar in their goodness, is perfect. Those who desire the good of their friends for the friends' sake are most truly friends, because each loves the

⁸ Brainyquote (b).

⁹ Brainyquote (a)

¹⁰ Brainyquote (c)

other for what he is and not for any incidental quality. Accordingly the friendship of such men lasts so long as they remain good; and goodness is an enduring quality. Friendship of this kind is permanent, reasonably enough; because in it are united all the attributes that friends ought to possess. Friendship requires time and intimacy, and as the saying goes, you cannot get to know each other until you have eaten the proverbial quantity of salt together. Nor can one man accept another, or the two become friends, until each has proved to the other that he is worthy of goodness, and vice versa. Those who are quick to make friendly advances to each other have the desire to be friends, but they are not unless they are worthy of love and know it. The wish for friendship develops rapidly, but friendship does not. (Doyle & Smith, 2002)

Walter Winchell, an American Journalist and broadcaster, said that “a real friend is one who walks in when the rest of the world walks out”¹¹ and Henry Van Dyke said, that “a friend is what the heart needs all the time”¹².

5.6 Caring for plants, animals and natural environment

As pointed out in paragraph 1 of chapter 5, the themes of care advocated by Noddings are of fundamental importance in reforming schools. The theme – *caring for plants, animals and natural environment* is addressed in practice and the findings are the culmination of Noddings’ thinking from her texts. Nevertheless, the text book “The Challenge to Care in Schools, An alternative approach to education” plays a pivotal role in the core of the analysis in this study.

5.6.1 Findings from meta-analysis

With regards to *caring for animals*, children are naturally prone to cherish keeping animals as it greatly satisfies them. As a result they get interested in knowing about how to keep them in good condition. This deep interest leads them to seek information from wherever they can. Children quickly bond with animals and develop a strong communication channel. Children learn fast what their pet needs or what a particular behavior means. Noddings argues that schools that provide an academic environment that includes live animals such as pets or aquariums and a variety of books on animals for different age groups triggers the underlying concern ‘to care’ for them. The scenario, she argues, changes in high school and all the animals are gone, a stubborn response of the education system that believes that from here-onwards such a school ambiance is

¹¹ Brainyquote (d)

¹² Brainyquote

non-realistic and children are now able to think abstractly. (Noddings, 2005, pp. 142-146).

With regards to the relation of animals with humans, it is important to take into consideration the diverse set of affiliations or sensitivities that comes with it. Teachers should be able to conduct open discussions on soft issues and the pinching ones pertaining to the relation of humans with animals. Issues or discussion points based on the students' diverse cultures congregating in a school classroom could include, animals used for food, research, utility of their skin or fur, neglect and cruelty to animals etc. Noddings asserts that, all viewpoints should be treated with respect and each one of them should be critically scrutinized for insights and for absurdity. (Noddings, 2005 p. 145).

Caring for plants early in life gives children an authentic opportunity to experience the beauty and the vastness of the plant kingdom. Children learn about the green environment around them and spark interest in knowing how to care for them (Noddings, 2005). Noddings argue that plants should be studied in relation with other themes of care as these interconnect with one another. She argues that, "schools should have gardens, greenhouses, and windowsill plants and students should learn how to nurture plants" (Noddings, 2005, p. 148). This experience of caring for plants would help children during their adult lives to be responsive to environmental concerns. Noddings asserts that schools should provide ample opportunities for children to engage in agricultural activities during school hours so that they can experience first-hand how it feels and what it requires to nurture different types of plants. (Noddings, 2005, pp. 147-149).

Also, since human life is dependent on plant life, children would also learn the nutritional aspects of plants. This would help them stay healthy and learn from the diverse cultures in school about the different ways of using some plants as food, others for beautification purposes and some for providing shade and shelter. (Noddings, 2005, pp. 148 & 149).

With regards to *caring for the environment*, Noddings criticizes that schools are not giving enough attention to education about the environment. She points that the concern of the environment in education is executed by schools in an abstract way. For instance, the concept of recycling is taught in a limited way and does not exhibit the practicality of human life with recycling that develops caring human beings. Schools

find it easier to discuss social issues and environmental concerns that are distant, for instance, to critically discuss racism in South Africa than at home, or about food chains, ecosystems, extinction and habitat preservation that are far flung. The drawback is that students completely miss the point of relating the 'topic' with the practical circumstances of their individual surroundings. So the concern that moves them that eventually develops into passion is not formed and subsequently fail to learn how to produce relevant counterarguments. (Noddings, 2005, pp. 149-150).

She suggests that schools should include practical education where children get a hands-on experience in the environmental projects they are engaged in, such as contributing in cleaning-up streams, planting trees and sustaining gardens in parks and school compounds. She claims that practical and related work could help some students later in life to pursue professions such as, city planning, horticulture, forestry, journalism involving plants, animals and the environment. (Noddings, 2005, p. 149).

Schools should be able to nurture a climate where students should think at the personal and the political level. It is important to have a critical and informed view about matters concerning the environment. For instance, which group needs actual support and which ones rely on empty sloganeering? Students should be able to make the difference in order to make the right choice amongst the many. The school climate should encourage and inspire "a reflective examination of one's own life as an individual, as a member of a particular race, as a member of an economic class" (Noddings, 2005, p. 151). Such discussions are quite humbling as it enlightens about the acuteness and diversity of students, about the variety of possibilities of human beings and therefore the opportunity to learn from one another. Other points of discussion could be school and street safety, ethnic tension, providing support for students from broken families, standing firm and opposing against drugs, alcohol, advertising etc. Noddings also suggests the importance of educating for moderation. Hearing the stories of both sides would enable a responsive school climate, thus acknowledging and sharing responsibility for the welfare of others at the same time catering to our spiritual, mental and emotional health. (Noddings, 2005, pp. 150-151).

5.6.2 Findings from auto-ethnography

As a young boy I was very fond of keeping and *caring for animals* at home, and I had to negotiate with my parents to allow me to keep them. Since Nigeria was a former British

colony, the Brits had made huge houses with huge compounds and such was our house. Just to give a glimpse of the sheer size of the compound, there were thirteen full grown mango trees that bore fruit in season, and I learnt driving within the confines of my house—driving up to the third gear of the car. And since the entire compound was fenced, it provided a perfect place for animal keeping. I had to negotiate and renegotiate because my parents sole concern was wellbeing for the animals. All the talk that we had was on a theoretical level, I kept on pressing that I really needed to keep animals. They argued that it is important to keep the animals in a proper den where they live healthily, and not suffer due to negligence. My father had a good collection of books on animals plus we had the entire volume of Britannica encyclopedia, and I started reading more in detail about keeping animals. So I started convincing them by explaining how I would care for them sequencing the steps I would take once I have them. For instance, how and what to feed them, where will I get the feed from, how I would prepare the feed, how many times the animals will be fed, how to prepare the bedding with saw dust, where I would get the saw dust, how to seek veterinary services etc. The negotiation went on for months. Noddings (2005, pp. 142-146) argues that children are naturally prone to cherish keeping animals as it greatly satisfies them and as a result get interested in knowing about how to keep them in good condition that leads them to seek information from wherever they can. Now when I reflect back, I am sure that my parents were aware of what they were doing with regards to the negotiation process between me and them, trying to trigger a sense of responsibility and responsiveness towards animals in case I am given the permission, which I eventually got. Noddings (2005, p. 142) argues that, “many parents provide pets for their children because they suppose that caring for a pet will teach their children responsibility.

One of our houseboys had been keeping rabbits in the compound of the boy’s quarter that was just outside our compound and I visited every day to see them, feed them and spend a considerable amount of time with them. At the core of my heart, I actually longed to have them “as my own pets”. Noddings (2005, pp. 142-146) asserts that children quickly bond with animals. Then suddenly luck struck. On my birthday a family friend gifted me a female goat that happened to be pregnant. I did not know at the time, nevertheless, I was extremely excited of the goat itself, I was totally consumed taking care of it, sheltering it, providing different kinds of food such as mango tree leaves, guinea corn, lemon tree leaves as there were two fully grown lemon trees in the

compound and plenty of fresh wild grass. It would roam the compound and eat freely. A few months later it gave birth to a male goat (billy). The arrival of the new born gave me a new reason to provide extra special care.

This was the beginning. My parents observed me while caring for the goats and often engaged me with different questions. After this point on, it was easy to get different animals and with the passage of time, I got a puppy, a pure black kitten, broilers, layers, rabbits and an extra pair of goats. My life changed due to the different animals that I had with all the different requirements. It was fun. I had a time table in my head that I followed. Before having these animals, I would be very lazy to wake up in the morning for school, and all the time preparing for school was demotivating. Now the situation changed. I would get up early in the morning with enough time to feed them before I go to school. At this time I would add fresh feed for the layers, broilers and the rabbits. After coming back from school, I would cook food for the dog which was a mixture of bones, meat, smoked fish and leftover food of the previous day. I fed the dog a sizeable meal in the afternoon and towards the evening prepared homemade yoghurt which he loved. Every week I bathed the dog and brushed it afterwards. The cat was a skilled hunter and it would hunt rats, snakes and doves. Additional to this I would feed her with meat, leftover chicken bones, milk and smoked fish. The bedding of the dens of the rabbits, layers and broilers were changed on a weekly basis with fresh saw dust. I would on a daily basis collect the eggs and see for potential hazards such as cobras, pythons, rats and mongoose that were serious threat for the day old chicks and the rabbit litter.

The Harmattan season was quite a challenge for feeding the animals, especially goats and rabbits that depended on fresh vegetation. In Minna, there are basically two seasons in a year, 6 months is the rainy season and the remaining six is the dry season. The dry season brings with it the cold and dry dusty winds from the Sahara desert that overcast the horizon and the green grass dries and turns golden yellow. The dusty season is commonly known as Harmattan. So I had to learn to prepare animal feed by mixing different grains and minerals. I would go to the local market with my houseboy and purchase different grains, smoked fish and some salts. And we would then proceed to the grinding mill where we would grind all these ingredients to a fine texture.

Being able to prepare food for my animals was a skill I learnt from my mother (ammeejee in Urdu). For the family, she used to make different food items such as the

common staple food of the Sub-continent, cakes, pastries, biscuits, meat pie, and traditional sweets, e.g. “seviyaan”, “ras malai”, “gulab jaman”, “gajar ka halva”, “nimko”, “patties”, “samosa”, “kebab” etc., just to mention a few (See Figure 5¹³). Spending a great deal of time in the kitchen with ammeejee handling different sorts of ingredients provided an opportunity to experiment freely, observed the different stages of making different foods, and during the process ask lots of questions. This experience came in handy and I was able to make food for my animals and their good health was testimony to my cooking skills. The process of learning is still going on and seeks ammeejee’s advice whenever the need be.



FIGURE 5 Common Food of the Sub Continent

With regards to my dog and cat, I never trained the animals as I did not know how to do so, but nevertheless, there was a great deal of communication going on amongst us. Noddings (2005, p. 143) suggests that children quickly develop a strong communication channel. For instance, the cat was the only animal allowed in the house and it knew its limitations where it could roam around and where it could rest. The cat knew not to climb the dining table, the kitchen slabs, beds, wardrobes and not to defecate in the house. The cat never attacked the litter of rabbits or the day old chicks even though the cat was an excellent hunter. I remember that once we came back late at night after

¹³ I have included the pictures for readers who are not familiar with the food of the Sub-Continent; otherwise the names would have caused discomfort.

visiting friends and the cat was sitting in front of the door of the house and flicking its tail thrashing it back and forth. I knew something was wrong. As I approached her, she took off in a way as if she wanted me to follow. So I followed her and at the corner of the house the cat was growling with postural display around a dead snake whose head had been slashed clean from the body, as if with a sword. I understood that the cat wanted to let me know that she had killed the snake. I threw the snake in the bush, picked up the cat and brought her in the house. Even though the cat was still in the growling mode, she remained absolutely calm when I picked her up. The communication between me and the cat was very transparent and same was the case with the dog.

Being a guard dog, it never attacked the cat nor harmed the other animals within the compound. I had named him “whiskey”. It was a ferocious dog, but not for the family members of the house. Whiskey was a good guard dog, was playful with me, understood clearly that he was never to raise himself up and put his paws on me. He did not like to bark much and upon entry of anyone unfamiliar to him, Whiskey would immediately pounce upon to confront the person from approaching the house. In the evenings one of my favorite activities would be to take Whiskey for a sprint into the bushes. African bushes are thick and there are many wild creatures such as, scorpions, centipedes, snakes that could cause potential harm. But since I was born in that environment, I never felt scared of the creatures and never used any special gear for protection. Most of the time I was wearing trousers or shorts and a pair of rubber flip flops. But now that I reflect back on my past, I really get goose pimples. Whiskey had a strong nose and would immediately stop if there would be anything lurking in the bushes, thus indicating to me that I should stop. And I totally relied on his keen sense of smell and I felt protected.

There was a time when Whiskey got really sick. He had stopped eating and was passing blood in his stool and for some reason I was not able to carry Whiskey to the vet. I told the vet the conditions but he too was not able to visit Whiskey at home. So I asked the vet how to treat him. He told me to administer a subcutaneous injection. I took the vaccine and came home with the instructions of the vet. Along with the houseboy, I restrained Whiskey’s mouth and legs by tying them up and then administered the drug. Whiskey did not resist when I was restraining him. It was as if he had complete faith in me. The procedure went absolutely smoothly and in a few days Whiskey was up and

running. Noddings argues that children learn fast what their pet needs or what a particular behavior means, “knowing what a pet wants helps enormously in giving it proper care adding immeasurable pleasure of living with a pet” (Noddings, 2005, p. 143).

With regards to *caring for plants* I studied a subject Agricultural Sciences at school that included theory and practical work. The practical was based on growing different crops in a small area designated for this purpose within the school premises. We used a hoe to prepare the soil by mixing it with manure and we would make the bed rows, plant the seeds and water the beds. On a daily basis we would keep a watchful eye on our individual rows looking for signs whether the seed had started the germination process, and keep the bed rows clean by weeding them and finally made a scarecrow for scaring away the birds from feeding on the recently cast seed and the sprouting shoots. Plant life requires great care and the growth process is pretty slow and this tool enabled us to experience the feeling of keeping patient, and learnt with the passage of time that there is no shortcut to life. Berry (1977, p. 86) describes the connection of the soil and care:

The soil is the great connector of lives, the source and destination of all. It is the healer and restorer and resurrector, by which disease passes into health, age into youth, and death into life. Without proper care for it we can have no community, because without proper care for it we can have no life.

While at home, my mother had her personal garden where she would grow tomatoes, chili peppers, corn, egg plant, yam, peas and okra (ladies finger). While working with her in the garden, she would tell me about the nutritional value of the different plants explaining the health factors and how important it is to have a balanced diet, etc. I would help her regularly with the garden work and especially repairing the temporary boundary that we had collectively made out of wood sticks, wooden and plastic planks to ward off the goats that we had since the goats really liked to get into the garden to feed on the veggies. My experience of learning practical agriculture at school helped me a lot when my mother wanted to have a garden at home. It gave me a strong sense of responsibility, ownership, responsiveness and the capacity to cooperate.

With regards to *caring for the environment*, the policy of the school I attended provided opportunities where the students could engage with the environment to care for it by cleaning the surroundings. At home and at school, I was taught that cleanliness is a virtue and through practice students learnt the protocols of cleanliness. My school

regularly checked cleanliness in our appearance such as well trimmed nails, clean and ironed uniform, polished shoes and washing of hands before and after eating etc. Noddings (2005, p. 157) stresses that “sanitation is a topic of central importance and focus on it requires information from science, history, sociology, political science, health, aesthetics and religion”.

Noddings’ concern how one should plan for sanitation was emphasized in my early education in Minna, Nigeria. In Nigeria there was a national policy of a sanitation week on Saturday. On this day the people were supposed to clean their individual premises or surroundings, an exercise in order to keep the environment clean and healthy. So we had to rake the leaves and burn them, cut the grass with cutlasses, and spray kerosene oil in the small water holes as malaria is very common in Nigeria. Parallel to this, at school we had a rotating schedule to follow during the weekend to go to school to clean the class room, mop it, dust the chairs, collect the trash in the compound and burn it, and cut the grass with cutlasses.

Noddings suggests that schools should include practical education where children get a hands-on experience in the environmental projects they are engaged in, such as “participating in cleaning-up streams, planting trees and sustaining gardens in parks and school compounds” (Noddings, 2005, p. 150). Thus, students are able to relate the hands-on environmental task with the environment they live in. For instance, in my case we understood how important it was as a responsibility to contribute to eradicate malarial parasites. And for this we looked keenly for small water holes in the thick bushes of our surroundings and sprayed kerosene. At school, we were taught in the science class about malaria. We learnt to draw mosquitoes from a specimen; we learnt the conditions in which mosquitoes thrive and also about how to prevent malaria. Malaria was very common and we had to take nivaquine pills on a weekly basis to keep our immune system strong against malaria. So I as well as others could relate this with the practical circumstances.

5.7 Caring for strangers and distant others

As pointed out in paragraph 1 of chapter 5, the themes of care advocated by Noddings are of fundamental importance in reforming schools. The theme – *caring for strangers and distant others* is revealed in practice and the findings are the culmination of

Noddings' thinking from her texts. Nevertheless, the text book "The Challenge to Care in Schools, An alternative approach to education" plays a pivotal role in the core of the analysis in this study.

5.7.1 Findings from meta-analysis

It is quite a challenge to care for those that are utter strangers and at a distance, so Noddings argues that people are not obligated to care for people at a distance in the misery they are for the very reason that there is no transparent way of ascertaining that care was thoroughly accomplished. For instance sending money to development agencies does not guarantee that the money will be used to relieve the stress (such as providing shelter, food or medicines to the people displaced due to natural disaster etc.), and that the money will not be used wrongfully such as fulfilling the needs of greedy politicians (Noddings, 2005, p. 127).

This theme of care should also be taught in schools but with care. Educators need to know what challenges underlie this theme. Noddings warns that it is highly likely to become sentimental with distant others in terms of moral association. To be controlled by exploiting the emotional feelings in order to channel in this case money for the cause specified, is tricky. Education should provide students the analytical approach to understand the dynamics of such scenarios, the consequential details of the numerous possibilities. For instance, arguing the justifiable reason that convinced officers who physically participated in the allied bombing of population centers during World War-II. Whatever those orders were and the way they were delivered, definitely sparked sentiments that were strong enough to convince the officers to drop bombs on civilians. Noddings argues that, would the officers have acted in the same way as they did if they would have been told the real consequences of their actions to be atrocious. What this means is that, these young officers despite being adults did not have the capacity to cross examine the situation and its consequences. And to have failed to do so implies that they were under the control of an authority supreme that they did not question, in this case, the supremacy of the army as an institution. This is still going on today, innocent civilians-children, women, the old, the impaired, are being violently targeted in the name of highly held supreme justifiable reasons such as cast, color or creed etc. Noddings suggests that for a well-rounded personality it is important to build character and this has to emanate from education. Self-knowledge or self-awareness is helpful in

building the relationality, and Noddings points that schools should give more attention to understanding ourselves and our various loyalties, thus providing access to abundant relevant information to such matters. She argues that the themes of care could be the foundation of designing the curriculum which would allow the smooth inclusion of the interests of minorities and others, thus providing an opportunity of nurturing a better generation as compared to the present one. Including diverse set of topics, related subtopics and sub questions would prompt students to ask existential questions. Providing students an opportunity to discuss and research on the theme(s) and the related questions openly, the rationales offered in class would eventually lead to relaxing the inhibitions that people have and control the impulse of impatience and over confidence. Therefore, students would have the possibility of learning that there is great temptation to exploit others for one's own ends, to know it and to skillfully tackle it rather than worsening the situation. (Noddings, 2005, pp. 127-134).

Noddings (2005, p. 136) argues that, "in schools we more often preach than teach in the areas of race, ethnicity, religion and gender". She asserts that it is important to have dialogue on the different aspects that might be spurred from the major themes and base the discussion on some common ground. Individual and collective inquisition should lead the way for the discussion and students should learn to face hard questions. Students would have the opportunity to explain to their fellow learners about their race, ethnicity, religion etc., along with the related questions that the listeners might be prompted to ask. Dialogue being the precondition for existential necessity has to be transformative and human, where as the climatic conditions for a progressive dialogue is humility, hopefulness, profound love for the global and distant others - the world as a whole, a passionate faith in humankind and critical thinking (Freire, 1970, pp. 88-92). Handling such sensitive matters in schools would germinate in people to keep calm, have the capacity and humility to explain, and provide an atmosphere of a successful dialogue. Noddings argues that even when people are committed to connect with a diverse collection of people, often it is a challenge and becomes difficult to understand deeply held diverse views that guide their behavior, it is rather important to have an authentic reciprocal dialogue (Noddings, 2005, p. 136). Dialogue is therefore neither a process of depositing ideas into another, neither an effortless exchange of ideas imposed to be consumed by the participants, nor a quarrelsome interaction, but rather an

instrument of creation for renewal with the objective to unshackle the human kind (Freire, 1970, p. 88-89).

5.7.2 Findings from auto-ethnography

Caring for the global others - strangers and distant others is extremely relevant in preserving global peace. The unrest of the current times is simply destroying humanity on grounds of the sacred beliefs held due to cast, color and creed and under the cunning shadow of politics. Our countless allegiances provide us with an adequate ground to be exploited where it is impossible to see transparently the underlying truth and its final impact on human life. And even though when we see it, we have sufficient justifiable reasons to satisfy our actions. Again, all are based on the insensitivities of the murky complexities of cast, color, creed, politics, social and economic reasons. It is important to educate students in a manner that would enlighten them of the diversity around them, to broaden up and accept that they are not the only ones on the planet.

Nigeria is equally distributed amongst Christianity and Islam, and schools had two courses on religion, one was Islamic Religious Knowledge (IRK) and the other, Christian Religious Knowledge (CRK). In my secondary school in Minna, Nigeria, the Principal, an Irish missionary had whole heartedly devoted himself to serve the school in the best possible way. His name is Father J. D. O'Connell. Being a devoted Christian he never imposed anything out of biasness upon Muslim students and teachers. He in fact actively arranged different religion based discussion sessions and debates periodically according to the different religious festivities in the two religions. In these sessions everyone was openly invited and everyone whether the speakers or the audience, all of them respected each other's religious beliefs. The Principal practiced an inclusive policy where he made sure that every individual's interest is cared for. The teachers who taught the religion courses would engage students to express and discuss their deep beliefs on the particular theme of religion that was be studied. This aspect created an atmosphere of tolerance, composure to listen and respond with respect and argumentation, as suggested by Noddings (2005).

The Principal regularly participated in the different activities in the school, for instance, he would join the students to clean the halls of the school etc. As a teenager this had a great impact on me when I would often see him do the common chores with the students. He would regularly inspect the dormitories for their condition and to see if

the boarding students had any concerns. I remember that poor quality and quantity of food for boarding students in other schools in Minna was a common feature. Due to corruption the boarding students were ripped of the services that they were supposed to get from their individual schools. But we never heard any form of corruption or grievance from any student of my school. “Father” was strict at administering discipline and would make numerous rounds of inspection throughout the day and immediately try to solve any problem that he might encounter. For instance, if a teacher was absent for some reason and was supposed to be in the class, the Principal would conduct the class himself and engage with the students to learn what they learnt previously. This style of management is known as “management by wandering around”.

Furthermore, since at the time there was no tuition fee and the different resources were supposed to be managed optimally, I remember one such case; “chalks” that were used for writing on the black boards, the teachers preferred to use fresh sticks of chalk and would not use the entire chalk as it is a bit difficult to write with the shorter ones. As a result there was a lot of wastage. Due to this the teachers would often send a student during their lecture to the Principal’s office to get some chalks which was a normal procedure. This practice led to the depletion of the school’s chalk supply. So the Principal quickly devised a strategy that he explained in the school assembly that took place every morning before the commencement of the first class. The students all lined up in their rows and the staff members present, the Principal highlighted the issue and suggested that amongst the students, every class would have a chalk monitor who would be responsible to collect a specific number of chalks from the Principal’s office and catalog this information in his office so that the chalks are accounted for. He requested the teachers to use the complete chalk stick and avoid wasting them. The chalk monitor would then provide the class teacher with a piece of chalk. Since I was a chalk monitor of my class, it gave me a sense of responsibility of optimal usage of the chalk that implied safeguarding the interest of the schools resource(s). At that tender age, it meant something positive. My interaction with the Principal became frequent and while collecting chalks from his office, he would often ask different questions. He was very particular to see the pupils learn basic manners such as morning greeting. And the students were taught that greeting the teachers and other people in the school is a well-mannered gesture that shows respect. This was taught through practice. The Principal and the teachers would always tell us that being part of the community is important and

to take care of it means that you are caring for others who are also part of the society. We were also told the beauty of planting fruit or shade trees, that when they would mature would be beneficial for others –strangers and distant others.

5.8 Caring for the human made world

As pointed out in paragraph 1 of chapter 5, the themes of care advocated by Noddings are of fundamental importance in reforming schools. The theme – *caring for the human made world* is revealed in practice and the findings are the culmination of Noddings’ thinking from her texts. However, the text book “The Challenge to Care in Schools, An alternative approach to education” plays a pivotal role in the core of the analysis in this study.

5.8.1 Findings from meta-analysis

Noddings argues that it is equally important to care for people to learn the significance of the human made world, the objects and instruments made by man. Objects and instruments have a special place in our lives and we seek to acquire some form of satisfaction. However, Noddings points out that when people misplace the element of moderation, there is a likely tendency to do harm than good. Thus, by becoming careless with things or nurturing an obsession to acquire more than ever takes us to the path of consuming more than the required share of the world’s resources. As resources are vital and scarce, students should be taught to appreciate the objects and instruments they use. It is common to see in schools, how students destroy school resources without the least regard and care. The education imparted should promote the safety and optimum usage of the objects and instruments for the purpose of learning. (Noddings, 2005, pp. 154 & 155).

Noddings argues that schools do not give adequate attention to facilitative order that should prompt peacefulness of soul and grace. On the contrary, in the conventional schools students sit in rows, do their work alone affixed to their desks, provide fleeting answers upon the teachers demand, attendance is compulsory, and have to seek permission from the teacher to visit the restroom etc. Noddings argues that, “students living in these conditions are unlikely to experience order as facilitative of their own

purposes". (Noddings, 2005, p. 155). She explains the practical aspects of facilitative order as:

Facilitative order provides sufficient time, ample space, appropriate materials, and assurance that someone will help in case of need. One's work space and materials should be inviolate. Even the teacher should await an invitation, or request one, before intervening in the serious work of students. This kind of order is cooperatively constructed by teachers and students. The teacher provides parameters within which students must work and within these parameters students are free to pursue their lines of thought. The teacher must also talk to students about order and utility, about the objects around them, their appropriate use and engaging with them in appreciative reflection on the utility of objects. (Noddings, 2005, p. 155)

Noddings claims that the continuous process of examining objects and instruments develops the capacity and inclination to discuss and examine their own lifestyles. For instance, how many pairs of shoes, socks or trousers they have, and is the utility of the pile of stock according to the need? Such self-examination could lead to visualizing the perspective and the latent purpose of aggressive consumerism and advertising and as such understand the bigger picture of who got exploited. (Noddings, 2005, p. 155).

Noddings also suggests that schools should give attention to the physical arrangement of things around us. They tend to create an aesthetic and harmonious atmosphere of serenity. For instance, the Japanese are well known for the meticulous arrangement of wood, rocks, plant and water that creates peace and calmness. In a Montessori school, children use real food and things they need to have a tea party. They arrange and decorate the area where they want to have the party; they talk, tidy up the place after the party and rearrange the things back into their slots. (Noddings, 2005, pp.156 & 157).

Noddings asserts that schools should adequately provide a teaching climate where children learn to make and repair things using common household tools. For instance, to screw, unscrew and how to use the hammer, basic plumbing, carpentry, how to replace a fused light bulb, to wire lamps, be able to use mixers, blenders, processors, peelers, etc. Children enjoy using food materials to play with, such as the dough. They learn to roll it with the rolling pin, cut them in different shapes and see how they cook in the oven. As students advance into the different grades, these elements of education should advance relatively. For example, "they should visit places which introduces them to creative and innovative applications such as a manufacturing concern, an art or a science gallery, or a chef's kitchen and let the students be intrinsically inquisitive - how do they do that? (Noddings, 2005, p. 160).

5.8.2 Findings from auto-ethnography

Besides being a full time teacher, my mother participated in all the housework that needed attention and I always saw that she did all the chores with all her heart. One of her common routines was sewing clothes for the family for the different events during the year. For me the most important aspect of her working with the sewing machine was as the paddle operator as she often asked me to help her. Being a young boy, handling the paddle satisfied the need of being in control, imitating the paddle as the accelerator of a car that signified speed. During this process she would tell me different stories of the Prophets. For instance, the story of Prophet Nuh (Noah), Prophet Isa (Jesus), Prophet Adam, Prophet Yusuf (Joseph), Prophet Yaqub (Jacob), Prophet Yunus (Jonah), Prophet Sulaiman (Soloman), Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham), Prophet Lut (Lot), Prophet Musa (Moses), Prophet Haroon (Aaron), Prophet Ayub (Job), Prophet Zakariyya (Zechariah), Prophet Muhammad, (May Peace and blessings be upon them all). The stories of the Prophets contain a great deal of content that aids in the development of character of an individual as they all possessed and followed in spirit the universal virtues of humanity, such as, truthfulness, wisdom, patience, refraining from vanity and falsehood, respect-love-care for the people at large, value of education, welfare, leadership and so on. These men led a life that is characterized to standing on the highest pinnacle of behavior.

Being raised in Africa, I grew up in an aural culture where my parents told me a lot of stories of the things of the present and the past. As a result I developed the skill to listen well because only then I could excitingly and passionately tell that story to my friends at school. And in all of these stories the principle content dealt with common humanity as something shared together to strengthen and harmonize with it. Simply being different is truly miraculous as this makes life more interesting. We are able to rapidly learn special gifts of life from others that makes life all the more fascinating. It is important to learn and teach how other people view the world differently from us, how other people have experienced life differently from us and thus not to conclude to categorize people as being superior or inferior to anyone.

My formal and informal education both supported and nurtured a climate of understanding the necessity of harmonizing with the things around us. I was taught that resources were scarce and that people around the globe did not get their fair share. For instance, to my daughters I often discuss the scarcity of water and explain to them that

despite we have a good supply of clean drinking water, there are millions of others around the world that do not have access to clean water. So if they are playing with water, along the way we make use of it otherwise e.g. using the water to clean the floor or washing the car together etc. This way I can monitor for any undue wastage of this precious resource.

The things that I used whether in ownership or not, used them with utmost care. During the later years of my life in college and university, I often saw student colleagues that would misuse the different school resources such as keyboard, mouse, books, chairs etc. They would argue for their actions that since they have paid the tuition fee, it is their right to do so. I never agreed with them and told them so. But to the ignorant it becomes awfully difficult to understand the consequences of their actions. Noddings (2005, p. 155) indicates this behavior of students destroying school resources without the least regard and care. Educators need to create a learning climate that allows students to understand to take care of the resources they come in contact with. An educated mind is not as likely to be exploited and to act with prejudice as would an uneducated one.

5.9 Caring for ideas

As pointed out in paragraph 1 of chapter 5, the themes of care advocated by Noddings are of fundamental importance in reforming schools. The theme – *caring for ideas* is revealed in practice and the findings are the culmination of Noddings’ thinking from her texts. However, the text book “The Challenge to Care in Schools, An alternative approach to education” plays a pivotal role in the core of the analysis in this study.

5.9.1 Findings from meta-analysis

Noddings is of the view that people react to some degree of responsiveness from ideas. People simply get intoxicated by the things they cherish, how people are magnetically drawn towards what they would like to do. How people passionately work in their respective domains and create significant value for themselves and possibly for others. For instance, a master chef creating a magnificent dish, a goldsmith creating new designs or a person who is in love with a study subject is enthralled in it, etc. Noddings argues that, “the care we exert induces something like a response from fields of ideas

and from inanimate objects” (Noddings, 2005, p. 43). With regards to education, Noddings claims that it is important to decrease the obsession of expertise. She argues that teachers want to teach their respective subjects from the stand point as an expert in the field and then expecting of students to think in the similar manner the way the teacher does. It is important that average students be allowed to follow their interpretation of what they want out of the subject, thus keeping in mind the purpose, interest of students and the pace at which they can comfortably learn. In contrast to the passionate learner, this “level is not necessarily lower, it is just different” (Noddings, 2005, p. 182). However, some students with zeal and enthusiasm are drawn unabated to particular subjects and teachers should design their teachings to offer them a chance of exploring in breadth and depth the subject they are involved in. Those students that are passionately interested, Noddings argues that teachers should expect a very different level of performance from them by exposing them to the rigorous demands of the subjects they study. In order to nurture the ‘caring of ideas’, it is important that schools design their curriculum such that it is able to transparently explain to students and teachers the practical usage of that particular study, to consider the direction and intensity of individual study interests, and understand the individual learning capacities that explains the limitations of the students. (Noddings, 2005, pp. 43, 98, 164 & 182).

5.9.2 Findings from auto-ethnography

Most part if not all of my basic education was based on the conventional education model the heart of which was standardization and testing. We had a fixed number of subjects that we all participated in and we all had to keep up with the speed of progression with which the teachers taught. The lectures were either dictated to us verbally or were written on the black board and we copied them down. For most of the courses that were taught in classrooms, I almost never got the hang of the purpose with respect to its applicability in real life. The teachers’ favorite students were those that had high scores and the average and below average students felt deeply alienated from the messages that the teachers gave through their body language and word expression. However, the practical courses that were conducted outside the class were the ones that I fully enjoyed. The reason was less supervision by the teacher; consequently we had more time to work on our own. I therefore scored high in science practical work and not in the theoretical exam. We had a number of teachers that were excessively obsessive

about their knowledge and experience and as a result always taught from a single perspective that they thought was the best. The few students that were able to pick up were the brightest of the class and the rest were not. I agree with the claim of Noddings that, schools do not design programs based on the students' learning capacities and individual interests (Noddings, 2005, p. 183), and educators need to decrease the worship and authority of their knowledge (Freire, 1970, p. 73; Noddings, 2005, p. 98).

6 DISCUSSION ON HOLISTIC EDUCATION PHILOSOPHIES REVISITED

The definition of holistic education is grounded on the objective that we educate for the learner to find self-actualization, meaning and purpose in life, intrinsic respect for life and a love for learning (Miller, 1997, n.d.). In other words, we teach the whole person for the physical, intellectual, emotional, social, creative and spiritual attributes that are carefully nurtured in school to achieve self-actualization and interconnectedness so that students are wholesome in their individuality (Orr, 2005, p. 87; Neda Nobari Foundation NNF; Raj, 2015, p. 4). These are the elements of holistic education as conceptualized in Figure 3.

With regards to the conceptual framework (Figure 3), the research aimed to explore the factors important in the philosophy of education practice that should be approached differently. A school that is built on care should harness relational learning in terms of reciprocity, egalitarianism, candidness, honesty, fairness, collaboration, reflection, responsiveness, inquisitiveness and caring in general with all people, and with the environment (Heid & Kelehear, 2007, pp. 412-413). Furthermore, according to ASCD (2007, p. 10), there are nine essential elements of the ‘whole child’ in congruence with the philosophy of holistic education. See Figure 1. These attributes of the whole child illustrates the dynamism of holistic education and range from examining multiple layers of meaning, exploring identity and the interrelationships, purposefulness with reality, harmony with the cosmos, developing spiritual values, intellectual, physical, emotional, interpersonal and moral potentials etc., (Warren, 2002, p. 2; Miller, 2008, p. 5; Miller, n.d.). This builds reciprocity of relationship, which is, developing the sense of concern and caring. Mayeroff (1971, pp. 2 & 76) argues that caring is a continuous evolving experience of belonging collectively characterized by commitment, trust, hope and courage, that improves someone else’s development towards self-actualization.

On the contrary the conventional schooling model is an old age model catering to the needs of industrialism that is further aggravated by the global neoliberal economic policies. What possible academic justification could there be for a homogenous

curriculum believably fitting for an audience that is not one bit similar? Kochhar-Bryant and Heishman (2010, pp. 5-6) argue:

Each child possesses an individual pattern and timing of growth, as well as individual personality, temperament, physical constitution, learning style, family, unique strengths, talents, interests and experiential background. To fulfill the development needs of all children requires responsiveness from the educational community.

To elaborate the philosophies of holistic education, I begin by discussing the letter (in chapter 3.3.1) that Abraham Lincoln wrote to the school teacher where his son was studying.

In the letter, Lincoln consciously avoids to mention anything with regards to conventional school system such as a message to the teacher pertaining to high scores in tests or improving the skill to memorize text, etc. We need to remind ourselves that the letter was written sometime during the period between 1809-1865. The message is beautifully conveyed and streams into the 21st century, spot on. Analyzing it further, one is also able to comprehend how Lincoln during almost the entire breadth of the letter addresses to the teacher with humility and not ordering but rather requesting, “teach him if you can...”. The insight to this is Lincoln’s realization that all the elements he has included in the letter needs to be carefully nurtured. They cannot be attained by a sheer stroke of command; they can only be achieved through responsiveness.

Lincoln understands that besides the pedagogic learning acquired in school, it is important to weld it with the different attributes of character as mentioned in the letter - love, faith in oneself and mankind, courage, perseverance, patience, wonder, curiosity, vision, dedication, honesty, humility, virtue of truthfulness, shrewdness, cautiousness, equality, competitiveness etc. With great modesty, Lincoln requests the teacher to guide his son on the path of principle that leads to character. Further analysis reveals that Lincoln was a progressivist as were Pestalozzi, Froebel, Steiner, Montessori and presently Noddings. The following comparative analysis illustrates the dynamics of the holistic education philosophy of Noddings with Steiner, Pestalozzi, Montessori, Froebel and Lincoln. Also the elements of holistic education as explained in the conceptual framework – physical, intellectual, emotional, social, creative and spiritual perspective, surface in the discussion and in the diagrammatic illustrations below.

Noddings’ theme of *caring for self* is rather comprehensive as compared to the other five progressivists. This theme is subdivided in to the physical life, spiritual, occupational and recreational life highlighting that each plays a significant role in the

development of the 'whole' being. With regards to physical life, Noddings (2005, pp. 74-81) argues that schools through physical education courses should teach students collaboration and cooperation rather than to strictly enforce upon them to win only in competitive sports. They should be taught the important details of keeping themselves physically and mentally fit through open discussion engraved into curriculum based on their interests. And after graduation they would have learnt how to keep themselves positively active as adults. Eurhythm, one of the principles of Steiner's education philosophy corresponds to Noddings' physical life theme. Eurhythm is an artistic expression where students through bodily movements combine dance, gestures, words, colors, rhythms, music etc., to create new entertaining expressions of things and life they see around themselves. It is a way that allows exiting the pent-up energy in children, keeping them calm and peaceful. Steiner's approach is purely inclusive where teaching and learning tends to be the main objective of the school's environment. Like Noddings and Steiner, Pestalozzi points out that the education system of his time was not flexible and not inclusive. He emphasizes that the learning of children should be guided by their individual interests, referred to as occupational life by Noddings. Pestalozzi argues that to explore the hidden treasures of the child, it is important to understand that personality is sacred that symbolizes inner dignity and the role of the educator is to provide an environment which is free from unpleasant influences. This is somewhat similar to Noddings' recreational life, one of the fundamental principles of caring for self. Montessori and Froebel advocate for divergent thinking, individual, self directed and playful learning which reflects Noddings' recreational, occupational and physical life. Lincoln writes in the letter to "give the child time to ponder...", "give him the courage to be impatient and the courage to be brave", "to believe in himself", "...that all men are not just and not true..." reflects Noddings' occupational, recreational and spiritual life respectively. Similarly, Noddings along with Steiner, Pestalozzi, Montessori, Froebel and Lincoln recognize the need to tap into the unique potential of each child. This is illustrated in Figure 6.

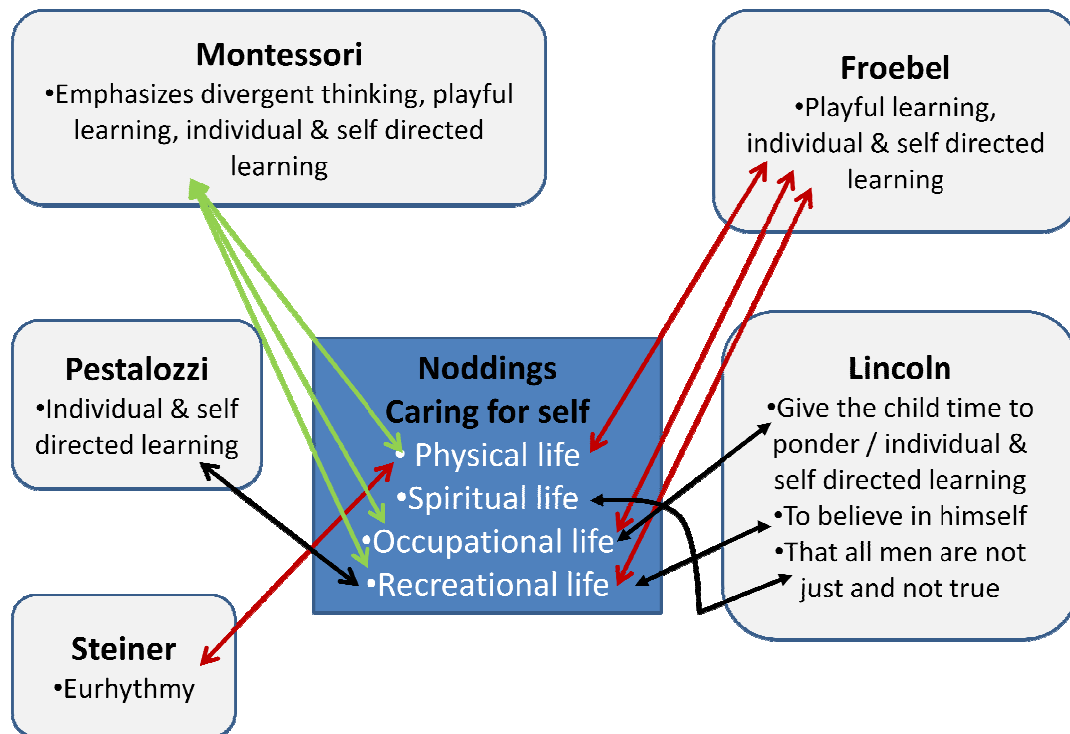


FIGURE 6 Comparative Analysis of Noddings' Caring for Self with Montessori, Froebel, Lincoln, Steiner and Pestalozzi

Noddings' proposition of *caring for intimate others* is an extension of caring for self. Noddings stresses the importance of friendship as a fulfillment during the school years where students constantly go through the process of friendship making. As a reciprocal act, Noddings argues that friendship that evolves out of shared admiration and likeability is true, rare and beautiful. However, students and adults should have an accurate understanding of the meaning of friendship in order to evaluate the relation in terms of taking appropriate responsibility for the moral growth of both parties. Steiner argues that different activities e.g. 'eurhythmy' allow students to strengthen their bonds socially. Montessori argues that cosmic education could develop responsive students as responsible individuals of the society. One of the bench marks of Froebel's philosophy is social participation where children work collaboratively. The time line of Pestalozzi was the 18th to 19th century where he argued against the way children were taught. He was against flogging, got rid of verbosity at school, and did not agree to provide readymade solutions to children. Pestalozzi does not mention specifically about the dynamics of friendship as does Noddings. Lincoln in his letter mentions to the teacher, "that for every enemy there is a friend", implying to seek advice. With regards to

Steiner, Montessori, Froebel, Pestalozzi and Lincoln, their education philosophy does encourage collaborative learning and thus it becomes inevitable that students would explore the friendship relationship as things begin to unfold in a school setting. This however, is an assumption, and it is not as detailed as illustrated in the case of Noddings. The discussion is also illustrated in Figure 7.

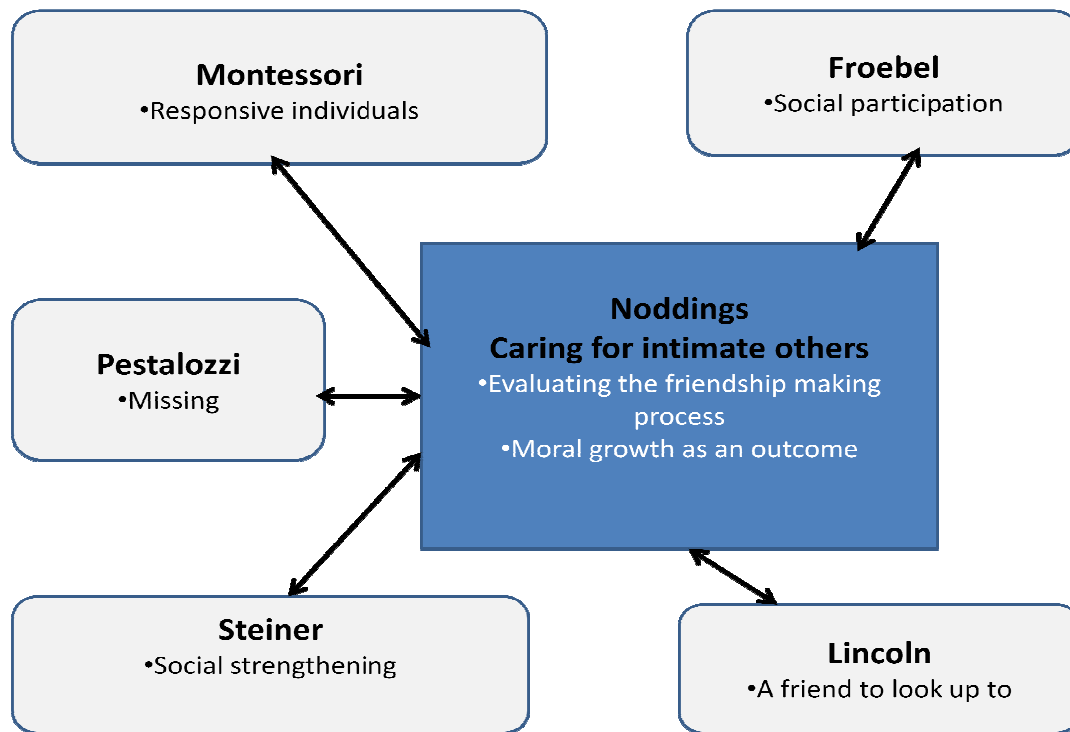


FIGURE 7 Comparative Analyses of Noddings' Caring for Intimate Others with Montessori, Froebel, Lincoln, Steiner and Pestalozzi

Noddings' theme of *caring for strangers and distant others* with regards to compassion towards the unknown global citizen is explained in detail. She elucidates that it is very easy to get carried away by the exploitation of emotions and react to it, but to critically analyze the reality, it is important that educators teach this theme with absolute care. A relevant example is the Syrian crisis, amidst all the justification for such an action; innocent human beings are faced with gruesome consequences. Noddings argues that children should be taught to discuss such global issues to produce a better generation than the existing one. The emotional aspect that disturbs the sentiments of people reveals unpredictable action and educators need to include in the curriculum the existential questions as well as spiritual matters for students to research and discuss freely. Thus providing a platform where students and the teacher could learn to manage

and control the impulse of intolerance and over confidence. This theme is missing with Steiner, Montessori, Pestalozzi, Lincoln and Froebel. This is also illustrated in Figure 8.

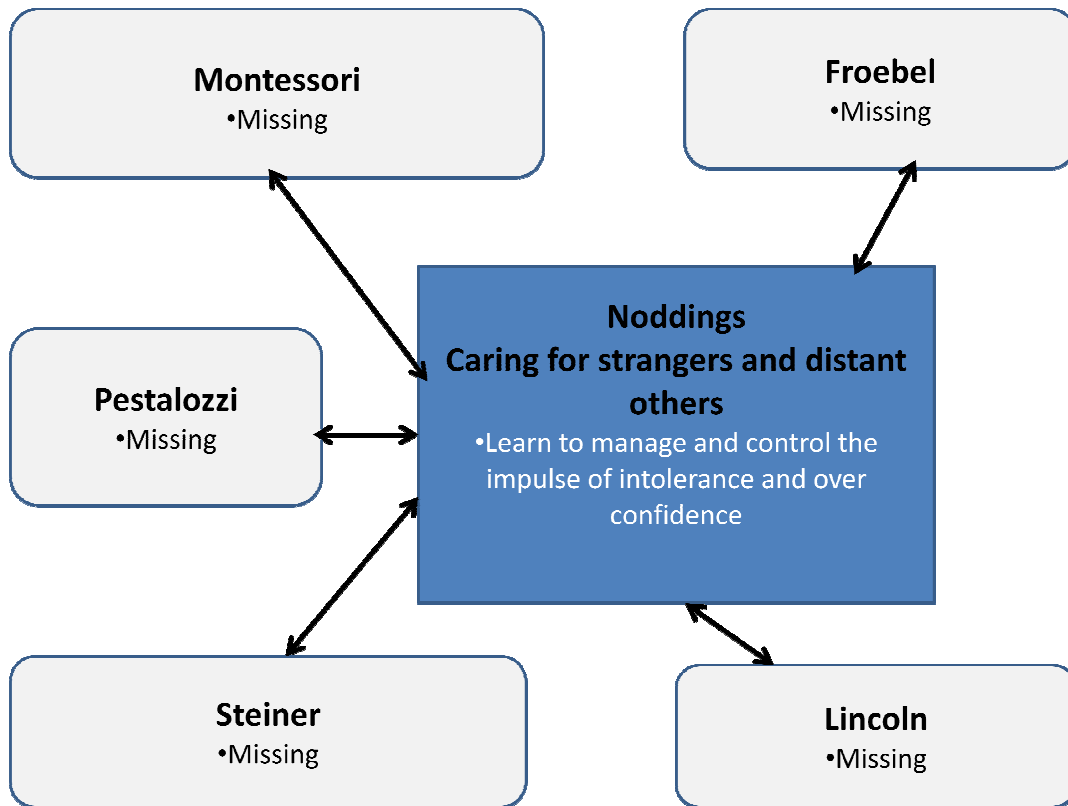


FIGURE 8 Comparative Analyses of Noddings' Caring for Strangers and Distant Others with Montessori, Froebel, Lincoln, Steiner and Pestalozzi

Noddings' theme of *caring for plants, animals and the natural environment* provides a detailed elaboration on the elements necessary to harness the concern 'to care for'. Children are quick to learn to care for the plants and animals that they keep and gradually learn the vastness and beauty of the natural environment etc. She suggests that in order to build the concern to care for, it is necessary to teach children through discussion and practice the soft and the sensitive issues pertaining to caring for animals, plants and the natural environment. For instance, discussion points could be: animals used for food, research, negligent treatment, nutritional aspects of plants and animals, environmental concern – climate change, habitat preservation, ecosystems, street crime, racial prejudice, drugs etc., where as the practical application could be gardening, planting trees, cleaning the school compound or classroom or cleaning-up streams etc. This approach, she argues, would help students develop a critical and informed view about matters both at the personal and at the political level. Steiner's education

philosophy points towards inspiring children’s natural quest of wonder, curiosity and love for nature. Similarly, Montessori also speaks of cosmic education, which if wisely presented to the children would create in them admiration and wonder and the knowledge acquired would be ‘whole’ enabling the child to move through the different stages of human development – to adulthood as self-governing, self-assured, responsive, emotionally intelligent, mentally and physically balanced. Froebel believed that the early years of childhood education are crucial as children learn quickly during the early years and their personality is shaped around what they encounter in the learning environment. Froebel raises the importance of learning together both indoors and outdoors, about the culture and the natural world – the question about human existence etc. Pestalozzi’s underlying principle of education is kindness and affection, teaching children to take care for the needs of others referring to the natural world around them. Lincoln argues for auto education in the letter e.g., by allowing children to ponder upon the mysteries of nature, in other words to let them learn at their own pace about things around them. This is illustrated in Figure 9.

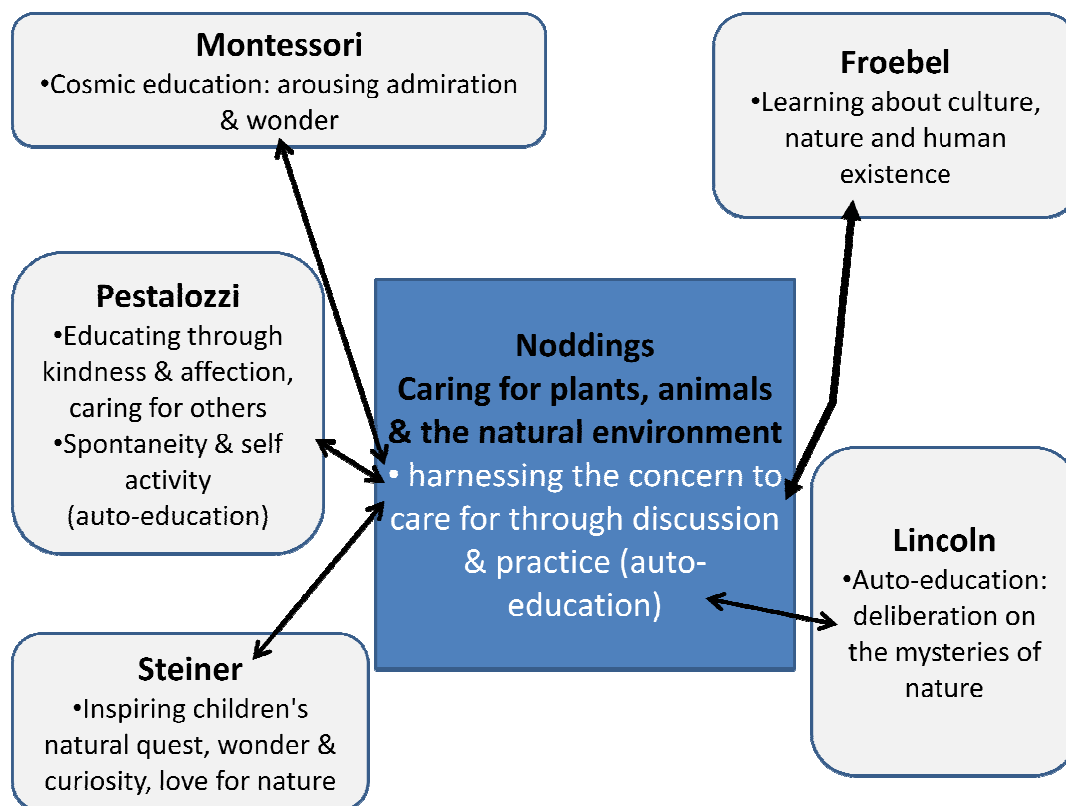


FIGURE 9 Comparative analyses of Noddings' Caring for Plants, Animals & the Natural Environment with Montessori, Froebel, Lincoln, Steiner and Pestalozzi

Noddings' theme of *caring for the human made world* signifies the optimum utility of objects and instruments that are manmade. To only consume what is needed develops moderation and one becomes more careful with proper usage of things, she argues. This possibly leads to limiting the consumption of the world's resources such as water and trees. By this she argues that children could learn to self-examine about the extent of consumption of a single item such as socks, trousers, shirts, toys, bikes etc. Noddings adds that schools should teach students how to make and repair things using common tools, and play with food materials gradually arousing curiosity in them to explore further e.g. learning to cook. Playful learning is integral to Montessori's education philosophy where scientifically designed toys are used to teach children the slight variations in correctly assembling them. This enables them to reason on their decisions. The furniture that children use in schools are according to their heights e.g. brooms, mops, shelves etc. Using such materials and objects around them build in them the capacity to take care of things they frequently use. They also learn to work in teams and cooperate with one another. Froebel's pedagogy involves encouragement that builds self confidence and autonomy, individual and collaborative activity and play, and, an environment that builds aesthetic awareness. Both Steiner and Pestalozzi emphasize that teaching and learning should maintain a balance between the head, heart and hand (3H). Pestalozzi's teaching method asserted learning by doing and not blind repetition, whereas Steiner's education philosophy invigorated the belief in goodness, respect for space in which they spend time working and taking care of the play area. It could be inferred that Froebel's, Steiner's and Pestalozzi's education philosophy does in one way or the other try to arouse in students the attribute to care of the environment. However, it is not as elaborate as is specified by Noddings. Lincoln's letter does not categorically specify caring for the manmade world. But upon close scrutiny, his letter is about requesting the teacher to take 'care' of his son and teach him the universal accepted values of humanity e.g. truth. So if a person is truthful, just, hardworking, informed, a balanced personality etc., without doubt the person would not be someone who is careless in general and towards the space around. This is illustrated in Figure 10.

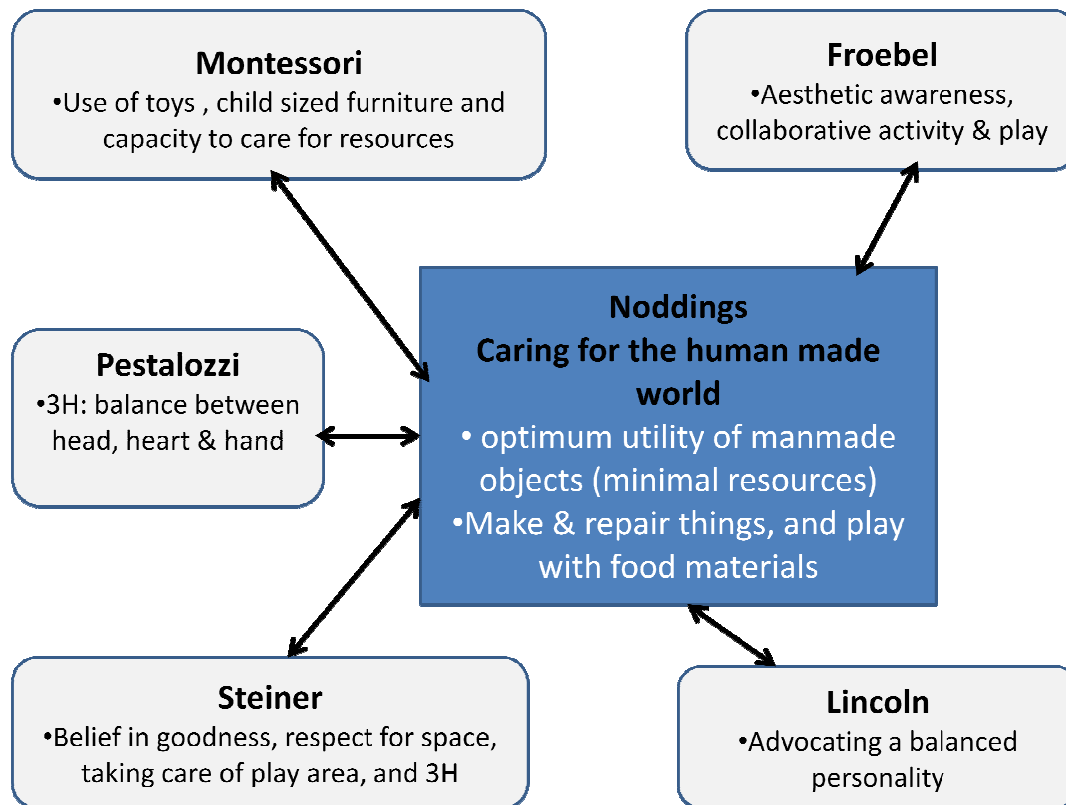


FIGURE 10 Comparative Analyses of Noddings' Caring for the Human Made World with Montessori, Froebel, Lincoln, Steiner and Pestalozzi

Noddings' theme of *caring for ideas* illustrates that educators should nurture the ideas that tend to drive people what they cherish to do e.g. a favorite study subject, to paint or dance etc. She suggests that teachers should not fall trap to viewing themselves as experts in the subject because when they do they expect students to think in a similar way. Teaching and learning should be molded as per the interests of students, their pace of learning and what they intend to achieve from the subject should be determined and the provision placed in the curriculum. Lincoln in his letter suggests that teachers should educate children to have faith in their own ideas even when everyone else opposes them. Pestalozzi and Froebel argue that children should learn according to their capabilities and have the freedom to express openly. Montessori also speaks of caring for ideas, however she does not expressly use the term, but her education philosophy does revolve around learning that is self-paced, joyful, choosing freely, independent and collaborative. Finally, Steiner argues about nurturing imagination into the curriculum through folk and fairy tales, fables and legends. This is illustrated in Figure 11.

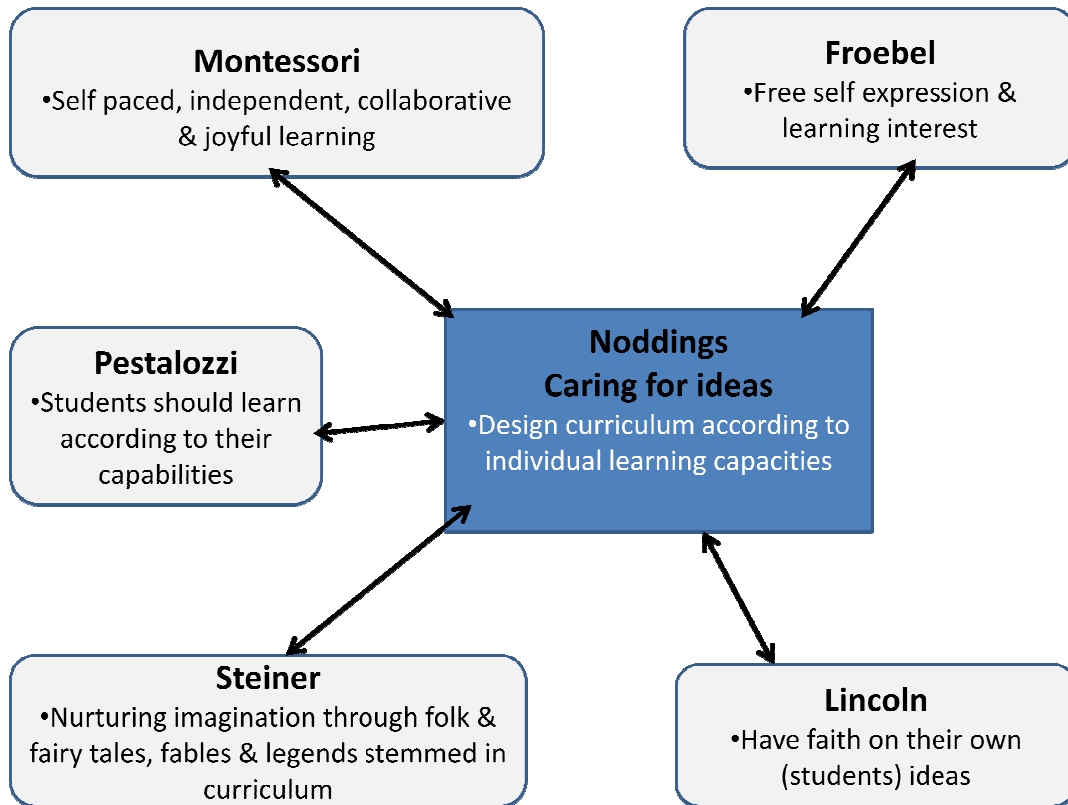


FIGURE 11 Comparative Analyses of Noddings' Caring for Ideas with Montessori, Froebel, Lincoln, Steiner and Pestalozzi

7 CONCLUSION

My research question number 1 is: why the concept of caring is so topical? The dominant education model which is the industrial and the neoliberal modality is inflicting social harm and misconduct in many walks of life. From the bottom of my heart, as a parent I would definitely want my children to study in a school system that has the capacity to build a caring education practice which overarches the attributes of holistic personality. This, however, cannot be nurtured at school alone. It has to be the combination of upbringing both at home and at school.

The purpose of education is to attain a capacity of achieving the state of liberation that Freire (1970) refers to as humanization, rather than to seek control over them by domestication – to ‘dehumanize’. The allocation of money to preferred academic disciplines has created a culture of dominance and prestige in the traditional liberal and neo-liberal education with concrete power structures (Noddings, 2005, p. 60). As a parent what kind of education do I want for my children? I believe this concern is by far the most genuine concern of any parent anywhere in the world. Besides the arguments and facts presented in the previous sections, one can challenge that fraudulent activities are engineered and conducted with the intention to satisfy self-interest regardless of the devastation it causes to the common good of the masses.

As part of human complexity, people have ideologies that are well guarded and deeply rooted according to their own circumstances. None of us had any power on where and when we wanted to be born in this world; however, it is common to see that the culture people are born in is taken to be supremely sacred. People view the world in their own spectrum of value systems, and often collide with the opposing view. It is clear that the current education model is not helping to solve such problems. We need an education system(s) that helps to understand why people are the way they are, to understand the self, what formed their ethnic or cultural identity and those of others. The predominant education model trains people and develops in them predatory consciousness that is fundamentally based on greed, materialism and self-centeredness (Nava, n.d. a). Since ‘to compete’ is at the heart of the predominant existing education model, we simply become what we are trained for. Sharon Shinn, an American novelist and journalist, argues that, “sometimes we become what we see. Sometimes we take

what we see and make it the model for what we refuse to become”¹⁴. The Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity make their point as follows:

In the West we have a tendency to be profit oriented, where everything is measured according to the results and we get caught up in being more and more active to generate results. In the East, especially India, I find that people are more content to just be, to just sit around under a banyan tree for half a day chatting to each other. We Westerners would probably call that wasting time. But there is value to it. Being with someone, listening without a clock and without anticipation of results, teaches us about love. The success of love is in the loving, it is not in the result of loving¹⁵.

The marvel of care is truly innate and Noddings highlights its dynamism in proposing an alternative solution to education. The quest to unravel the exciting research question(s) revolves around my life as a child, a teenager, and as an adult working in the field of education as a teacher at the university level.

Holistic education from the point of Noddings’ proposition of care in education provides a logical path towards addressing such complex issues besides enhancing other important matters such as teaching and learning, etc. Noddings suggests that it is important to address such pinching questions through open classroom discussions as well as through practical work, where students with different ideologies and competencies engage in dialogue and practice to understand diverse beliefs, opinions and skills. Anxieties, fearfulness, doubts, hopefulness, hopelessness etc., on the differing world views are intricately intertwined with the individual, social and cultural construction, and these are significant opportunities to build the curriculum that in reality reflects the aspirations and concerns of those involved in the learning process (Freire, 1970, p. 93).

According to Noddings, care holds magical powers and the teachers and the students should together build consciously a learning environment that cultivates care (Heid & Kelehear, 2007, p. 412). Great teachers are able to inspire their students. Inspiration is a magical stimulant that drives immense positive energy that unleashes creativity and learning becomes fun. It is a fanciful state almost intoxicating, except that it is not, and one can feel the erupting joy with eyes wide open. Educators need to discover the essence of holistic education since it paves a vibrant path to develop responsive human beings. Teachers should be able to trigger a connection with the mind, body and soul by virtue of education. This approach is totally opposite to the

¹⁴ Goodreads (a)

¹⁵ Goodreads (b)

traditional schooling that is based on competition and instruction of the standardized curriculum to heterogeneous students. Eisner (1994, p. 44) posits that while defining the curriculum it is important to keep in consideration the dynamic opportunities children would experience by putting together meaning out of the experience. One major dilemma of the traditional education model is that it leaves out those students that are not able to stay abreast with the rate of teaching and the consequent learning, and are eventually excluded, first from education and then from the society. Students tend to lose motivation, become more alienated and perform poorly in academic and non-academic activities when schools consistently fail to address their needs for belonging, competence, self-interest and autonomy (California Department of Education, 2005). A commonly known fact is that different students learn with different pace, an experience we all have faced at some point in time during our academic years, however, the existing educational system drills into the students a fixed amount of content in a fixed amount of time, again addressing the issue in the old-fashioned way. Noddings (2005) proposes that through the themes of care (caring for self, caring for intimate others, caring for plants, animals and natural environment, caring for strangers and distant others, caring for the human made world and caring for ideas) in education would build the right climate to empower and co-create the path to wisdom.

As for the methodology used in this study, it is meta-analysis which is the most commonly used method of qualitative synthesis (Hannes & Macaitis, 2012). It is a way of formally collecting, blending and composing the results and conclusions from completed qualitative studies transforming into theories, grand narratives or generalizations (Sandelowski 2004, p. 892; Barroso et al., 2003, p. 154; Sandelowski et al., 1997), creating new and a holistic interpretation from the entire research process (Noblit & Hare, 1988). To preserve the depth of analysis and protect the interpretive validity, Sandelowski, et al. (1997, p. 368) have recommended a maximum of ten studies in a single research study. In this thesis, I have used eight different texts of Nel Noddings. As regards to the auto-ethnographic method I have presented a narrative of my lived experiences and have written them like a story. According to Ellis and Bochner (2000, p. 737), the self-reflexive element of auto-ethnography is a disciplined and passionate sociological reflection or soul-searching in an attempt to recall and understand a lived experience, and then writing it as a story.

The reliability factor of the research method - auto-ethnography, refers to the credibility of the narrator (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011), which is based on the researcher's training, work or life experiences, presentation of self etc., and a philosophical conviction in the value of the study (Patton, 1999). My life experiences and education in three continents have provided sufficient training and orientation of the diverse cultures bound contextually. The research proves to be reliable if the results of this study are transferable in that they relate to readers making practical assessments to their given scenarios (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

With regards to the validity of the research process of auto-ethnographic work, Chang (2008) suggests to be mindful of the downside, e.g. self emphasis of the narrator, emphasizing on the narrative rather than the analysis and neglecting ethical standards regarding others. Similarly, Kvale (1996) suggests the researcher's responsibility in terms of dependability, and autonomy in the analysis of results pertaining to ethical considerations. Auto-ethnography is often critiqued for authenticity, the reason being that the researcher uses personal experience as the only data source and this convenience may hinder adequate distancing to reflect upon (Holt, 2003, p. 3; Quicke, 2010, p. 242). However, for this study, the auto-ethnographic account was validated by Nel Noddings' work. The very character of this study has been to discover new meaning out of the analysis by blending self-narrative and theory as argued by research scholars (Spry, 2001, p. 713; Midgley, 2008, p. 23). Furthermore, if personal experience is not to be included in research, then it would not be auto-ethnography and would lose its very characteristic (Atkinson, 1997; Coffey, 1999).

With regards to ethical considerations, auto-ethnography characteristically is an ethical practice (Ellis, 2007, p. 26), a point of departure of establishing broad spectrum theories (Sandelowski, et al., 1997, p. 369), creating new and a holistic interpretation from the entire process of the study (Noblit & Hare, 1988, pp. 9-10). Reed-Danahay (1997, p. 3) posits that author's voice is considered more accurate, lifelike and spot-on.

It is advisable to conduct the research from an ethic of care perspective, to keep the people that are part of the narrative as safe as possible, and the outcome of the research should bring about change in the lived experiences of readers (Ellis, 2007, 2009; Medford, 2006; Chang, 2008; Bochner, 2002; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Tolich, 2010). In this study, my intention is that the outcome of the research should be beneficial to the reader and enable them to relate it to their own given circumstances.

And in regard to ethical considerations, I have tried to keep the people safe that are part of the story as referred by Ellis (2007). Even though I have mentioned the name of the Principal of the secondary school that I attended in Minna, Nigeria, I have not harmed his reputation. Instead, it reveals a positive outcome and I would definitely want to show this research to the Principal with great comfort and honor, as pointed by Medford (2006).

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Corporate and financial crimes, unresponsiveness of governments to emergencies, sensitivity of multiculturalism and religion

White collar crimes have become a global trend and it is becoming difficult to even remember how many such high profile scandals have occurred in the past and those taking place at this very moment that would be unearthed in the future. These corporate/financial/political scandals have left many multinational organizations in despair which has affected the reputation, businesses, economies, families and the community at large. The well-known money laundering and accounting scandals namely, WorldCom, BCCI, Tyco, Yukos Oil Company, Adelphia, Enron, HIH Insurance, Urban Bank Philippines, Parmalat etc., are some of the few. Then there is the financial meltdown at the global scale, the lethargic response of governments when it comes to supporting their people when natural disasters strike, the inequalities in education and the list goes on. These are the true bitter realities. It is as if no one cares. Just to shed some more light on the events that took place in a bit more detail, I give the following account.

Parmalat collapsed in 2003 with a 14bn euro (\$20bn; £13bn) hole in its accounts in what remains Europe's biggest bankruptcy. Tanzi the founder of Parmalat was accused of wrongly influencing the share price for personal interests, obstructing auditors and providing with false accounting. (Italian dairy boss gets 10 years, 2008).

Nicknamed as Australia's Enron, *HIH Insurance* financially collapsed in 2001 with debts of A\$5.3bn (£2.1bn; \$4.1bn) (Mercer, 2005). The man behind Australia's biggest corporate collapse was Raymond Williams (former head of HIH insurance firm) who confessed to have misled the shareholders and was charged with four-and-a-half years imprisonment (Mercer, 2005).

The *BCCI* banking scandal is still considered to be one of the largest money laundering scandals of all time when it collapsed in 1991 with a financial hole of more than £10bn (\$18bn) (Britain's biggest banking scandal, 2004). Terrorists preferred the BCCI for transacting drug money from Columbia and Panama that was used to fund the Mujahideen in Pakistan and Abu Nidal in the Middle East (Britain's biggest banking scandal, 2004). Additionally, some of the crimes the bank was accused of were arms trafficking, the sale of nuclear technologies, management of prostitution, the

commission and facilitation of tax evasion, supporting terrorism, bribing key officials, smuggling, illegal immigration and the illicit purchases of banks and real estate (HR World, 2008).

In the aftermath of *Hurricane Katrina* in 2005, the US government has been blamed widely that it was slow to respond in rescuing people that were stranded. More blacks view race as a factor in federal response (Reaction to Katrina split on racial lines, 2005). It is estimated that more than 1,800 people died in the disaster and millions were left homeless (Zimmermann, 2012).

Tharparkar deaths caused due to the prolonged drought in the Tharparkar district (Sindh Province, Pakistan), the death toll of infants has climbed to 562 and is rising. “The provincial government claims that it is providing free wheat bags of 50 kg but the citizens repeatedly complain of the quantity and delays in the wheat distribution” (Tharparkar: Death Toll Climbs, 2014). This story was published on December 14, 2014. While addressing a national conference on nutrition in Islamabad in the same month (December 24, 2014), the Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms Prof Ahsan Iqbal asserted that, in order to bring prosperity in Thar, the government intends to build ten coal-fired power stations throughout the next ten years (Ten Coal-Fired Power Stations Planned for Thar, 2014).

Environmental Disaster (BP Oil Spill) also referred to as Deepwater Horizon Oil Rig Spill, the leak began in April 2010 that flowed for three months and is considered to be the largest accidental oil spill in the history of the petroleum industry. The explosion killed 11 men working on the platform and injured 17 others causing extensive damage to marine and wildlife habitats (Ten largest oil spills, 2011). The Federal Court judge Carl Barbier said the disaster happened because BP’s US subsidiaries along with oil services company Halliburton and rig owner Transocean did not take adequate care in drilling the highly risky well. The judge said, it was “gross negligence”, as “they failed to exercise even the slightest care”; BP’s misconduct was willful that led to the blowout, explosion and oil spill; the decision of BP to keep drilling was dangerous and motivated by profit (BP found grossly negligent, 2014).

Multiculturalism is defined as a collection of different cultural identities which is grounded in ethnicity, religion, values etc., which reside side by side with respect of the other (Parekh, 2000). Due to the favorable economic opportunities abroad and deplorable home conditions such as war, poverty, hunger, persecution etc., in home

countries have given rise to the phenomena of multiculturalism, and consequently the agitation that fuels intolerant actions. The increase in the migration of people has also led to the growing intolerance that opposes a peaceful coexistence. This intolerance has grown widely and is continuously challenging a peaceful coexistence in the newly formed societies with brute force. These triggering sensitivities revolve around national, religious, ethnic, gender, economic and ideological lines and people go at great lengths to defend them, verbally and physically, when opposed in any manner. Instances such as honor killings and female genital mutilation are common practices in many countries still. The indifference runs skin deep, fanaticism is rampant and it is common to see how comfortably it defeats reason.

In recent events, the Syrian crisis beginning in early 2011 is the largest refugee crisis in recent history where more than 11 million people have been forced to leave their homes seeking refuge in neighboring countries Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan (Rodgers, Gritten, Offer & Asare, 2015). The plight is to such an extent that refugees have even put their lives at risk to make the hazardous journey to Europe up to Sweden (Martinez, 2015). Most European countries are reluctantly taking limited numbers of refugees, whereas the Arab countries Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain have declined to take any Syrian refugees (Martinez, 2015).

The cost of *corruption* in the African continent is almost \$150bn a year that has led to the increase in prices of up to 20%, has deterred investment and stranded development with tremendous burden on the poor through taxation and inflation (Blunt, 2002). Africa is blessed with natural resources like gold, oil, diamonds, cocoa beans, petroleum and minerals like cobalt, iron copper, uranium, silver and bauxite, but unfortunately the standard of living of many people in the continent is deplorable. This is largely due to the corrupt governments that loot their own countries wealth for their lavish lifestyle. According to Transparency International, there are as many as 26 countries in Africa that are most corrupt with the highest corruption perception index (CPI)¹⁶ score at 31 of Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Tanzania. The lowest CPI score is 8 of Sudan being the most corrupt in the list (Richestlifestyle, 2015). In a similar account, Ihlwan (2015) gives an account of Asia's top corporate executives engulfed with the scam virus. In truth every continent is plagued with high profile scam.

¹⁶ CPI: if a country has a score of 100 it is very clean and if the score is 0, then the country is highly corrupt.

With regards to *religious atrocities*, religion and ethnicity are used as a weapon of war to destroy innocent lives around the world. Religious ideological beliefs are taken as sacred by people of different religions and placed very high within the group's set of values (Hernandez, n.d.). And to trigger such events, crimes such as rape, incest etc., are used as virulent tools. There is an unending list of atrocities, the conflict between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria, Mindanao (The Philippines) and Egypt, Hindu-Muslim clashes and Hindu-Sikh riots in India, the torture of Muslims and Christians by Buddhists in Myanmar, the Myanmar Rohingyas being one of the world's most persecuted minorities according to the United Nations (Win, 2015), the atrocities of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). In comparison, Wilson (2010, p. 787) highlights the European wars of religion between the Catholics and Protestants from 1524 and 1648 as the most catastrophic religious battles in the history of Europe.

The *global financial and economic meltdown of 2008* was triggered easy lending (subprime mortgage) of the US housing market that began in 2007 when sky-high home prices in the US eventually nose-dived first within the US and then spreading to financial markets overseas. The banks offered mortgages to everyone irrespective of whether they could pay back the mortgage or not. The Federal Reserve had full authority to regulate the subprime lending but they did not do so, and with easy lending and low interest rates the financial institutions (banks and mortgage companies) were heavily investing in the housing market as home prices were constantly soaring. Banks and mortgage companies were involved in fraudulent activities to escalate their business by deliberately engineering complex mortgages with hidden terms of conditions from borrowers and these were sold to families that did not qualify for home loans that had no clue about these loans, such as not taking into account the income history of the borrower and how they would manage the mortgage when the mortgage would reset in the future. People who could not own a house were shown the opportunity that they could now own a house via the subprime mortgage. For people the fascination of becoming a home owner was simply irresistible to ignore and naturally they grabbed it. Consequently, there were millions of foreclosures and people ended up on the streets, in shelter homes and became unemployed etc., (Havemann, 2008). One after the other, all the major financial institutions began filing for bankruptcy that gave economies the shiver of their life. It was a chain reaction. However, eventually the Federal Reserve bailed them out with tons of money. It is worth mentioning that the people that were

involved in creating the crisis right from the beginning due to intentional fraudulent activities were eventually saved by the ones that led the system. Lenzner (2011) argues that Thomas Jefferson in the debate over the Re-charter of the Bank Bill (1809) said:

If the American people ever allow private banks to control the issue of their currency, first by inflation, then by deflation, the banks and corporations that will grow up around (these banks) will deprive the people of all property until their children wake-up homeless on the continent their fathers conquered.... The issuing power should be taken from the banks and restored to the people, to whom it properly belongs.

In a similar context, the tax structure in the US is based on harsh inequalities. For instance, in Texas, the poor is levied with 11.4% in taxes while the affluent class pays 3.2%; in Washington State, families making an average of just \$9,600 in 2002 paid a massive tax (state and local) of 17.6% whereas families in the top 1% income bracket paid just 3.1% (LeRoy, 2005, p. 178). LeRoy says that New York City is the “job blackmail capital” of the United States. New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) made the threat of relocating to Jersey City and in order to retain 1500 jobs at NYSE, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani announced a subsidy package of \$940 million (LeRoy, 2005, pp. 38-42). In addition to this, the deal also demanded a huge trading floor of 600,000 square feet that required bulldozing three to four buildings on its block, and in due course the subsidies estimated at \$1.1 billion (LeRoy, 2005). Even though the deal got terminated, still the damage was done as buildings were acquired and tenants driven out (LeRoy, 2005). LeRoy provides statistics of “New York City retention subsidies” given to different companies from 1988 to 2001. To mention a few of the companies that received subsidies are, NBC in 1988 a subsidy of \$72 million; New York Mercantile Exchange in 1994 a subsidy of \$183.9 million; Prudential Securities in 1995 a subsidy of \$122.9 million; Merrill Lynch in 1997 a subsidy of \$28.6 million; Reuters in 1998 a subsidy of \$26 million (LeRoy, 2005, pp. 38-41).

Appendix 2: Key features of the ERA

With regards to the inequality in education, the key features of the ERA are discussed further. Introduced by the government of Margaret Thatcher in 1988, the government enforced strict measures and control over schools, colleges and universities more than ever before (Wilby, 2013). The fundamental logic underlying the changes made in education in England was, “the belief that competition in the economy as a whole drives efficiency and improvement could be applied to schools as well, so that competition among schools would lead to better outcomes for students” (Fullan & Levin, 2008, p. 289). Wilby (2013) explains that the attempt of Thatcher’s government to end the authority of the local councils on education created a new category giving rise to the *Grant-Maintained Schools* that permitted schools to ‘opt out’ from the control of the Local Education Authorities (LEA’s) and receive funding directly from the central government. Through this, the central government was more in control of education and considerably destroyed the authority of LEA’s (Powell and Edwards, 2005, p. 98). In a Grant-Maintained Schools Conference held in Birmingham reported that, there is no significant difference in teaching quality in the Grant-maintained schools when compared with other state schools; in the opted-out schools, one in four lessons was considered substandard or poor; and only 35% of lessons considered as being good or very good (Judd, 1993). The schools that received admission applications from a child’s parent automatically received funding per head and the school had total autonomy over their budgets and how the school should be operated (Wilby, 2013). Based on tests and exam results that were published centrally, the schools competed for customers and their businesses expanded into recognizable and trusted brands (Wilby, 2013). This led to the private companies operating numerous schools purely as commercial ventures (Wilby, 2013). The productivist ideology (neoliberalism) in education gives commercial companies the opportunity to sabotage the public and pedagogical values in schooling (Marginson, 2006, p. 209).

Drury (1992, p. 5) argues that, “one of the main criticisms of the ERA is that it is predominantly Eurocentric, Anglocentric and monocultural and is consequentially largely unrepresentative of a multi-cultural and multi-racial society”. Drury provides a few examples with regards to this bias. For instance, the French and the German language are given priority in the curriculum over the Indic and other non-European ethnic minority languages (Drury, 1992). In another instance with regards to music

education, Drury (1992) says that the Western Classical composers are given prominence versus Asian and Afro-Caribbean forms of (popular) music.

Herrmann, Burroughs and Plucker (2009, p. 1) define *school choice* as a substitute to conventional public education system that gives parents the choice to opt for schools where their kids would attend. Primarily there are three types of school choice—charter schools, open enrollment programs and the voucher system (Ryan, 2013, p. 155). **First**, ‘charter schools’ receive public funding and are governed by actors external to public school system (Knopp, 2008). In the UK are the ‘Academy schools’ that are synonymous to the model of the US charter schools that are managed privately either having a profit seeking objective or a not-for-profit one (Grant, 2010, p. 25). These governing bodies could be an organization, an NGO, a university etc., that act independently from the school board having exclusive exercising powers over the budget, the curriculum, student selection, and set up measurable results for the school to measure up to (Grant, 2010). Based on a certain selection criteria students that are admitted study free of cost and have the opportunity to explore further according to their personal interests the customized courses as the school caters to the students individual needs (Ryan, 2013, p. 155). For instance in the United States, magnet schools attract students through the tailored programs that suits individual interests. In England, the magnet schools are referred to as the ‘specialist schools’ having a particular focus on a subject area. When a student with a given set of traits achieves additional grades (at GCSE/GNVQ)¹⁷ by attending a specialist school is called the specialist school effect, in contrast to studying at a non-specialist school (Jenkins & Levacic, 2004, p. 28). Magnets are either school within schools provided by the local public school district(s), and/or regional or provincial magnet schools funneled from several districts either mutually funded by the districts or from the state (Nathan, 1989, p. 53). Providing an opportunity for parents to select schools for their children, it gives them more choice and control over their children’s education (Powell & Edwards, 2005, pp. 98, 102); allowing schools to ‘almost’ handpick only those students that they (schools) consider would be successful. In a way this reflects England’s 19th century education policy that was primarily organized to protect and cultivate the class system by designing three school systems—elementary schools were for the children of the working class, for the

¹⁷ GCSE: General Certificate of Secondary Education

GNVQ: General National Vocational Qualifications

middle class it was the secondary school system, whereas for the ruling class it was the private public school system (Ball, 2008, p. 61). Sahlberg (2012, p. 30) points out that segregation (separation and isolation) of students in schools are bound to increase consistently as a result of the implication of school choice and associated market mechanisms (such as competition, economies of scale, standardization, cost efficiency and production line strategies, etc.). Employing the principles of competition in the field of education, it is evident that some schools are bound to fail (Herrmann et al., 2009, p. 3). These market forces have magnified the existing inequalities in education, for instance in the United States, Sweden, Australia, England and Wales, and New Zealand, researchers found that with regards to education results, student retention and total income earned by the school(s), the elite (privileged) schools got wealthier and the poor schools got poorer (Hill, Greaves & Maisuria, 2009, p. 77). These market forces in education gave way to the duality allowing affluent parents to select the best schooling for their children as parental choice beefed-up standards of excellence and those kids that were not able to meet these standards were forced out (Ross, 2000, p. 47). Whitty et al. (1998) found that one of the results of the application of market mechanisms in education led to the creation of new types of schools that effectively increased school choice for families, thus aggravating racialized school hierarchies. Excessive experimentation with choice leads to hierarchical differentiation which is further heightened by publicly advertising the different test results, SATS, for instance (Hill et al. 2009, p. 76). The practice of the different choice options are being aggressively administered in the public education system, however, its applicability to produce the intended results is profoundly debated (Herrmann et al., 2009, p. 1). **Second**, subject to availability of space, test scores, transfer policies and other possible requirements, ‘open enrollment programs’ allow students to opt for schools (with a higher Academic Performance Index (API)) either outside their district termed as ‘interdistrict’ or within their district termed as ‘intradistrict’ (Herrmann et al., 2009, p. 2). A portion of the tax of the student’s family is allocated by the government to the district where the student has chosen to attend school (Ryan, 2013, p. 155). With regards to transportation, the government often does not provide for students who study under the open enrolment program (Ryan, 2013). Critics of open enrollment programs argue that it has a negative effect on low income families as it increases segregation in the society, for instance, students with insufficient funds are confined and cannot move out of a failing school

(Herrmann et al., 2009, p. 3). Students are also not able to transfer-out if the school is homogenous ethnically; a situation beyond their control prompts a feeling of further isolation (Herrmann et al., 2009). On the other hand schools that are not able to retain students would eventually lose funding and therefore, also the options to improve school conditions as a whole (Herrmann et al., 2009). **Third**, under the 'voucher system', a voucher is state money that is paid to families to allow for meeting school expenses such as tuition, books etc. The voucher system especially targets the low income families and children in failing schools (SEDL, 2000, p. 7), and this clearly implies that the affluent class has the choice of schools for their children while poor parents do not have the same choice since vouchers only cover a portion of the education expense and the rest is paid by the families of students. Under this it is possible for students to select the school of their choice, including private schools and or religious schools (Jacobson, 2004, p. 86). It is argued that vouchers is a way to allow poor performing schools to perform better, however, some claim that such policies are leading to the complete privatization of education (Jacobson, 2004). Since the public schools (such as in the case of the US) get a guaranteed intake of students, they do not have to compete for students as do private schools. Private schools on the other hand are not compelled as are public schools to recruit students with special needs and therefore are left behind in schools with a reduced amount of money (Jacobson, 2004, p. 87). Thus competing in a free market to recruit students, private schools have to be more efficient in attracting students by offering a better quality education (SEDL, 2000, p. 2) which they do well as they have more funding at their disposal. Opponents of the voucher system assert that it is damaging public education as it promotes a culture of 'failing' and 'successful' schools, rather than providing adequate funding for all schools (Jacobson, 2004, p. 86).

Another key feature of the ERA was to introduce *National Tests* - a rigorous assessment program to test children of age groups of 7, 11, 14 and 16 (Powell & Edwards, 2005, p. 98). These are the compulsory national tests—SATs. The results of national tests are published in league tables and schools are judged directly in relevance to this data. The decisions made by government officials' on these assessments strictly focus on the differential educational achievement whereas the individual students learning needs are completely unattended (Powell & Edwards, 2005, p. 102). Effective intervention measures are not in place once poor academic performance was identified,

as if the main role of the state was to observe and tabulate facts and not to interfere in the educational needs of students (Powell & Edwards, 2005).

Another outcome of the ERA was that in 1992 the *Office for Standards in Education* (OFSTED) was established with the objective of inspecting England's schools for better overall performance. OFSTED, a corporate concept steered by competition is facilitated through continuous measurement (Williams, 2014). During the course of 1988-1996, market competition and consumer rights were the fundamental basis for educational reform (Powell and Edwards, 2005, p 98). Thus, mirroring the corporate concepts in education, schools were being rigorously inspected. OFSTED created a culture of high stress and low morale and a survey report found three main causes. *Continuous monitoring* by which the inspections tremendously increased the teachers' workload due to the constant scrutiny of the elements of their profession (teaching, lesson plans etc.), and kept them under fear as everything depended on a successful outcome (Scanlon, 2001, p. 3). The discouraging aspect of non-stop monitoring led to *deprofessionalisation* where even good teachers felt completely incompetent of the whole inspection process labelling their years of profession as totally ineffectual (Scanlon, 2001). The practice was to name and shame failing schools through the use of league tables. The news of failing schools was highlighted in the media and as a result both teachers and students faced public humiliation as everyone knew one another in the town (Scanlon, 2001). The teachers that were surveyed used words like 'colossal' and 'phenomenal' to explain the *increased workload and type of work* such as excessive paperwork that hampered their original work of teaching (Scanlon, 2001, p. 4). The problem with OFSTED is that it emphasizes more on inspection rather than support and has created a culture of "targets and terror, name and shame, compete and count, and discourages what education thrives upon which is trust, cooperation and participation" (Williams, 2014). Fullan (2011, pp. 3 & 5) argues that that in building these, the necessary ingredients are "intrinsic motivation, capacity building, group work and 'allness', instructional improvement and systemic solutions" which would bring about the necessary change effective enough to alter the existing school culture such as its values, norms, skills, practices and relationships.

Appendix 3: Adapted from the Froebel Trust (2013)

Froebels Principles	Froebels Pedagogy that includes	Froebels environment which
Recognize the uniqueness of each child's capacity and potential.	Knowledgeable and suitably qualified early childhood professionals.	Is physically safe but intellectually challenging, promoting curiosity, enquiry, sensory stimulation and aesthetic awareness.
An holistic view of each child's development.	Skilled and informed observation of children to support effective development, learning and teaching.	Demonstrates the unity of indoors and outdoors, of the cultural and the natural.
Recognition of the importance of play as a central integrating element in a child's development and learning.	Awareness that education relates to all capabilities of each child: imaginative, creative, symbolic, linguistic, mathematical, musical, aesthetic, scientific, physical, social, moral, cultural and spiritual.	Allows free access to a rich range of materials that promote open-ended opportunities for play, representation and creativity.
An ecological view of humankind in the natural world.	Parents / carers and educators working in harmony and partnership.	Entails the setting being an integral part of the community it serves, working in close partnership with parents and other skilled adults.
Recognizing the integrity of childhood in its own right.	Activities and experiences that have sense, purpose and meaning to the child, and involve joy, wonder, concentration, unity and satisfaction.	Is educative rather than merely amusing or occupying.
Recognizing the child as part of a family and a community.	An holistic approach to learning that recognizes children as active, feeling and thinking human beings, seeing	Promotes interdependence as well as independence, community as well as individuality and

	patterns and making connections.	responsibility as well as freedom.
	Encouragement rather than punishment.	
	Individual and collaborative activity and play.	
	An approach to learning which develops children's autonomy and self confidence.	

Appendix 4: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

