The Framework of Learning Effectiveness Focused on Concomitant Curriculum, Parenting Styles and the 4Cs of 21st Century Skills Through the Use of ICT Tools for Omani Schools, Colleges and Universities

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Abstract

Concomitant curriculum is an unwritten curriculum used by a family that is linked to what is communicated within a home or different practices and values applied by the family. Literature reveals that parenting style is extremely important that has a direct impact on the learner(s) of that home. Explicit is the curriculum available in schools, colleges or universities in written form; therefore, these educational institutions have expertise to shape the curriculum in written form. Moreover, communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity are soft skills known as the 4Cs of education that has great benefits, if used effectively. This research provides an organized structure to quench the thirst of educational industry that is continuously finding the innovative methods and strategies to improve intended learning outcomes of the pedagogical processes. Hence, this manuscript provides a framework based on the review of literature and identifies concomitant curriculum as an independent variable, effectiveness of learning outcomes of written curriculum as a dependent variable, and the 4Cs, parenting styles and use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools to disseminate the information as moderating variables, impacting the effectiveness of learning outcomes of written curriculum. Finally, recommendations on the framework are provided to key stakeholders, including policy makers, head of educational institutions, teachers and other practitioners working in schools, colleges, universities, and other educational systems in the Sultanate of Oman, GCC, and international countries, on promoting awareness about the concomitant curriculum, parenting styles, and the 4Cs of education among families using information and communication technologies to improve their parenting styles.

1. Introduction

Industry of education is constantly looking for innovative methods and strategies to improve intended learning outcomes linked to educational processes. Think about teaching and learning. All learners receive two types of teaching. The first type is attained at schools, colleges or universities that is in written form. The second type is hidden in everyday stuff what learners learn at homes with their families. This type of curriculum is known as unwritten concomitant curriculum.

Parenting styles have great impact on the learners, depending on the way parents raise their off springs. Educational institutions are experts at planning curriculum and trying their best to transfer the required knowledge and skills to the learners; and what is happening at homes is equally important. Moreover, educational institutions have written plans as explicit curriculum to achieve intended learning outcomes through different instructional strategies. However, families do not have written plans or strategies those could guide them towards a clear line of direction. Consequently, there is no effort and improvement to advance or change the existing practices at homes.

There are soft skills known as the 4Cs of education those are extremely important for success in the modern world of 21st Century: including, 'Communication', 'Collaboration', 'Critical Thinking', and 'Creativity'. Literature reveals that these are significant elements that work successfully to achieve and improve intended learning outcomes.

The concomitant curriculum, explicit curriculum, parenting styles, and the 4Cs of education are available in literature as scattered dots, having the potential to be structured in a way that could be beneficial to the educational industry, which is constantly in search of innovative ways to enrich the learning outcomes of the pedagogical processes. The aim of this research is to identify independent, dependent, and moderating variables through the review of literature, and to develop an organized framework that connects these scattered dots to draw a picture and provides a solution to the educational institutions to effectively impact the learning outcomes of written curriculum.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Curriculum and Curricula

In the field of teaching and learning, a curriculum is referred to as the total process of learning that is used in an educational journey linked to students (Kelly, 2009). The term curriculum refers to an arranged sequence of teaching and an organization of learners with learning contents in an educational setup through the process of teaching and learning, which works toward the

attainment of learning objectives, and accomplishment of curriculum goals (Adams, 2003). Hence curriculum is what an educational institution intends to instruct the students; curricula is the form used when referring to more than one curriculum.

2.2. Written or Explicit Curriculum

Written or explicit curriculum is the main type of curriculum that is also known as overt curriculum. This is the formal part of the pedagogical process that precisely includes selected and unified instructional features. This includes written syllabus, handbooks, notes, handouts, instructional videos, textbooks and supporting instructional contents that are purposely chosen to assist an educational institution towards the attainment of their objectives (Srivastava, 2005).

2.3. Concomitant Curriculum

The rules, experiences or practices that are communicated, emphasized, permitted and applied within the atmosphere of a home, and the use of these by the family are known as concomitant curriculum or unwritten concomitant curriculum (Srivastava, 2005).

2.4. The Four Cs (4Cs) of 21st Century Skills or 4Cs of Education, its Benefits and Needs of Innovative Methods

The 21st Century skills are linked to knowledge, life and career skills, habits and behaviours those are declared as extremely significant to the success of students in today's world, and these skills are categorized as learning skills, literacy skills, and life skills (Greenstein 2012; Team 2022; Buckle, n.d.; Ahmad, 2023c).

The 4Cs of education are one of the major areas of 21st Century skills those come under the category of learning skills. These are soft skills based on communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity (Educart, 2022).

Greenstein (2012), Team (2022), Buckle (n.d.) and Ahmad (2023c) detailed the 4Cs of Education as follows (Table 1):

Table 1. The 4Cs of Education

Name of the Skill	Details
Communication	Open and respectful conversations, sending and receiving a message in a clear manner to convey and receive precise idea, discussions to deliver ideas or opinions, active listening and feedback.
Collaboration	Teamwork, group based tasks, collective problem-solving, support to team members, and discussion of ideas.

Critical Thinking	Analysis, evaluation, comparisons, insightful content, brainteasers, logical problems, several viewpoints.
Creativity	Creative thinking, feedback and support to advance creativity and bringing ideas to reality.

Overall, effective communication has great benefits (Moss, 2020). Collaboration is an important factor that improves student achievement (Kochhar-Bryant and Heishman, 2010). Effective critical thinking skills improve effective decision making and problem solving, and develop effective leadership skills (Stone, 2023). Effective creativity skills produce empathic problem solving abilities, and support in bringing ideas to life (Runco and Pritzker, 1999).

Field of education is continuously seeking innovative methods and strategies to improve intended learning outcomes (Ahmad, 2023b; Ahmad, 2021b)

2.5. Parenting Styles and Involvement of Parents

Different parenting styles can directly affect the performance of kids in their academic journey. The way parents raise their children has a huge impact on their academic achievements (Purificación and Alicia, 2018).

Literature defines four famous styles of parenting as following (Baumrind, 1967; Baumrind, 1991; Ahmad, 2021a; Jessup, n.d.):

i). Authoritarian

Authoritarian style is like a dictatorship, where parents expect obedience without giving any explanations. They are the type to say, "Because I said so!", and the rules are super strict, without any room for discussion. If kids break the rules, there are some pretty harsh punishments. In this parenting style, kids do not really have much say in their own lives. They are expected to obey their parents without questioning anything, which can actually have some long-term effects on them. They might struggle with making decisions on their own, have a tough time telling right from wrong independently, and end up with pretty low self-esteem. It is like they are always seeking validation from others. This whole Authoritarian deal does not really seem to teach kids any lasting lessons. They might behave when their parents are around, but as soon as they are out of sight, they start misbehaving again. And they might get advice from other people instead of their parents.

ii). Authoritative

Authoritative style of parenting is most productive and useful. It is linked to maintaining a balance between structure and autonomy. Such parents set clear rules and expectations for kids, but they create a nurturing environment that kids can explore and learn within reasonable limits. It can be summed as "firm but caring style". Parents acknowledge that mistakes happen and they do not need to judge their children for them. Kids get guidance and support from their parents. Authoritative parents are firm but do not show controlling behaviour because they believe in building discipline without punishments. Their aim is to raise children who are confident, responsible towards society, and able to adjust themselves according to the needs. With this style, kids develop confidence, handle responsibility, overcome struggles, and trust their own decisions.

iii). Permissive

Permissive style of parenting allows children a lot of freedom with very few rules. It is opposite of the authoritarian style of parenting. Permissive parents act like friends instead of being dictators. However, an absence of guidelines and directions can lead to negative long-term effects such as anxiety. Additionally, extreme permissiveness can result in emotional dysregulation, increased rebelliousness, giving up in face of difficulties, and a liberty towards harmful behaviours like substance abuse.

iv). Uninvolved or Neglectful Parenting

Uninvolved parenting style is regarded as minimal interaction and lack of emotional connection between kids and parents, which leave children without rules, boundaries, structure and affection, and these children take care of themselves without depending on anyone else. This style of parenting is also known as neglectful parenting. These parents typically do not engage in conversations or attend their children's activities, leading to serious psychological consequences, including depression, difficulty in forming relationships, failed relationships, and social withdrawal.

Overall, parenting styles impact the learning outcomes of explicit/written curriculum through impacting the attitudes, values, behaviours, believes, motivation, engagement, and academic performance of the kids (learners or students).

Involvement of parents is very important in the pedagogical process (Ahmad 2023a; Ahmad, 2023c; Ahmad2022a; Ahmad, 2022b; Ahmad, 2021a; Ahmad 2021d).

2.6. Child Learning Theory

Pedagogy is a practice of teaching children through different teaching methods and approaches (Yerramsetty, 2020). Child learning theory is linked to pedagogy that focuses on stages of cognitive development; Piaget's stages highlight the importance of play, exploration, and scaffolding in children's learning processes. Piaget (1963) defined four stages of children's intellectual (or cognitive) development known as Piaget's stages, including: 'Sensorimotor stage': from birth to 2 years, 'Preoperational stage': from toddlerhood to early childhood (2 to 7 years), 'Concrete operational stage': from 7 to 11 years, 'Formal operational stage': from adolescence to adulthood (12 years and older).

2.7. Adult Learning Theory

O'Shea (2002) stated that adult learning theory is known as andragogy, and this theory tells that adults learn in a different way as compared to the learning of children because of their previous background and experiences that supports them to become self-directed learners. O'Neill (n.d.) referenced that adult learning theory was developed by Malcolm Knowles for adult learners in 1968, also known as andragogy, which stresses on the self-directed nature of adult learners because they recognize their previous knowledge and experiences that support them in new learning.

2.8. Impact of Information and Communication (ICT) Tools

Information and Communication Technological tools have positive impacts on learning outcomes (Ahmad, 2023d; Ahmad, 2022c; Ahmad, 2021c; Ahmad, 2021e). It is commonly known that websites, blogs, videos, audio podcasts, WhatsApp, Facebook, emails, Instagram etc. are renowned ICT tools. Different ICT tools have different impacts on the receiver of information in terms of understanding (Ahmad, 2021e).

3. Methodology

This research aimed to develop a framework to support schools, colleges, and universities to improve the effectiveness of learning outcomes of their curriculum. The framework was developed passing thorough a number of different steps.

Initially, a review of literature was carried out that was related to two types of curriculum, including explicit or written curriculum and concomitant curriculum, parenting styles, the 4Cs of education, child learning theory and adult learning theory. Subsequently, literature revealed that

parents are one of a major key stakeholders of an educational system, and their parenting styles have impact on learning outcomes of their children, as students.

Afterward, literature disclosed that all these areas were available as scattered dots, and if unified, could have impacted the learning outcomes of educational curriculum in an effective manner, through impacting leaners attitudes, values, behaviours, believes, motivation, and academic performance. These dots were unified into an organized framework through their linkage as independent, dependent and moderating variables to form an organized framework. Therefore, 'the framework of learning effectiveness focused on concomitant curriculum, parenting styles and the 4Cs of 21st Century skills through the use of ICT tools for Omani schools, colleges and universities' was developed that has a great potential to help learners, parents, and pedagogical institutions to elevate the effectiveness of learning outcomes of written curriculum through understanding the use of unwritten curriculum; and promoting awareness about parenting styles and inclusion of the 4Cs ('Communication', 'Collaboration', 'Critical Thinking' and 'Creativity') of education with parenting at home, via the use of suitable and effective ICT tools.

4. Independent, Dependent and Moderating Variables of the Framework of Learning Effectiveness Focused on Concomitant Curriculum, Parenting Styles and the 4Cs of 21st Century Skills Through the Use of ICT Tools for Omani Schools, Colleges and Universities

Figure 1 shows the independent, dependent and moderating variables of the framework of learning effectiveness focused on concomitant curriculum, parenting styles and the 4Cs of 21st Century skills through the use of ICT tools for Omani schools, colleges and universities. Unwritten family curriculum that is also known as concomitant curriculum is an independent variable. Communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity (the 4Cs of education; those are soft skills of 21st Century), along with parenting styles, and use of suitable ICT tools are moderating variables, and their effectiveness on learning outcomes of written/explicit curriculum of schools, colleges and universities is a dependent variable. Schools, colleges and universities in the Sultanate of Oman have to promote awareness to the families, about parenting styles, provide ideas, literature, and samples of written family curriculum or structured family curriculum using the 4Cs, deliver ideas about the child learning theory, adult learning theory, and information about their effectiveness on explicit curriculum, disseminating through the use of ICT tools.

5. Independent, Dependent and Moderating Variables of the Framework of Learning Effectiveness Focused On Concomitant Curriculum, Parenting Styles and the 4Cs of 21st Century Skills Through the Use of ICT Tools for Omani Schools, Colleges and Universities
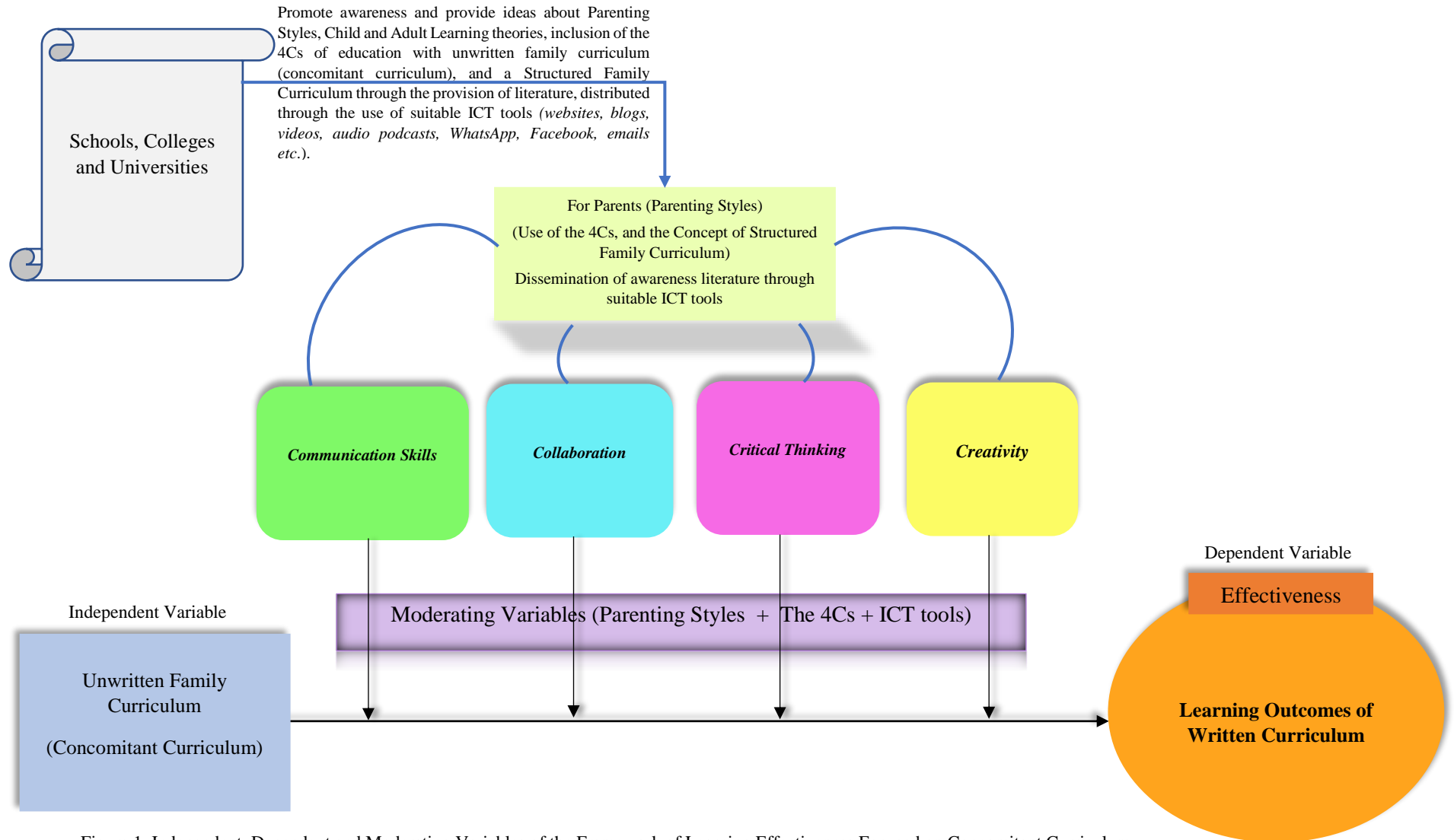

Figure 1. Independent, Dependent and Moderating Variables of the Framework of Learning Effectiveness Focused on Concomitant Curriculum, Parenting Styles and the 4Cs of 21st Century Skills Through the Use of ICT Tools for Omani Schools, Colleges and Universities

6. Findings and Discussion

There should be active efforts from Omani schools, colleges and universities to promote awareness of the importance of family-based teachings (concomitant curriculum). They have to search for most effective ICT tools, and use them according to their feasibility and suitability, like websites, blogs, videos, audio podcasts, WhatsApp, Facebook, emails, and other digital platforms to promote awareness through spreading of information, ideas, literature and samples of structured family curriculum to the families (parents and kids) connected to their educational institutions; as different ICT tools have diverse effects on the receiver of information, in terms of understanding the information. This initiative would enhance the understanding and significance of family-based learning, and provides practical resources and examples to the parents to support its application at homes. Use of ICT tools for educational outreach efforts would bridge the gap between the implicit curriculum of the families and formal education, nurturing collaboration between homes and educational institutions environments that in turn enrich students' learning experiences and overall development.

The framework emphasizes into how families teach important soft skills to kids without using books or formal classes. These lessons, such as how to behave, or what is important, come from daily life at home. They affect how kids think of their educational institutions and learning. The framework highlights on four major soft skills of 21st Century, including communication (talking, communicating, or conveying and receiving messages to and from others), collaboration (working together), thinking critically, and being creative.

A family that encourages its kids to ask questions and think hard at home impacts the performance of the kids at figuring out things at their educational institutions. Or a home where talking openly is valued, kids from there are more confident speaking up in classroom. When families support teamwork and thinking outside the box, kids learn to solve problems in a better way. If there is a harmony in the formal teaching practices and teaching of a family, the results would be effective on the learning outcomes of the written curriculum of an educational institution.

Therefore, Omani schools, colleges and universities should promote awareness to parents through informing them about the learning theories of children and adults. As, children's learning theory is focused on different stages of cognitive development of a child, and is directly connected with the pedagogy and academic performance of the child. Likewise, adult theory or andragogy emphasizes on maintaining a connection with past experiences and knowledge by the adult that is helpful towards new learning areas. This awareness should also include famous parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved or neglectful parenting), the 4Cs of education and their impacts on their kids as learners; because the 4Cs

(communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity skills) are extremely useful 21st Century skills. This awareness would support parents towards smart inclusion of the 4Cs according to the learning theories, and adjust their parenting styles. Consequently, this framework would support the Omani educational industry with an innovate approach to improve intended learning outcomes linked to learners.

Figure 2 shows a sample of educational awareness leaflet. This leaflet can be sent through a WhatsApp message as a picture, uploaded as a pdf file on a website, blog, Facebook, converted and sent as a video or as an audio podcast.

Educational Awareness Leaflet

The 4Cs of 21st Century, Parenting and Educational Performance of Students

Four Famous Parenting Styles

This is my family.

i). Authoritarian
Authoritarian style is like a dictatorship, where parents expect obedience without giving any explanations.

ii). Authoritative
Authoritative style of parenting is most productive and useful. It is linked to maintaining a balance between structure and autonomy. Such parents set clear rules and expectations for kids, but they create a nurturing environment that kids can explore and learn within reasonable limits.

iii). Permissive
Permissive style of parenting allows children a lot of freedom with very few rules.

iv). Uninvolved or Neglectful Parenting
Uninvolved parenting style is regarded as minimal interaction and lack of emotional connection between kids and parents, which leave children without rules, boundaries, structure and affection, and these children take care of themselves without depending on anyone else.

Learning Theories

The 4Cs of Education

a). Child Learning Theory

Children's learning theory is linked with pedagogy, focuses on stages of cognitive development.

b). Adult Learning Theory

Adult learning theory stresses on the self-directed nature of adult learners, as they recognize their previous knowledge and experiences to support to new learning.

- Communication
- Collaboration
- Critical Thinking
- Creativity

Details of Educational Awareness Leaflet
(5 minutes read)

1. Unwritten Concomitant (Family) Curriculum: this is linked to the hidden lessons, values, and behaviors that children pick up from their families and immediate environment. These lessons are learned through everyday interactions, traditions, and cultural practices within the family unit. Examples include styles of communication, attitudes toward education, work ethics, and values related to morals.

2. Four Cs (4Cs) of Education: the 4Cs of education are Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking and Creativity. These are essential skills acknowledged as critical for success in the 21st Century.

3. Impact of Effectiveness on Learning Outcomes: unwritten family curriculum and the 4Cs influence the effectiveness of the written curriculum used in schools, colleges and universities. The effectiveness of the written curriculum is measured by its impact on the student's learning outcomes, like the academic performance, critical thinking abilities, communication skills, and overall readiness for the upcoming future.

4. Impact of the 4Cs of Education: 4Cs shape the values and skills communicated by the family curriculum and become evident in the educational setting.

For example:

Communication: families that place a strong emphasis on open dialogue and effective communication deliver their kids with a strong foundation for self-expression, confident and effective communication skills, and clear understanding; all these things help the kids (students) well in classroom discussions and presentations.

Collaboration: families those highlight to work together and respect difference of opinions within the family units prepares their kids (students) for collaborative activities in their educational institutions, nurturing teamwork and shared problem-solving skills.

Critical Thinking: Students belonging to a family environment that encourages questioning and reasoning are more likely to develop critical thinking skills, which enhance their ability to analyze and evaluate information within the written (explicit) formal curriculum taught at their educational institutions.

Creativity: Family settings that support exploration, imagination, and innovation help their kids to realize their ability to think creatively that is an important attitude for approaching learning tasks with new perceptions and original ideas; that turns ideas into reality at later stages.

Figure 2. A Sample Educational Awareness Leaflet for Parents (can be sent through a WhatsApp message as a picture, uploaded as a pdf file on a website, blog, Facebook, converted and sent as a video or an audio podcast etc.)

In summary, parents often teach their kids about different values of life, without any formal lessons. Children pick up these teachings while doing daily routine things at their homes. These lessons have great impact on how they approach schools, colleges or universities for learning; therefore, there should be a matchup between the practices of educational institutions and concomitant curriculum.

7. Conclusions

The framework of learning effectiveness focused on concomitant curriculum, parenting styles and the 4Cs of 21st Century skills through the use of ICT tools for Omani schools, colleges and universities highlights the deep impact of the family's unwritten curriculum on the learning outcomes of students, explaining how these implicit teachings could be linked to the 4Cs of education, including communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity. By identifying the significant role of family dynamics and parenting styles in shaping students' attitudes, values, behaviours, and beliefs towards learning, educational institutions can develop their literature through the use of this framework that would integrate families with the environments of educational institutions. Moreover, the framework emphasizes to promote the awareness of learning theories for children and adults, and use of suitable Information and Communication Technology tools for the active promotion of awareness and the provision of structured family curriculum resources.

The collaborative effort between families and pedagogical institutions holds promise for improving students' academic achievement, communication skills, working effectively in team-based atmosphere, abilities to think critically, converting the ideas into reality, and overall readiness for future accomplishments. The collaboration between families and educational institutions can nurture well-rounded individuals equipped with skills and values required to succeed in the 21st Century.

This framework has provided an innovative solution to educational institutions towards the improvement of their intended learning outcomes of the curriculum. Policy makers from ministries and government educational departments in the Sultanate of Oman should work towards the development of policies and procedures centred on this framework. Educational administrators, teachers, and other educational practitioners and field experts from schools, colleges, and universities in the Sultanate of Oman should use this framework to promote awareness among families through the involvement of parents connected to their educational institutions, use of concomitant curriculum, and the 4Cs of education. They should search and use most appropriate ICT tools, those they can utilize and maintain for spreading the awareness for the improvement of

intended learning outcomes of written curriculum; as literature reveals that different ICT tools have different impacts on the receivers of information towards their understanding. Students are the major human resource of the future; therefore, this framework will broadly promote sustainability in educational endeavours at national levels, produce global citizens, and support the Sultanate of Oman in attaining its Vision 2040 targets. These targets include Global Innovation Index, and Skills and Global Competiveness Index (Observer, 2020). Schools, colleges and universities of GCC countries and other educational institutions around the world should also use this framework to receive its benefits.

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