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International Branch Campuses in Qatar:
Qatari Students' Experience of Campus Life

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PhD
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Thesis declaration

I declare that this thesis presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgement, the work presented is entirely my own.

Mohammad S. Alkuwari

2019

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“(96:3) Read, and your Lord is the All Munificent, (96:4) Who taught by the pen, (96:5) Taught human what he did not know.”

Quran (96:3-5)

I still remember my first day at school when I was a child. I remember the first time I learned how to write my name. Today, having presented my PhD, I accomplish an important milestone in my education journey. I am thankful to Allah for the privilege given to me to seek enlightenment through exploration; to know what I do not know. I am thankful to His Highness the Father Emir Shaikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani and Her Highness Shaikha Moza bint Nasser, the Chairperson of the Qatar Foundation for Education Science, and Community Development (QF) for their visionary plans in establishing QF, hosting international branch campuses (IBCs) and establishing Hamad bin Khalifa University (HBKU), thus creating an environment that stimulated my thoughts to realise this research idea.

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“For surely Allah is with the patiently persevering”

Quran (2:153)

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This work is dedicated to the people I mentioned and the ones I have not mentioned by name: to my ancestors who endured difficult times prior to modern Qatar and brought me to this life today with all its blessings; to my small-in-size but big-in-heart nation, Qatar, for its resilience against all odds under the blockade while this research was being written; to scholars around the world who seek enlightenment in higher education, student affairs, experiential learning, culture and social justice.

This work is dedicated to Qataris now and those who follow on in many later years.

“Peace be upon you, because you endured patiently. How excellent is the Final Home”

Quran (13:24)

Abstract

A priority for Qatar's National Vision for 2030 is the development of its indigenous population. To help achieve this, universities have been invited to establish international branch campuses (IBCs) in Qatar. To ensure the success of this strategy, it is important to understand how the cultural background of Qatari students interacts with a Western campus-life environment. Literature on the benefits and challenges of importing education is reviewed. The study is influenced by postcolonial theories. Where the sending nation is in the West and the hosting nation is in the East, is highlighted. In many cases, as pointed out by Said (2003), the West views the East as 'other', and therefore a postcolonial lens is required to view the existing research in context.

This study exploring the campus experiences of Qatari students uses a qualitative method involving thirteen interviews with Qatari alumni of the IBCs as well as four interviews with non-Qatari staff within the IBCs. Key themes emerging from the study included the importance of family influences in choosing a higher education pathway and the tensions faced by Qatari students as they negotiate being a 'home' student on an international campus.

Efforts are made by IBCs to accommodate the Qatari culture, as reported by Dumbre (2013) and Karam (2018). Both these authors indicate, however, that improvements can still be made, and this viewpoint is also indicated by the study reported here. This study also confirms the view in current literature (for example, Bakken (2013) and Rehal (2015)) that family has a particularly important role to play in the Qatari culture and in the thinking of Qataris.

The study demonstrates the differences among Qataris themselves, and the reader is provided with a tool in the form of an innovative multilayer spectrum which facilitates understanding. The study sheds new light on the silence of Qatari student voices in the literature and is one of the first studies to give some voice to Qatari students in IBCs. It is also the first to be undertaken by a Qatari researcher. The study's findings culminate in an original model that takes the form of a figurative 'combination lock' providing a mechanism through which institutions can assess the interaction of factors influencing participation and how they open or close opportunities for students. This model has the potential to enable current IBC staff and those who are planning to set up IBCs in Qatar to improve inclusivity for Qatari students based on their culture and religion. Finally, recommendations are made for future research.

Chapter 1: Rationale and motivation for this study

I still hear the voice echoing in my head from a personal communication in 2012 with Dr Dennis C. Roberts, Qatar Foundation Assistant Vice-President for Faculty and Student Services: “Qataris need to start writing about themselves instead of others writing about them.” Hence, the idea for this research was sparked more than twelve years ago when I started working with international branch campuses (IBCs) in Qatar. These campuses were branches of universities outside of Qatar, including some American institutions, which had been invited to begin operating in Qatar.

1.1 Background of the researcher

As the only Qatari working in the office, I was surrounded by colleagues educated to a high level, primarily in the United States. While they had some interesting and sometimes controversial ideas in the Qatari context, their attitude was that they knew best what to do in the best interests of students, including Qatari students. This provoked me to focus on the research which has formed the core of my study.

Qataris are in the unusual position of being a minority in their own country. This is slightly different in the education environment, where Qatari students make up 40% of the student body, but are actually a majority because of the mix of Qataris and students from other countries at Education City IBCs. This makes them the highest percentage of students from a single country. This created an interesting dynamic that I was interested to explore further.

It became clear to me that with the acceleration of higher education development in recent years, the ongoing importation of systems and staff (“Edu-colonialism”, Kirk & Napier, p. 140), the shortage of indigenous expertise, and the mobility of systems and staff in the Arabian Gulf including Qatar (Kirk & Napier, 2009), there was a need for a study investigating the influence of systems importation on society as regards “equity, equality, and gender issues” (Kirk & Napier, p. 140) and the development of indigenous systems and staff (Kirk & Napier, 2009).

To unlock my potential in the field, it was recommended that I undertake a Master's degree in student affairs in the United States. I spent a year at the University of Maryland, USA, learning English academic writing. Two years after that I completed my Master's degree in Higher Education Administration at the University of Kansas, USA, focusing on student development theory, managing higher education institutions and working in the area of out-of-classroom learning. I benefited enormously from these three years in the field, but it was clear that while there were some theories and research that might be applicable to Qatari students, I still had much work to do to find out how to help Qatari students with their different and unique culture and circumstances.

After coming back to Qatar, I started drafting my thoughts for this research from 2011, directly after obtaining my Master's degree. At that time, there was no research discussing Qatari students in Qatari IBCs. Shortly after this, in early 2014, I started work on my PhD at the University of Edinburgh, and began to research the area in earnest.

I recall reading Bakken (2013) for the first time and feeling that some parts of the study left me puzzled. This feeling of discomfort extended to multiple articles and authors in the literature discussing Qatar and other Arabian Gulf countries. In several cases, I was so puzzled and confused about the way things were being addressed that I had to leave an article on my desk for some time before, intrigued, I picked it up to read again. After expressing this discomfort to my supervisors, I was advised to think about exploring the whole idea of postcolonial theory. This was the missing piece of the puzzle, bringing my research idea sharply into focus.

I had long had a sense of understanding that being from the Arabian Gulf meant we were viewed differently from the Western perspective, and postcolonial theory gave me the language and tools with which to think about this in a more academic way. After exploring work in the area of postcolonial theory, such as that of Said (2003), Bhabha (2004), Spivak (1988) and Hall (1997), I started to realise that a significant feature of most of the literature written about Qatar is that it is not written by Qataris. This made me wonder how deep the understanding of Qatari students and their culture is among the people working with them in the IBCs, and what a contrast there might be with a postcolonial understanding which recognises that the dominant culture (West) is producing knowledge about the subordinate culture (East) and dictating who has the power to produce knowledge about the others (Said, 2003).

“Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.”

1.2 Aims of the research

I aim to shed light on the challenges and opportunities which IBCs present to Qatari students and investigate how Qatari students are being supported as different learners within the Qatari culture or indeed cultures. The study will focus in particular on how out-of-classroom experiences are presented to and taken up by students in the local Qatari context. The main guiding questions are:

- What was the experience of Qatari alumni when they were students in their American branch campus in terms of non-academic extracurricular activities and student life?
- What are the student affairs services of the IBCs providing to their students in terms of cultural adaptation in extracurricular activities and student life, and what is their experience of working with Qatari students?

It is hoped that the study will contribute to a deeper understanding of Qatari students' expectations of higher education generally and IBCs specifically, based on their local culture and experiences and, therefore, will facilitate insightful advice to IBCs about localisation when needed.

This study adds a unique perspective as it is the first one undertaken by a Qatari about the Qatari student experience in Qatar IBCs. As such, it is less likely to be influenced by the colonial view and hence can bring new insight to the existing literature. The postcolonial influence is a topic undergoing intense examination, which is another reason why this study is timely; if these issues are simmering underneath, they will likely surface and solutions will need to be found if branch campuses continue and grow in Qatar.

1.3 Structure of the study

In Chapter 2, Qatar is introduced as the context where this study is taking place. The country's location, surrounding environment, and population demographics are discussed, with emphasis on Qataris being minorities within their country population-wise, in education and in the workforce. The important notion of the Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV2030) is introduced, as is its main strategy for developing Qataris – the 'Qatarisation' policy. Thereafter, the chapter provides a brief history of education in Qatar and the current status of education including K-12 and higher education. The current higher education institutions in Qatar are discussed, including those within Education City. Finally, information is provided on the creation of IBCs in general, and on each IBC in particular.

Chapter 3 reviews relevant literature on IBCs and student affairs. Internationalisation and globalisation of universities are discussed as factors in the emergence of branch campuses. The motivation for establishing IBCs from the point of view of their originating nations and their hosting nations are explored, and the benefits and drawbacks for both nations are reviewed.

Since this study is focused on out-of-classroom learning and its importance (Allison et al., 2012; Kuh, 1995) in the American branch campuses, the history and development of the American student affairs model is addressed. Recent development is also discussed with emphasis on student affairs in the Arabian Gulf and emerging issues. The lack of a Qatari student voice in the literature is exposed.

In Chapter 4, the relationship between East and West is discussed in the light of postcolonial theory. The ideas of the main theorists are presented, such as Edward Said (2003), Homi K. Bhabha (2004), and Gayatri Spivak (1988). Important concepts, such as othering people, dislocation culture, hybridity, mimicry, liminality, third space, cultural mummification, internalisation, subaltern, media and image are linked with the rationale and context of the study. The work of Taylor (1997) on identity development by recognition and the dangers of misrecognition is also presented. Examples of these ideas in practice in the Qatari context are provided, and the chapter ends by expressing the questions that these concepts raise in terms of the Qatari situation.

Chapter 5 discusses the methodology and methods of this study. The options for the study are discussed and the choice of qualitative methodology is justified. The use of postcolonial theory

as a paradigmatic lens through which to view the qualitative data is presented. The process of obtaining ethical approval, details of participating institutions and participants, methods of data collection and interview strategies are presented, along with an outline of the pilot procedures used to finalise the format of the study. Data management and data analysis procedures are explained. The language used for the interviews is explained in detail and its importance is discussed, with particular emphasis on the translation philosophy and process. I discuss my position as a researcher, including the strengths and possible biases I bring to the study. This is followed by a discussion of authenticity, reliability, trustworthiness and credibility as it applies to the study, along with its transferability and dependability. Finally, ethical issues, bias and possible limitations of the study are discussed.

Chapter 6 provides an overview of the data analysis, including codes emerging from the data at the first coding stage, examples of how the data was coded and the process by which codes were grouped to yield emerging themes. This chapter provides a transition to the findings chapters where these themes and their implications are discussed.

The findings are presented in Chapters 7, 8, and 9. In these chapters, the literature and postcolonial theory are interwoven with the findings. Chapter 7 is dedicated to the findings and themes that relate to IBCs and student affairs staff. The chapter starts with the participants' backgrounds and work experience. Then it addresses what the data reveals about the dynamics of IBC relationships in their environment, including IBC to main campus, IBC to peer IBCs and other institutions, and IBC to the Qatari cultural context.

In Chapter 8, the first alumni findings are presented. The chapter discusses the differences found among Qataris themselves, and defines them in terms of the different levels of commitment Qataris demonstrate to facets of their lives. This complex phenomenon is illustrated through an innovative multilayer spectrum (Figure 8.1). The important role of the family and its influence on the student application process and choice of subjects as indicated by the interviews are presented.

Chapter 9 is the second chapter dealing with alumni findings. This chapter discusses the challenges faced by Qatari students in IBCs. Two concepts which are raised by the data and profoundly impact on Qatari students' decision-making are discussed: firstly, that of *alsiter* and mixed-gender interaction, and secondly, the systemic lack of the voices of Qatari students. The final part of this chapter brings together the overall findings of the study into a model. This model is an original work and takes the form of a combination lock, showing how different

factors interact to open or close opportunities for students (Figure 9.1). This innovative model will assist future IBCs in developing a better understanding of how to improve inclusivity for Qatari students in their different out-of-classroom activities. This leads to consideration of the broad implications of the research study and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 10 is the conclusion chapter, where an overview of this study is provided, the main findings are highlighted and the contribution of the study is discussed. The implications of the research for IBCs are presented, along with practical recommendations and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: Research context

This chapter provides background information about the site of the study, Qatar. The facts and figures presented in this chapter are important because it is the unusual demographics of Qatar that give rise to the questions and issues which are the focus of this study.

In this chapter, a brief history of Qatar is presented, and the governance and shaping of democracy in Qatar is discussed. The history and industry of the State are presented, along with the implications for the workforce and the overall composition of the population. The important principles of the Qatar National Vision 2030 are outlined, along with the concept of Qatarisation and the country's notion of self-preservation in relation to its demographic breakdown and culture. Thereafter, the system of education is explained, including the current status of K-12 education and higher education, and Education City is introduced.

2.1 Introducing Qatar

Qatar is a small but significant State with a rich history. It has played an important role in trade and naval commerce for many centuries. It has come under the rule of a number of different powers, including the Abbaside in the 14th century AD, the Turks in the 16th century AD and the British from 1916. It gained independence from the British in 1971. Despite this diverse history, the recognised leaders of the country since 1878 have been from an internal tribe, the Al-Thanis. Qatar is a monarchy, with the leader bearing the title of Emir.

Qatar is a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) founded in 1981. The other member countries of the GCC are Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Those countries are in proximity to each other with many common sociocultural similarities and cross-border families.

The State of Qatar is a Muslim country with Islam as its official religion and Islamic Law (Sharia) the major source of legislation in the country (*Qatar Today*, 2019). While Qatar is a monarchy, steps towards democracy are being taken. Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa, the previous Emir (from 1995-2013), was progressive in his thinking about democracy from the start of his reign. In 1999, the first step marking the beginning of Qatar's journey to

democracy was the introduction of free elections in which both men and women ran as candidates and voted to form a Central Municipal Council (CMC) (Qatar Embassy in the UK, 2019b, political system page). A permanent constitution was introduced in 2003. This constitution guarantees citizens the right to assemble and establish civic and professional associations, freedom of religion and expression, and a free press (Brewer et al., 2006). The Qatar Ministry of Planning Development and Statistics (2019a) describes the basic ruling system of the country as democratic.

The Qatari understanding of democracy and its relationship with the culture and religion is an important element to grasp, and is explained in the quotation below.

“On June 8, 2004, based on Article 141 of the Permanent Constitution of the State of Qatar, and in the framework of **achieving the goals of democratic governance in Qatar**, a permanent constitution was to be taken on that would lay down the fundamental pillars of society. The constitution would also embody popular participation in decision-making, and **guarantee the rights and freedoms of citizens. This was to be achieved while still being aware of the importance of cherished Arab and Islamic culture and religion.**”

(Qatar Government Communications Office, 2019a, emphasis added for the purposes of this study.)

Arabic is the main language in Qatar but English is widely spoken (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018). The main economic resources of Qatar are oil and gas. Oil was discovered in Qatar in 1939, but its exploitation was delayed by World War II. The first shipment of crude oil left its shores in 1949 and is the basis of its thriving economy to the present day. Qatar’s largest exports are petroleum, gaseous hydrocarbons and related products.

After independence in 1971, Qatar witnessed an enormous boost in all aspects of life. The unemployment rate is currently 0.5% (Central Intelligence Agency, 2018). After using a variety of currencies, largely resulting from its position in the Arabian Gulf region, Qatar introduced its own currency, the Qatari Riyal, in 1973, and also began to strengthen its education system. Expenditure on education in Qatar was 3.6% of GDP in 2014. The system of education is discussed in more detail in later sections of this chapter.

On April 7 1994, Qatar joined GATT and is part of the World Trade Organization (WTO), based in Switzerland. This new global economy both includes and excludes – it includes everything thought to be of value and discards everything thought not valuable or which is becoming devalued (Castells, 1999). The most important aspect of networking is being in the

network and not being excluded (Castells, 1999). By becoming a member of the WTO, the government can have a voice and share in its decision-making. The organisation promotes the idea that participation in the network will make better trade possible and enable the country's economic growth (World Trade Organization, 2014), which may be an appropriate step for Qatar in seeking to achieve its National Vision 2030 of developing its economy and competing globally.

2.1.1 Demographics

The map on the left shows Qatar's location within the Middle East. The map on the right shows some of the main cities, including Doha, the capital city.



Figure 2.1. Qatar's location within the Middle East.

Figure 2.2. Main cities of Qatar.

As shown on the map, Qatar, one of the Arabian Gulf countries, is located on a peninsula and borders the larger Arabian Peninsula to its south. Qatar occupies 11,427 square kilometres and has a population of two and a half million (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018). In terms of area, Qatar is roughly five per cent of the UK and has a population of around four per cent that of the UK.

The total population in Qatar has increased significantly in the last 30 years. In 1986, the total population was 360,000, including both Qatari citizens and other groupings. In January 2009, the total population was 1.5 million and in January 2019 it was 2.7 million. This population growth is largely due to non-Qataris working in Qatar and their families. It is also the result of a continuing influx of male labour from other countries (Qatar Ministry of Planning Development and Statistics, 2019b), creating population demographics which are different from those of most countries.

Of the total of 2.7 million people in Qatar, Donn and Al Manthri (2013) put the number of Qataris at between 250,000 and 350,000, while Bqdoha (2014) states it as 278,000. The rest of the population are temporary workers and their families from other countries. In Qatar, this large group is known by the general term ‘expats’, and they can represent different nationalities, ethnic backgrounds, religions, and socio-economic statuses. This is the term that will be used to describe them in this study. This makes Qataris a minority in their country, forming an estimated 10 to 13 per cent of the total population. This has implications for the job market, and also for policy, because key roles in Qatar’s decision-making processes, including those concerning education, may be filled by non-Qataris.

The figure below provides a breakdown of the top ten highest nationalities in Qatar.

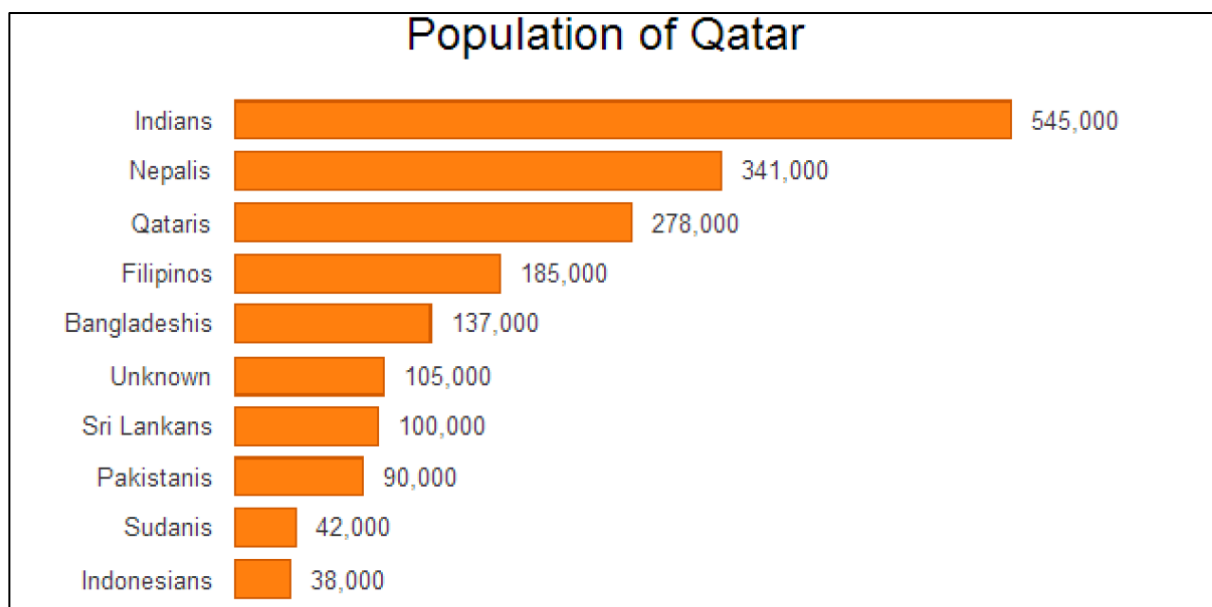
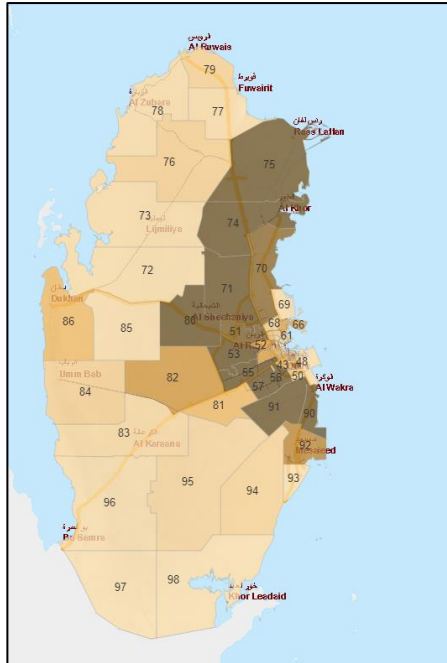


Figure 2.3. Top ten population groups in Qatar by nationality (Bqdoha, 2014).

There are many other nationalities, including 20,000 UK nationals (Bqdoha, 2014).

The preponderance of working male people in Qatar also results in the population being centred in urban developments.



The darker areas have a balanced male to female ratio, indicating that they are populated mostly by locals and expats with families, while the brighter colour areas have few to zero females, and are dominated by male workers (Qatar Ministry of Planning Development and Statistics, 2019b).

Figure 2.4. Male to female ratio in Qatar.

However, since most of the men are expats working in Qatar, the general male:female ratio is not reflected in the unusual male to female ratio in the student body, as will be seen later in this chapter.

Qatar is a Muslim country. Of the total population, 10-13% are Qatari Muslims, and 54.7%-57.7% are non-Qatari Muslims. Of the remainder, 13.8% are Christians, 13.8% are Hindu and the remainder are Buddhist, folk religion practitioners, Jewish, unaffiliated, or others (Central Intelligence Agency, 2018).

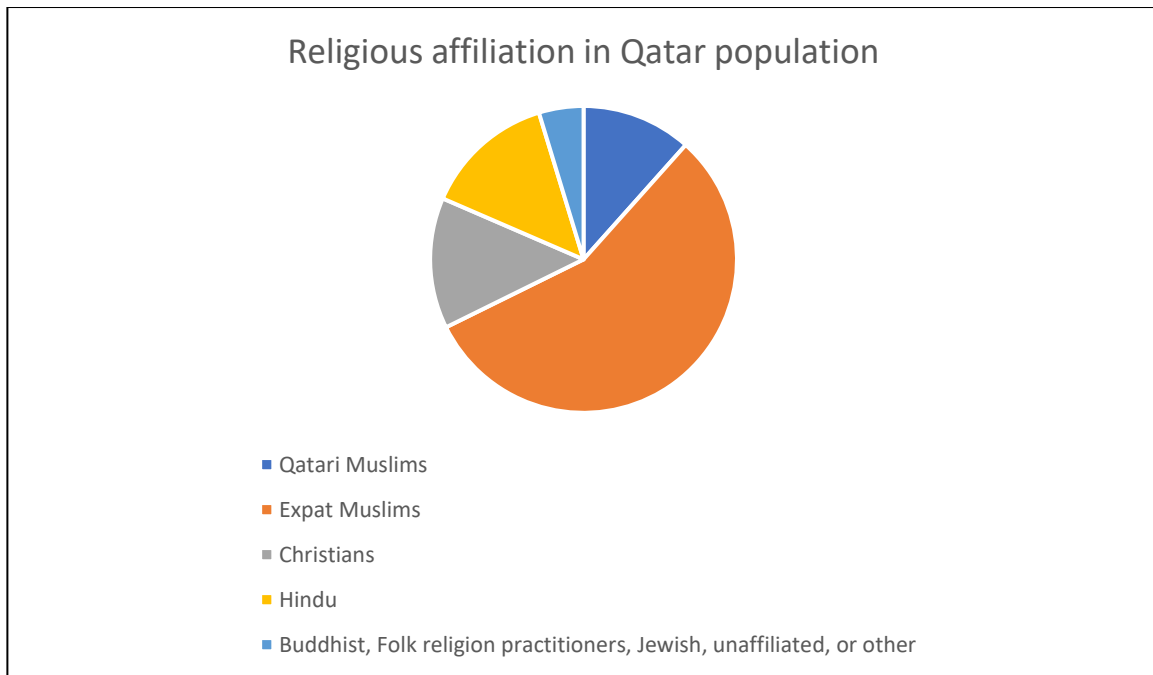


Figure 2.5. Religious affiliation in the Qatar population (adapted from Central Intelligence Agency, 2018).

From the figure above, it can be seen that the major religion practised in Qatar is Islam. However, Muslims are diverse, and it is important to understand that this major grouping is divided into several smaller groups. Within Qataris themselves, the Sunni sect is the major group and the government of the State is Sunni, but Shia Qataris commonly co-exist within the Qatari Sunni community. In addition, of the part of the population who are not indigenous Qataris but practise Islam, there are multiple Islamic sects, backgrounds, cultures, countries, and languages.

Life expectancy is 78.9 years (Central Intelligence Agency, 2018).

2.1.2 The labour force in the State of Qatar

The proportions of groups within the labour force specifically are summarised below.

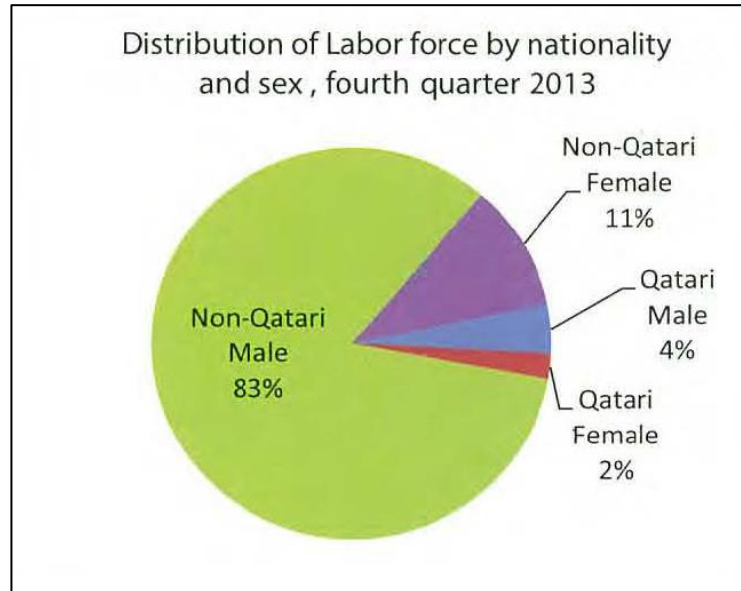


Figure 2.6. Distribution of labour force by nationality and sex (Ezdan holding group, n.d., p. 5).

The expat workforce in Qatar covers 94 per cent of the job market.

Of the six per cent of the working population who are Qatari, the majority are employed in the government sector, as shown in Table 2.1 below.

Work in the government	86.5%
Joint sector	8.85%
Private sector	4.65%

Table 2.1. Qatari workforce distribution (adapted from Brewer et al., 2006).

Another effect of the large number of expat workers is that, of the total population of the country, 70.59% are between the ages of 25 and 54. The age breakdown for both Qataris and non-Qataris living in Qatar in 2017 is shown in the table below.

14 years old or younger	366,251	13.8%
15 to 24 years old	392,353	14.8%
25 to 64 years old	1,846,115	69.9%

65 years or older	34,492	1.3%
Total population	2,639,211	100%

Table 2.2. Qatar population breakdown by age (adapted from UNESCO, 2019).

It is noticeable from these tables that most of the population in Qatar are in the working age group and very few are in the older age group.

While the large numbers of males are present in the country to work, this does not mean all expats are in the working class. Many are integrated in senior decision-making roles that decide matters for the country. In education, for example, expats are seen in teaching, administrative, and senior leadership roles. Having expats as a majority in the workforce could lead to some tensions between them and Qataris when it comes to deciding what is best for the country.

One source of evidence supporting this is the summary of the 2012 *Qataris' Attitudes Survey* conducted by the Social and Economic Survey Research Institute (SESRI) at Qatar University about Qatari attitudes towards foreign workers in Qatar (Finding Summary, 2014). In response to a question asking whether the Qatari way of life needs to be protected against foreign influence, the answers were:

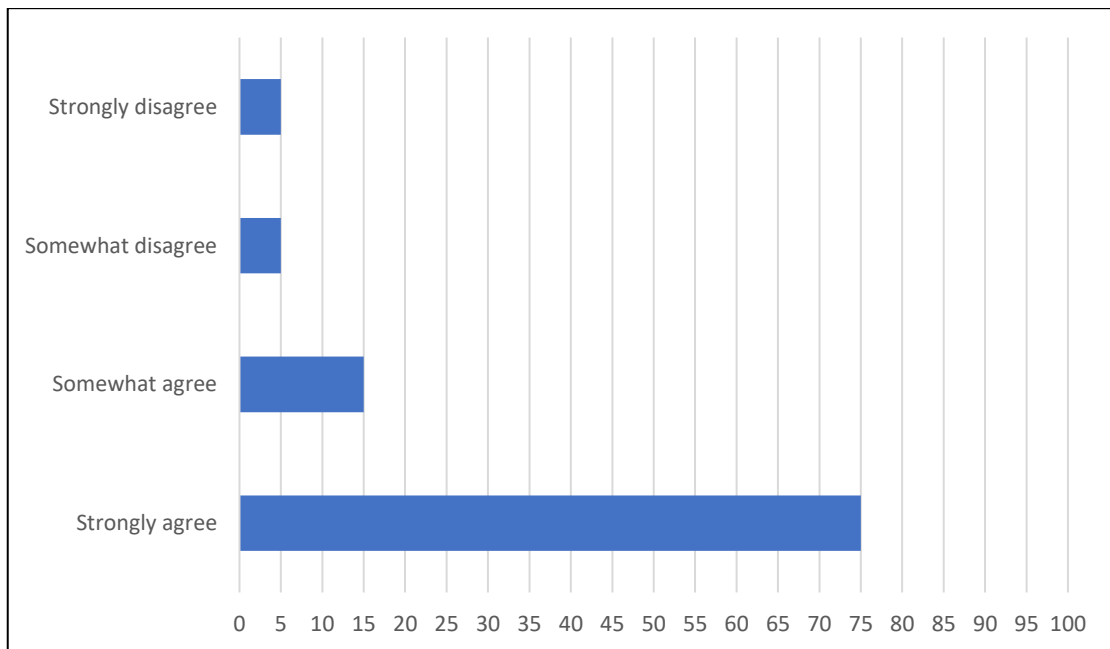


Figure 2.7. Views on the need to protect the Qatari way of life against foreign influence, adapted from (Social and Economic Survey Research Institute Qatar University, 2014, p. 15).

2.1.3 'Qatarisation' as policy

Given the demographics discussed above, it is not unexpected that the government of the country is thinking about how to protect its best interests for the future by, for example, building the capacity of its nationals through education.

“Building the capacity of each citizen would enable Qatari nationals to take charge of the country’s rapid growth and replace the foreigners who fill many managerial and professional jobs because of the dearth of qualified Qataris.”

(Zellman, 2009, p. 17)

Qatar created ‘Qatarisation’, which sets as a target percentage quotas for key roles in the government and private sectors to be led by Qataris. One of the central instruments of this policy is the Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV2030). QNV2030 has four pillars: Human Development, Social Development, Economic Development, and Environmental Development. The production of the vision document in 2008 enabled organisations throughout the country to set the direction of its mission. This document discusses the nation’s needs and concerns such as “Modernization and preserving of traditions” (General Secretariat for Development Planning, 2008, p. 3). It is one of the QNV2030 goals to prepare Qataris through education to serve the needs of the country by effective participation in the labour force (General Secretariat for Development Planning, 2008).

The Qatar Foundation describes the Qatarisation goal with regard to job placement as Qataris making up 50% of “meaningful employment” (Qatar Foundation, 2019). As more qualified Qataris have entered the job market, some bodies, such as the Supreme Education Council, now Ministry of Education, have increased the proportions of Qatari employees required to ensure that the goals are being met (Zellman, 2009).

The introduction of QNV2030 indicates a concern about preserving national identity and culture while still remaining a country open to the world.

“Preservation of cultural traditions is a major challenge that confronts many societies in a rapidly globalizing and increasingly interconnected world.”

(General Secretariat for Development Planning, 2008, p. 4. Emphasis in original document.)

Moreover, in January 2019, a new law, Law number 7, 2019: Arabic Language Protection, was passed in Qatar. The law consists of fifteen sections. Each section describes the guidelines and responsibilities of governmental and non-governmental bodies operating in Qatar and the ways in which they can protect the Arabic language, such as using it as the main communication language, teaching in the language, holding events in the language, producing Arabic printed materials and so forth. Passing such a law reinforces the idea that the Arabic language does need protection.

2.2 History of education in Qatar

Al-Misnad (1985) in her book *The Development of Modern Education in the Gulf* discusses the progress of education in Qatar. Education had existed informally for a long time, mainly through study of the Quran, the traditions of the prophet, and the Arabic language, along with the teaching of basic arithmetic with Arabic reading and writing in larger towns. Classes took place in the teachers' houses or nearby mosques. A semi-modern advanced Islamic school was founded in 1918 by an eminent scholar and continued to operate until 1938.

The first official school was established in 1948 for boys. Here, Islamic studies, English, Islamic history, Arabic, geography and arithmetic were taught. The government lent its support to the boys' school in 1951, and in 1956 a girls' school was started. In the mid-1950s, the 'Wazarat Al Maarif', the Ministry of Education, was established. By the late 1970s, nearly all males and females of school-going age were attending classes (Brewer et al., 2006).

In addition to the schools mentioned above, there was growth in schooling for the children of expats working in Qatar. In the 1950s, an international school programme called the Dukhan English School was established. Part of Qatar Petroleum, its British curriculum was taught in English by expat teachers (Qatar Petroleum, 2019c). Dukhan is a major petroleum location located 84 kilometres west of Doha, and the Dukhan school was geared towards the children of the expats who started working and living in Dukhan when oil production started.

A more recent development in delivering K-12 education was the creation of the Supreme Education Council (SEC) in 2002 to take the lead in overseeing education in Qatar. The SEC's role was to reform K-12 education and introduce a new, independent school system (Brewer et al., 2006). However, the reform was criticised because it appeared to be geared towards an

American schooling system and questions have arisen as to whether this is outdated or is appropriate for the context of Qatar (Donn & Al Manthri, 2013). In 2016, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, previously the SEC, took over the function of overseeing education in Qatar (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2019).

2.3 Current education policy and provision

As noted above in the section on ‘Qatarisation’, as encapsulated in QNV2030, the country is now focused on developing its indigenous population, providing them with an education appropriate for participation and indeed leadership in a global society.

Public schools teach the national curriculum and are single-gendered. Private schools can be single or mixed-gendered schools and teach a variety of curricula (representing over 25 different countries and languages). Qatari and non-Qatari pupils study in both public and private schools. In 2000/1, Qataris made up 63 per cent of pupils in public schools (Brewer et al., 2006).

Pre-university education in Qatar takes place in three main stages: six years of primary school, three years of preparatory school, and three years of secondary school (Brewer et al., 2006).

The tables below are from the annual statistics of schools in Qatar 2016-2017.

Students statistics in K-12 Education in Qatar 2016-2017		
Type of school	Public schools	Private schools
Number of schools	193	261
Number of total students	113,532	181,853
Average students per school	588	697
Average students per class	25	23
Student enrolment in single or mixed gender environment	100% single gender	92% mixed gender 8% single gender
Gender distribution	Female 52%	Female 47%

	Male 48%	Male 53%
Percentage of students by nationality	57% Qatari female 43% non-Qatari female 55% Qatari male 45% non-Qatari male	16% Qatari female 84% non-Qatari female 19% Qatari male 81% non-Qatari male

Table 2.3. Students statistics in K-12 Education in Qatar (Ministry of Education Annual Stats, 2019).

Staffing statistics in K-12 Education in Qatar 2016-2017		
	Public schools	Private schools
Number of schools	193	261
Number of administrators	8023	4750
Number of teachers	14,888	10,709
Average students per teacher	7.6	17.0
Teachers distribution by gender	25% Qatari female 1.5% Qatari male	0.01% Qatari female (12 teachers) 0.002% Qatari male (3 teachers)
	48.8% non-Qatari female 24.6% non-Qatari male	71.3% non-Qatari female 28.4% non-Qatari male
Teachers distribution by nationality	26.5% Qataris 73.5% Non-Qataris	0.2% Qataris 99.8% non-Qataris

Table 2.4. Staffing statistics in K-12 Education in Qatar (Ministry of Education Annual Stats, 2019).

Ministry of Education staff 2016-2017	
Total staff	1,386
Staff distribution by nationality	64% Qataris 36% non-Qataris
Staff distribution by gender	54% female 46% male

Table 2.5. Ministry of Education staff (Ministry of Education Annual Stats, 2019).

Public schools are free for Qataris and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) citizens. Non-Qataris and non-GCC students pay a minimal fee total of 230 GBP for the entire year, which includes transportation and books (Bader, 2017).

If Qataris working in the government choose to enrol their children in private schools, they receive a government voucher that covers up to 5,600 GBP of the private school's cost. As all private school fees vary, this may or may not cover the entire fee. If not, the fee needs to be made up from their own resources (Almeezan, 2012).

For Qataris and non-Qataris working in the private sector, independent education is often one of the job benefits, and they can enrol their children in the school that they prefer.

2.4 Higher education in Qatar

Qatar established its first national university in 1973 (Attiyah & Khalifa, 2009). Its first cohort was made up of 57 male students and 93 females (Qatar University, 2019). Over the years, Qatar has invited universities from other countries to establish branch campuses for students in Qatar. The Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, established in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, Emir of Qatar at that time, and the father of the current Emir, founded Education City. Its main goal was the development of Qatari citizens, and this remains the highest priority for the organisation (Donn

& Al Manthri, 2013; Qatar Foundation Website, 2015). The plan was to form a network of partnerships with other institutions from the USA and other nations, who would establish branches at Education City (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Most recently, QNV2030 sets out the guiding principles that govern education policy.

Given the above history, it was decided, for the purposes of the research reported in this study, to group higher education institutions into three categories:

- Home-grown institutions
- Institutions with ties to institutions outside Qatar
- Education City institutions, both home-grown and international.

2.4.1 Home-grown institutions

The table below introduces home-grown institutions based on year of launch, older to younger.

Home Institutions			
Name of the institution	Year opened	Scope of work	Information about student size
Qatar University	1973 as College of Education 1977 as Qatar University	Undergraduate and postgraduate. Multidisciplinary programs. Including but not limited to Education, Engineering, Law, Business, Medicine, Art and Sport.	More than 20,000 students enrolled The largest university in Qatar Qatari and International
Qatar Aeronautical College	1977 as the Civil Aviation College of the Gulf States	Undergraduate and postgraduate. Pilots.	9,489 students enrolled

	1996 as Qatar Aeronautical College	Aircraft maintenance engineers. Airport management. Air traffic controllers, and flight dispatchers. Meteorologists.	8624 Qataris 865 International
Ahmad bin Mohammad College	1996	Undergraduate. Military College. Military science, administration. Law, accounting, international relations and information technology.	Total enrolment not found 125 graduates in 2019
Community College of Qatar ¹	2010	Undergraduate. Management, Health, Arts, Education, public administration, engineering and information technology.	5,000 enrolled students Qatari and Qatari mother
Diplomatic institute	2012	Diploma. Postgraduate.	Total enrolment not found
Police College ²	2013	Undergraduate. Law and police science.	Total enrolment not found First graduation class in 2019

¹ It is worth noting that the Community College of Qatar was established in collaboration with an American community college for its first five years, after which this collaboration was ended as planned.

² There is some connection between the College and Georgetown University, but as the University does not lay claim to this through the College name, it has been classified as home-grown for the purposes of this study.

			108 graduates 85 Qataris 23 International
Ras Laffan Emergency and Safety College ³	2013	Emergency and Safety programmes. A collaboration between Qatar Petroleum, the Qatari Ministry of Interior, and Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX), a member of the Texas A&M University System.	Enrolment not found Capacity 300 students
Mohammad bin Abdulla Alatiya College	2014	Undergraduate. Airforce College.	Total enrolment not found 58 graduates in 2018
Doha Institute for Graduate Studies	2014	Graduate. Social science, public administration, economic development, psychology, social work, critical security and humanitarian studies.	Total enrolment not found Capacity 350 to 400 students
Joan bin Jassim College	2014	Undergraduate. Military College.	Not found
Mohammad bin Ghanim Alghanim College	2019	Undergraduate. Navy College.	Not found

Table 2.6. Home-grown institutions.

In the above table, information on the size of student body is sometimes not included, as not all universities share information about their student body. Nonetheless, the most important

³ Although the College has close ties with an American institution, because this is not made specific in its name, it is classified as home-grown for the purposes of this study.

point to note is that Qatar University is the largest university in terms of the variety of programmes provided, unlike other institutions which focus on specific types of programmes. Qatar University currently has more than 20,000 registered students and over 2,000 faculty (Qatar University, 2019). While numbers are not always readily available for the other institutions (in particular, the military colleges), it is likely that their students number in the hundreds, as estimated from the numbers of graduates in the cohort.

2.4.2 Universities with ties to institutions outside of Qatar

In addition to the institutions above and those at Education City, there are five universities which are clearly stated to have ties to other institutions outside of Qatar. These are presented in the table below:

Name of University	Year opened in Qatar	Scope of work	Country links	Students
Stenden Qatar University	2000	Undergraduate and graduate. Hospitality programmes.	The Netherlands	In 2015 a total of more than 600 students graduated in 15 years span from opening.
College of North Atlantic Qatar	2002	Undergraduate: Business, Engineering Technology and Industrial trades, Health Sciences, Information technology.	Canada	More than 2,000 students Qatari and international

University of Calgary Qatar	2007	Undergraduate and postgraduate. Nursing programme.	Canada	More than 450 students Qatari and international
University of Aberdeen Qatar	2017	Accounting & Finance and Business Management.	United Kingdom	Capacity in 2017-2018 is 120 students
Northumbria University Newcastle Qatar	2018	Undergraduate. Accounting, Finance, and International Banking.	United Kingdom	Not found

Table 2.7. Higher education institutions with clear ties to institutions outside Qatar.

2.4.3 Education City

The Qatar Foundation for Education Science and Community Development was established in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, Emir of Qatar at that period, and the father of the current Emir. He aimed to convert the country's current, but temporary, mineral wealth into long-lasting human capital and a knowledge-based economy. The development of Qatari citizens was the main goal and highest priority for the organisation, which would go on to expand regionally and internationally (Donn & Al Manthri, 2013; Qatar Foundation Website, 2015). To reflect the Qatar National Vision 2030, the Foundation proposed the establishment of Education City, the components of which were a network of centres and partnerships. Accordingly, American universities were invited to open in Qatar as part of Education City (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Education City is located within the Doha area.

Education City's IBCs form a unique group of IBCs for a number of reasons: their location in the Arabian Gulf with its distinctive cultural differences setting it apart from the remainder of

the Middle East; the financial resources available; the nation's willingness to invest in this model of education; and the high concentration of IBCs that work in agreement with the Qatar Foundation for support. Added to these reasons is the fact that the majority of IBCs represent the United States of America. Finally, the majority of single citizenship students who attend Education City's IBCs are Qataris (40%), despite the fact that Qataris represent a minority within their own country (13%).

Education City is often described in the literature as being on the outskirts of Doha, but it is located within the surroundings of Doha, its centrality helping most Qatari students and non-Qataris living with their families in Doha to commute from their homes.

This study will focus only on the undergraduate American branch campuses in Education City. These undergraduate programmes aim to bring over and teach the same curriculum as the main campuses in their original countries. The Qatar Foundation partnered with the main campuses in the United States of America to open an IBC of each of them in Education City.

At present, there are nine institutions based at Education City: eight branch campuses and Qatar's home-grown university. Of the eight branch campuses, six are of American origin, one is from the United Kingdom, and one is from France. In addition, there is an academic bridging programme (ABP) which is a transition programme and not a degree. The ABP is an optional alternative to prepare high school graduates to meet university entry requirements such as standardised tests.

Each IBC oversees the implementation of its own curriculum, hiring its own faculty and staff, so that the students in these branch campuses will receive an education similar to that which they would receive in the main campuses. Each IBC has autonomy within limits, guided by the main campus in the USA and operating within US legal boundaries. The IBC has no president but is chaired by a Dean, as the president of the main campus in the USA is the president of the IBC in Qatar. The role of the Qatar Foundation is to support the branch campuses in successfully accomplishing that goal. English is the language of instruction for the programmes. The Qatar Foundation provides a free shuttle service between the campuses and other buildings within Education City.

Name of University	Year opened in Qatar	Scope of work	Country links	Students	Faculty
Virginia Commonwealth University Qatar	1998	Undergraduate and graduate.	USA	379 students Qatari and international	Total of 162 employees, representing 31 nationalities. Of these, 62 are faculty, representing 18 nationalities.
Weill Cornell Medical College Qatar	2001	Medical school. 2 Years foundation programme followed by 6 Years medical programme.	USA	Total 318 2019 enrolment first year medical programme 58 students 50% male & 50% female. 2019 enrolment pre-medical 55 students 44% male 56% female.	137 employees, of which 77 are faculty.

Texas A&M Qatar	2003	Undergraduate and graduate. Chemical engineering. Electrical and computer engineering. Mechanical Engineering. Petroleum Engineering. Liberal Arts.	USA	In 2016-2017 total 550 students. In 2016 freshman enrolment 110 students 55% Qatari 45% International. 43% female 57% male.	81 faculty.
Carnegie Mellon University Qatar	2004	Undergraduate. Biological Sciences. Business administration. Computer science. Information systems.	USA	In 2017 Total 388 students. 44% Qatari 56% non-Qatari. 62% female 38% male.	No employee figures located, but student: professor ratio stated to be 7:1.
Georgetown University Qatar	2005	Undergraduate.	USA	Total 249 students in 2017-2018.	49 full-time faculty.

		International History. International Economics. International Politics. Culture and Politics.		44.5% Qataris 55.5% non-Qataris. 73% female 27% male.	
Northwestern University Qatar	2008	Undergraduate. Science in communication. Science in journalism.	USA	2019 total of nearly 300. 70% female 30% male. More than 50% Qatari Less than 50% non-Qataris.	132 staff, of whom 42 are faculty.
HEC Paris Qatar	2010	Graduate. Executive MBA (EMBA).	France	586 graduates since opening.	

		Specialised Master in Strategic Business Unit Management (SBUM).		2018 graduation class included 105 graduates (28 EMBA more than 50% Qataris – 77 SBUM 66% female). Qatari and international.	
Hamad Bin Khalifa University	2010	Undergraduate and postgraduate. Focus on research. Several programmes through five colleges. Islamic studies, Humanities & social sciences, Science & engineering, Law & public policy, and	Qatar	2018 enrolment: 330 students. More than 450 total students enrolled in 2016, 90% postgraduate, 70% Qataris.	

		Health & life sciences.			
University College London	2013	Graduate. Library studies. Museum and Gallery practice.	United Kingdom	Not Found	

Table 2.8. Degree-offering institutions in Education City.

Each IBC oversees the implementation of its own curriculum and the hire of its own faculty and staff. Some institutions state specifically that the intention is for students in these branch campuses to receive the same education as that which they would receive in the main campuses. The figure below is an example.

▼ Do Carnegie Mellon students in Qatar receive the same education and degree as the students on the Pittsburgh campus?

Yes. The curriculum and the degree programs are identical to those offered at the Pittsburgh campus. All faculty members are appointed through their respective colleges on the Pittsburgh campus. Some faculty members are based in Qatar, and others are based in Pittsburgh and teach in Qatar for either long- or short-term residencies. All graduates of Carnegie Mellon Qatar receive their degrees from Carnegie Mellon University. Students are awarded the same diploma in Qatar as on the main campus.

Figure 2.8. Carnegie Mellon University Qatar frequently asked questions (2019).

As can be seen from this figure, future students are assured that the education received in the IBC is the same as in the main campus. On the other hand, at least some universities mention Qatar, developing Qataris and supporting QNV2030. (It should be noted that QNV2030 specifically includes protecting Qatari identities.) Nonetheless, these branch campuses want to be seen to offer the same USA degree. Each IBC has autonomy within limits, guided by the main campus in the USA and operating within US legal boundaries and Qatari law. These dual obligations create a dilemma that forms the basis of the research in this study.

In recognition of this dilemma, as an adjunct to the dates and figures provided in Table 2.8, mention is made below of the stated vision and goals of each of the institutions (where this could be ascertained).

2.4.3.1 Virginia Commonwealth University – Qatar

VCU-Q’s mission and vision is one of human and social development, pursued holistically, in Qatar and the region (Virginia Commonwealth University, 2015).

2.4.3.2 Weill Cornell Medical College – Qatar

WCMC-Q offers a six-year medical programme, including two years pre-medical, leading to an MD degree which it states is based on the same standards as those of Weill Cornell in the United States.

Its mission and vision, as stated on its website, is shared with the main campus in the United States, and focuses on delivering quality education, research and care to the community (Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar, 2015).

2.4.3.3 Texas A&M – Qatar

TAMU-Q is proud of female representation on the engineering programme in Qatar, as women enrolled in engineering in the USA represent only 19.9 per cent of engineering students, and at the TAMU main campus in the States, it is 21.9. This is less than half the percentage of the female engineering students at TAMU-Q.

The university’s mission through its statement is to provide a good education, produce research, and “advance the development goals of the State of Qatar and the region through expertise and engagement that expand human capital” (TAMU-Q, 2015).

2.4.3.4 Carnegie Mellon University – Qatar

CMU-Q is committed to the development of its international students, stating: “Carnegie Mellon is firmly committed to Qatar’s National Vision 2030 by developing people, society, the economy and the environment” (Carnegie Mellon University Qatar, 2015).

2.4.3.5 Georgetown University – Qatar

GU-Q states in its mission and vision that it seeks to be one of the best universities for international affairs in the Middle East. It also seeks to promote more than just the intellect, being interested in ethical and spiritual understanding as well (Georgetown University Qatar, 2015).

2.4.3.6 Northwestern University – Qatar

Northwestern University (NU-Q) aims to strengthen its connection to Qatar through its mission (Northwestern University Qatar, 2015).

2.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has covered a brief history of Qatar, a demographic breakdown of the population as relevant to this study, as well as the history and the current status of K-12 and higher education systems, including an introduction to Education City.

It is important to note that because of the low numbers of Qataris in the job market, decisions can be made for Qataris by non-Qataris. For this reason, Qatar has initiated a Qatarisation policy, targeting key roles in the government and the private sectors, and has also introduced QNV2030 and laws (such as the Arabic Language Law) which aim to preserve the Qatari culture.

The American branch campuses in Qatar provide the same programmes as in the USA. With a student body made up of 40 per cent Qataris and operating with the notion of Qatari self-preservation, there is a need to investigate how the American model of education is implemented and how well it works.

For this study, it is important to move beyond the demographics of the branch campuses in Education City and explore more fully some of the issues thrown up by the export of education

models, various models of student affairs and support, and the operation of remote branches of educational institutions. The existing literature on these topics will be explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Literature survey – branch campuses and student affairs

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, literature addressing the key themes of this study are explored, namely that concerned with the purpose of branch campuses and the American concept of student affairs. At the end of the chapter, I discuss some of the issues raised by the literature framed within a legacy of global colonialism, and introduce the idea of a postcolonial lens, which forms the basis of my theoretical framework and epistemology for this study, this being discussed more fully in Chapter 4.

In the case of the first theme, branch campuses, the literature review was guided by the following main broad issues: what are branch campuses; how do sending and hosting nations benefit from branch campuses and what do they cost; and what are the management issues as well as the student opportunities and challenges that branch offices present. In this chapter, I also share my insights about the existing literature and discuss how the research reported in this study can add to our understanding.

The American model of student affairs is focused upon for discussion because it is the primary model of practice of the institutions in this research. This section begins with the history of student affairs in the United States, as that was the context it originated from, and ends with what we know from the literature about its practice in the relevant environment: the Arabian Gulf countries and Qatar.

3.2 Literature review process

The search for appropriate documents for this chapter went through two phases. The first phase was implemented using a manual and electronic search protocol. Boolean and phrase search techniques were employed using relevant words and authors.

The second phase entailed snowballing with reference chasing from relevant documents. I also used personal knowledge about known authors in the field from years of experience working

in higher education, authors I had met in person during my career, and knowledge of research being conducted in Education City by colleagues.

The above search methods made use of the University of Edinburgh physical library, the University of Edinburgh electronic library search engines, and free search engines such as Google Scholar. In addition, a few hard-copy books were purchased.

The search language used for this literature review was mainly English. Even though the branch campuses are located in an Arabic language nation, Qatar, the main teaching and working language in the branch campuses is English. Moreover, the majority of American student affairs research is written in an English-medium nation, the United States of America. Lastly, the language used in the University of Edinburgh where this study is written, supervised, and examined is English. However, being an indigenous Qatari myself with Arabic language skill, I was able to use Arabic for searches which identified literature that filled some gaps. For example, in the context chapter, a few websites about Qatar contained specific information only in the Arabic website version but not in the English version, or a document was published in Arabic only. In this chapter, for example, I use a piece from a local newspaper that was written in Arabic. The local English newspaper contains some similarities but is in effect a different newspaper, dealing with different topics. Even where it deals with the same ones, they are not identical translations from the Arabic. I first looked for globalisation, then for terms more specific to my study such as growth, types, motivations, benefits and drawbacks of international branch campuses, and then student affairs.

3.3 Results of the literature search

Even though the number of publications about branch campuses is rising, they remain limited and particularly in relation to branch campuses in the Gulf area. Escrivá-Beltrán et al. (2019) conducted a systematic literature review and found out that the number of publications does resemble the increase in the opening of branch campuses (Escrivá-Beltrán et al., 2019). The figure below demonstrates the increase in publications over recent years.

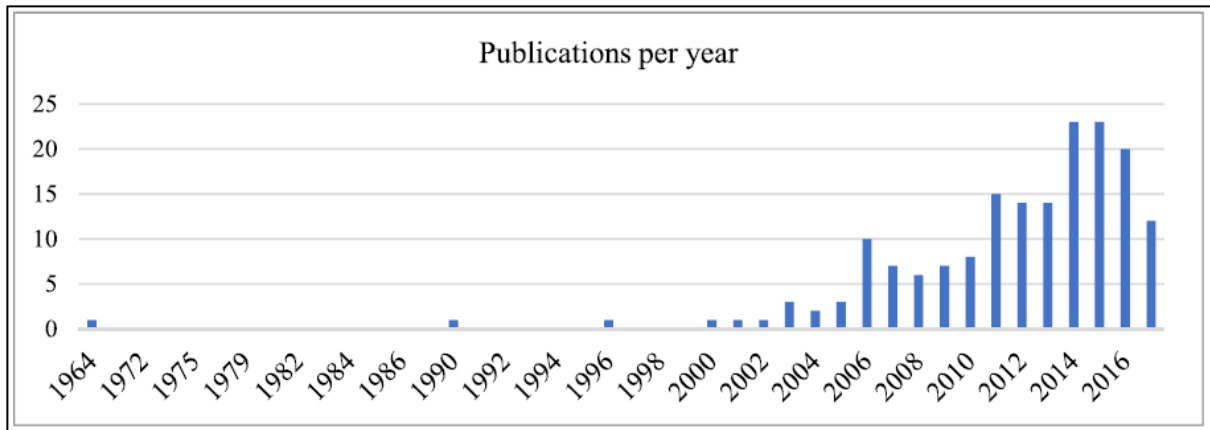


Figure 3.1. Publication acceleration in the last years, cited from (Escriva-Beltran et al., 2019, p. 509).

The surge in the opening of branch campuses attracted interest in the literature; hence the number of publications per year is on the rise. However, those publications discussed various topics. Escriva-Beltran et al. (2019) studied 173 publications published from 1964 to 2016 that are closely linked to international branch campuses, and divided them into nine different themes.

Research area to analyse in international branch campuses	Number of publications
Models of International Branch Campus	3
Language. English as lingua franca	6
Student issues	9
Institutional reasons to establish an international branch campus	9
Sustainability	9
Parallelism with a subsidiary of multinational corporation	10
Academic staff issues	15
Educational hubs	15
Managerial issues	26

Table 3.1. Adapted from (Escriva-Beltran et al., 2019).

When exploring the literature, I have concentrated on studies that address the theme of ‘student issues’. Escriva-Beltran et al.’s (2019) systematic review shows that there are few studies or writings that deal with student issues as the core of their research. Out of the 173 selected documents that Escriva-Beltran et al. looked at which relate to international branch campuses, only nine of them discussed student issues. This demonstrates the shortage of literature in understanding student issues, which is what this study seeks to address.

Of the studies about Qatar IBCs that I was able to locate, those by Prowse (2008) and Prowse & Goddard (2010) focused on in-class learning rather than out-of-class experience, interviewed faculty and one Canadian student, did not interview Qatari students, and was not undertaken at an IBC which is part of the Qatar Foundation and Education City. Another study, this one by Hussain (2018), researched HBKU which, while it is part of the Qatar Foundation and Education City, is not an IBC. This study interviewed Qatari staff only and not students. Fourteen other documents were viewed (Alfouzan, 2015; Arwari, 2014; Clifford, 2015; Crombie-Borgos, 2013; Dumbre, 2013; Itani, 2017; Jauregui, 2013; Karam, 2018; Khoury, 2013; Laigo, 2013, Maddox, 2016; McHarg, 2013; Stanfield, 2014 and Walsh, 2011), in which a variety of high level advisors, assessors, policy and decision makers, professional staff and faculty working in branch campuses in Education City were interviewed, but none of them interviewed students. Some of these studies required the staff to be Western (Jauregui, 2013) or only American and of non-Middle Eastern descent (Itani, 2017). Therefore, as much as these studies add to my study in terms of value and contextual understanding, they do not directly address the experience of Qatari students.

Vora’s (2014) research focused on non-Qatari students in Qatari branch campuses; therefore she interviewed only non-Qataris. While still worthwhile research to draw upon, Vora’s study does not shed light on Qatari perspectives. A study by Cichocki (2005) interviewed high-level staff, and also used questionnaires distributed in a class that reflected the diversity of nationalities in Qatari IBCs. This resulted in 20 Qataris being identified (out of 29 questionnaire respondents) in one IBC in Qatar. In this study, Cichocki (2005) discussed the academic and non-academic experience of IBC students, although the findings were discussed for all nationalities and only on some occasions were Qataris differentiated. Another study (Lazen, 2016) interviewed faculty, staff, students and alumni in two IBCs that meet the description of Qatar IBCs but did not clearly state the nationality of interviewees (for example, “two female seniors in communications who were both from Arabia and a male sophomore in communications from South Asia” (Lazen, 2016, p. 16)). One study (Rehal, 2015) did

interview Qatari students. However, the research aimed to understand the meaning of leadership for Qataris, and their involvement in student leadership, but not the broader student experience. The study that came closest to my own research focus is Bakken's (2013) work which discusses student choice of university and student adjustment in different educational environmental settings.

Before exploring the literature further, to provide a context to my study, I want to explore briefly the impact of internationalisation on universities and the growth of international branch campuses.

3.3.1 Internationalisation, globalisation and universities

The concept of “universe” within the term “university” expresses the global dimension of higher education (Knight, 2014). As the building of branch campuses is part of the internationalisation and globalisation narrative (Altbach & Knight, 2004), it is important to develop an understanding of these concepts in the educational context.

Globalisation and internationalisation facilitate the flow of ideas, people, values and economic benefits from place to place, and from earlier times to the present (Knight, 2004; Roberts & Roberts, 2011). This is as true for education as for other fields. Neither term has one single meaning, but both have had an impact by informing and shaping today's conversation about higher education (Roberts & Roberts, 2011). Globalisation impacts on internationalisation, and internationalisation, in turn, impacts on education. Internationalisation, infused with the intercultural dimension that addresses diversity elements, creates a rich and complex mixture in higher education (Knight, 2003).

One proposed definition of internationalisation in education is:

“The process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education.”

(Knight, 2003, p. 2)

The definition of internationalisation as a term in higher education is a challenging work in progress, having evolved and been adapted throughout the years to represent the current reality. It is based on influences – such as practice, challenges, policies, cultures, different systems and

the definition itself – impacting on the current reality and vice versa, as reality affects the shaping of any definition. Another challenge in defining internationalisation is that the concept needs to be tailored to different nations’ rationales and goals and the ways in which it influences the nations’ societies (Knight, 2003). It has been argued that the best direction for the future of internationalisation to unfold in is not yet known (Roberts, 2015). Internationalisation is widely used to explain the relationship between nations and countries (Knight, 2004) and its usage in the context of education has been increasing since the 1980s (Knight, 2003).

Globalisation creates an increasingly strong social network between places that impact on one another (Giddens, 1990). One definition of globalisation in education is: "The economic, political, and societal forces pushing 21st century higher education toward greater international involvement" (Altbach & Knight, 2007, p. 290).

Globalisation and internationalisation are clearly related, and although they have distinct features, these can become blurred (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Knight, 2004; Roberts & Roberts, 2011). Internationalisation and globalisation have led to greater mobility between academic staff, and growth in student mobility, language mobility and cross-border operations (Lane, 2015; Teichler, 1999). This is evidenced in increased international agreements, memoranda of understanding between universities, research and teaching partnerships, and projects for purposes such as income generation, cultural diversity and student and staff development (Knight, 2004), as well as the promotion of cultural and public diplomacy (Lane, 2015).

3.3.2 The growth of international branch campuses

The literature uses a variety of names for or linked to the term “international branch campuses” (IBC), and there is no one definition of an IBC (Becker, 2010). Terms such as offshore campus, transnational campus, branch campus, cross-border branch campus, overseas campus, foreign branch campus or campus on foreign soil are all used, as well as other variations. All of these terms were used to search online libraries for relevant articles for this study.

For the purpose of writing consistency, the term which will be used throughout this study is international branch campus (IBC). This was chosen because it is most consistent with how the American campuses in Qatar label themselves. The main concept is to have a physical presence on foreign soil (Lane & Kinser, 2013).

One definition of an IBC is as follows:

“An international branch campus (IBC) is a type of a foreign educational outpost that is established in a country other than the one where the home (primary) campus exists. It typically has a physical presence in the host country, and is at least partly owned by the home institution. The students can earn degrees in the name of the home institution.”

(Olds & Robertson, 2014, p. 2)

IBCs can be described as movements "outward", and further defined as:

“Initiatives and connections that stretch out into global space and connect with new places well beyond the nation-state.”

(Olds & Robertson, 2014, p. 2)

IBCs can be seen as movement from the centre to the periphery (Donn & Al Manthri, 2013; Roberts & Roberts, 2011) or from North to South (Roberts & Roberts, 2011). The “centre” here is assumed to be Western countries and the periphery relates to developing countries including the Arabian Gulf states; likewise, the North corresponds to the centre and the South to the periphery. These orientations are important to bear in mind for the next chapter in which the literature, perspectives and theoretical frameworks of the postcolonial lens are discussed.

As a development of the internationalisation of higher education, there has been noticeable growth in IBCs, with the dominant IBC exporters from the West being the UK, the USA and Australia (Healey, 2018). Which was the first branch campus and from what university is debatable (Escriva-Beltran et al., 2019); however, what is relevant is the acceleration of the opening of IBCs in recent years. The following figure shows the number of IBCs opened from 1964 to 2016.

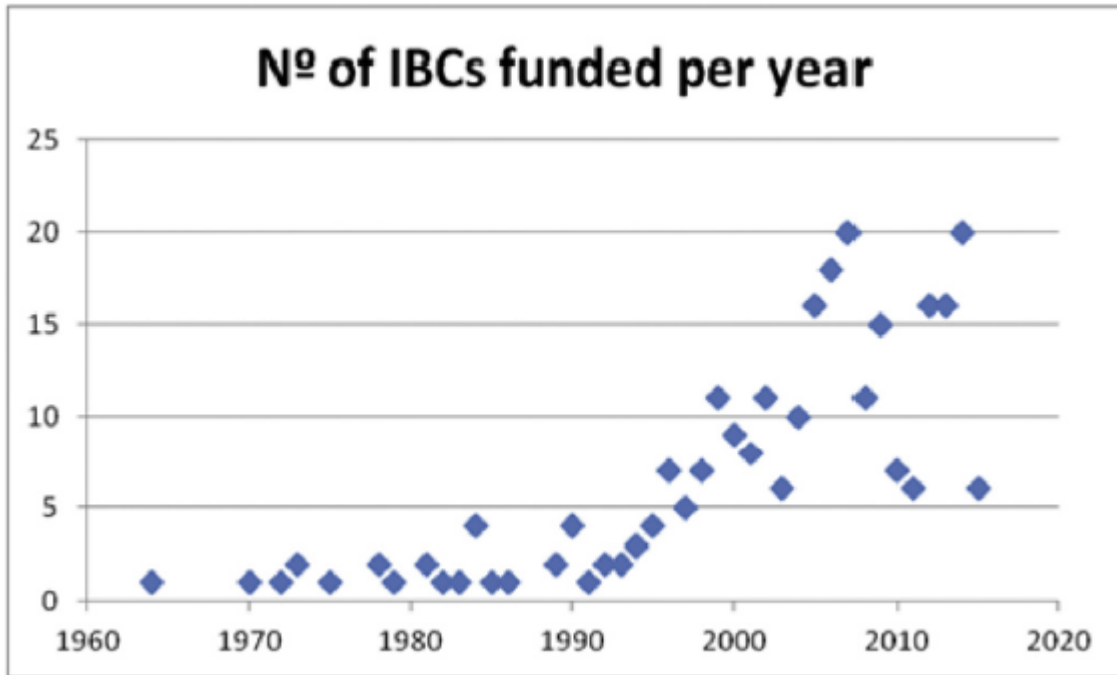


Figure 3.2. IBCs funded per year (source OBHE updated December 2016, cited from Escriva-Beltran et al., 2019, p. 508).

What draws attention in the above figure is the acceleration of IBC establishment. The following figure shows where these new campuses were created.

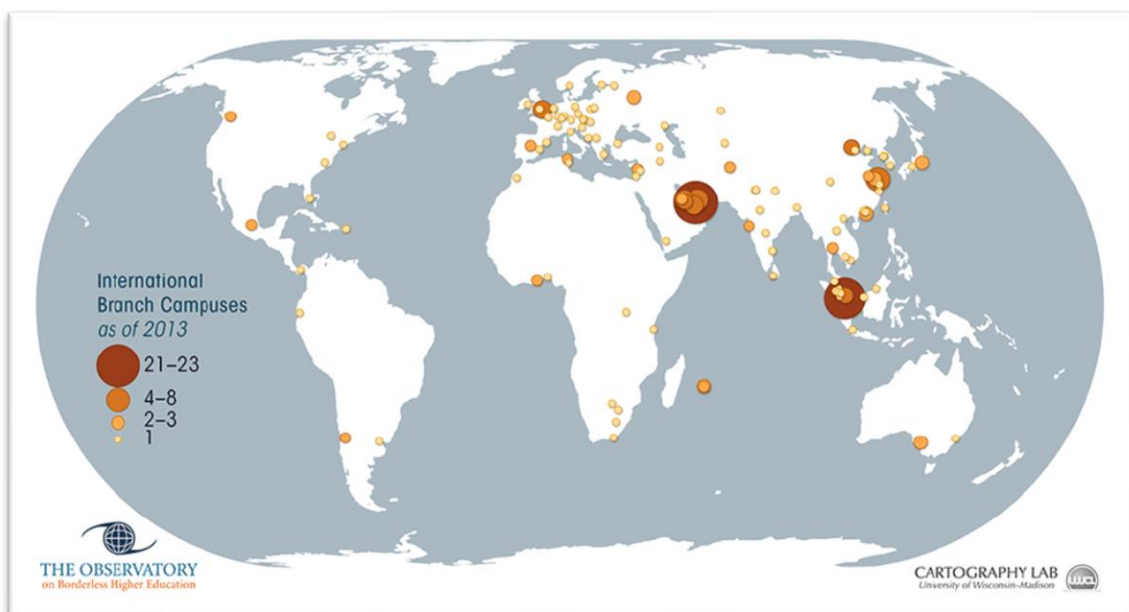


Figure 3.3. Location of IBCs in the world (Olds & Robertson, 2014, p. 1).

As can be seen, IBCs can be found concentrated in particular parts of the world. One of the highest concentrations is in the Arabian Gulf region and one of the lowest is in the United

States of America (Olds & Robertson, 2014; Healey, 2018). The way in which education is imported/exported in countries around the world is variously described by different authors as: from North to South, from West to East, and from the centre to the periphery. All of these terms are intended to indicate that education typically is exported from economically and historically powerful areas to those less economically well off or less economically and historically powerful.

According to the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (OBHE) (updated in January 2017), there are approximately 249 IBCs in 33 countries. The top five hosting countries are:

Host countries	Number of operating international branch campuses
China	32
United Arab Emirates	24
Malaysia	12
Qatar	11
Singapore	11

Table 3.2. Hosting countries. Source: OBHE, cited in Escriva-Beltran et al., 2019.

There is a clear cultural difference between the sending country and the receiving country (Healey, 2018), with the top five exporting countries shown in the following table.

Countries exporting branch campuses	Number of branch campuses
United States of America	77
United Kingdom	38
France	28
Russia	21
Australia	14

Table 3.3. Exporting countries. Source: OBHE updated 2017, cited in Escriva-Beltran et al., 2019.

These tables show that the exporting countries are from the West, while the hosting countries are primarily in Asia and the Middle East.

3.3.3 Types of international branch campuses

The two-way partnership between the host country and the sending institution results in different models of IBCs. This is perhaps linked to the different offers that nations provided as an incentive to the branch campus, or the resources the institutions were able to provide for outreach. Some IBCs are similar to or replicas of the main campus, and some do not even own a building (Lane & Kinser, 2013). In a survey of 180 IBCs by Lane and Kinser (2013), five types of ownership were identified:

- 1- *Wholly owned by the home campus (28%)*: i.e. when the home campus fully funds and owns the building and operation of the branch campus. This represents some financial risk to the home organisation, as regulations can change or the number of enrolments may not cover its costs, but it also gives the campus autonomy from local governments and control over its own academics.
- 2- *Owned by the local government (22%)*: most of this model is found in Qatar. In this case, it is up to the "... local government to subsidize the cost of, and thereby own, the local campus" (Lane & Kinser, 2013, p. 3). The Qatar Foundation Education City branch campus is an example of this type.
- 3- *Owned by a private investor (20%)*: in this case, a local private investment party develops the building and receives revenues from the branch campus.
- 4- *Rented from a private party (18%)*: some examples of this model can be found in Europe but the majority exist in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, where space is shared among different institutions in a similar location, with the institutions paying rent and some other related costs, thus creating a mall of institutions for students. Some institutions choose this as a temporary setting until they build their own facilities.
- 5- *Owned by an educational partner (12%)*: found in the Middle East and Asia, in this model, a branch campus exists inside another university but delivers its own degrees with no collaboration between the two institutions.

From the above classification, it can be concluded that Qatar and similar host countries are investing in IBCs.

3.3.4 Motivation for creating branch campuses

The establishment of IBCs around the world brings with it many opportunities for success (Becker, 2010). Even though IBCs are moving education in one direction only, West to East, Roberts (2015) argues that the creation of IBCs provides mutual benefit for both the sending institution and the hosting nation.

Key drivers for universities to open IBCs elsewhere are: entry into international partnerships, the creation of networks of allied institutions, enhancement of their reputation for high quality education, provision of evidence that they have an impact at the global level through helping to develop other nations by research, preparation of their citizens for global participation, and contribution to the promotion of peace, knowledge production and revenue generation (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Escriva-Beltran et al., 2019; Green, 2012; Hamilton, 2012; Olds & Robertson, 2014; Roberts & Roberts, 2011).

Although the motivation for most institutions will fall somewhere in the above list, institutions individually differ in their reasons for establishing IBCs. For example, not all universities branch out for financial reasons (Roberts & Roberts, 2011); each institution can have multiple different drivers that work at the same time (Green, 2012). Association with the host country's achievement can also be a motivating factor.

“Outward movements enable universities to jump scale and connect to innovation systems associated with other city-regions.”

(Olds & Robertson, 2014, p. 11)

This is exemplified by the Qatar Foundation which, through building a project such as Education City, has created a unique opportunity for students studying different specialities in different universities to live in a single student housing project and to learn from each other. Besides the learning opportunities afforded by this project, it also provides students with the opportunity to experience living in up-to-date, sustainable student housing provided by the Qatar Foundation. Below are two statements made on their websites by two American IBCs in Qatar:

“Living on campus is a wonderful opportunity to meet undergraduates from all of Education City's branch campuses.”

(Georgetown University Qatar, 2018)

“Buildings are designed to Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum Level standards, one of the largest groupings of LEED platinum buildings in the world.”

(Carnegie Mellon University Qatar, 2018)

Other motivations for establishing IBCs include the positive impact on a certain region and the region’s uniqueness from the establishment of such a campus. An example is WCMC-Q, which is the first institute to deliver the American model of medical programmes outside the United States (Hajjar & Gotto, 2013). They state: “Cornell University/WCMC is proud to play a role in Qatar’s visionary plan to transform the country and region into a knowledge-based society” (Hajjar & Gotto, 2013, p.74).

However, Escriva-Beltran et al. (2019), analysing the literature on purposes of IBCs, found that the most cited reason for the setting up of specific IBCs was the financial incentives for the sending universities from offers by host countries, and other income streams associated with the IBCs.

3.3.5 Benefits and drawbacks of hosting branch campuses

Developing countries such as those in Asia or, as in the case of this study, in the Middle East, see the benefit of IBCs as being about educating their people (Mazzarol et al., 2003). The sustainability and growth of Qatar as a nation are seen to be enabled by education that will transform Qatar into a knowledge-based society. This above all is the primary reason that motivates Qataris to collaborate with partners from across the world (Hajjar & Gotto, 2013).

Castells (1999) suggests that the development of nations is a bottom-up cycle: preparing the nation through education and making the people ready with the right infrastructure. This enables people to use technology and infrastructure to achieve economic growth, which leads to social development, in turn generating cultural and educational development; and so the cycle continues.

There are income benefits for nations hosting international students, such as tuition fees, payment of living expenses, enhancement of the nation’s reputation, prestige, and diversification of the student body, thus contributing to the host nation’s development (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Lane, 2015). The development of a nation can also result from knowledge

created, or from an international student's decision to stay and contribute to the workforce, and through the sending university investing in the branch campus since it has a stake in it (Lane, 2015). Despite noting these benefits, Lane (2015) is sceptical about how successfully these factors are in contributing to the development of the importing nation.

These educational hubs attract students in a variety of ways. In a study examining Malaysia as an educational hub, Ahmad & Buchanan (2016) found that once a country becomes an educational hub and establishes a good reputation, international students, especially from nearby countries or similar cultures, prefer to study in it. Other than the cultural aspects, these educational hubs provide a favourable environment, including safety and a low cost of living. English language as a teaching medium also contributes to creating a favourable environment for international students as it is seen as a common global language (Ahmad & Buchanan, 2016). These findings are consistent with the situation in Qatar, as shown when Vora (2014) examined non-Qatari students at Education City-Qatar IBCs. This study found that for non-Qataris, studying in the American IBCs in Qatar was more appealing than studying in the United States of America itself. One of the reasons for this was that it was easier to secure an interest-free student loan in Qatar than in the United States of America (Vora, 2014).

In a study examining IBCs through a business model, Healey (2018) suggests that IBCs are part of a university's international brand, and are seen as very much part of its business. As such, the university operates in balance to satisfy its internal stakeholders (such as the main campus and partners in its home country), as well as to develop and maintain good relationships with the sponsors, partners and stakeholders in the international branch context. In Qatar, as discussed in Chapter 2 of this study, IBCs attempt to satisfy Qatari stakeholders focused on Qatari knowledge-based economic development by undertaking in their mission statements and aims to contribute to the Qatar National Vision 2030. At the same time, IBCs can benefit from the host nation, for example through incentives provided by the Qatari government, including financial ones. While the establishment of IBCs can be mutually beneficial, the long-term prospects for a hosting nation like Qatar are unclear (Becker, 2010).

In the case of Qatar, what stands out is that all the IBCs that deliver Bachelor's degrees hosted in Education City are from universities originating in the United States of America rather than in other regions or countries of the world. The probable explanation is that Qatar tries to meet a self-imposed criterion of educational quality, which it sees as exemplified by "Western" education. This is not an uncommon response from countries perceiving themselves as needing

to improve and is part of the postcolonial narrative which impacts globally, whereas Kirk and Napier suggest it is “the postcolonial state seeking to [be] modernized” (Kirk & Napier, 2009, p. 133). We will return to this theme of postcolonialism in detail in Chapter 4.

However, Roberts and Roberts (2011) question the suitability of American higher education for developing people in other cultures, and also question whether or not the importing nations fully know what they are importing other than just a certificate from that university.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Qatar is a member of the WTO, which includes the provision of education as a service (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Roberts & Roberts, 2011). Although each member country can negotiate its own provision (Altbach & Knight, 2007), the use of agencies to deliver education, which is more and more seen as a marketable commodity provided by the private sector (Donn & Al Manthri, 2010), has led to less control over education by governments. Roberts and Roberts (2011, p. 4) express a concern that “Western and specifically the U.S., model will impose neocolonial domination on a market it already heavily influences”. Hence, the exporter of the education (the “North”) controls the process of providing education to the developed countries of the “South” (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

Because establishing IBCs brings with it potential success and also potential failure (Becker, 2010), it has been criticised as a policy both generally and in the case of Qatar in particular. The critique specific to Qatar is that delivering American democratic education premised on freedom of speech in a non-democratic country like Qatar creates a predicament (Vora, 2014), even though, as we saw in the previous chapter, Qatar does describe itself as democratic or moving toward democracy. In Vora’s discussion (2014), she states that US academia is not pleased with IBCs, regarding them as too accommodating towards host nations. This dilemma is also discussed by Healey (2018) when applying a business model to study IBCs. Universities walk a tightrope in that they need to work to keep their international brand, be relevant to the host country and create IBCs that are acceptable to both groups of stakeholders – those connected to the main campus and those connected to the host country.

Lane (2015) argues that, despite the perception that there is censorship in relation to criticising the government (and perhaps some faculty might censor themselves in Qatar), the existence of American IBCs in Education City in Qatar is a step towards freedom of speech. When developed countries in the Middle East like Qatar and the United Arab Emirates associate themselves with highly regarded institutions such as Texas A&M and New York University or

highly regarded nations like the United States of America, the United Kingdom or Australia, this raises their profile and increases their perceived legitimacy and soft power (Lane, 2015).

3.3.6 Sustainability of international branch campuses

A major consideration in managing IBCs is their sustainability. Some contributing dimensions have been identified when considering IBC sustainability, such as adapting to the local environment to fit with the local culture, good relationships with the main campus and maintaining its brand, good budget utilisation, and good student enrolment (Lane, 2011).

Failure to manage a branch campus successfully can damage the university's reputation. Poor student service and mismanagement of financial resources (Becker, 2010) can have a significant impact on nations like Qatar, since their financial resources are responsible for sponsoring branch campus expenses, infrastructure, staff bonuses and students eligible for government grants (Becker, 2010).

Managing IBCs can present other challenges besides financial ones. Managing a branch campus requires a different type of management from that practised by the campus on its home territory. IBCs involve working with professionals in different spaces, and with different partners and cultural norms (Olds & Robertson, 2014). There is a need to be self-critical. Although working in a different location and culture does not necessarily require educators to change their values, they do need to recognise that working in an international location is different. Therefore, in the case of this study, the study will explore from a Qatari student perspective whether the differences in Qatari values are acknowledged, and will also explore how IBCs manage the internal/external pressures. Roberts and Roberts (2011) argue that the failure of branch campus staff to self-reflect could lead to the marginalisation of Qataris and, by extension, of Qatari culture. Educators who recognise the characteristics, values and traditions of the host nation's students and are willing to support them, are better placed to equip their students with the confidence that will make them better contributors to life holistically, in the workforce as well as in social life (Arshad, Wrigley & Pratt, 2012).

Most of the literature about managing IBCs is anecdotal (Shams & Huisman, 2012), and the formal research that is available tends to be focused on business models, since the most cited motive for establishing IBCs is financial revenue (Escriva-Beltran et al., 2019).

Escriva-Beltran et al. (2019) summarise the managerial issues in the literature into the following themes:

- strategic leadership
- corporate risk
- institutional strategies
- quality assurance
- marketing or branding
- organisational culture
- market entry strategies
- cross-cultural challenges
- stakeholders.

Shams and Huisman (2012) collected relevant fragments from the literature and, in a business-oriented model, examined whether a global or localised approach would be better for an international entity entering a foreign domain. They argue that IBCs can be like businesses as they ‘trade’ under a brand name, deploy their experiences, and expand their influence while entering a new market where they can benefit from new resources. It is a competitive market as usually the branch campus will not be the only branch campus, nor will the university be the only one, as is the case in Qatar.

Shams and Huisman’s study does not focus on IBCs per se, but on what they perceive to be the core activities of a branch campus: curriculum, research and staff (Shams & Huisman, 2012). They concluded that there is a need for both globalised and localised approaches, and that an extreme global or local approach should be avoided. Either choice will influence the student experience (Shams & Huisman, 2012).

It should also be borne in mind that Qatar branch campuses have specific characteristics, particularly relating to resourcing. Not all IBCs in developing countries have access to similar monetary funds to sustain what is usually an expensive operation (Bakken, 2013), which means that for IBCs in other countries, sustainability is a far more pressing central concern, hence the difficulty in managing them (Becker, 2010).

Since this research is not about branch campus management specifically, this issue will not be examined in further detail. However, because branch campus sustainability (Lane, 2011) and

the interface between branch campus and local culture is one of the main areas of this study, these facets of management warrant separate consideration.

IBCs, including the ones in Qatar, are faced with the need to acknowledge the differences in culture between the branch campus in a host nation and the main campus culture in the home nation. Working successfully with this difference is one of the main contributors to sustainability (Karam, 2018). In his doctoral research, Karam (2018) investigated the management practices of branch campus towards sustainability in the Arabian Gulf, including Qatar, and found that several factors contribute to branch campus sustainability. These were localisation of research, curriculum and staff development, and branch campus practice relevant to the needs of local students and the host country. The research also found that alignment of branch campus mission and practice with the host nation's laws and national vision affected the sustainability of IBCs and their ability to contribute to the community and student experience, and to the quality of graduates brought to the job market (Karam, 2018). It is worth noting that Karam's research is about sustainability and Dumbre's research is about curriculum, while my study is about student affairs. Because the research reported here covers an area that is largely a gap in the existing literature, it is necessary to cast the net slightly more widely to find studies which may have a bearing on the area under consideration.

Finding a balance between global and local interests in branch management is an ongoing process. The ideal would appear to be a middle ground between branch campus best practice and supporting Qatari interests (de Wit & Meyer, 2012; Dumbre, 2013; Healey, 2018; Karam, 2018; Shams & Huisman, 2012; Smith, 2010).

The focus above has been on IBCs from the perspective of management within the local culture and values. Another important aspect of working within the local culture is recognising how the social needs, norms and traditions of the students might be different from those of the host nation. For instance, anecdotal experiences in WCMC in Qatar (Hajjar & Gotto, 2013) indicate that the branch campus maintains a measure of flexibility in working in the Qatari culture and does not pressurise Qataris to take part in "any social activity" (Hajjar & Gotto, 2013, p. 70) when they have decided to opt out from those experiences. While social activities are generally considered to be part of the broader student university experience, it is not clear whether WCMC uses this approach only for social activities or whether this applies more broadly to general extracurricular activities. In addition, Hajjar and Gotto (2013) do not deal with the

question of why students choose to opt out and how to retain them if the institution wishes to do so.

Kuh (1995) emphasises that “out-of-class experiences influence student learning and personal development” (Kuh, 1995, p. 124). Out-of-class learning, or student engagement, means the time and effort invested by the students in educational opportunities that are designed and encouraged by the university to achieve specific anticipated results (Kuh, 2009). Those activities can include educational visits, close to campus or with travel, whether staying overnight or not. These opportunities can help university students to socialise and also to learn a variety of skills such as decision-making and others connected with environment-related issues and moral education (Allison et al., 2012). Therefore, Qatari students who choose to opt out can miss opportunities to achieve beneficial outcomes as a result of adhering to Qatari culture. Often Qatari students choose to opt out as they are not keen to engage in mixed-gender social activities. However, Qatari students enrolled in the branch campus where Hajjar and Gotto conducted their research are in fact studying in a mixed-gender education environment for up to six years, so it is not clear what makes them opt out of mixed-gender social activity but not out of the mixed-gender classroom educational experience. In addition, even though giving the Qatari students the flexibility to opt out sounds like an understanding gesture by the faculty and staff, it is not clear what efforts faculty and staff are making to ensure that social activities are inclusive for the Qatari students.

Donn and Al Manthri (2013) believe that importing systems can be a “quick fix” (p. 9) to develop an education system for a certain nation. While they seem relatively comfortable with the way this could affect the indigenous people, they do express concern with the speed at which the introduction of imported education systems takes place and with whether the indigenous people are properly prepared (Donn & Al Manthri, 2013).

Working in a different location means working either with different, pre-existing laws and policies or, more importantly, with different people, cultures and expectations. This issue can be illustrated through the example of the Community College of Qatar, which is a branch campus of Houston Community College. Dividing the management between the Qatari administration and the Houston administration created significant challenges for the community college. The initial plan was for the Community College of Qatar (CCQ) to be co-ed; then the college was asked by the Qatari administration to segregate its provision by gender. It was also directed by the Supreme Education Council, the highest educational body in Qatar,

to show more interest in teaching classes in the Arabic language, rather than in the main language of instruction which was English (Hamilton, 2012).

Although the Houston Community College five-year contract has come to an end and CCQ is now locally managed, it delivers only one of its ten programmes in Arabic, with the rest of the programmes in English, and success in an English proficiency test is required for admission to the college (Community College of Qatar, 2018).

Despite the Qatari administration's push for a single-gender environment, it seems that many aims have not yet been achieved, and there is no established norm in place for educational institutions working cross-culturally in the Arabian Gulf (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

There is a limited number of studies about Qatar IBCs (Bakken, 2013; Dumbre, 2013; Karam, 2018; Prowse & Goddard, 2010; Rehal, 2015; Vora, 2014). However, it does appear that a certain level of autonomy is given to IBCs in matters such as hiring of administrative and support staff (but not academic faculty), and other local operations such as purchasing. The branch campus works closely with the main campus in the USA in the hiring process. Faculty need to be accepted by the main campus as well as the branch campus to make sure they meet an appropriate standard. The proportions of staffing in a branch campus are such that two-thirds of WCMC-Q faculty are Americans, and a quarter are either European or Canadian, while the remainder are from the Middle East (Hajjar & Gotto, 2013).

Another doctoral study (Dumbre, 2013) analysed four leaders managing curriculum implementation of American IBCs in two Arabian Gulf countries, one of them an IBC in Qatar. The study found that, much as IBC's leaders and lecturers wish to localise the curriculum, it is a complex procedure and one that needs approval from the main campus. Branch offices do not generally make decisions related to the curriculum (Karam, 2018), and the people who work on the ground in the actual IBCs have limited ability to localise the curriculum beyond making minor changes for accreditation and contractual reasons (Dumbre, 2013). The body that advises on curriculum change in the main campus has no experience of working in the Arabian Gulf, and cannot, therefore, make curriculum decisions to fit the context (Dumbre, 2013). Shams and Huisman (2012) suggest that quality of services such as curriculum implementation depends on the quality of staff deployed by the university.

Even though technology can help to overcome communication problems relating to distant locations, different time zones and staff flexibility (for instance, Qatar's business week runs from Sunday to Thursday rather than Monday to Friday as in the United States of America),

and can facilitate the exchange of ideas (Hajjar & Gotto, 2013), problems remain around decision-making. In addition to geographic challenges such as time zones and different working days, branch campuses have a sense of bureaucracy linked to their main campus which influences the rapport between staff in the main campus and the branch campus (Karam, 2018). Karam (2018) found a strong tendency for IBCs to follow the policies and practices of the main campus.

Karam's (2018) findings about leaders in IBCs in the Gulf, including Qatar, presented evidence that leaders made efforts to localise their practices to the host nation, and to appreciate and accept the different cultures of their students. Open-mindedness, accepting and appreciating diversity and other cultural values are important qualities for professionals working and making decisions in the branch campus system (Karam, 2018).

Accreditation can be a challenge for IBCs too. After 10 years of functioning in the region, for instance, WCMC-Q is looking to be accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) which currently accredits medical programmes only in the USA and Canada. They are seeking accreditation by LCME or a body in the region to demonstrate the quality of their education (Hajjar & Gotto, 2013). Seeking accreditation from bodies like these can cause issues for IBCs, because they are often required to deliver the accrediting body's curriculum in full – leading to anomalous situations, such as Qatari students finding it problematic to study American history and American political science as a major requirement for their degree at Texas A&M IBC in Qatar (Cichocki, 2015).

3.3.7 Summary of literature on the benefits and drawbacks of branch campuses

In summary, the benefits of opening IBCs for the exporting institutions can be seen as:

- financial gains from opening up new markets in different nations
- being part of another nation's plans for their development
- strengthening their brand and prestige
- improving their international experiences, and
- being part of a greater global network of bodies which can bring a variety of benefits.

The hosting nation attempts to use its resource to best effect by:

- hosting universities and creating educational hubs which can also bring financial benefits
- building capacity for employment and productivity of citizens
- developing its people, which can also create a step towards the nation's aim of becoming a knowledge-based economy
- closing the gap between the education level in that nation and more developed educational systems
- meeting internationally accepted criteria of quality education and providing certification which allows its citizens to compete in the international economy
- being part of a global network with the benefits that can bring, and
- strengthening and legitimising the hosting nation through forward thinking about things like democracy and freedom.

The drawbacks for hosting nations deciding to open international branch campuses include not always being aware of the challenges they will meet, such as:

- the high financial cost to set up and operate,
- understanding the local stakeholders and meeting their expectations while also meeting the expectations of the sending institutions, and
- regulation issues such as accreditation and adaptation of the curriculum.

All of the above challenges create risks for branch campus sustainability.

There are also drawbacks for hosting nations:

- they may not fully know what they are importing in the package of IBCs other than classes and certificates
- depending on the type of agreement, there may be a financial burden (in the case of Qatar, for instance, opening and operating IBCs was expensive)
- difficulties in measuring how much IBCs are contributing to the success of national development.

Donn and Al Manthri (2013) argue that instead of investing such non-renewable financial resources in hosting IBCs, which might widen the gap between the hosting nation and the sending nation, it might make more sense to invest the resources in developing the individual nation's own education systems both in the host and receiving nations (Donn & Al Manthri, 2013).

3.4 Student affairs and the student experience in branch campuses

The reasons given for student interest in attending IBCs vary across the literature. The reasons range from logistical factors such as low living costs and safety, to school reputation, cultural considerations, and being close to family (Escriva-Beltran et al., 2019). The differences between the reasons IBC students give for making their choices, and the reasons the university's home students give, and the long-term implications of these differences, are generally not considered when IBCs are being established (Becker, 2010).

In a comparative research study (Prowse & Goddard, 2010) between two locations for the same institution, the main campus in Canada and the other campus in Qatar delivering the Canadian curriculum by Canadian instructors, Prowse and Goddard found that there was an adaptation of pedagogy by the Canadian instructors. However, this adaptation was based on the instructors' perceptions of the Qatari students' culture and cultural differences rather than adaptation which might be culturally-responsive. On some occasions, Canadians teaching the business curriculum found it harder to give local Qatari examples in Qatar. Prowse and Goddard (2010) did not interview any Qatari students or staff in this research. On the Qatari site, the researchers interviewed four Canadian instructors and one student from Canada who studied at the Qatari campus.

In 1998, the Alaska Native Knowledge Network published a document that contains standards to help schools and educators to deliver a culturally responsive pedagogy for native Alaskans, which takes into account the students' cultural well-being. This Network spent years developing content that is culturally applicable, as well as performance standards for teachers and administrators. Those standards and guidelines are provided as a complement to rather than a replacement for what existed (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1998). This is evidence that special attention does need to be paid to the content delivered to indigenous students, and to the professionals delivering it. Bearing in mind that Alaskan indigenous people are an original part of North American history and yet development and education are still in the process of finding ways to deliver a culturally healthy education; the standards are non-conclusive and need to be reviewed further in the future (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1998). Nonetheless, these complementary standards may have ideas to offer for the localisation of global higher education. There have been similar developments in New Zealand, where

culturally relevant pedagogy for Maori learners has been considered (Bishop, 1998), as well as in the US for African American learners (Ladson-Billings, 2014). A similar initiative for delivering education designed in a Western context might need to be examined for branch campuses delivering education in the Arabian Gulf region, including Qatar – supporting indigenous students culturally and creating an environment to nurture differences rather than adopting rigid rules.

Roberts (2015) has written extensively on the concept and processes of internationalisation and draws from his personal experience of living and working in Qatar for seven years in a leadership role in student affairs. Roberts (2015) emphasises that as part of the process of going global and international, universities need to understand the cultural context of the Qatari people. For Roberts, students with a distinctive culture, like Qataris, need to appreciate their own culture, as there is a “value in preserving unique cultures” (Roberts, 2015, p. 10). While this may indicate that Roberts understands Qatari cultural heterogeneity, he could have made this clearer in his writing.

Branch campuses are aware that local students need different forms of support based on their culture, and work hard to meet their students’ needs (Dumbre, 2013). However, years after their opening in Qatar, they are still in the process of understanding how best to support the local Qatari, and further investigation is needed (Bakken, 2013; Dumbre, 2013), especially into the cultural negotiation Qatari students go through with themselves about attending a branch campus in their own country (Bakken, 2013). Issues of religion and culture are not discussed deeply because they are perceived by the Western staff to be difficult and complex areas.

Rehal’s (2015) doctoral research studied student leadership development in Qatar. Rehal found no previous research on this topic, not only in Qatar but also in the Arabian Gulf. Western IBCs, even though they have been functioning for years, are still in development and there is uncertainty about their sustainability in countries other than their original home country. The way in which leadership is conceptualised cannot be separated from the Qatari context. It is likely that other aspects of student life will also be deeply rooted in the Qatari culture; hence an understanding of the Qatari context and its differences might be required to facilitate local delivery by the IBCs.

In a more relevant study, Bakken (2013), discussing Qatari students and American IBCs, found that the overall environment contributed to their success. However, to achieve this, the branches had to go through some cultural adjustment to establish an appropriate educational

environment that was “cognizant of Islamic beliefs and culture” (Bakken, 2013, p. 103). Despite this, Bakken finds that there is a lack of student participation in extracurricular activities. Even though Dumbre’s work is about curriculum implementation and Bakken’s is about student affairs, one connection that can be drawn is that, according to Dumbre (2013), IBC leaders are still in the process of understanding how best to support Qataris. This echoes earlier initiatives working to ensure that the curriculum and standards are informed by indigenous nations and voices of indigenous people, such as native Alaskans (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1998), Maori learners (Bishop, 1998) and African American learners in the US (Ladson-Billings, 2014).

3.4.1 The US model of student affairs

An important aspect of the American education system being delivered by the IBCs in Qatar is the US student affairs model.

Student affairs departments within US universities provide a focus for non-academic, extracurricular activities and are often the focal point of student life at American universities.

The mission of student affairs has been summarised by Komives et al. (2003) as:

- to support the academic mission of the institution
- to develop the student as a whole.

Even though each US university may have its own distinct mission and programme of development based on religious factors and historical, economic, social and political events, the above two elements are key features of the students’ learning environment (Komives et al., 2003).

The discipline and operations of the student affairs element within universities are a work in progress. American universities were founded during the colonial era (Thelin, 2011). The creation and development of student affairs began in 1636 with the establishment of the first colonial colleges and universities (Komives et al., 2003). Learning was not based on what was being taught in the classroom, but was fluid and contextualised in the environment students lived in at that time (Thelin, 2011). At that point, student affairs were a shared responsibility among faculty members, including the president of the educational establishment. The faculty and the president served as ‘parents’, their role being mainly focused on discipline and conduct.

Moral and ethical mentorship outside the classroom was also offered to students. One of the first facets of college life established in that period was the dining rooms and residence halls (Komives et al., 2003; Schuh et al., 2011).

The faculty's experience of working with students was limited to white elite students, since that was the nature of the student population at that time (Komives et al., 2003; Schuh et al., 2011; Thelin, 2011). There was an attempt to include non-white students by admitting indigenous American students in 1784 (Komives et al., 2003; Thelin, 2011), but they soon left the university at the request of the indigenous American elders, who stated that this type of education was not benefiting them. The elders were concerned about the university's standards of wisdom, one of many concerns mentioned involving their sons' inability to make good decisions. Therefore, they refused the offer of scholarships (Komives et al., 2003), which were seen by the indigenous tribes partly as missionary efforts (Wright & Tierney, 1991). There was a conflict between some of the indigenous Americans and the white men's education system, since instruction in the hosted universities was based on Christian teaching in the belief that it would civilise the indigenous people, "saving them from the folly of their 'heathenish' and 'savage' ways" (Wright & Tierney, 1991, p. 12, inner quotes in original). One of the indigenous leaders responded to an invitation to attend the College of William and Mary: "We thank you for your invitation; but our customs differing from yours, you will be so good as to excuse us" (Wright & Tierney, 1991, p. 13). Therefore, the indigenous American enrolment was not popular and to an extent was unsuccessful during that period.

In 1850-1900 there were some changes in the faculty's role, and with more demands placed on the presidents, this led to the first dedicated student affairs professionals being introduced to work on students' issues and problems. In the era from 1880 to 1915 there was an expansion of universities in the United States, some universities coming to resemble the German model. This system included an increase in extracurricular activities, mainly in sport and recreation, and a focus on healthy living. Rules set by the faculty and president started to diminish, and there was less interest in living in residence halls or in compulsory chapel attendance (Komives et al., 2003).

Preparation for diverse learners

In 1919, the first Conference of Deans and Advisors of Men was held to discuss their concerns about the field and ways of developing it. Female professionals started to join it in 1926, and in 1951 the name was changed to the National Association of Deans and Advisors (NASPA) (Komives et al., 2003). Today NASPA organises several meetings a year for over 13,000 members from more than 25 countries (National Association of Deans and Advisors, 2015). NASPA is only one of several student affairs-related organisations that are concerned with diverse students.

Recent developments

In the late 1900s, there were fewer missionary efforts (Wright & Tierney, 1991) and a dramatic change took place in the student population (Komives et al., 2003; Schuh et al., 2011). High college enrolment due to federal funds; veterans' enrolment; legal challenges concerning race, gender and sexual orientation; deaths; sexual assaults; relationships between students and faculty; students' initiation; international students; and many other issues led to more specialised student affairs services like financial aid and support for under-represented groups. Those events also required student affairs professionals to be armed with skill sets for working with emergency situations. This made the field more complex and challenging for these professionals (Komives et al., 2003; Schuh et al., 2011).

3.4.2 Student affairs in the Arabian Gulf

In recent years, increasing numbers of international education providers have emerged in the Arabian Gulf States (Altbach & Knight, 2007). However, there is relatively little written about the internationalisation of student affairs (Osfield et al., 2008), less about student affairs in the Arabian Gulf region (Roberts 2018, personal communication email, 13 September), and less still about Arabian Gulf indigenous people studying in Western IBCs in their home countries (Bakken, 2013). Considering that the student affairs department is the centre of extracurricular provision in a university and an important element of the educational journey, it is surprising

that the literature on this area of university life is so scarce. As Roberts and Roberts (2011, p. 5) observed, “the importance of enriching students’ holistic experiences is a must”.

Before discussing the non-Qatari student affairs staff, it is worth mentioning the Qatari student affairs staff in Education City, i.e. those at HBKU. Although HBKU is not an IBC, it is part of Education City and the Qatar Foundation. HBKU works closely with the IBCs, collaborating and providing services such as some student programmes and student housing. In general, the student affairs department at HBKU adapts the American model for best practice in student affairs. Hussain (2018) conducted doctoral research studying Qatari student affairs staff at HBKU and found a general lack of qualification in history and philosophy of student affairs, student development theory, and organisation and administration of student affairs (Hussain, 2018).

Hussain (2018) included 31 Qatari student affairs staff in her study and states:

“Some of the most common degrees participants held are in engineering, business administration, human resources, and international politics. Only one participant has a master’s degree in student affairs. The other 30 had no academic preparation or degrees relevant to the field.”

(Hussain, 2018, p. 60)

The student affairs professionals in the Qatar IBCs are generally not local and need to acculturate themselves to the mores and customs of the country. IBC leaders are working to achieve this (Dumbre, 2013). Some IBCs in Qatar provide cross-cultural training for their faculty and staff working in Qatar, as reported by Jauregui (2013).

“Cross-cultural training involved any efforts or attempts by home or host campuses to provide faculty with any given level of cross-cultural training or preparation in association with a professorship in Qatar.”

(Jauregui, 2013, p. 61)

This cross-cultural training needs to emphasise issues such as the importance of family as part of the student journey. The relationship between Qatari students and their families is a significant factor when it comes to students’ decision-making (Bakken, 2013; Roberts & Roberts, 2011). This has led to difficulties for university professionals who do not sufficiently consider the need to communicate with and include families. The tradition in the US is that

higher education institutions are spaces where students begin their autonomous educational and life journeys, mixing and learning with peers. In Qatar, appropriate provision for a student might necessitate greater acknowledgement of the role of the family and wider community (Roberts & Roberts, 2011).

Most Qatari students come from a Muslim background, the majority of them from a single-gender school system. It is unusual for males and females to interact socially, and they choose to have little such interaction due to faith, cultural and family beliefs. However, by not making adjustments or by promoting their own norms and values, Western staff accustomed to co-educational study may push Qatari students to interact in accordance with the Western version of “normality” in society. This can be perceived as cultural insensitivity on the part of Western educators (Roberts & Roberts, 2011). Because the promotion of sets of norms and values can be an integral part of learning outcomes, standards are produced by bodies such as the Alaska Native Knowledge Network to ensure that norms and values are applicable to their indigenous students.

There is also the issue of transferability and applicability. Even if a hybrid model of student affairs is achieved, such a model would not necessarily be easily transferable from one Gulf country to another, nor would it necessarily be suitable for all citizens in the one country (Osfield et al., 2008). For example, in Qatar, not all Qataris hold the same cultural values or have, as described by Roberts and Roberts (2011), the same “character”. As Qatar is developing at high speed, Qatari families can vary in their experiences and beliefs, and educators are faced with the complexities of engaging in a different country, within an Islamic framework and in the presence of particular cultural elements that may not necessarily be applied universally for all Qataris (Roberts & Roberts, 2011).

The findings of Bakken (2013) do shed light on the Qatari student experience in Qatar IBCs, perhaps for the first time, as he stated. His research shows that Qatari students have a range of choices of universities and family does influence those choices. He also found that they are not interested in their local university, as they see it as an inferior option and prefer Western education. In the choice process, they weigh their options by considering what would lead to the prospect of good future jobs, promotions, and salaries. They also have concerns about the mixed-gender environment offered in Education City, and participants coming with similar educational experience in matters such as mixed-gender education tend to stay together. Participants appreciated studying close to home. According to Bakken (2013), there was a

general feeling that students' religious and social rights were respected among staff and faculty, and that they were generally listened to.

Participants shared some challenges in their adjustment, including academic challenges such as the use of English and development of study skills. Some participants shared their concerns about attending a Western IBC and attending events on campus that reflect American culture, even though they do feel staff are trying to make these events more appropriate to Qataris. Participants pick and choose what they feel is appropriate and fits with their culture and beliefs. Bakken's participants were constantly thinking about their families, culture, and religion while making their choices. Participants were open to embracing change but interested in keeping their religion and culture. The long-term impact of changes concerning Western culture and women was unclear to Bakken (Bakken, 2013).

3.4.3 Emerging issues

The profession is changing and will continue to change in the future in the United States and the rest of the world (Komives et al., 2003). There is a rise in the number of underrepresented minorities on campuses, and staff need to be aware of this and to have the appropriate competencies for creating a more effective learning environment for students coming from different backgrounds (Schuh et al., 2010).

Quality assurance for programmes delivered internationally is in place to an extent, but it is not clear how it works with foreign partners cross-culturally, which is a concern (Altbach & Knight, 2007). The case of Qatar, where Qatari students are themselves usually underrepresented in American IBCs, might necessitate extra care in helping to cultivate a rich learning environment for both Qatari and international students. In particular, there is a need to develop a hybrid model of student services/student affairs for the local Arabian Gulf context (Osfield et al., 2008), which to some extent has taken place in later years. Roberts & Roberts (2011) suggest that a host country is likely to be unaware of what it is getting along with the education it imports (Roberts & Roberts, 2011). Western staff import with them their values surrounding higher education and impose these on the local people, perhaps "unknowingly, or sometimes arrogantly" (Roberts & Roberts, 2011, p. 4). Whatever the intention, this imposition of Western values can contradict the host country's plan to root the improvement of their citizens in their own culture and traditions.

Host countries mostly do not apply quality assurance to programmes delivered internationally, creating a window that allows “foreign providers to avoid compliance with national regulations in many countries and makes monitoring their activities difficult” (Altbach & Knight, 2007, p. 300). There are only four countries, none of them in the Arabian Gulf, that have created systems to monitor imported programmes (Altbach & Knight, 2007). When values are recognised and examined, it becomes easier to give host countries and their citizens a choice as to what they want and do not want from among Western values and the practices and policies that perpetuate them (Roberts & Roberts, 2011, p. 4). There is a need to understand the extent to which Qatar can “modernise” itself while keeping its heritage, as also aimed at by QNV2030, and can learn what leads to success and what leads to failure so as to work on the former (Kirk & Napier, 2009).

Universities support the holistic learning of their students through engaging in out-of-class learning that is purposely designed for a certain outcome (Kuh, 2009). Allison et al. (2012) found that out-of-class learning can contribute to students’ learning beyond academic information. It can contribute to “open enquiry into moral and other issues and values” and the “development of the good judgement and practical wisdom” (Allison et al., 2012, p. 52). Perhaps when a university designs an out-of-class activity, it will need to identify the different understandings of different nations in regard to morals, values and wisdom. Perhaps this understanding of differences of values, wisdom and morals can be traced back to the indigenous Americans’ concern about their children’s wisdom and the decisions made after attending the “white man’s university” mentioned earlier. This may also be connected to today’s understanding of the holistic development of Qatari students.

3.5 Delving deeper – what the literature reveals and does not reveal

As we have seen, there is a dearth of studies of indigenous students in foreign IBCs in Education City in Qatar (Bakken, 2013), and what there is, tends to be written by non-Qatari researchers. This means that the research takes particular perspectives that generally do not connect with the lived experience of Qataris.

Besides the important factual and logistical issues discussed above, more subtle issues are revealed by the literature. The first is that the student voice is almost entirely lacking. The

second is that the vocabulary and tone of the research often displays residual colonial attitudes, thought processes and expectations. Addressing both of issues is why this study is new and, it is hoped, illuminating.

3.5.1 Lack of student voice

Lane (2011) suggests that it is important for IBCs to understand and respect the local culture, and to fit in with the local environment, including non-academic areas such as student life and university activities.

“Importantly, the religious and cultural customs of some nations may require respect and some level of adherence even if the students or staff are not members of that religion or culture.”

(Lane, 2011, p. 11)

The examples which follow illustrate more clearly student thinking on some of the issues raised above.

In 2013, a Qatari female graduate chose not to attend her graduation ceremony and wrote a letter to *Alsharq* newspaper to enable her voice to reach policy-makers. The newspaper wrote an article questioning why a college which offers single-gendered classes chose to surprise its students with a co-gendered graduation ceremony. The newspaper urged the college to respect the Qatari culture and support students' choice to celebrate their graduation according to their chosen way of life (Alkuwari, 2013). Despite this, as of 2018, the Qatar Community College graduation ceremony was still co-gendered, even though the originating college, Houston College, is no longer working in the country.

Another example concerns the Georgetown University branch campus in Qatar's announcement of a debate planned for October 9th, 2018 in GU-Q about whether or not major religions should portray God as a woman.



Figure 3.4. GU-Q activity poster.

The above picture was captured by a Georgetown student and posted on Twitter. The student was not happy and saw Twitter as the channel through which to share her/his voice. The image quickly gained traction on Twitter, upsetting users in Qatar who felt that this topic was disrespectful in the context of Qatar.

The IBC reaction within hours was to cancel this debate, claiming that the event had not gone through the proper GU-Q approvals.



Figure 3.5. GU-Q response.

The Georgetown example raises several questions. How many programmes, events, conversation topics and similar activities which affect Qatari students are implemented without the proper approval? Are those programmes, events, conversation topics and similar activities based on the originator's own values and understanding of what should be done, rather than on what the institution wants to do in the country, and should the central institution and the branch each have its own mission and vision? A question also arises about why students resorted to using newspapers and social media to give their opinions and be heard. Clearly, today's students feel very comfortable communicating via social media, and this may be an avenue they prefer to personal discussion (perhaps this could form the basis for another study).

However, it would be logical to assume that if there were an easy, safe, and approachable outlet within the university itself which would listen to and value the student voice, students would use it. Further, if such a service already exists, why did they *not* use it in the that case?

The lack of published academic articles in this field means that research depends on grey material such as media articles (Lane, 2015) if they wish to show the tension and project the dilemmas involved in managing international programmes and meeting local expectations.

3.5.2 The use of English

Another important point about the existing literature is that in many cases, interviews for Qatari students were conducted in English.

“Participants are enrolled at an international branch campus of an American institution and are fluent in English.”

(Rehal, 2015, p.45)

Rehal explained that students could be assumed to be fluent in English because they were admitted to an American university. It is true that the IBC requires English proficiency, but students' proficiency varies significantly from one student to another, as does their ability to express their thoughts fully. Rehal does speak Arabic, and it is unclear why she chose not to use Arabic but to depend on the participants' “fluency” in English. Bakken (2013) also required his Qatari participants to be conversant in English. He finds that one of the challenges his participants go through is the use of English language in their education journey (Bakken, 2013). This finding confirms the limitations of using English with some of the participants even if they do meet the English proficiency requirement for admission to their IBCs. In my study, this limitation is reduced by giving the participants the freedom of choice to communicate in the language they feel they are most comfortable with. Further discussions about language choice will be found in the methodology chapter.

3.6 The need for a postcolonial view

Finally, we come to the judgement and positioning implicit in the writing of research on Qatari issues by non-Qatari researchers. Much of the research in this area, primarily as a result of being carried out by non-Qatari researchers, uses phrases and perspectives that reflect Western values and ideas. As a single example, it is interesting, for instance, that Bakken (2013) uses the term “conservative” more than 12 times in his research when describing families, values, relationships, environments, culture, religion and government. This is a concept that generally comes from the Western perspectives of conservative, liberal, left and right, and thus indicates an underlying Western perspective in the study.

Another factor which makes it difficult to obtain a specifically Qatari view from Bakken’s (2013) study is that he did not always distinguish non-Qatari participants from Qataris, even though his targeted participants were Qataris throughout the study. Despite his professed aims, the criteria for inclusion in the focus group did not require participants to be Qataris or to be Muslims. It is not clear from Bakken’s data whether all four participating students were practising Islam. Further confusion is caused by the fact that data from the focus group were integrated and data from non-Qataris were not distinguished in the findings.

Bakken’s categorisation of the administrators he interviewed is also somewhat vague:

“Two administrators came from the **United States**, one from **South America**, and one from the **local region**.”

(Bakken, 2013, p. 62, my emphasis)

In doing this, Bakken’s main intention may have been to protect the identity of administrators, as the community of staff members in Education City is small and it would be easier to identify them if particular countries were mentioned. However, this does make it more difficult to pick out data which relate specifically to Qatari participants. It is one of the strengths of the study reported here that by virtue of both the researcher and the participants being Qatari, the perspectives and viewpoints will be specifically those of Qataris.

In Rehal’s research (2015), there are different features reflecting the lingering influence of colonial times. In order to protect the identity of the participants, Rehal chose to use pseudonyms. Students chose their own pseudonyms, and the choice of pseudonyms is intriguing.

Female pseudonyms	Male pseudonyms
Muneera	Mohammad
Cinderella	Mishaal
Bubbles	Ahmed
Paris	
Poppy	

Table 3.4. Rehal (2015) participants' pseudonyms.

It is fascinating that the four female participants chose pseudonyms which, other than Muneera, did not reflect Qatari, Arab or Muslim names. It is true that some Muslims have Western names, but it would be expected that many would choose names that reflected their background as Qataris, Arabs or Muslims. As discussed earlier in the chapter, early American universities made efforts to “Christianize to civilize” indigenous Americans (Wright & Tierney, 1991). The fact that these participants chose pseudonyms such as Cinderella, Bubbles, Paris and Poppy echoes Wright and Tierney (1991), who discussed the story of an indigenous American in 1773 named Shawuskukhkung. He also acquired an English name, Bartholomew Scott Calvin, which reflected the idea that “institutions were designed to remake their Indian charges in the image of the white man” (Wright & Tierney, 1991, p. 14). Even participants themselves now follow the pattern of replacing indigenous names with names that do not reflect their background. While it may be simply coincidental that participants chose names that did not reflect their backgrounds, it may also be that the influence of Western culture played a role in the indigenous Qatari female participants in choosing those four names.

3.7 Chapter summary

In this chapter, the notions of internationalisation and globalisation, and the intercultural dimension in higher education, were introduced. This was followed by a discussion about the creation of IBCs and the motives that drive both the sending nation/university and the receiving nation/organisation.

The relevant, available literature on student affairs in the Arabian Gulf region was presented, emphasising two student affairs-related studies that investigated Qatari students in American IBCs in Education City. In addition, Bakken's (2013) study was discussed from a number of perspectives, as it is the most relevant research available. A gap in the literature was identified in that little information is available to help in understanding the situation of indigenous students attending Western IBCs (Bakken, 2013). Finally, some of the deeper issues were highlighted through contemporary accounts of student issues, and an exploration of potential latent colonial influences in the literature.

My knowledge of Qatari culture and my exposure to Western culture through nine years of studying abroad in the USA and UK have helped me to appreciate the differences between cultures and their values, without the need to describe a people's cultural thinking in a certain, possibly negative, way. This lends an important and different perspective to my research and has encouraged me to use a postcolonial framework as a lens for this study. The use of a postcolonial lens will be explained in detail in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Colonial legacy and the postcolonial lens

4.1 Introduction

I am using postcolonial theory to guide my research design and as a lens through which to view my analysis and understand my findings. I have chosen this lens as I believe that with Qatar being in the Middle East but hosting IBCs from Western universities, a context is created where issues of how the East is viewed by the West are critical. While Qatar is a rich nation, it is located within an area that is often portrayed as “other”, “different”, and perhaps primitive (Said, 2003). The approach taken in my research is to provide a voice for Qatari graduates from IBCs and contribute, therefore, to the “cultural well-being” of Qataris (Young, 2003, p. 2). Using postcolonial theory as my epistemological lens allows me to undertake this study with a critical perspective of the “occident”, or “the West” as Said would call it (Said, 2003).

4.2 Key authors informing this chapter

This chapter will draw largely from the works of leading postcolonial theorists such as Edward Said and his concept of the ‘Other’, and Homi K. Bhabha and his ideas of dislocation of culture, cultural mummification, liminality, third space and hybridity. While not a founding postcolonial theorist, Stuart Hall’s work and his concept of diaspora, identity (Hall, 1994), the media and image (Hall, 1997) provide significant insights. Charles Taylor and his discussion of recognition, misrecognition and internalisation also form part of the discussion in the chapter. Finally, I touch briefly on the work of Gayatri Spivak, and explore her concept of the subaltern.

4.3 Overview of postcolonial theory

As Young points out: “‘Postcolonial theory’ is a contested term but it does involve a conceptual reorientation towards the perspectives of knowledges, as well as needs, developed outside the west” (Young, 2003, p. 6). A single definition is hard to find, and as Zachariah suggests:

“One of the central difficulties in writing about ‘postcolonial history’ is that no one is sure what it is, or when it is.”

(Zachariah, 2013, p. 2)

From my readings, I would suggest that a key aim of the theory is to change how people view the world and to work towards greater equality and justice between West and those deemed not West (Young, 2003). In that sense, postcolonialism is an ideological position. It adopts a stance that acknowledges the realities of colonialism and subjugation, and, following independence from the colonisers, looks back at the impact of the colonial period.

Aside from being an ideological position, the postcolonial viewpoint is also a lens through which to critique the experiences of people from different colonised countries, largely from the global south who have been colonised by the global north. As we saw in Chapter 2, Qatar was a British protectorate from 1916 to 1971, and while it is not traditionally viewed as a colonised country, its position in the East places it in direct contrast to the West and, therefore, some of the themes from postcolonial narratives are relevant for the purposes of this study.

“Postcolonial perspectives emerged from the colonial testimony of Third World countries and the discourse of ‘minorities’ within the geopolitical divisions of East and West, North and South.”

(Bhabha, 2004: p. 245, quotation marks in original)

The West in postcolonial theory is Europe and the global north. The historical relationship between European and other colonised peoples, non-white and non-European, impacts on contemporary relationships. Europe and the West have seen non-European peoples as people who cannot take care of themselves and need guidance on how to do things, even though the colonised people had taken care of themselves for many, many years before being colonised (Said, 2003; Young, 2003).

An example to illustrate this point with particular reference to Qatar is taken from a movie produced by the USA in 2007 named *Transformers*. At the beginning of the movie there is a scene showing an alien attack on Qatar. American troops are there to protect themselves and the Qatari people who live in a small village in the middle of nowhere.



Figure 4.1. Qatari village as portrayed in the movie. IMDB 2019 image accessed at <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0418279/mediaviewer/rm1911920896> on Feb 1, 2019.

The village has partially run-down houses built with stones that look dated. The movie presents this picture of Qatar today as backward, rural and poor, rather than the reality of a Qatar which is one of the wealthiest nations in the world with modern buildings, infrastructure and technology. The background terrain includes mountains partially obscured by mist or dust. In reality, the terrain in Qatar does not have such mountains; it is a fairly flat country.

At the end of the scene, the US troops use their hi-tech army equipment and supposedly superior US military competence to save themselves and the Qatari people. The scene from the movie encapsulates many authors' ideas of the superiority of the West over the East. If this is the image that is portrayed by Hollywood, it is quite possible that it may influence the subliminal thinking of those who work and teach in the IBCs, which is why the concepts of colonialism and postcolonialism are important to explore in connection with this study.

Young (2003) puts forward the view that people who have been colonised have the right to determine knowledge from their own lenses; to be able to dream of their future on the basis of their needs. For Young, postcolonial theory offers a language for those who have had no place

and who did not belong, and gives voice again to knowledges and histories that have not been allowed to count.

Postcolonial literature argues for a more culturally specific way of studying lives and contexts, particularly of postcolonial people. It requires an unpacking of a white, Western worldview in which white culture is the centre of civilisation, “legitimate government, law, economics, science, language, music, art, literature” (Young, 2003, p. 3).

4.4 Main theorists and their ideas

I have divided postcolonial discussions into three strands. The first is the orientalist work of Edward Said and the concept of ‘other’. The second is the work of Homi K. Bhabha who explores concepts of resistance and agency. Finally, there is the work of Spivak, known for subaltern studies. In addition, although, as mentioned previously, Hall is not regarded as a postcolonial theorist, his discussions about identity, especially the perception of identity of those who have been seen as ‘other’, are a useful source.

Edward Said (2003), in his book *Orientalism*, presents the concept of how the West “others” the non-Western. He writes about distinctions of culture and civilisation and the concept of the colonised and coloniser. The Orient is seen by the West in the way that the West wants to see it, a view that is not typically informed by the way the Orient really is. To take a more benign view, the Orient in the eyes of the West is an exotic and unchanged civilisation. It is a developmental and potentially innocent state, less civilised and less able to care for itself. On the other hand, an explicitly deficit view would be that the Orient is irrational, lazy and incapable. Whichever, the “other” is simply not “like us”. This self-appointed Western superiority allows the West to “discover” the less civilised people and to view them as a people without history or culture. The West uses its own terminology to describe and represent the Orient (Said, 2003). This deficit or deficiency-based representation is for Said still present. Such stereotypes are then used to legitimise and justify action, including military action, against countries and peoples deemed inferior. Said (2003) argues that the West has had a long history of deliberately misunderstanding and misrecognising the Middle East. The question then arises as to whether these views form any part of policy or staff narrative within the world of IBCs.

In this context of “othering”, it is significant to mention the existence of Islamophobia in the USA, especially as IBCs in Qatar can be considered not only an extension of their home campus but also of their home country (Lane, 2011). Islamophobia can be described as:

“Racialized bigotry, discrimination, policies and practices directed towards a range of groups, Muslim and otherwise.”

(Love, 2009, p. 401)

Still, the definition of Islamophobia is work in progress. The All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims concurs with the above definition, describing it as rooted in racism that targets Muslims or people perceived as Muslims (APPG on British Muslims, 2019).

Islamophobia in the USA is not new; anti-Muslim attitudes can be dated back to the country’s beginnings (GhaneaBassiri, 2013), and both Muslims and those who appear to be Muslims have suffered the effects of Islamophobia. Kaplan (2006) describes hate crimes against Muslims in America post 9/11 as a brief but sharp surge. Mir (2014) studied Muslim American women on American campuses in the USA. She discusses the existence of Islamophobia as something that cannot be hidden. She also states that although Islamophobic racism had existed for a long time in the USA, after 9/11 it went to a different level.

“This period [post 9/11] offers rich and fresh possibilities for the scrutiny of Orientalist Islamophobia in our everyday American lives.”

(Mir, 2014, p. 14)

Mir reports ideas relating to Muslims as being all the same, men as people to be feared, and women as people who fear or are victimised by Muslim men (Mir, 2014). Mir’s participants shared that they wished people could understand that Muslims are not all the same, and that they can be American citizens as well. GhaneaBassiri (2013) suggests that American attitudes against Islam may not actually be against Islam itself and its practitioners, but may rather reflect how they are perceived by the media, and how little people really know about Islam (GhaneaBassiri, 2013). In contrast to the closed views on Islam, open views on Islam would perceive Islam and Muslims as diverse and different (Arshad et al., 2012). The existence of Islamophobic attitudes towards Muslim American students (Mir, 2014), American-born Muslims or Muslim immigrants (Laird et al., 2013) evident within the USA raises the question of how much that might influence the experience of US staff perception of Qatari students, families, communities, faith and culture in American IBCs in Qatar.

This is, perhaps, one result of the binary view of the West and the East presented by Said (2003), reflecting the idea that the West and the East will have different contexts, frames of reference and relationships with each other.

In contrast, Homi K. Bhabha (2004) does not concur with the concept of binary sides. In his seminal book, *The Location of Culture*, there is a degree of consensus between Bhabha and Said in term of the self-appointed superiority of the West to the non-West and the dangers of what Bhabha calls ‘cultural mummification’ – a concept Bhabha uses to caution against static ideas about identity. However, it is his ideas of liminality, hybridity and the ‘third space’ that makes his work distinct from that of Said.

For Bhabha, issues are less clear-cut than for Said, and he argues that people can be between West and non-West in terms of culture. Culture for Bhabha is not spatial or geographic although a certain region might have an overarching national and regional identity. Essentialist assumptions, that is, representing the East as one monolithic geographical mass, which feature in Said’s ideas, do not sit comfortably with Bhabha. Bhabha differentiates between negotiating culture and negating one culture over another, meaning that a person or a subject as commonly used by authors will be negotiating their culture as neither completely Western nor completely Eastern, but as a hybrid. The subject will be somewhere between trying to keep their original identity and acting in a Western manner; therefore the subject is dislocated from both cultures and creates a different, hybrid culture.

A person’s culture is considered their first space; it goes wherever they go and provides the tools to act in the environment that they live in and in which they construct social norms. When a different dominant culture exists, that is the second space, and a person is no longer capable of using their first-space tools in second-space venues. Being no longer able to function fully, therefore, the subject produces new tools in a third space to allow them to function. The third space is not an identity; it is an identifier. In that third space, hybridity can thrive, new lives can be constructed, and new ideas, political views and initiatives can start. Liminality is when the person is in the process of their cultural changing, not before and yet not after the changes happen. While someone’s own traditional social norms can be uncertain, it is during this process of liminality that the subject will need to go through a series of actions in order to belong to a certain group (Bhabha, 2004; Bhabha & Rutherford, 2006).

In the literature review chapter, studies were reported in which leaders discussed the fact that they are limited in making changes to fit the local context when it comes to students’ education

(Dumbre et al., 2013; Karam, 2018), which can lead to the creation of a third space and hybridity. This process can be harder on Qatari women, as could be seen in the example in the literature review chapter of the female graduate who shared her experience concerning the mixed-gender graduation in the newspaper. She did perhaps feel alienated from the graduate group with whom she should have been graduating, and chose not to attend her graduation. Hajjar and Gotto (2013) discuss an environment which creates social and out-of-class activities but in which the Qataris decide whether they want to be in those activities or want to opt out. This can be seen as the point of liminality: the process Qataris would have to go through to adapt to the broader university community that functions outside of their social cultural norms, and to function within a new cultural space. This may be interpreted as the beginning of the process of being changed by “the civilizing mission” (Bhabha, 2004, p. 122) or, in Edward Said’s words (2003), from uncivilised to civilised.

The dominant culture can cast the inferior culture in a certain image. This can be unintentional but may also be intended. Perhaps one of the most profound assumptions of the superiority of West over East is encapsulated in a speech in 1835 by Thomas Macaulay. He is speaking about the English plan to control the Indians:

‘We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern – a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degree fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population.’

(Sharp, 1920, p. 116)

Macaulay not only sees Europeans as superior in knowledge but also wants to wipe out the knowledge and way of life of the ‘others’. In addition, he wants to create a layer of Indian people who will work for the colonisers to produce more Indians from the lower layers of the population having English ideology although perhaps not being fully English, as per Bhabha and Hall.

The concept of subjects acting like the coloniser is referred to as mimicry by Bhabha (2004). Mimicry has a unique shape which is the imperfection of acting like the West but not being exactly like the West. However, that is not a mistake, that is how it should be; indeed, it is how Western colonisers want it to be.

‘Colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognized Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite.*’

(Bhabha, 2004, p. 122, italics in original.)

Mimicry is a product of the West delivered to Eastern subjects – it requires them to continue doing the wrong thing with no origin from their own original culture or from the coloniser culture, a repetition of no origin. Their imperfection is the perfection of mimicry. Subjects want to follow the coloniser to gain power, to be part of that power that the coloniser enjoys but still will maintain the difference, questioning their place in-between identities and still not being like the coloniser, dislocated from both cultures (Bhabha, 2004).

Bhabha then focuses on the various ways that individuals within a postcolonial setting (or, as in the case of this study, within a Western setting in the middle of the Middle East) constantly negotiate and construct identity, identity production and reproduction in the face of fluidity and ambiguity. Bhabha is less focused on the big concepts of colonialism and postcolonialism, and more focused on the impact of colonialism and neo-colonialism on the everyday geopolitics of the colonisers as they go about their daily lives. In that sense, his concepts of hybridity, mimicry, liminality and the ‘third space’ all have relevance for this study. This study will seek the perspectives of those who are the ‘other’ or the visitor attending IBCs, and explore how they have found ways to negotiate their identity and agency as they study in the branch campuses.

Stuart Hall (2016; 1994) agrees with Bhabha and Said’s idea of the relationship between West and non-West. Moreover, Hall agrees with Bhabha that culture is not tied to one location, and also subscribes to his ideas about culture dislocation and mimicry, which he describes as ‘diaspora’:

“I use this term here metaphorically, not literally: diaspora does not refer us to those scattered tribes whose identity can only be secured in relation to some sacred homeland to which they must at all costs return, even if it means pushing other people into the sea. This is old, the imperialising, the hegemonising, form of ‘ethnicity’. We have seen the fate of the people of Palestine at the hands of this backward-looking conception of diaspora – and the complicity of the West with it. The diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of ‘identity’ which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference.”

(Hall, 1994, p. 235, quotation and italics in original.)

In the above quote, Hall is transforming the use of diaspora and “re-presenting” it as the concept that he has in mind. His re-presentation of diaspora agrees with Bhabha’s ideas of dislocation of culture and mimicry: that the subjects are no longer in their homeland, meaning in their own culture, nor are they producing something with origin, either theirs or the others’, but are having to keep reproducing something new every time. So, Hall and Bhabha agree on the concept of dislocation/diaspora and disagree with the binary, clear-cut sides presented by Said. However, all three of them agree about the relationship between the subjected and the West and others of superiority, as explained earlier – as represented by Bhabha’s concept of culture mummification, Said’s idea of painting an ancient image of the orient as containing people for whom time has stopped, and Hall’s suggestion of inferiority reinforced through images by the people who have the power in the media (Hall, 1997), including movies and similar productions to those discussed earlier in this chapter such as the movie *Transformers* about Qatar. Moreover, when Qatari students enrolled in the international IBCs want to fit in with their university and peer environment, they may have to negotiate not only an environment that perhaps does not represent their culture but also one which might conflict with their upbringing, creating conflict for them in staying true to their faith, Qatari culture, and their families’ identity.

Are Qatari culture and identity as clear-cut as Eastern vs Western, in Said’s description, or are Qatari culture and identity hybrid and diasporic, where they are dislocated from their own culture, producing something other than what their culture is? What kind of dialogue would a Qatari student engage in to be recognised and accepted, and would that mean that a new culture has been produced by that student?

Charles Taylor (1997) discusses the concept of recognition and misrecognition or non-recognition, and its dangers in identity development. Identity is a sort of understanding of our characteristics as human beings. Identity development is partially attributed to individual recognition or absence of it. When an individual is younger, they look up to their parents, and when they grow older, they may seek approval from a significant other or any other person who holds a place of importance in their lives. The challenge for youngsters may come when their parents have two different projected aims and goals for them; in these cases, difficulties can arise in the family.

This idea of recognition and the implications of non-recognition can even take place at a higher level, such as when a group of people seeks approval from another group (Taylor, 1997). At this level, challenges can arise too, because both groups can be different. For example, when a colonised group seeks approval, although there is a plethora of cultural groups around the world, they may look only to the coloniser group for their recognition (Taylor, 1997), acting like them, being like them, and trying to be one of them. Nonetheless, as Bhabha (2004) suggests, they will never be the same; they will always be different.

Taylor (1997) believes that peoples have different cultural characteristics, and all individuals have the right to be recognised for what they are. As he says in the quote below, it is a right of people to be recognised, and the absence of recognition means taking away peoples' rights, which can be a form of oppression.

“Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being.”

(Taylor, 1997, p. 98.)

Identity is not constructed in isolation; it is constructed through dialogue within an environmental context, and herein lies the importance of recognition.

“A person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves.”

(Taylor, 1997, p. 98)

One of the issues of being cast in an inferior image can be that this image becomes internalised. This internalisation is described by Taylor (1997) as one of the most powerful forms of oppression. People who have internalised such images of themselves are unable to seize opportunities if and when they arise (Taylor, 1997). This is essentially what Taylor describes in the above quote as “imprisoning someone”, which can be “one of the most potent instruments of their oppression” (Taylor, 1997, p. 98).

Misrecognition can be unconscious, too (Martineau, 2012). As discussed earlier in the chapter, media and movies can affect the subliminal thinking of staff working in international branch offices. Subliminal thinking can in turn influence staff and teachers' choices of topics and words. Arshad et al. (2012) gave an example that illustrates how a simple choice of words by teachers can have a significant impact on students.

“The *congested* streets of Mumbai...

...The *bustling* streets of Mumbai....”

(Arshad et al., 2012, p. 4, italics in original.)

The first choice of words creates an image of a chaotic environment, while the second presents the image of an exciting environment. Arshad et al. (2012) explain that “[v]alues can be imparted unconsciously through the choice of words or content of what we teach” (Arshad et al., 2012, p. 4). In a similar way, the choice of topics and words can influence the Qatari students’ experience, leading to the type of dialogue Taylor (1997) discusses, and creating a certain image of oneself, intended or not intended.

Those who are oppressed need to cleanse themselves of imposed images like these, and they also need to be recognised equally, which is a healthy model for a democratic society. Their identity development happens in a dialogue with the surrounding environment; the goal is to have a single class of citizens, with equal rights and entitlements. Taylor argues that equal rights should not be based on the needs of the majority or the dominant group, but on everyone’s need – the need to be recognised for their unique identity. Acknowledging their distinctive difference is relevant to the story related previously about the student who chose not to attend her mixed-gender graduation. The Qatar Community College choice of having a mixed-gender graduation may have come about for various reasons: economically, one joint ceremony costs less than two ceremonies, one for each gender; one ceremony is common practice in the US; US cultural traditions would dictate a joint ceremony, and so forth. The common or dominant need required the college to hold such an event. However, the student’s distinctive need was not considered. In addition, the kind of dialogue the student went through with herself, and how this incident affected her identity were not recognised (Taylor, 1997).

Martineau (2012) argued that we need to go further than asking what harm identity misrecognition brings, and start asking “What is hindering this person from participating equally in society?” (Martineau, 2012, p. 174). Martineau’s question echoes the question discussed in Chapter 3 about WCMC-Q not asking why Qatari students choose not to join in social activities, rather than simply giving them the option to opt out. This question is shaping this research so as to explore the Qatari student experience – as Martineau (2012) suggests, this question will “elicit a multi-layer response, in which the identification of the type of misrecognition ... may be part” (Martineau, 2012, p. 174).

When a misrecognised, non-dominant culture tries to find its place within the dominant norm of a cultural structure space, it is often interpreted as the minority trying to take over the democratic way of life. In fact, giving those who are misrecognised space is an embodiment of democracy, not the other way around (Martineau, 2012).

Gayatri Spivak (1988) argues that the relationship of superiority between West and non-West has contextual elements within an infrastructure that has created a layer of people with no voice or access to hegemonic power. This concept of subaltern does not completely capture the oppressed. Some of the oppressed are subaltern, but all the subaltern are oppressed. The difference between the oppressed and the subaltern is that the oppressed have a history from which they were able to gain power, such as black people in the United States of America. Through this history that they created, they were able to claim their place and gain access to hegemonic power. Indeed, in the United States they have had an African American president. The subaltern, on the other hand, do not have access to a similar history that could perhaps help them to gain access and be part of hegemonic power.

Spivak (1988) gives examples of Indian females being subaltern in practising *sati*, which is a cultural Hindu practice whereby widowed females sacrifice themselves by throwing themselves onto their husbands' funeral pyre. She discusses how there can be social pressure on these widows to sacrifice themselves, and how it is seen as the right thing to do. However, when British colonials arrived, they banned *sati* to save Indian women from such social practices. Spivak describes this as “white men saving brown women from brown men” (Spivak, 1988, p. 297).

In a similar way to the concepts above, in this study Qatari students from both genders are subject to indigenous social norms and ways of living that can be imposed by families and social pressure and thus affect them. Qatari females, in particular, are affected by these social expectations (Bakken, 2013). The type of education in which the Qatari students are enrolled can impose Western values and expectations. This is reinforced by the type of research available, which lacks a Qatari student voice and is conducted by non-Qataris, mostly Westerners. It can be interpreted as an attempt to try to “civilise” Qataris without listening to them, reflecting the kind of postcolonial paternalism described by authors like Edward Said. It can be seen in a similar light to the British in India stopping Indian females from practising *sati*: the Western world trying to save Qataris from their own selves without their being involved and lacking opportunities to express their own needs.

Are Qatari voices heard? From the student affairs chapter, it is evident that the Qatari student voice is lacking. My own experience and reading of the research is that Qataris themselves feel a subtle tension when it comes to their culture, and this is exacerbated by the fact that their voice does not appear to be heard. As a result, they realise the limitations of their access to hegemonic power. It is clear from that chapter that the people in power, the decision-makers in the Community College of Qatar even after the American community college had left, still opted for a mixed-gender graduation. Although the president of the Qatar Community College is Qatari, are decisions such as those about the graduation really being made by Qataris? And even if decisions are being made by Qataris, are they making decisions in the interests of fellow Qataris or in the interests of Western norms and traditions? Who is that Qatari person in power representing? Why did the female student who missed her graduation have to resort to a local newspaper to have a voice, and why, five years later, is the graduation still mixed-gender? Who is part of the hegemonic power and who is the subaltern?

Even though there are crucial differences between the British colonisers banning *sati* by law, and the Qatari example, there is no law dictating whether someone could or should attend mixed-gender events or not. Other examples like banning the Burqa and Niqab in France and similar European countries suggest that perhaps the means of controlling people are different in today's age. The modern history of Qatari culture is not known for violent incidents to protect their identity. Are Qataris subaltern with no access to a voice or do some have access and some not, creating their own differences within the culture?

Spivak describes the subaltern in the following way:

“For the (gender-unspecified) ‘true’ subaltern group, whose identity is its differences, there is no unrepresentable subaltern subject that can know and speak itself; the intellectual's solution is not to abstain from representation. The problem is that the subject's itinerary has not been left traced so as to offer an object of seduction to the representing intellectual.”

(Spivak, 2010, p. 40)

The main idea here is that the real subaltern are the ones with no means of being represented. In the example from the student affairs chapter, would the student who contacted a writer in a local newspaper to communicate her voice about the mixed-gender graduation be considered oppressed?

Spivak describes the relationship between the oppressed and oppressor in the following quote:

“The small peasant proprietors cannot represent themselves; they must be represented. Their representative must appear simultaneously as their master, as an authority over them, as unrestricted governmental power that protects them from the other classes and sends them rain and sunshine from above.”

(Spivak, 1988, pp. 276-277)

In the above quote, Spivak sets out the relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor. The oppressors legitimise themselves because the oppressed exist; they act as if they work in their best interest, but the oppressors are making decisions for the oppressed, and the oppressed have no choice except to follow. Yet, until Qataris are actually asked, it is not possible to ascertain fully whether Qatari students, some or all, men or women or both, could be labelled subaltern as described by Spivak.

Creating the subaltern does not have to take the form of forcing people. It can happen through the type of dialogue represented by the graduating student example, where students are being silenced so that they define their identity as inferior and their choices as less important, and therefore have to make a choice not to participate. It may also take the form represented by the other students that we do not know about who perhaps did not want to attend this type of graduation ceremony but went regardless, in order to be accepted and recognised (Taylor, 1997).

The subaltern has no access to voice; but from the previous discussion, we have seen that Qatari students were consulted in one study at least that discussed general experience (Bakken, 2013), and were also able to make their views heard through the media in the two incidents that I was able to capture for this research. In terms of the GU-Q conversation about God and the mixed-gender graduation, the question is why, when there is an established student affairs system, did the students have to resort to social media to have a voice? And although they were able to find a way of getting their voices out into the public domain, were they actually listened to? Do they have access to hegemonic power that allows them to express their needs, be listened to in a clear, safe environment, and gain what they want? It seems that in at least some cases, their voices are not being heard; the mixed-gender graduation is still happening at the time that this research is being written, five years after the student missed her graduation ceremony. In the GU-Q event example, GU-Q did stop the event after the topic went viral on social media. However, the reason announced for cancelling it was procedural error not cultural, which is the main reason the topic went viral. The question may be posed: how many other events, conversations and activities go through GU-Q and other IBC's procedure system without

‘procedural error’ but nonetheless put similar cultural pressure on the Qatari students? One thing particularly pertinent to the GU-Q event is that the ‘God issue’ is widely agreed among Qataris across the board and can be extended to the Muslim world in general. This may be the reason the issue went viral on social media. However, as Taylor (1997) argues, it is a human right to care about the particular, distinctive differences that affect people like the Qatari students. Therefore, although differences among themselves as Qataris are highly likely not to gain attraction in social media like the God issue, it can still be a form of oppression not to recognise them.

As a general observation, the relationship between Qatar and the West is what the authors discussed above would expect, given that Qatar has a history of being colonised, most recently by the British. The number of Western universities/IBCs in Qatar is much higher than non-Western education institutions in the country. Could this interest in Western education relate to the relationship between West and East? What do IBCs and their staff perceive as their role in Qatar and for Qatari society? What do Qataris perceive as the role of IBCs? Finally, how do these things interact with each other? All of these questions are explored in this study through the kind of postcolonial lens discussed above.

There is a final, relevant and extremely current issue to consider. In January 2019, a new law was passed in Qatar. It is called ‘Law Number 7 for the Year 2019: Arabic Language Protection’. The law is divided into 15 sections. Each section describes the guidelines and the responsibilities of governmental and non-governmental bodies operating in Qatar and the ways in which they can protect the Arabic language, such as making it the preferred language of communication, teaching the language, holding events in the language, using it in printed materials and so forth. The fact that such a law has been passed in Qatar shows their seriousness about protecting Arabic, and indicates that the language does indeed need protection. To achieve this, there were no obvious public protests or violent actions by Qataris, so it may be that the tensions in Qatar are subtle and perhaps handled differently from how this type of change happens elsewhere, such as with black peoples’ rights. Furthermore, it is unclear to me who is part of that hegemonic power that made this law and passed it, and this relates to other concerns about Qataris not being represented as part of the hegemonic. Are they subaltern as Spivak describes it or not? How do the Qataris see themselves in terms of their cultural identity; are they clear-cut East as Said described it, or more in the grey area, that is, dislocated? This study perhaps unfolds some of this lack of clarity about the Qatari location of culture and diaspora (as conceptualised by Hall (1994) and discussed above).

4.5 Chapter summary

In this postcolonial chapter, I have presented the ideas from postcolonial theory that are most relevant to this study. The overview of postcolonial theory introduced the writings of Bhabha, Said, Hall, Taylor and Spivak. These authors agree on some of the ways of thinking about postcolonialism and its effects, and disagree on others, but nonetheless, their thoughts set the scene of the relationship between West and East. The main ideas discussed were: the concept of 'other', culture dislocation, hybridity, mimicry, liminality, third space, cultural mummification, media and image, idea development through recognition, misrecognition, internalisation and subaltern. The chapter included some reflections on how these postcolonial concepts manifest in Qatar, with some examples. This leads us to new ways of questioning how IBCs perceive themselves working in Qatar, and how Qataris and their families perceive those universities, and the interaction between these different entities. This research contributes to our understanding of these issues.

Chapter 5: Methodology and methods

5.1 Introduction

There is no single way to gather data or to choose research methods, and any path the researcher chooses when conducting his/her research will have strengths and weaknesses and create some sort of imperfection (Patton, 2002). In addition, there is no specific time-period over which to collect data; collecting data can take place even before the study is conducted (Stake, 1995). This chapter details and explains the rationale for the series of decisions that were made in this research. It justifies the choices made in terms of methodology and method and outlines the process designed and followed to achieve the aims of the research as described in the Introduction to this study. The main guiding questions are:

- What was the experience of Qatari alumni when they were students in their American branch campus in terms of non-academic extracurricular activities and student life?
- What are the student affairs services of the IBCs providing to their students in terms of cultural adaptation in extracurricular activities and student life, and what is their experience of working with Qatari students?

The qualitative research strategy that was chosen is discussed, and the use of a postcolonial lens to view data is explained. Thereafter, the process of developing the semi-structured interview questions is addressed, and a table is presented showing the semi-structured questions guiding interviews for staff and alumni, and linking them to the aim and the objective of the overall research study. The process and timeline of data collection and data analysis are explained, and the translation philosophy used when working with data is discussed. Finally, issues relating to the validity and reliability of the research are presented.

5.2 Methodology

The term methodology concerns the philosophical view of the research paradigm or approach (Hughes, 2014). As seen in the outer layers of the research onion (Figure 5.1) as discussed by Saunders et al. (2016), philosophical views are the first consideration when planning the

research design. Creswell (2009, p. 3) suggests that research designs are the “plans and the procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis”.

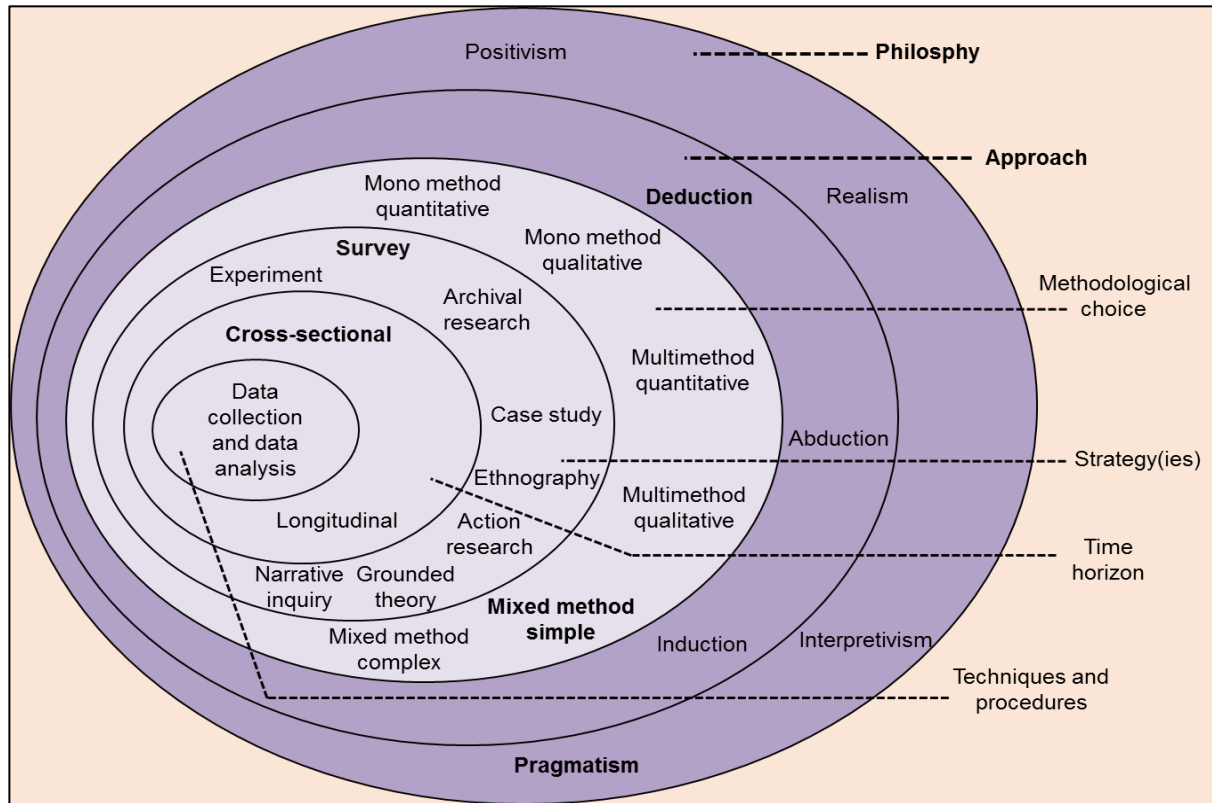


Figure 5.1. The research onion (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 128).

5.2.1 Choice of methodology

The three primary options in terms of methodology for research are quantitative, qualitative or a mixture of quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative methods rely on numerical data and therefore require “predetermined response categories” to which answers and experiences would be assigned (Patton, 2002, p. 14). These are collected by something like a survey designed to collect the participants' views through quantitative or numeric description (Creswell, 2009). While quantitative research can provide generalisable findings (Patton, 2002), to be effective it often requires a very large sample or very strong evidence. Another disadvantage may be that it would “only tap the surface” of the issue being explored (Patton, 2002, p. 17).

As the research goal in this study was to explore experiences, the qualitative model seemed more appropriate. As discussed in Chapter 2, there is a tension between the application of the Western/American model of higher education and the culture of the indigenous Qatari people. There is a need for deeper learning about this tension that would be difficult to capture through quantitative methods. Moreover, an important part of this study was to examine the experiences and to seek the “cultural well-being” (Young, 2003, p. 2). of participants who can be disadvantaged in terms of having their voices fully heard, as noted in the literature review. The qualitative approach provides the indigenous participants the opportunity to share their voices and be heard, and also to learn from their experiences being presented in a way that is less likely to be influenced by the colonial position of seeing indigenous Qataris as “the others” (Said, 2003).

Following a qualitative approach facilitates an understanding of past life experiences directly from participants’ words (Creswell, 2009; Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2011). The “raw source” (Patton, 2002, p. 21) of data comes directly from the participants’ description in their own words, and any themes that arise are investigated without assumptions about right and wrong answers (Patton, 2002).

This openness to learn about the participants can be described as basic research that is linked closely with qualitative inquiry (Given, 2008). Yin (2011, p. 3) states that qualitative research is a “multifaceted field of inquiry marked by different orientation and methodologies”. Yin (2011) also states that qualitative research is concerned with the depth and details of an issue – it helps the researcher to “study a real-world setting, discover how people cope and thrive in that setting and capture the contextual richness of people’s everyday lives” (Yin, 2011, pp. 3-4). Qualitative research helps the researcher to look for more than just the “surface” (Patton, 2002, p. 17). By choosing a qualitative research methodology, this study facilitates openness to new things arising without predetermined categories (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2011). The depth from the open-ended interviews adds “detail, meaning at a very personal level of experience” (Patton, 2002, p. 17). This allows us to see the world through the eyes of the participants (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2011).

Using a qualitative research design helps with learning about the context and experience as a whole, rather than focusing on a single variable (Hughes, 2014), and allows the research to reveal how participants see their world through the deep and rich stories shared (Bresciani et al., 2004; Patton, 2002; Saunders et al., 2016; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2011). Therefore, choosing to

use primarily a qualitative approach allows the researcher to listen to the authentic voice of the participants and dive into the “richness and fullness” (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 568) of data from listening to their life stories and experiences.

5.2.2 Case studies and generalisability

“Case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (Stake, 1995, p. xiii). IBCs form the chosen site for this study, and as such are treated as a case. “In intrinsic case study, the case is pre-selected” (Stake, 1995, p. 4), which is true here, as the choice of Qatar IBCs was pre-decided by the researcher. Even though the use of Qatar IBCs in Education City is not a typical case, it may be that the “unusual case helps illustrate matters we overlook in typical cases” (Stake, 1995, p. 4). The strength of a case study lies in its ability to capture the complexity and particularity of a single case through deep understanding of its details, and also of the similarities and differences between stories (Bresciani et al., 2004; Stake, 1995). Case studies can examine people as individuals or can examine groups, programmes and institutions as entities (Bresciani et al., 2004; Gillham, 2000; Stake, 1995). Case study data collection sources can vary: for example, interview, observation or document review (Bresciani et al., 2004). A case study is so focused that its findings are not intended to be generalised to other cases. Although cases could range from one case (Bresciani et al., 2004) to multiple cases (Patton, 2002), this research focuses on understanding each interview as a single case (Stake, 1995). Each participant will be treated as a case study, and the participant’s responses will be analysed individually.

Even though case studies do not facilitate generalisation (Given, 2008; Stake, 1995), a “certain generalisation will be drawn” in cases where things keep happening over and over (Stake, 1995, p. 7). The uniqueness of Education City (as described in the literature review) creates interest in learning about Education City's population per se, without focusing too much on the generalisability of the findings (Given, 2008; Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995). Nonetheless, some sort of generalisability may be possible, and it is for the readers to judge the extent of the study’s applicability (Given, 2008; Letts et al., 2007; and Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The reason for using a case study approach is to allow the curious researcher (Stake, 1995) to explore what might be beneath the surface, particularly in relation to the literature review. This,

hopefully, will provide insight into student experiences and inform and shape future research and practice in higher education and student affairs for Qatar and beyond.

Case studies can be organised by identifying the main themes with examples of each, then presenting the main themes from different case studies (Bresciani et al., 2004; Gibbs, 2007). Later sections of this chapter explain how multiple cases were managed and analysed in cycles to find out whether there were common themes among them (Patton, 2002).

5.2.3 Viewing qualitative data via a paradigmatic lens

Researchers use different paradigmatic lenses to view their qualitative findings (Patton, 2002). The philosophical lenses for this study were drawn primarily from postcolonial theory. As discussed in the literature review, postcolonial theory is concerned with issues of justice and equality and particularly with how colonialism has impacted on relationships between people and countries, particularly in relation to West and non-West relations. Postcolonial theory considers issues of representation, migration and what constitutes knowledge production (Young, 2003).

5.2.3.1 Postcolonial theory and lived experiences

Postcolonial theory does not solve problems but provides “useful strategies for a wider field of global analysis” (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2013, p. viii), which is a form of generalisation. This study focuses on examining concepts of postcolonialism such as Bhabha's (1994) idea of mimicking, Spivak's (1998) layers of power, and other concepts of social justice such as justice, equality, equity and fairness. Further details of these concepts can be found in the postcolonial lens chapter.

Most, if not all, of the literature about the Education City Qatari students' experience has been written by non-Qatari authors. Framing this research through a postcolonial lens facilitates a better understanding of the Qatari perspective.

5.3 Linking of aim, objectives and questions

The tables below demonstrate the rationale behind the type of questions created for the interviews and the aim of the topic area they were designed to explore. There are five groups of questions, each represented in a different table. The first group of questions relates to postcolonialism, the second to IBCs, the third to the development and adjustment of student affairs, the fourth to the context of study in Qatar, and the final one to student life and the campus environment. The questions are arranged here for ease of understanding and as a guideline to the areas of exploration of topics in the guided questions, and not in the order in which they were asked. In addition, the number of questions does not necessarily reflect the importance of the area being examined, nor does the order of presentation in the table. For the complete sets of questions in the order in which they were asked, please refer to the appendices. The linking questions could be distributed differently by a different researcher. Follow-up questions in the interviews were based on the progress of each individual interview and the stories shared.

Aim, objectives and question/s list	To investigate the theoretical context: postcolonial theorising; postcolonial critique and theory; locating the term postcolonial; subjectivity and the postcolonial subject
Alumni interview questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What have you done to express your needs to student affairs staff? - What would you recommend doing to make your branch campus student affairs activities better suited to future students?
Staff questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you share with me your learning journey in working with Muslim and Arab students? - Can you talk about what kind of policies, procedures, and direction to the team you work with you think might have some influence on Qatari students? - Can you share with what kind of channels/methods Arab and Muslim students can share their opinions and needs and the process of finding feasible solutions? A story of first-hand experience of such students sharing their opinion and needs?

Table 5.1. Questions linked to postcolonial theory and voice.

The alumni and staff questions above are linked to the ideas of Spivak (1988), and are intended to investigate whether or not the alumni were heard when they were students, whether they were able to make changes in their college experience by sharing their voices, and what kind of environment they were offered by IBCs to help achieve that goal. These questions are also

linked to Edward Said's (2003) idea of who is making knowledge and the learning of Westerners about Others.

The questions in Table 5.2 explore what influenced the alumni's decision to enrol in a certain branch campus and what made staff interested in working in a certain branch campus.

Aim, objectives and question/s list	To discuss and analyse the historical context / development of the increase of the use of IBCs
Alumni interview questions	- Why did you choose to come to this university? Which other universities did you consider attending? What were the other options you explored?
Staff question list	- Can you share with me your story, how you ended up working at this university? - Would you please talk about what you know about the university you work at?

Table 5.2. Questions linked to decisions and interest.

These questions were intended to build on the literature concerning the development of IBCs and the reasons for their increase in the Middle East and the Arabian Gulf area.

The third group of questions tackles the historical development of the American model of student affairs being a student-centred model.

Aim, objectives and question/s list	To evaluate historical development of the American student affairs
Alumni interview questions	- What efforts have you noticed from student affairs staff to accommodate you as a Qatari? Or Muslim?
Staff question list	- Some staff members tend to interact with students on a daily basis, some work with schools' policies, procedures, and leading a team of professional staff or maybe something else. In your current role, can you describe to me your job and what you do? - What shapes your practices, dictate your practice, as a professional in this field? - Can you describe your practice if you worked in another institution?

Table 5.3. Questions linked to adjusting the environment for the Qatari students.

The questions above were designed to evaluate the implementation of American student affairs in the American IBCs in Qatar, and explore how the student affairs service is being adapted to make it student-centred for the Qatari student population on campus.

The next group of questions focuses on the characteristics of the participants.

Aim, objectives and question/s list	To investigate the State of Qatar, the development of higher education in Qatar, and the creation of Education City and the American IBCs in Qatar.
Alumni interview questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you give me three phrases that your closest friends would use to describe you to a stranger? What about describing you as a Qatari to a stranger? - Could you share with me aspects that distinguished you from your peers as Qatari?
Staff question list	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you please share with me what kind of students you work with – their backgrounds and demographic? - What made the university interested in you for this role? - In your opinion, what things can be done to enhance Qatari student experience?

Table 5.4. Questions linked to understanding the participants' characteristics.

The final group of questions examines the living experiences of alumni as students in their IBCs and the interactions they had with student affairs, or interactions with student affairs that they were aware of. In the case of staff, the questions examine efforts made that alumni were not necessarily aware of during their experiences.

Aim, objectives and question/s list	To examine campus life in the international IBCs for their challenges and opportunities in relation to native students of the host country.
Alumni interview questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you tell me what you know about student affairs? Follow up questions about their experiences of student affairs support during their studies. - Could you talk about your experience of adjusting to university life: Any support you needed and received and from whom? - Were there activities you could not take part in? (Why, gender, faith) - Can you tell me what student affairs activities you have used? Why? - Did student affairs influence your experience in either positive or negative ways? Tell me more.
Staff question list	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you talk about out-of-classroom activities that you do? - Can you describe your experience working with Qatari students taking part in out-of-classroom activities? - Can you share with me some stories about when you needed to customise practices to fit Muslim and Arab students? - Can you describe your experience implementing policies, procedures, and leading your team in terms of working with Qataris?

Table 5.5. Questions linked to alumni living experiences and staff efforts.

5.4 Geographical location and time-frame

The main study was preceded by one pilot study for staff and two pilot studies for alumni. The first pilot study for alumni and the pilot for staff took place in Edinburgh, United Kingdom. The second pilot for alumni and the actual research data collection took place in Doha, Qatar. The data were collected in two time-periods at Education City, where Qatar Foundation IBCs are located. The first time-period was from the beginning of April 2016 to the end of September 2016, and the second, to carry out the remaining five interviews, was from the end of December 2016 to early January 2017. The figure below presents timelines for the data collection process and further details about data collection in chronological sequence.

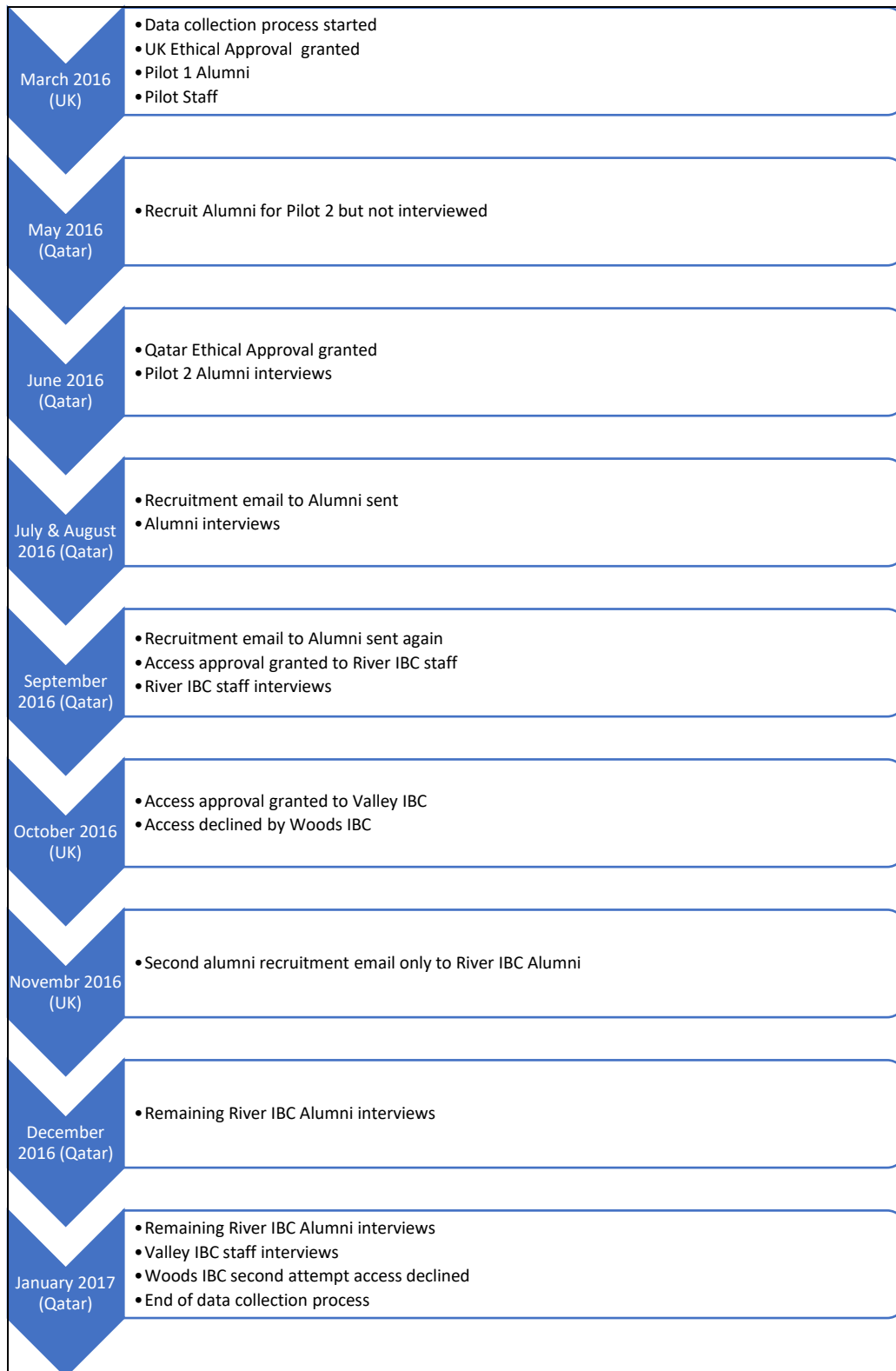


Figure 5.2. Timeline data collection process.

5.5 Data collection

The section which follows includes detailed information about the data collection procedure, selection of data sources, accessing participants, challenges, data gathering, data management, translation, time-frame, and data analysis. This detail is important to allow for critical evaluation of the rigour of the study (Letts et al., 2007; Patton, 2002).

5.5.1 UK ethical approval

Prior to collecting data by interviewing participants, ethical approval was applied for and granted. In the UK, ethical approval (IRB) was granted through the University of Edinburgh by email correspondence after an official IRB form was filed.

5.5.2 Preparation for interviews

A checklist was adapted from one developed by the University of Minnesota Centre for Social Research (Patton, 2002). Because that list recommends using older equipment, such as good quality tapes, their recommendations were updated to include the use of digital equipment to record the interviews. The adapted checklist is below:

- Use a good quality audio recording tool.
- Always carry extra spare batteries for the audio recorder.
- Carry an outlet to transfer data from the audio recorder in case it runs out of recording space.
- Choose a quiet and interruption-free interview place.
- Place the audio recorder closer to the interviewee.
- Have the recorder on a stable place or surface.
- Test the recording prior to the interview.

For both the pilot and actual interviews, the study process, including the background to the study (see Appendix 3), and measures taken to ensure confidentiality, were carefully explained to the participants (Creswell, 2009; Stake, 1995). It was further explained that the interview was voluntary, and participants' rights were made clear (Creswell, 2009). A form seeking informed consent was provided to read and sign. The informed consent form is available in the Appendices section.

5.5.3 Information collected before the interview

Demographic information was collected prior to conducting the second alumni pilot and actual interviews. This was done using the prepared tables in Appendices 9 and 10 that were filled in by the researcher after questioning participants. For the first alumni pilot and the staff pilot, demographic data was not collected, as many of the questions were not relevant.

5.5.4 Audio recording and note-taking

As detailed previously, a digital audio recorder was used to record the interviews. Audio recording is helpful to provide exact quotations while still enabling the researcher to be actively engaged in the interview. As discussed by Patton (2002), the use of recording equipment facilitates a better conversational flow and better availability of time to develop follow-up questions. The end result of this process enables repeated checking which helps to identify patterns (Patton, 2002).

In addition, the researcher used a notepad to take strategic notes for following up when listening to the audio. Directly after the interview, an additional 30 minutes was blocked out to write other notes while the conversation was still fresh. Follow-up efforts also included understanding (through research) unusual terminology or simply organising the audio recordings, for example by transferring them to a laptop and labelling them (Patton, 2002). Notes and related research papers were safely stored in a file cabinet and locked. Audio recordings were saved in a password-locked computer through TrueCrypt, an encryption software with an additional password for the software to protect the audio recording.

5.5.5 Developing the questions

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Care was taken when writing the questions as this can be the hardest part of undertaking a successful case study (Bresciani et al., 2004; Stake, 1995).

The questions were designed to facilitate identification of patterns (Saldana, 2016) and make choices of what was “worthy of attention” from which to draw meaningful conclusions (Stake,

1995, p. 49). Describing the physical location, for example hallways and furniture, can help the reader to see the context in a livelier way (Stake, 1995).

As indicated above, interviews were audio recorded. A standardised question list was prepared with 12 questions for alumni and 14 for staff. These questions created a framework for the interview, and allowed for further questions to delve more deeply into participants' experiences. The questions are provided in the Appendix section.

Pilot studies were carried out to test the questions.

5.5.5.1 Alumni interview pilot 1

Two pilot studies were conducted for alumni. For the first pilot, access to a Qatari student in Edinburgh was not feasible. The next-best thing was to interview someone who seemed to be in a similar situation to Qataris. I recruited and interviewed an Edinburgh University Master's degree student about his Bachelor's degree experience. This student was in the same age group as those for the main study. I planned to ask the student as an alumnus of the university where he studied for his Bachelor's degree, and what his experience had been. He had undertaken his studies as an international student, so had been in the minority, much as Qataris are a minority in their own country. I asked him personally if he was interested in taking part in the pilot study and he was willing. There was no monetary compensation for participating. Interviews were conducted during the weekend as that was the only time the participant was available. The original venue booked was the library, but there were no staff to assist at the chosen time. After a few failed attempts to find alternative venues, the interview was finally conducted in the living room of my residence, with the express agreement of the participant. The interview lasted for one hour, and used the prepared questions apart from a few minor changes in terms of nationality, location and the name of the university. The participant was provided with a consent form to sign, briefed about the study and its purpose, and also briefed about the purpose of the pilot interview. The interview was audio recorded. It was conducted in English, which was a second language for both the researcher and the participant. During the interview, there was a sense that it was not going in the right direction, which was confirmed when the interview was transcribed. The participant did not fully understand the questions, or was not answering around the area of interest for the main study. In the process of listening to the audio recording to transcribe the interview, it became clear that the questions needed to be rewritten and another

pilot needed to be done with a Qatari student. This first set of questions is available in the appendices.

5.5.5.2 Staff interview pilot

One pilot study was conducted for staff. The volunteer participant for the pilot was identified with the assistance of University of Edinburgh staff. The female staff member was from the United Kingdom, and worked in a similar role to the student and staff services who were the target participants of the main study. The questions were modified slightly to fit the pilot, such as the name of the university and the country name. The location of the interview was based on participant choice, the staff office at the University of Edinburgh. A consent form was provided to be signed by the participant, who was briefed about the purpose of the research and the purpose of the pilot interview. The interview was audio recorded. The interview was conducted in English, which was the interviewee's first language but the researcher's second language. During the interview and at the transcription stage, it was clear that the participant understood the questions and the responses were relevant to the issues that the main study interviews were hoping to explore.

5.5.5.3 Alumni interview pilot 2

Bearing in mind the concerns identified in the first pilot with an alumnus, it was decided that a data collection trip to Qatar was required. In May 2016, this became possible, as the researcher was invited to attend a Qatar Foundation graduation ceremony where all branch campus students graduate together on a single day. At the end of the ceremony, three alumni who had just graduated were approached separately and asked whether they would be available to talk. The researcher introduced himself to each alumnus as someone who had worked with the Qatar Foundation but who was currently on study leave as a PhD student in the United Kingdom and looking for research participants. One declined to take part in the interview, and two accepted, both male, one from Woods IBC and the other from Valley IBC. Although only one was needed for the pilot, both were recruited as a precaution in case one did not show up for the interview. In the event, both participated.

At the initial approach, it was explained that their participation was completely voluntary and that they could decline immediately, during the interview, or even after the interview. The question list and consent form were available at that early stage, should they wish to look at or have it emailed to them in advance, but they did not want to look at it at that time or ask for it to be emailed. However, they did take their time to read it on the day of the interview and requested clarifications prior to participating in the interview. Each participant was provided with a consent form to sign, briefed about the study and its purpose, and the purpose of the pilot interview. It was explained that if the results using the new sets of questions were satisfactory, it was likely that these would be the questions used for the actual research.

The timing of the graduation event and seeking ethical approval from the Qatari government meant that the pilot 2 participants were recruited before Qatar Ethical Approval was received, but the interviews were conducted after ethical approval had been confirmed. It was proposed that the interviews be conducted in the Student Centre at Education City or at an alternative location of their preference. Both participants chose the Student Centre. The interviews were audio recorded. Once the interviews were transcribed, it appeared that they dealt with the area of interest for the main study. It was therefore decided that these questions would be included in the study and formal data collection interviews could proceed. The second (final) set of alumni questions is available in the appendices.

Pilot 2 participants were also informed that the data from the pilot interviews might be included in the actual study as part of the data collected. In the end, it was decided to include both pilot 2 interviews in the actual study.

5.5.6 Qatar ethical approval

Obtaining Qatar Ethical Approval was a vague process. Despite online research prior to arriving in Qatar for data collection, there was no clear answer to what the exact process to obtain the Ethical Approval might be, and who the ultimate body was that provided it. It appeared that the Qatar Ministry of Health was the overarching body to grant Ethical Approval for research in Qatar with human subjects, as in this study.

Similar research in Qatar, such as that conducted by Bakken (2013) and Rehal (2015), did discuss their IRB from the university at which they were studying and at the study location as the branch campus approval to collect data, but not from the Ministry of Health. In addition, during the period of data collection, there were another two research projects ongoing but neither of them appeared to have obtained Ethical Approval from the Ministry of Health, as they were not aware of the process.

Locating the right office, right person and right location in the Ministry of Health took several scheduled meetings. One of the conditions for ethical approval laid down by the Ministry of Health was completion of a compulsory online course called the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program). Once the researcher had achieved the required standard to pass the course, an application form was completed, and then was combined with the CITI programme certificate, UK Ethical Approval, and copies of the interview questions and consent form. Only then was Qatari Ethical Approval granted. The formal approval document can be found in the Appendix section.

All in all, the process lasted two months from exploring how to obtain ethical approval, to actually being provided with it. The knowledge gained from this process means that future studies will achieve Qatari Ethical Approval far more quickly.

5.5.7 Access to alumni and staff

All alumni contacts are handled by a central office in Hamad bin Khalifa University. They were approached with both Ethical Approval documents, from Qatar and the UK. They agreed to send out the recruitment email provided, and forwarded it to all alumni along with copies of the question lists and informed consent form.

A total of three recruitment emails were sent: two for all alumni and the third for only River IBC. After the first two rounds of emails, there were still no participants from River IBC. Investigation revealed that the HBKU alumni office had mistakenly forgotten to include the River IBC alumni list with the email in the first two rounds of emails sent. Therefore, a third recruitment email was sent to only River IBC students (i.e. this was the first and only email they received). This resulted in the recruitment of three River IBC participants. Further details about participant interviews and timeline are presented later in this report.

Please refer to Figure 5.2 to see the timeline of emails sent. The emails were sent in English only, as it is the common language used for communication in Education City. The recruitment email can be found in the appendices. Participants were self-identified and replied by email, text message or phone call.

Once a participant made contact, her/his data were recorded in an Excel spreadsheet with all the information provided at that moment, such as name, contact details, branch campus, graduation year, and potential time for the interview. Once a date and time were confirmed, this was logged in, and once the interview had been concluded, its date and time were also logged.

In order to recruit staff participants, both Qatari and UK Ethical Approvals had to be provided to each campus, along with copies of the questions and the consent form for staff. Valley IBC provided a letter of permission to interview staff (see appendices). Then the head of student affairs at Valley IBC was sent the paperwork via email. Thereafter, the request was forwarded to staff. Valley IBC participants were self-identified and emailed the researcher directly to schedule an interview time.

River IBC did not request any other additional approvals. They forwarded the recruitment email to student affairs staff; staff self-identified and contacted me directly to schedule an interview time.

Woods IBC declined the request to interview their staff in October 2016. Their full email was as follows:

“Dear Mohammed,
I have reviewed your request. I am afraid that [Woods IBC] will be unable to grant you permission for your study. Wishing you best of luck with your research.”

(Woods IBC Senior Leader, 2016)

On the assumption that it could be a timing issue, a further email was sent to them clarifying that the timing of the study was flexible and their preferred schedule could be accommodated. However, in January 2017 they replied, once again declining with no reason provided. Their full email was the following:

“Dear Mohammed,
I am afraid we cannot accommodate your request. Thank you.”

(Woods IBC Senior leader, 2017)

It was decided that the research could continue without Woods IBC staff participants. Further information about participating staff is provided later in the report.

Knowing that Bakken (2013) and Rehal (2015) gained their approval to access Woods IBC and conducted their studies at Woods IBC, I was unclear as to why they did not approve the study when I approached them in 2016. It may be that Woods IBC will go on to decline access to several other researchers, not only me. Still in this case, Woods IBC, by rejecting my access to its staff, played the role of “gatekeeper” (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 223). Saunders et al. (2016) suggest that time, as a resource of the organisation, can be one of the reasons for not participating in research studies. Other reasons may be the perceived value of my work, concerns about potential confidentiality or sensitivity, or perceptions about my credibility and competence as a researcher. The decision of Woods IBC demonstrates the power IBCs have to decide who has access and ability to produce knowledge. Being the only Qatari researcher of the three researchers who approached Woods IBC, and to my knowledge the only one who was declined access to conduct my research, may reflect the original idea of Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* that it is acceptable for the West to study and understand other cultures, but not for those cultures to research and understand themselves (Said, 2003). The fact that there is no research about Qatari students’ experience in relation to their culture in Qatar IBCs conducted by a Qatari researcher for the past 21 years, i.e. from the establishment of the first IBC in Education City until this research study, indicates reluctance to participate, but also in the case of Woods IBC, loss of a rare and valuable opportunity, at least from my perspective. Fortunately, I was able to access staff from Valley IBC and River IBC, and alumni participants from all three chosen IBCs, because alumni can be accessed through HBKU not the IBCs themselves. Nonetheless, Woods IBC staff-members’ contributions would have been valuable and might have shaped this research differently.

5.5.8 Interview time, location and length

Office space was obtained at the Student Centre in Education City to use throughout the data collection period. The Student Centre is a neutral place that all branch campus affiliated students, staff and alumni have access to; therefore it is an equally familiar place for all the alumni and staff participating in the study. The office space at the Student Centre had a lockable door with lockable storage drawers in which to keep interview documents and notes. The

Student Centre was only an option provided to the participants; any other space of their preference was accommodated. Most alumni participants accepted the Student Centre venue, except three who preferred their workplace as their interview location. All staff were interviewed in their office space at their respective branch campus except one, who chose the Student Centre.

All the interview times chosen by participants interviewed in the Student Centre were towards the end of or after business hours when alumni were free after work. All staff interviews were conducted during business hours. Interviews in the Student Centre ranged between a start time of 3:30 pm and an ending time of 8:30 pm. The participants interviewed in their workplace participated at times ranging from 10:30 am to 2:30 pm. Participants were informed that the interview would last for approximately one and a half hours and actual interview times varied between one and two hours. Longer interviews occurred because the participants were interested in discussing their experiences at greater length.

5.5.9 Alumni participants

Alumni participants were chosen to fit the study purposes, i.e. they were Qatari nationals who had graduated in the previous three years from one of the three identified IBCs. Student affairs staff at both entry level and managerial level working in the three IBCs were identified.

The total number of targeted and actual Alumni participants is presented in Table 5.6.

Branch campus	Targeted number of participants	Participants actually interviewed
Valley IBC	4 (2 Male; 2 Female)	5 (3 Male; 2 Female)
River IBC	4 (2 Male; 2 Female)	3 (1 Male; 2 Female)
Woods IBC	4 (2 Male; 2 Female)	5 (2 Male; 3 Female)
Total	12 (6 Male; 6 Female)	13 (6 Male; 7 Female)

Table 5.6. Targeted alumni numbers and actual interviews.

In addition to the above three IBCs chosen to participate in this research, three peer IBCs were mentioned, named Rocks, Cliff and Canyon IBCs. Two Qatari universities are also mentioned,

named Dune University and Sea University. In one quote, two American universities in UAE were mentioned, named American university in UAE A and American university in UAE B.

The table below provides the pseudonym names, gender and IBC affiliation. The pseudonyms were chosen by me. I have chosen pseudonyms that reflect the cultural origins of the original participants; therefore all of my alumni participants' pseudonyms were Qatari and Muslim names. The staff members' names were treated differently, about which more will be mentioned later in this chapter.

IBC affiliation	Pseudonym name	Participant gender
Valley IBC	Ameena	Female
Valley IBC	Shammah	Female
Valley IBC	Ibrahim	Male
Valley IBC	Shaheen	Male
Valley IBC	Mubarak	Male
River IBC	Nawal	Female
River IBC	Muneera	Female
River IBC	Abdulrazaq	Male
Woods IBC	Aisha	Female
Woods IBC	Hessa	Female

Woods IBC	Ruqaya	Female
Woods IBC	Jassim	Male
Woods IBC	Ali	Male

Table 5.7. Participants' pseudonym names, gender, and IBC affiliation.

Further information about each alumni participant regarding method of recruitment, interview date, interview location, and graduation year is in Appendix 11.

Two alumni who made contact wanting to take part in the study had graduated more than three years ago. One was accepted because she was female, and there was some concern about having adequate Qatari female participants. The other was accepted since he showed an interest and came to the interview.

5.5.10 Staff participants

The original study plan was to have two staff members from each branch campus – one working on a daily basis with students, and one in a managerial role. Entry level staff were not always new staff; their years of experience varied and they could have had many years of service within the branch campus. Choosing two members of staff from each branch campus facilitated learning about both types of experience, the day-to-day student interaction role and the managerial role. On the other hand, choosing three staff members would have created an imbalance in the staff voice coming from the entry level or managerial role, hence one from each. At the research phase, all the staff who worked in student affairs in all the branches were counted. In total in the three IBCs there were 31 staff altogether, including administrative staff and health and wellness professional counsellors. Hence, four or more from each branch campus would have been a large proportion of the total staffing of student affairs departments in Qatar IBCs.

The following table shows the planned and actual staff participants:

IBC	Targeted number of staff participants	Participants interviewed
Valley IBC	2 (1 Managerial; 1 Entry Level)	2 (1 Managerial; 1 Entry Level)
River IBC	2 (1 Managerial; 1 Entry Level)	2 (1 Managerial; 1 Entry Level)
Woods IBC	2 (1 Managerial; 1 Entry Level)	Zero (Woods IBC Rejected Access to Staff to Participate)
Total	6 (3 Managerial; 3 Entry Level)	4 (2 Managerial; 2 Entry Level)

Table 5.8. Targeted staff numbers and actual interviews.

IBC affiliation	Pseudonyms
River IBC	Staff member 1
River IBC	Staff member 2
Valley IBC	Staff member 3
Valley IBC	Staff member 4

Table 5.9. Staff members' pseudonyms and IBC affiliation.

Further information about each participating staff member regarding interview date, recruitment method, interview location and position level is in Appendix 12.

Approval to interview the two staff members at Valley IBC was granted only after the first field trip. Therefore, the two Valley IBC staff participants were interviewed on the second field trip. The number of years of experience and gender of participants were originally noted in Appendix 12; they were later deleted to preserve participant anonymity. Student affairs staff in Education City form a small community and it would be easy to identify the participants through their gender and the number of years and role they have worked in at their respective IBC. The participant names chosen were Staff member 1 to 4 instead of pseudonyms. The four participants came from different ethnic backgrounds. In order to respect their ethnic

background, I was not able to rename them with names that reflected their backgrounds without compromising their anonymity.

5.6 Data analysis

The data from the interviews were recorded, translated if needed (see notes on this process in section 5.8), and transcribed. Field notes were also included in the data for coding. Saldana (2016, p. 4) defines a code in qualitative inquiry to be “most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data”. It was this definition that guided the creation of codes for this study.

Looking at data can reveal things happening twice or more – i.e. patterns (Saldana, 2016). Those patterns are a trustworthy indication of habits and important features of people's lives by confirming their routines, rituals, rules, roles and relationships (Saldana, 2016). When data show things that are alike, share something in common or have common differences, they can be coded similarly to show their commonality (Hatch, 2002; Saldana, 2016). Patterns can also result from a sequence, correspondence and causation (Hatch, 2002). Moreover, it is crucial to pay attention to things that do not fit in with others, i.e. anomalies (Saldana, 2016), which can reveal intriguing features.

Coding was done in cycles; translating and transacting (please refer to the translation section) was the first coding cycle (Saldana, 2016). This process is further described in Chapter 6.

Throughout the coding process, sense is derived through interpretation of the subjective expressions shared by the participants (Saunders et al., 2016). Great care needs to be taken in understanding those words because they can have different meanings or no meaning at all (Creswell, 2009; Saunders et al., 2016). During this meaning-making process, translation also plays a part and this will be discussed later in this chapter.

Qualitative data can be analysed using one of two approaches, inductive or deductive (Gibbs, 2007). Creswell (2009, p. 175) described inductive data analysis as creating “themes from the bottom up by organising the data into increasingly more abstract units of information”. Gibbs (2007) agrees with both Creswell’s (2009) and Saunders et al.’s (2016) definitions by suggesting that inductive analysis takes place when a researcher comes up with an explanation

by combining many small, similar circumstances, and deduction takes place when the researcher draws the explanation of something from existing theory. The inductive approach is “the development of a theory as a result of the observation of empirical data” (Saunders, 2012, p. 718). For example, an inductive data analysis strategy might draw together data coming from the participants by looking at themes and shared experiences (Saunders et al., 2016), and thus lead to a new finding in the field (Creswell, 2009; Gibbs, 2007; Saunders, 2016; Yin, 2011). Those new findings will help create new knowledge and could in turn lead to the development of theory (Gibbs, 2007). Of course, there is also the possibility that no new findings result which, in essence, confirms existing theory: one of the aspects of basic research (Given, 2008).

5.6.1 Introduction to the coding process

Having undertaken the interviews and bearing in mind all of the factors above, the data were coded for analysis. The following section introduces the principles behind the coding process. Details of the coding process as it unfolded specifically in this study are provided in the next chapter, *Analysis of data and introduction to findings*.

This research is looking at the situation taking a bottom-up approach, treating the data from participants as the most valuable source, but including also information from the staff who work with them on a daily basis as well as staff who work with them partially but have managerial roles. This is a different approach from that of Karam (2018) and Dumbre (2013) who interviewed high-level IBC administrators like the dean and chief executive officer – “the most senior official of respective academic affairs” (Karam, 2018, p. 53), i.e. using a top-down approach, and even then, Karam ended at mid-level management, rather than pursuing research into the student view.

Analysing the data was done by coding in cycles; translating and transcribing (as noted in the previous chapter) was the first coding cycle (Saldana, 2016). First-cycle coding ranged from coding a single word through a full sentence to a story (Saldana, 2016), with codes being stored in a separate file. The notes produced in coding, tracking and creating the themes and tracking and creating detailed data are too extensive to be included in this chapter or in the appendices.

5.6.1.1 First coding cycle – identifying ideas for themes

The diagram which follows shows how the first cycle for alumni interview data was handled.

The same process was followed for staff interviews.

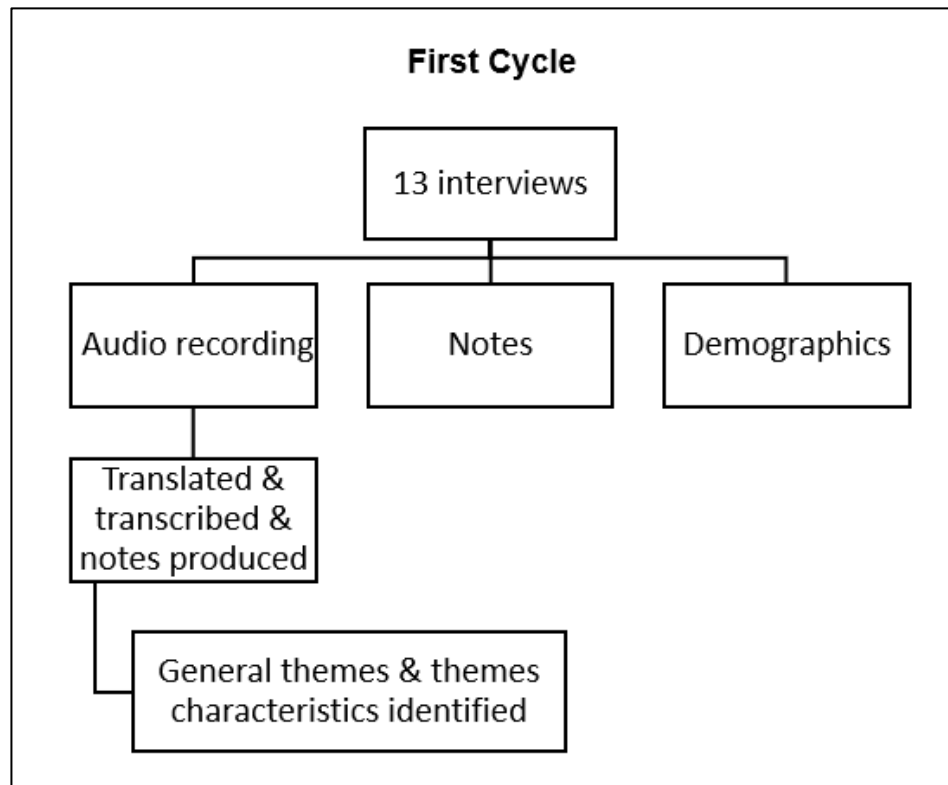


Figure 5.3. First-cycle coding process

5.6.1.2 Second coding cycle – gathering codes to form themes

In the second cycle, everything was brought together – the analytic memos, first-cycle notes and transcriptions (Saldana, 2016). This is illustrated in Figure 5.4.

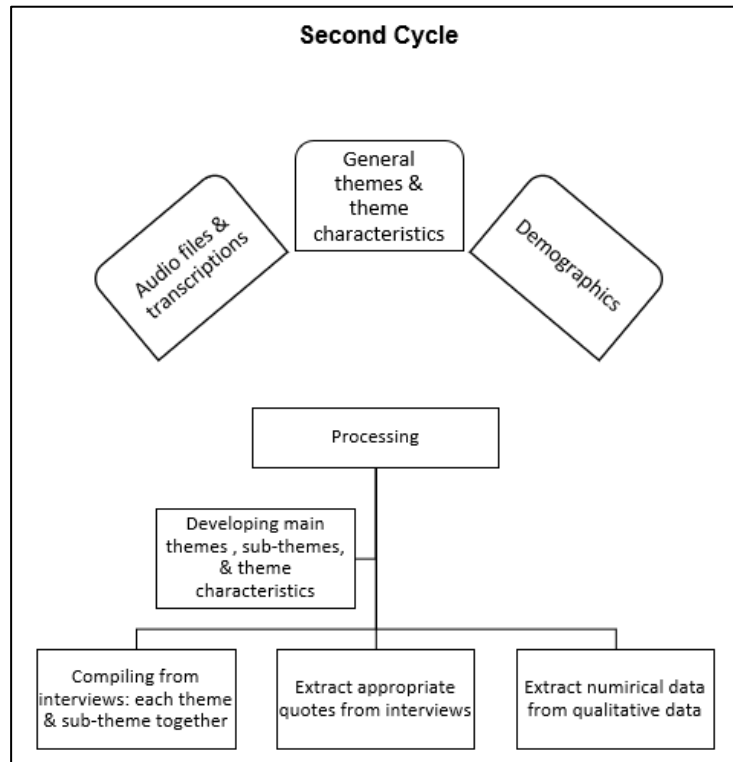


Figure 5.4. Second-cycle coding process.

5.7 Researcher positionality

Collecting data through interviews is a type of research that is greatly influenced by the position of the researchers themselves, as well as their demeanour as the instrument of the research (Creswell, 2009; Saunders et al., 2016). Conducting a qualitative interview requires a genuine interest in the perspective of people (Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995). Thus, research requires the interviewer's time, care and curiosity, in this case to help him learn about fellow nationals (Stake, 1995).

Being an insider as someone who worked in Qatar Foundation student affairs, and an outsider as a researcher from the University of Edinburgh examining Education City, has its advantages

and disadvantages (Cohen et al., 2011). Qatari participants could disclose information to me as an insider, being a Qatari, that they might not disclose to a non-Qatari researcher. Similarly, as I was a person who had worked in Education City in a student affairs capacity, staff who were interviewed were more comfortable sharing information with me, compared with someone who had never worked in Education City and in a student affairs capacity. However, although I am an insider, I am an outsider at the same time. Staff participants are working with the American IBCs while I never worked in any of the IBCs, I worked for the Qatar Foundation itself. Hence, I knew some of the staff interviewed, but not all. I was a stranger to all of the alumni participants. Therefore, the distance of an outsider was largely maintained even though I was an insider (Cohen et al., 2011).

As a native Qatari, the responsibility for finding out the participants' experiences is the result of a genuine interest and is the main motivation for this research. Beyond the interest in Qatari nationals, there is also a wholehearted interest in the Qatari alumni's perspectives on their experiences at Education City. This stems from my educational background, having qualified in American higher education and developing students outside the classroom as a field of study, and years of experience working in Education City and with its students. Throughout the years of following a career in higher education, my interest in learning about Qatari students' perceptions of studying at Education City's American IBCs has also grown.

My shared cultural background with the alumni and shared work experience with staff was beneficial in the data-gathering and analysis process. Enjoying the experience of conducting the interviews (Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995) and sense-making process when interpreting the participants' experiences contributed to enthusiasm for the research process (Saunders et al., 2016). This shared background helped me relate to what the participants express about their deep and rich shared experiences. This benefits the research results immensely because as the researcher, I then become a crucial instrument in the research (Patton, 2002).

However, it must be noted that it is also challenging to share a similar background to the participants, being Qatari myself. This creates the potential for bias. To avoid this, I was aware of different views, and worked hard to avoid moving in a certain direction unless the interview took a direction that indicated that exploration was required. Participants' voices are kept intact and honoured.

5.8 Language used in the interviews

All staff interviews were conducted in English as their preferred language for the interview. In terms of alumni, every alumnus was encouraged to choose the language he or she felt comfortable sharing their experience in, and they were free to shift languages during the interview whenever they felt like it. Participants' preferences in choosing the interview language varied. Some preferred to listen to the questions in Qatari Arabic and others in English. Regardless of the language they asked to listen to the questions in, some alumni answered in Qatari Arabic and some in English. Moreover, all the participants switched and used both languages to some extent in the interview. The usage of the non-chosen language ranged from a few words, such as an expression, to lengthy, detailed answers. Therefore, a column was added into the language table to indicate the language that dominated the interview. The table below details each participant's choice of language, language used to answer and the dominant language in the interview.

Alumni	Language used to ask the questions	Language used to answer the questions	Dominant language in the interview	Used both Qatari Arabic and English during the interview
Hessa	Qatari Arabic	Qatari Arabic	Qatari Arabic	Yes
Shaheen	Qatari Arabic	Qatari Arabic	Qatari Arabic	Yes
Shammah	Qatari Arabic	Qatari Arabic	Qatari Arabic	Yes
Abdulrazaq	Qatari Arabic	Qatari Arabic	Qatari Arabic	Yes
Ibrahim	Qatari Arabic	Qatari Arabic	Qatari Arabic	Yes
Ruqaya	Qatari Arabic	Qatari Arabic	Qatari Arabic	Yes

Ameena	First question in English. The rest in Qatari Arabic	Qatari Arabic	Qatari Arabic	Yes
Ali	English	Qatari Arabic	Qatari Arabic	Yes
Aisha	English	Qatari Arabic	Qatari Arabic	Yes
Muneera	Qatari Arabic	English	English	Yes
Mubarak	English	Entry level skill in English	Entry level skill in English	Yes
Jassim	English	English	English	Yes
Nawal	English	English	English	Yes

Table 5.10. Interview language.

In terms of transcribing, interviews that used English language only, rather than simple words and expressions, were transcribed through a transcription service. For the student participants, this was one interview only, Jassim's. The four staff member interviews were also transcribed by the transcription service. The transcription service is an online service named Transcription Puppy. They advertise themselves as used by academics; data are stored in a secure area, and their transcribers sign a non-disclosure agreement. Interviews which used sentences or more of Qatari Arabic were translated and transcribed simultaneously by me. This was done for a total of 12 alumni interviews. The following section discusses the translation aspect.

5.8.1 The importance of language

It is better for the researcher in cross-language research to understand the participants' own words without the need for a third-party translator (Esposito, 2001). When participants express themselves, the researcher should be able to understand their words and actions, otherwise the usefulness of the data may be jeopardised (Esposito, 2001).

When working with non-English participants, English-speaking researchers face the difficult task of providing accurate data from another language (Esposito, 2001). Many researchers choose to eliminate non-English speakers or those not fluent in English from taking part in the research, to mitigate the researchers' language limitations (Esposito, 2001). For example, Bakken (2013) and Rehal (2015) did research in Qatar about Qatari students in Education City, and excluded non-English speakers from the study even though Arabic is the native language for Qatari students.

In addition to the inaccurate representation created by the exclusion of non-English speakers or those not fluent in English, the participants with fluent English do not provide an accurate and best reflection of their non-English speaking peers because they have been acculturated (Esposito, 2001). This means that they have been "assimilate[d] to a different culture, typically the dominant one" (Oxford English Dictionary). This is so commonly assumed that in the USA, an immigrant's level in their new language is seen as a way to measure their level of acculturation (Esposito, 2001).

5.8.2 Translation

Interview translation has been described as an aspect of the research design that must be reflected in the methodology chapter (Fersch, 2013). Therefore, this section details the thinking and processes about interview translation for this study. The research was conducted under the auspices of the University of Edinburgh, an English-medium university located in the United Kingdom. While the research is about Qatari alumni, whose native language is normally Arabic, those alumni graduating from the American IBCs in Education City are more likely to be fluent in English than other students because English is the medium of teaching in IBCs and each of them has its own English proficiency requirement upon applying for a programme of study. Despite this, because English proficiency could vary among alumni, there was some concern about the ability of the alumni to best express themselves. Therefore, as explained above, participants were given the choice of using the language they felt most comfortable expressing themselves in – English or Qatari Arabic – in the interview. Two sets of self-translated questions were prepared to guide the interview: one in English and the other in Qatari Arabic. This had the effect that interviews or even parts of interviews were not in English, necessitating a translation process.

5.8.3 Translation philosophy

A hermeneutical philosophy was adopted towards the translation process. People are not fully objective and observe events and choose from them based on their culture, upbringing and language (Zimmermann, 2015). The world is presented to people who then use language to interpret what is presented and guide perceptions of it. The hermeneutical standpoint is that translators interpret the interpretations (Fersch, 2013). In fact, this can go beyond translation and interpretation if the goal of the process is to "make sense of text or situation, to understand what they mean" (Zimmermann, 2015, p. 1). While hermeneutic philosophers do not necessarily create a philosophy to regulate specific methods of translation for a precise and controlled production of meaning per se, in hermeneutics "interpretation is seen as the *production* of meaning, which means that this meaning is produced through the involvement of the interpreter in the aforementioned dialogue" (Fersch, 2013, p. 90, italics in original). Moreover, because not all concepts are universal in all cultures, word-by-word translation cannot always happen in cross-culture translation (Jones & Kay, 1992); hence striving for meaning is helpful to the process.

Fersch (2013, p. 88) suggests that in interpretation "hermeneutics does not evaluate prejudices, bias or fore-meanings as necessarily negative for the research process". Therefore, this philosophy of interpretation works hand in hand with qualitative research exploring experiences, such as those of the alumni interviewed here about when they were students. During the process of translating and transcribing the interviews, where there appeared to be participant bias, it was kept intact. Fersch (2013, p. 88) also states that "hermeneutical theory argues that one's biases should be utilised in the quest for understanding". This understanding and utilisation of people's biases is important to this study, which explores the alumni's experiences.

This philosophy guided the role of the researcher as interpreter while translating and transcribing the interviews from Qatari Arabic into English. The philosophy and the process provided a framework to create an understanding of how the alumni represent their thoughts in their words and how the researcher in his role as an interpreter can provide the most accurate interpretation. The main reason for providing alumni with the opportunity to choose the

language to be interviewed in was to obtain the richest data possible and present the data in the research language, English, without risking the quality of data.

5.8.4 The process of translation and its validity

There has been an increase in research in which interviews are conducted in foreign languages, including research in a language foreign to the researcher him/herself, which is one of the consequences of an increasingly global world (Fersch, 2013). Most studies are conducted by non-native speaker researchers (Fersch, 2013). However, this was not the case in this research. As the researcher, I speak English and am also a native speaker of Qatari Arabic, one of the two languages that alumni could choose to be interviewed in. Most studies conducted that needed translation and interpretation did not mention the translation process and the challenges it presents (Al-Amer et al., 2015; Fersch, 2013). This gap in the explanation of a multi-language approach to interviews (Fersch, 2013) encouraged the inclusion of this section to help with future research conducted in a cross-language environment.

Translation is the process of taking the words from the source language, in this case Arabic, to the target language, which is English in this case (Esposito, 2001). Larson (1998, p. 3) describes the translation process as "studying the lexicon, grammatical structure, communication situation and cultural context of the source language text, analysing it in order to determine its meaning and then reconstructing this same meaning using the lexicon and grammatical structure which are appropriate in the RECEPTOR LANGUAGE and its cultural context" (capitalisation in original). In short, the meaning stays constant and only the form of the language changes (Larson, 1998).

Larson's (1998) receptor language has the same meaning as the targeted language mentioned by Esposito (2001). The figure below shows the translation process, which Esposito (2001) adapted from Larson (1998).

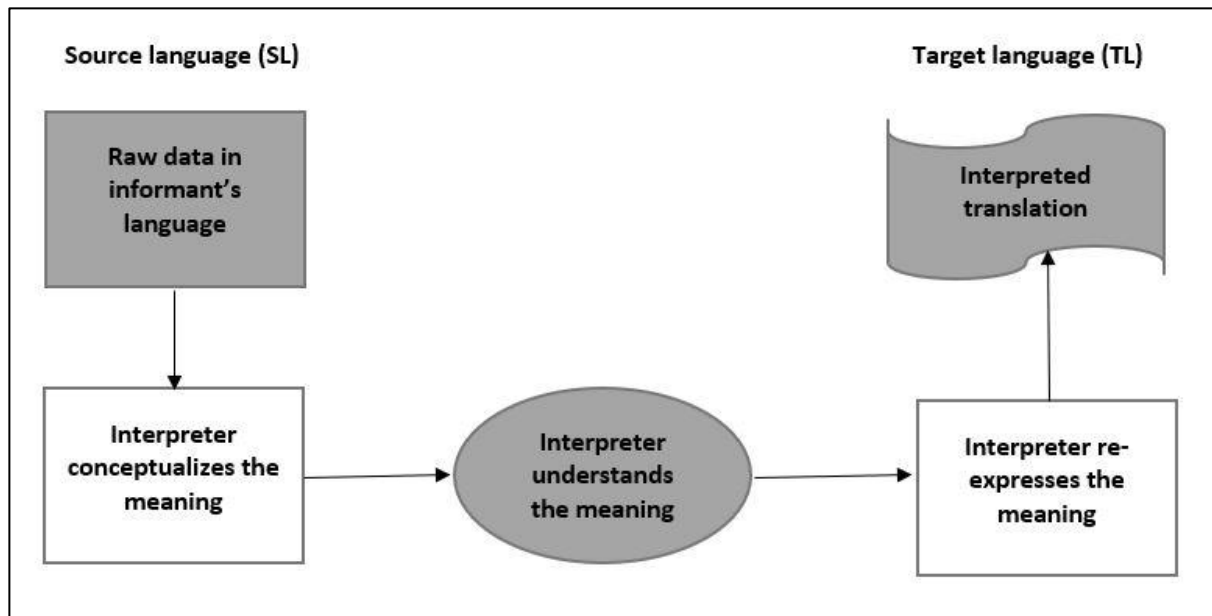


Figure 5.5. Translation process (Reproduced from Esposito, 2001, p. 571).

This process of understanding the meaning and expressing it in other words is susceptible to the choice of words in the source language, and differences in the grammatical structure from the targeted language can mean that slavish translation produces meaningless sentences (Fersch, 2013; Larson, 1998). There is a negotiation process between the translator and what is being interpreted to make sense for the context (Fersch, 2009). If translated word for word, objects like a “fridge's eye” (a literal translation of the way in which the freezer at the top section of the fridge is denoted in Arabic) or the “bread's lips” (actually the bread’s crust) would confuse the reader. An additional complication is gender. All non-human items have an assigned gender in Arabic. For example, an airplane is a “she” and a pen is a “he”. In general, where the meaning could be kept intact, the translation was rendered word for word, and the grammatical differences were smoothed out only when required.

When it comes to validity, it needs to be borne in mind that the “idea of a perfect translation that could stand for all time is entirely illusory” (Gadamer, Weinsheimer & Marshall, 2004, p. xi). When it comes to translating multilingual research interviews, there are generally two possibilities. The first one is that the non-bilingual researcher will source a translator to translate the interviews so that the researcher is able to access them. The second is that the researcher is fluent in the languages used for the research and for the interview and can play the role of translator and researcher simultaneously (Temple & Young, 2004).

Non-bilingual researchers must choose translators with care, as a non-qualified translator would threaten the validity of the data (Esposito, 2001). In the case of this study, as Qatari Arabic can be different from classic Arabic, locating a qualified person to work on the transcript and translation was not feasible and could be extremely expensive. Therefore, I chose to do the translation myself. This was a significant task because translating and transcribing is an extremely time-consuming process (Twinn, 1998) and it took much longer than planned. However, this avoided the issue of involving a third party in producing the meaning, which would bring a third party's own background into the translating and might introduce external translator biases and meaning-making to the translation (Fersch, 2013). The issues around translation do not end here. For a native speaker of Qatari Arabic but not of English, the translation of idioms can create a challenging task (Fersch, 2013), particularly because, as noted in the discussion above, not all concepts are universal (Jones & Kay, 1992). Therefore, relevant dictionaries were consulted and native English language speakers were asked to confirm the translation (Fersch, 2013). An additional advantage of me being the translator is my understanding of the jargon of higher education and student affairs work. Many Arabic-to-English translators would not have familiarity with the language of student development that I have learned through the years of work and study in the field of higher education and student affairs. Two qualified Qatari translators were also supplied with samples of the work to approve the translation and to make sure that meanings had not been changed (Fersch, 2013) in the process of translation. Despite the challenges in the process and the great amount of time spent, there are benefits, because multi-lingual research provides rich data that “maximize the quality of the data interviews and analysis” (Twinn, 1998, p. 660).

5.9 Authenticity and trustworthiness

5.9.1 Authenticity

Authenticity is an important issue for qualitative research (Given, 2008). Given (2008) delineated the components of authenticity as fairness, ontological authenticity, and educative authenticity. For this study, fairness was achieved by allowing participants equal access to the research (Given, 2008). For alumni, the email went through a database and whoever was interested contacted the researcher without interference from any person in making that choice. In terms of staff, the same thing was achieved by using a focal contact point from which to

seek staff interest. In relation to ontological authenticity, which means raising participants' awareness about the research (Given, 2008), information sheets were created to be shared in the recruitment process for both alumni and staff. These sheets included information on the person conducting the study and his background, how the study related to the participants, participants' rights and the expectations of them, and participants' right to confidentiality. Moreover, prior to the interview, time was taken to explain the context of the research to participants to raise their awareness and help them to understand the research topic and its goals (Given, 2008).

With regard to educative authenticity, Given (2008) suggests that it consists of helping participants understand that other participants would have their own opinion and all opinions are valid and appreciated. The importance of each participant's point of view was emphasised by stating that there were no wrong and right answers, and that everything shared by each participant was valid and valuable. Participants were reassured that they could have their own points of view and opinions and everyone's view would be respected, valuable and valid (Given, 2008). Validity and reliability do not carry the same weight in qualitative and quantitative research when it comes to differences in generalisability, stability or consistency (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, because this study takes the form of qualitative research, it is judged differently from quantitative research in terms of achieving reliability and validity. With this in mind, I implemented four steps of trustworthiness for this study. The section that follows elaborates further on trustworthiness.

5.9.2 Trustworthiness

Research authors have suggested different criteria for building the trustworthiness of a study. The guiding principles for this study were those of Letts et al. (2007), who recommend that one self-examines one's own work for trustworthiness. Letts et al. (2007) suggested four components of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In the sections that follow, each of these criteria is explained and thereafter a table is provided linking each criterion with its applicability to this research. Despite the discussion of these factors as individual entities, it can be observed that there is considerable overlap among the four trustworthiness criteria. Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 318) confirm this observation when they state that "a single audit, properly managed, can be used to determine dependability and confirmability simultaneously".

5.9.2.1 Credibility

Given (2008, p. 138) defines credibility as “the methodological procedures and sources used to establish a high level of harmony between the participants’ expressions and the researcher’s interpretations of them”. Therefore, Given (2008) suggested that to achieve better credibility in a research study, the researcher should pay attention to the following: a high level of consistency between the rationale for the choice of research model, the criteria for selecting participants, and the “believable link” (p. 138) between participants’ expressions and the emerged codes. Letts et al. (2007, p. 9) agree, focusing on the “logical connections among the various steps in the research process” to enhance the trustworthiness of the research. In addition, Letts et al. (2007, p. 9) recommended that elements to look at in a research study to ensure its credibility should include “range of participants”, “variety of methods to gather data”, “keeping a journal of reflections, biases or preconceptions and ideas”, and the use of triangulation through “multiple sources and perspectives to reduce systematic bias”.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) agree with Letts et al. (2007) that triangulation will increase the credibility of the research. In addition, Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 301) suggested that “prolonged engagement” would increase credibility. They describe prolonged engagement as spending time on the research site to learn the culture, test misinformation and build trust. Learning the culture helps the researcher to understand what is being studied in its own context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). When considering the issue of misinformation, it should be borne in mind that, as Lincoln and Guba say (1985, p. 302), “[i]t seems likely that unless the inquirer began as an accepted member of the group or agency being studied, distortions can never be overcome”. Participants could create distortion by answering in a manner designed to please the researcher. Researchers are more likely to be able to identify misinformation when they are familiar with the research site, and are not considered strangers anymore. The last aim of prolonged engagement is to build trust (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Building trust is a “development process” (p. 303) and is described as the daily interaction of the researcher with participants to gain their confidence as well as their trust that their voices will be honoured and heard and will make a difference, and that their confidentiality will not be betrayed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) discuss one particular challenge to prolonged engagement – the idea that the researcher’s “professional judgment will be influenced” (p. 304)

by the long time spent on the research site, but state that awareness of the problem will help to prevent it (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

One of the elements suggested by Patton (2002, p. 552) to increase credibility is “rigorous methods” that aim to provide “high-quality data” through paying attention to credibility issues, and having the data systematically analysed. Patton (2002) suggested that rigorous methods in qualitative interviewing should include several techniques for “skilful interviewing” (p. 340). The areas he mentions which require attention include: types of interviews, types of questions, wording the questions, props and follow-up questions, feedback during the interview, supporting the participants, maintaining control and enhancing the quality of answers, how the interview is recorded, and taking notes after the interview (Patton, 2002).

The table below lists some methods for increasing credibility which relate to this study.

Credibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learnt how good interviews should be conducted (by taking research classes at the University of Edinburgh, reading research books) and learnt about how to document and later to analyse interviews (Patton, 2002) • interviewed alumni and staff, listening to more than one side of the story (Given, 2008) • provided open-ended questions, letting the participants define themselves instead of the researcher defining them (Given, 2008) • conducted private interviews to help participants be open and truthful in their answers and reduce power issues (Given, 2008) • took notes throughout this research in general and during data gathering (Letts et al., 2007) • obtained data from multiple sources and from different points of view (Letts et al., 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) • interviews conducted by a native Qatari and previous employee to ensure rapport (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) • during data collection, paid attention to credibility issues (Patton, 2002)

Table 5.11. Methods used to increase credibility in this study.

5.9.2.2 Transferability

This report provides information to allow other researchers to compare the study and judge it against their own research or plan future research. There are various attempts in the literature to define the elements required for transferability (for example, Given, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), but in summary, one can say that the researcher needs to provide the widest possible information to help other researchers produce similar results in a different context or in the same context but in a different time-period (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) focus particularly on appropriate research design, while Given (2008, p. 886) describes

transferability as being increased by two major elements: the first is “how closely the participants are linked to the context being studied” and the second is “the contextual boundaries of the findings”. To achieve this, the participants selected have to be involved in the context being studied and have an appropriate understanding of that context, and the data gathered through the interview must be appropriate for answering the questions (Given, 2008).

All of these authors, Given (2008), Letts et al. (2007), and Lincoln and Guba (1985), agree that the judgement of transferability is the reader/applier’s responsibility, while provision of the appropriate data is the researcher’s responsibility.

The table below demonstrates some examples related to this study.

Transferability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • described the context in term of geographic location and institutional setting, and in terms of the types of students enrolled and the staff (Given, 2008; Letts et al., 2007; and Lincoln & Guba, 1985) • explanations and clarifications of the context and method provided (Given, 2008; Letts et al., 2007; and Lincoln & Guba, 1985)

Table 5.12. Methods used to assist in transferability of this study.

5.9.2.3 Dependability

Letts et al. (2007, p. 10) suggest that dependability is a clear explanation of the research process including “data collection, analyses, and interpretation often indicated by evidence of an audit trail or peer review” which leads to consistency between the data and the findings. Letts et al. (2007, p. 10) describe the audit trail as the “decision points made throughout the research process”. Given (2008) suggests that the researcher will need to take notes about the points in the process where an alteration was required in the design to enable completion of the research. This process of taking notes is called an “inquiry audit” (Given, 2008, p. 209); it increases research dependability by allowing other researchers to be able to replicate or repeat the study (Given, 2008).

Given (2008) suggests that the researcher should make his or her best effort to learn about the research context through literature review and experience, and should then “design appropriate methodologies for studying it” (p. 208). Knowing that one of the challenges of the “qualitative context is the variability of the environment” (Given, 2008, p. 208), when it comes to applying the plan to reality, the researcher needs to recognise that things can be different and that it is acceptable and indeed to be expected that new issues or changes can arise (Given, 2008).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that the role of the audit is to look at the fairness of the representation, and to examine the records for accuracy by understanding the justifications and verifying the actions taken; in short, to examine the process of conducting the research and the data gathered (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Should the research be repeated, similar results are likely to be obtained when the researcher has provided results linked to the data and when the findings are accurate records of what the participants intended to convey in their answers (Given, 2008). Given (2008, p. 209) also suggests that when the audit is taking place, the “transparency and relevancy of this process will increase the dependability of the study”. Transparency is explained by Yin (2011) as documentation and description of the research procedure in a publicly accessible manner, which creates a better review for others to criticise and support. Moreover, the research method should be carefully explained and the work should be objective and based on a clear set of evidence (Yin, 2011). Overall, transparency will also increase credibility and trustworthiness (Yin, 2011).

The table below demonstrates some examples related to this study.

Dependability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explained the rationale for choosing the three IBCs and the overall research design and how participants were selected and recruited, and how data were recorded for analysis • details were provided to participants of the research purpose and confidentiality processes, as well as their right to anonymity • participants were provided with opportunity to express themselves fully and to go through all the questions in the prepared list without rushing their answers • field notes were recorded, and information was provided regarding changes to research plans, subsequent actions and justifications for those actions

Table 5.13. Methods used to increase the dependability of this study.

5.9.2.4 Confirmability

Letts et al. (2007) suggested that an important part of confirmability is paying attention to the actions taken by the researcher to avoid his or her bias influencing the neutrality of the data – “specifically the neutrality of the data not the researcher” (p. 10). Confirmability is increased if the researcher keeps a journal with his or her reflections, involves a second, informed opinion at decision points made during the process, and also can verify the interpretation of data (Given, 2008; Letts et al., 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Given (2008, p. 112) suggests that the purpose of confirmability is to “understand a phenomenon from the perspective of research participants” and to understand the “meanings people give to their experience” through an

audited process to confirm that the results were “based on the researcher purpose” and not changed by researcher bias.

It is recognised within the concept of confirmability that researchers are different, with different perspectives, which makes the research unique. However, the researcher will need to be open by disclosing his or her biases and take the appropriate methodological actions to negate those biases (Given, 2008).

The table below demonstrates some examples related to this study.

Confirmability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • kept a journal for notes, challenges, reflections and changes in the research plan • took advice from supervisors where required (Given, 2008; Letts et al., 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) • respected opinions and biases in certain topics mentioned during interviews but did not endorse or encourage participants by showing emotions or facial expressions, or by praising certain actions (Saunders et al., 2012)

Table 5.14. Methods used to demonstrate confirmability for this study.

5.10 Ethical issues and considerations

This study adhered to the criteria for level one of the University of Edinburgh School of Education Ethics Committee, and followed the British Educational Research Association (BERA) ethical requirements. Ethical approval was also obtained from the Ministry of Health in Qatar.

Local IRBs are required to be obtained on campuses; the process of obtaining permission will ensure the upholding of human rights and protection from physical or mental harm (Creswell, 2009). Creswell (2009) pointed out that most ethical issues arise during the data collection phase. Hence there is a need to apply processes such as “informed consent, risk/benefit assessment and the selection of subjects of research” (Belmont Report, 1978, p. 7). This informed consent provided prior to the interview helps the interviewees understand their rights (Creswell, 2009; Gibbs, 2007). However, informed consent does not give the interviewer legal status. During a qualitative interview, there is the possibility that the interviewees could change after self-reflecting with the interviewer. The researcher should bear in mind that the main purpose of the researcher is only data collection, not changing interviewees (Patton, 2002) or putting them at risk (Creswell, 2009).

Creswell (2009) states that ethical issues could arise in the data analysis and interpretation phases as well. The researcher needs to think about protecting the identity of the participants, checking the accuracy of the data when interpreted and discarding the data in a timely manner after finishing the research (Creswell, 2009). After that, during writing and disseminating the research, researchers need to be ethical in using non-biased language towards a person or a group of people, for example ethnic groups or genders (Creswell, 2009). In addition, effort must be made not to try to hide or create information for or against the researcher's or others' benefit (Creswell, 2009). Researchers need to sustain a high "ethical spirit" (Yin, 2011, p. 38) of consideration, especially in qualitative research when making decisions about what data are going to be included in the analysis after collection. There may be a great deal of data to analyse and to include in the research project, and researchers have to choose the data to fit the research. The researcher's ethical attitude will play a role in their decisions about what to include and what to ignore (Yin, 2011).

Details of the information provided to participants and the procedures to ensure understanding and confidentiality are outlined in Section 5.5. All of these arrangements ensured that the study was carried out to the highest possible ethical standards.

5.11 Bias

Bloor and Wood (2006, p. 21) define bias as "any influence that distorts the results of a research study". Bias can occur from the source of the data, in this case interviewee bias, which is defined as an "attempt by an interviewee to construct an account that hides some data or when she or he presents herself or himself in a socially desirable role or situation" (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 719). Bias can occur from the instrument itself; in the case of qualitative research this is the interviewer. Saunders et al. (2016, p. 719) stated that interviewer bias could be defined as an "attempt by an interviewer to introduce bias during the conduct of an interview, or where the appearance or behaviour of the interviewer has the effect of introducing bias in the interviewee's responses". In this study, on several occasions participants were uncertain as to whether their opinion was valid, and they questioned whether it was appropriate to share certain opinions or make certain comments. The participants were reminded that there was no right or wrong answer and that all that was going to be shared would be appreciated and valued. It was also mentioned that the interview was the best place to share their opinions in the way they wanted to. After the interviews, several alumni participants asked how well they did, and asked

for a view on their opinions and their answers to the questions. In addition, it was clear that participants throughout the interviews felt self-reflective, and indeed some participants specifically stated this. Bearing in mind that, as discussed above, the sole task of the interviewer is to collect data (Patton, 2002), even when I had an opinion about a question, I made sure not to bring my biases to the research and emphasised that I was interested in learning about the answers. Reassurance was provided to participants that everyone who took part in the research was entitled to his or her own opinion and all opinions are valuable and valid.

Participants would have biases and their own opinions were valuable and valid; therefore care was taken to explore each case separately to find emerging themes. Care was also taken to be aware of potential inadvertent bias when coding and coming up with themes, and I paid attention to my biases when considering what to include and what to ignore from the data (Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2011). Besides being a researcher, I have had extensive training and a professional career in the sporting field for more than 12 years as a referee and judge for five different sports. That experience helped me to manage the task of setting aside my bias and taking no sides.

5.12 Limitations of the research methodology

As Patton (2002) points out, all forms of research have their limitations. These limitations affect the different factors contributing to validity and reliability, and one can only reduce limitations by acknowledging imperfections and taking good care in achieving the validity and reliability of the research (Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2009). However, in the context of a qualitative study like the one reported here, this means taking good care in achieving dependability and credibility as outlined above.

One of the areas that may pose an issue is encountered when conducting data collection as described by Yin (2011). This study faced limitations in relation to accessing alumni, and it was not possible to recruit an equal number of alumni from each of the three IBCs. Accessing staff was a challenge. As noted in a previous section, one of the IBCs refused access to interview staff.

5.13 Chapter summary

The study was carefully designed to align the methodology, the methods and the instruments to the type of research being done. In designing and carrying out the study, care was taken to address the currently accepted measures for quality in qualitative research. A postcolonial lens was used to frame the research epistemology. The study benefited by learning from pilot interviews, but also faced some challenges to its initial plans, such as the simple matter of room reservations or the vaguer issue of who the granting body was for ethical approval in Qatar. A data collection trip to Qatar was taken, during which the targeted number of alumni participants was achieved. Staff participant numbers were also achieved although one branch campus did not grant access to their staff. The process of identifying themes arising from the collected data was explained, as were the translation philosophy and the process used to prepare the data. Issues related to research authenticity and bias are acknowledged and addressed. Some limitations of the study were discussed, before the coding process was introduced.

In the next chapter, the analysis of the data is discussed in more detail, and an introduction to the findings of the study is presented.

Chapter 6: Analysis of data and introduction to the findings

In the first section of this chapter, I will discuss the analysis of the data and the way in which the cycles of coding described in the previous chapter revealed themes and subthemes. Illustrative examples of this process are provided. Thereafter, an introduction is provided to the findings which are then further discussed in some detail in Chapters 7, 8 and 9.

6.1 Analysis of data – first coding cycle

During the first cycle, I checked the notes taken from the interview and simultaneously transcribed and translated the audio recording of the interview. At the same time, I made notes of words or phrases that triggered ideas for themes. An illustrative example follows.

Ruqaya (female, Woods IBC): *He [her father] encourages us to study abroad, even my sister didn't want to study abroad. But he told her you are going to study abroad. I mean usually it is the opposite, the daughter wants to study abroad and the father is not keen.*⁴

Then she continues to describe the conversation about her university choice:

But when those universities [Qatar IBCs] opened here, my dad said okay we have elite universities, which are not only prestigious but they have a name, global and everyone knows them, so why not apply here.

Overall, this example shows the family influence in the choice of education.

- *encourages us to study abroad*
- *he told her you are going to study abroad*
- *why not apply here*

In the above, Ruqaya sees her father in the role of advisor or consultant, encouraging his daughters in their studying goal, and having views on the type of education they should undertake, abroad or in Qatar.

From the above quote, I was able to identify the influence of family in the choice of education, as well as the perception of IBCs in Qatar. I also coded the statement that suggested that perhaps some students would be discouraged from studying abroad.

Note: as explained in the glossary, where the words of participants have been translated by the researcher,⁴ they appear in italics. Where the words are as spoken by the participant in English, they appear in Roman text.

“Usually it is the opposite, the daughter wants to study abroad and the father is not keen.”

This code and the others noted above were repeated in other interviews with my participants, leading to the creation of subthemes. I kept track, for example, of the decision to study abroad or in Qatar, who made the decision, and other related data that became part of the data record.

The following is not a comprehensive collection of the themes identified, nor is it in a particular order. The purpose of the illustration below is to provide an example of the kinds of ideas that emerged in the first cycle of coding.

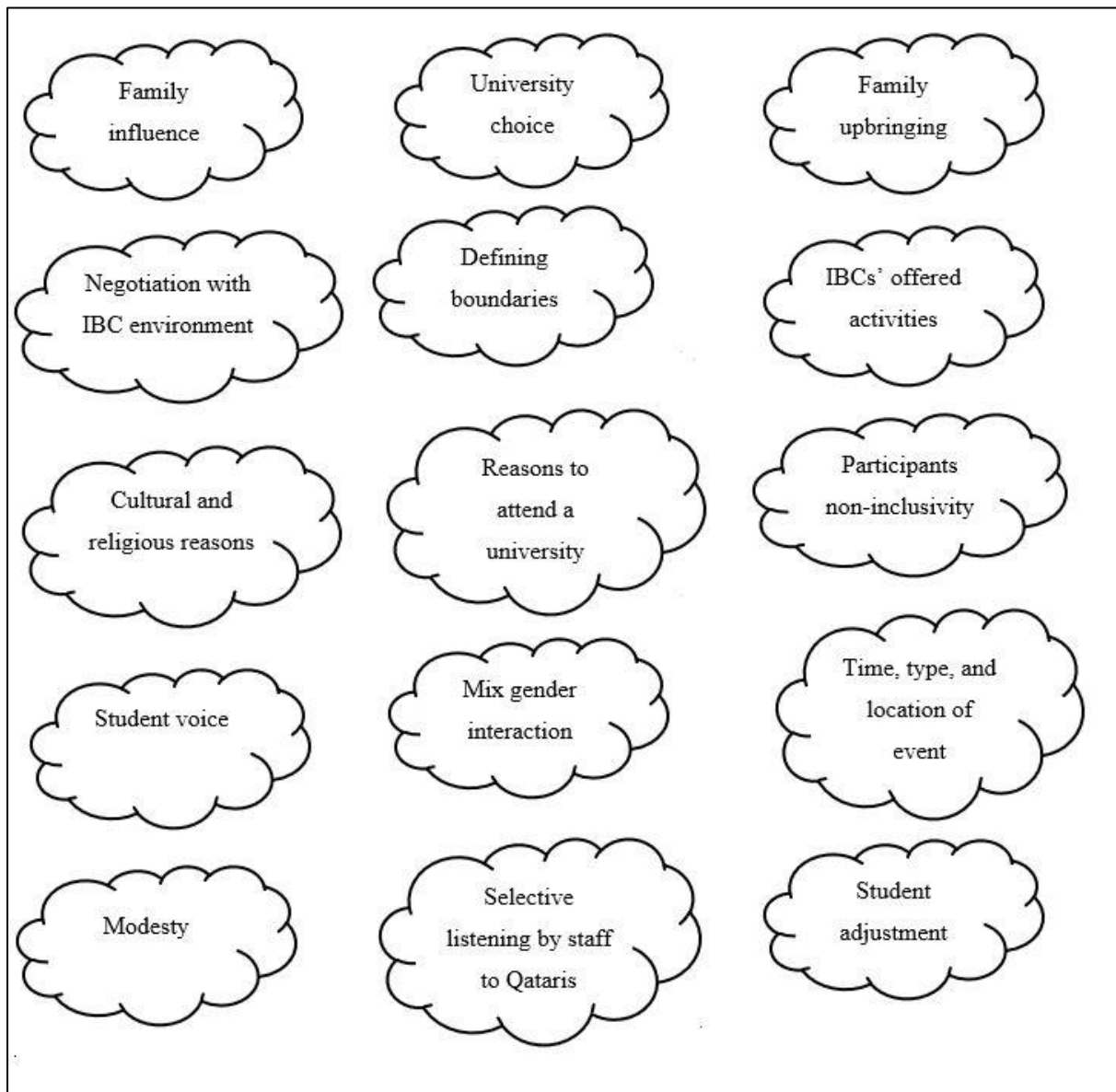


Figure 6.1. Example of potential themes noted during first cycle coding.

Once main themes had been identified and their characteristics noted, the process of identifying and characterising subthemes began. The following is an example of characterising the “attachment to family” subtheme.

Subtheme	Notes
Attachment to family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Several participants, male and female, chose to study in the country instead of studying abroad, to be close to their families. - Majority mentioned their mother involved in most decisions made. - Having a sibling in Education City influenced their decision. By knowing more about the university and being close to family. - For some, it was the participants’ desire to be close to family and some the family's desire to have the alumni close. - Being close was seen as desirable for a variety of reasons including, being missed, worrying about their children in terms of safety or taking care of oneself, being around to support the family and other reasons. - Family would attend university events in some cases, other than graduation.

Table 6.1. Example of characterising a subtheme.

The above table is an example of characterising fragments of subthemes that were consolidated later in the second cycle, creating bigger thoughts and themes.

6.2 Analysis of data – second coding cycle

In the second cycle, I was able to articulate and define my understanding of certain themes, such as family influence.

I came to describe family influence as follows: Family is described as parents, siblings or cousins. Any of these could be influenced by someone or something that impacted on their perception, and in turn could influence the participants’ life. Participants’ own experiences within the ambit of their lives influenced their opinions differently. Participants are inspired, attracted or encouraged towards a certain choice of university when a family member says something about it or by their actions, such as being currently enrolled or having previously enrolled in the chosen university, chosen education system or country of education.

I also gathered together several subthemes to create one bigger overarching theme. Examples of this are: *the Qatari way of life* is an overarching theme that consisted of smaller themes, such as *the importance of family* which in turn is also an overarching theme for smaller subthemes, such as *family influence in education decisions*, *attachment to family*, *family being priority*, *family upbringing*, and so forth.

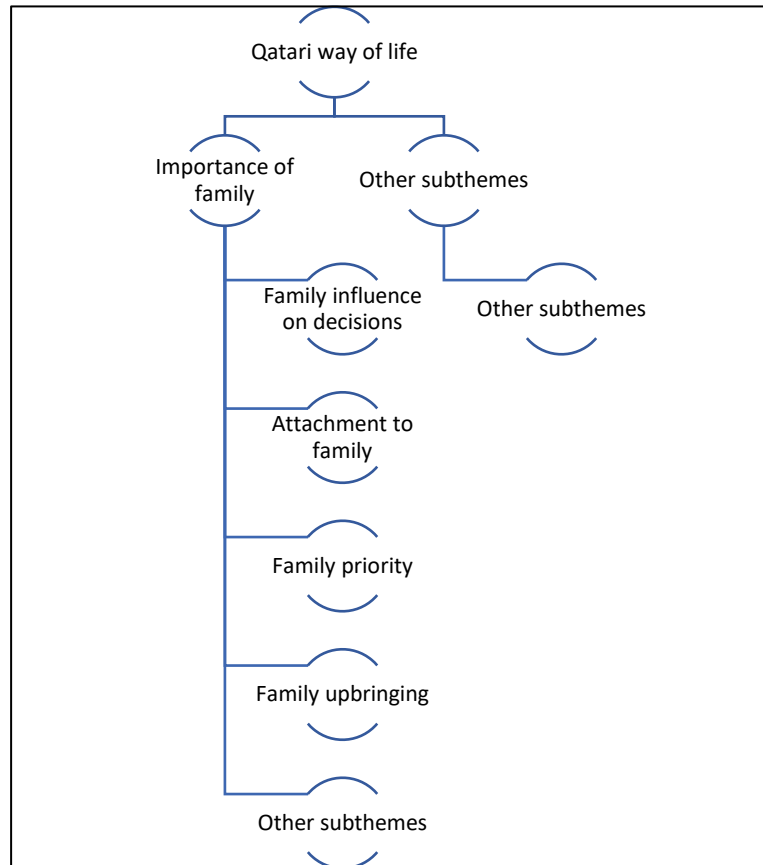


Figure 6.2. Example of creating overarching theme from subthemes.

Those mentioned above do not form a comprehensive subtheme list but are intended to provide an example of how an overarching theme was created from a smaller thematic fragment beneath it. The above exercise was created bottom up, from the small fragments to the bigger overarching theme.

In the second cycle, I was also able to extract some numerical data from the qualitative data. As discussed earlier in the first cycle, I was intrigued by how many participants self-decided to study abroad, and how many followed a decision made by someone else. The table below is an example of collecting one item related to student choice of university. I also tracked their decision in terms of preference for studying abroad or studying in Qatar. The following two tables will not be discussed in any detail here, as they are discussed as findings in Chapter 8.

However, these two tables are examples of extracting data from the qualitative data which can then be interpreted numerically.

Participants	Study abroad preference
Ameena Female Valley IBC	Self-decided to study in Qatar
Ibrahim Male Valley IBC	Self-decided to study in Qatar
Muneera Female River IBC	Self-decided to study in Qatar
Aisha Female Woods IBC	Self-decided to study in Qatar
Ali Male Woods IBC	Self-decided to study in Qatar
Jassim Male Woods IBC	Self-decided to study in Qatar
Ruqaya Female Woods IBC	Self-decided to study in Qatar
Shammah Female	Family decision to study in Qatar

Valley IBC	
Mubarak Male Valley IBC	Family decision to study in Qatar
Nawal Female River IBC	Family decision to study in Qatar
Hessa Female Woods IBC	Family decision to study in Qatar
Shaheen Male Valley IBC	Study abroad was an option
Abdulrazaq Male River IBC	Study abroad was an option

Table 6.2. Example of the basis for tracking and collecting numerical data: decision and preference for studying abroad or in Qatar.

As seen from the table above, numerical information on the extent to which my participants fell into each category that I was interested in investigating surfaced naturally in this study from the qualitative interviews. I was able to understand how many self/family decisions were made; how many considered studying abroad; how many females and males fell into each group, and which IBC they were affiliated with.

The above table is subsumed into one line in the following table that I use in my findings in Chapter 8. The line is seen highlighted in the table below, demonstrating preference for study abroad.

Participants' university option	Choice type	Total
Qatari institution was not a preference	13 self-decided	13
Study abroad was not a preference	7 self-decided (3 male – 4 female)	11
	4 family-decided (1 male – 3 female)	
Education City IBCs are seen to be the best fit	13 self-decided	13

Table 6.3. Example of presenting numerical data after extracting it.

Hence, while this was a qualitative and not a quantitative study, partly because of the small number of participants, but largely for the other reasons mentioned earlier, some numerical data helped to form an opinion and understand themes.

6.3 Final themes identified through the coding process

The coding process revealed a range of themes that relate specifically to the groups of participants interviewed. The resulting themes are outlined below, before the findings relating to these themes are discussed in detail in subsequent chapters.

6.3.1 Interviews with student affairs staff

Participants	Main theme
Student affairs staff	IBCs constraints

Table 6.4. Chapter 7: Participants and theme.

The main theme emerging from these interviews covers the constraints that affect IBCs and/or their staff when/if they want to make modifications in their practices for the Qatari student body. This theme and the findings related to it are discussed in Chapter 7.

6.3.2 Interviews with alumni

Because of the desired bottom-up approach identified above, the interviews with alumni provide the major information for this study, as the voice of students themselves is, as we state in Chapter 3, a neglected area in the literature, which neglect, as we saw in Chapter 4, is a particular consequence of a colonial legacy. Coding of the interview data from alumni coalesced into two main themes: the Qatari way of life; and the ways in which Qatari students strive to adjust.

Participants	Main theme
Alumni	Qatari way of life

Table 6.5. Chapter 8: Participants and theme.

The background that alumni provided helps to illuminate the context that Qatari students live in, and provide first-hand information on what factors played a part in their choices and in their decision to attend an IBC. This theme is discussed in Chapter 8.

Participants	Main theme
Alumni	Striving to adjust

Table 6.6. Chapter 9: Participants and theme.

In Chapter 9, I discuss the experiences of alumni while they were students. The findings address their efforts to adjust during their IBC experience as a main theme. Participants share their stories about the dialogue they needed to have with themselves concerning their surrounding environment, university, family, and overall Qatari cultural social norms in relation to mixed-gender interaction and the cultural concept of modesty (*alsiter*), which will be explained in Chapter 9. Lastly, the chapter covers the participants' views on their attempts to have their voices heard in the environment they experienced.

6.4 Chapter summary

A two-phase analysis cycle allowed me to identify a number of important themes and to develop a detailed understanding of how these themes relate to the lived experience of Qatari students in IBCs. Having completed the analysis as indicated in this chapter, the study moves on to report these findings. Throughout Chapters 7, 8 and 9, the findings are discussed thematically, and in the light of the literature discussed in earlier chapters. Where relevant, the postcolonial lens is also used to provide additional insights.

Chapter 7: Student affairs staff findings

This chapter is aimed at developing an understanding of how IBCs function within the Qatari context and what kind of environment is offered to the Qatari students from the IBC/student affairs staff perspective. It is important to note that the Qatari alumni participant findings are the core of this study and, therefore, should be placed first in importance among the findings chapters. However, in order to build up the context for the students' experiences, I have placed the alumni findings after the staff and IBC findings. This gives Qatari students a powerful voice which forms the final message for the reader.

7.1 The key messages in this chapter

The following important findings are discussed below.

Staff connection to the IBC host country's culture is an important factor in their recruitment. While staff do make efforts to localise the environment for Qatari students, there are other influences that limit those efforts. These are: the IBC to main campus relationship, relationships between IBCs and other peer institutions, and the interaction between the IBC and the Qatari cultural context.

In the following sections, I will discuss in detail how analysis of the data led to these findings.

7.2 Detailed presentation of the views of student affairs staff

In the student affairs staff section, I present the findings from interviews with four staff members affiliated with two IBCs within Education City Qatar. In this section, I have chosen not to use pseudonym names, or to mention gender or IBC affiliation. The number of student affairs staff in Education City IBCs is small. Any story shared along with the above information could lead to recognition of the participant. Unisex names for the four participants could be used, but I decided that the safest method was to use numbering randomly assigned to the participants, i.e. Staff-member 1 to Staff-member 4, and the same for the names of IBCs, i.e. Valley IBC, Woods IBC, and River IBC. Non-participant higher education institutions that were not part of this research are also brought up in the quotations and discussions. Three non-

participating IBCs are named Rocks, Cliff and Canyon IBCs, and two Qatari higher education institutions are named Dune University and Sea University. There are also two American universities in UAE which are mentioned once. They are named American university in UAE A and American university in UAE B.

Even though there are examples in the interviews of areas where staff successfully adapted their practices to the Qatari context, the aim of this research was to understand through their experience the challenges staff face in accommodating the Qatari context.

Before discussing the issues noted above, it is important to understand something about the participants who have provided information for this part of the study.

7.2.1 Participants' work experience

From the staff member interviews, I found that IBCs are more interested in employing staff with a cultural background that is relevant, to some extent, to the Qatari context than in employing student affairs degree holders. Based on the staff interviewed, IBCs will employ someone with a relevant qualification but with experience related to what they believe is a relevant Qatari cultural background. Staff learn about working with Qatari students by working in person in Qatar rather than through what they read. However, their understanding of the Qatari culture, to some extent, is not fully utilised by the branch campus, because the relationship of the branch campus with the main campus, peer branch campuses, and the Qatari context, places constraints on these staff members' use of their knowledge.

All four student affairs staff whom I interviewed work in similar roles (two working daily with students' extracurricular activities, and two with a managerial role in student affairs working partially with students) but came from different educational backgrounds. For example, the majority of them do not have a student affairs degree, similarly to the Qatari student affairs staff in the research reported by Hussain (2018). The four also come from different, self-identified cultural backgrounds, ranging from Arab Muslim to non-Arab and non-Muslim. Language ability also included more than Arabic and English. However, not all participants speak Arabic and not all of them speak more than one language. The most common denominator, applying to three out of the four participants, was a connection with an Arab/Muslim culture, through experience with Qatar or an associated Arab/Muslim culture, or

through living and working in Qatar or a neighbouring country, or through identifying as Arab and Muslim. This experience is likely to have contributed to their appeal as employable by the IBC. All four shared that after being employed, they learned extensively about cultural distinctions from Qatari students, those from other Gulf countries, Muslim students and international students.

Staff-member 4 is different, as this was the only staff-member interviewed who self-identified as Arab and Muslim, but not Qatari.

Staff-member 4 (Valley IBC): I'm a Muslim, a Muslim Arab, so I mean for me, it was not a significant challenge to work with the transition, here [in Qatar], especially that I speak the Arabic language. And that's something Qataris students are very important, something important to them. So, they don't like to speak in English, which is fine, it's their native language just to speak in Arabic so I think that's something that, very important to them. So, I think that's one of the things that have me more connect to them, than any other staff.

In the case of Staff-member 4, Qatari students felt more comfortable with a Muslim and with conversation in Arabic rather than in English, even though IBCs require English proficiency for acceptance into a programme of study. It was a considered decision for this study to provide participants with a choice as to whether the interviews would be in Qatari Arabic or English. In particular, it was thought that this would help the alumni participants to express themselves better. This was not an opportunity given to participants in Bakken (2013) and Rehal (2015), who required English language for their interviews. In addition, the staff member's closeness to the culture might have helped the staff-member's transition when relocated to work in Qatar. In contrast, Staff-member 3 had never worked in or had any connection with the Arabian Gulf before starting work in Qatar. In the quote below, Staff-member 3 is describing how the staff learned from studying about and working with international students, including Qataris, in the United States. The participant states that most development theories are not about Qataris in particular.

Staff-member 3 (Valley IBC): Student affairs is really a US-developed concept. And a lot of our student development theories came from studying US students and even that within the US. You know, there is a recognition between the 50s and 60s, the 70s and 80s that a lot of those early studies were done with white male students. Um, and so do those same development theories apply to females, do they apply to minority students, do they, you know, apply to international students?

The participant asserts later in the conversation that studying international students is not enough, and that working with Qatari students in an American university in the United States can be different from working with Qatari students in an American branch campus in their home country of Qatar. Staff-member 3 indicates a postcolonial awareness by questioning whether or not student development theories that are developed through working with US students are applicable to Qataris. This indicates an understanding of their differences and also an awareness of the contextual environment of Qataris and how this contributes to the complexity of understanding Qatari students.

Staff-member 3 (Valley IBC): Sort of studying international students ... well that didn't really apply either because the student who is in their home country versus a student who is an international student, there's very different dynamics there.

From the quote above, it can be seen that, whether the participant had broad experience of working with international students, or whether they had developed expertise through studying student development theory connected to Qatari cultural characteristics like being Muslim or Arab, they learned most through being on the ground, physically working in a Qatar IBC, and working with Qatari students. Working with Qatari students was the main contributor to their learning journeys. Therefore, in summary, by having worked in the Qatari context, staff can become an important resource for the branch campus. There are some examples of staff in both IBCs making efforts to have their activities fit the Qatari students. However, a common theme was the constraints that staff face when they want to put their expertise into practice. These constraints influence the environment provided for the students in general, but for the Qatari students specifically. These constraints are a product of the interactions of three types of relationships: IBC to main campus relationship, IBC to peer IBC or other institution within the Qatar relationship, and IBC in the Qatari context. The shape of these relationships and the ways they interact are described in the following section.

7.2.2 The dynamics of IBCs

Branch campuses need to work not only with their own home institutions, but also with other institutions around them. This leads to a complex web of relationships that will be explored in this section.

7.2.2.1 IBC to main campus relationship

Student affairs departments at the IBCs do not have full autonomy in their student affairs policies/practices within their own branch campus in Qatar. Even though my research is not about curriculum implementation, my findings are similar to those of Dumbre (2013) in terms of autonomy from the main campus; i.e. when IBC leaders wish to localise the curriculum, it is described as a complex procedure that needs approval from the main campus (Dumbre, 2013).

Lane (2011) suggested that some of the ways in which IBCs can be sustainable are by having a good relationship with the main campus, and being a good fit with the local culture (Lane, 2011), which can be a complex balance to achieve. It emerged from my participants' interviews that IBCs have close connections with the main campus that can lead to less flexibility in making decisions about adaptation to the local context. In many cases, the IBCs are expected to follow the direction dictated by the main campus, rather than providing what their students request or what they themselves want to provide as a result of their own experiences and knowledge of the culture. For example, in one of the staff interviews the following topic was brought up: the IBC bringing a Christian priest to a Qatar campus for a public religious ceremony:

Staff-member 1 (River IBC): He's a Jesuit priest ... that's because it's celebrating the Jesuit heritage so that's why it's a Jesuit priest.

This example shows how main campus requirements have wider effects. There is further discussion of this quote later in this chapter.

IBCs and other institutions intersect with each other, as shown in Figure 7.1. IBC staff on some occasions make limited efforts to accommodate the Qatari context through existing spaces that are already available in the IBC system. However, the strong connection between the main campus and its IBC means that there is limited use of the expertise built up by staff working in the Qatari context.

The following figure, developed from the data collected for this study, illustrates the influences on an IBC.

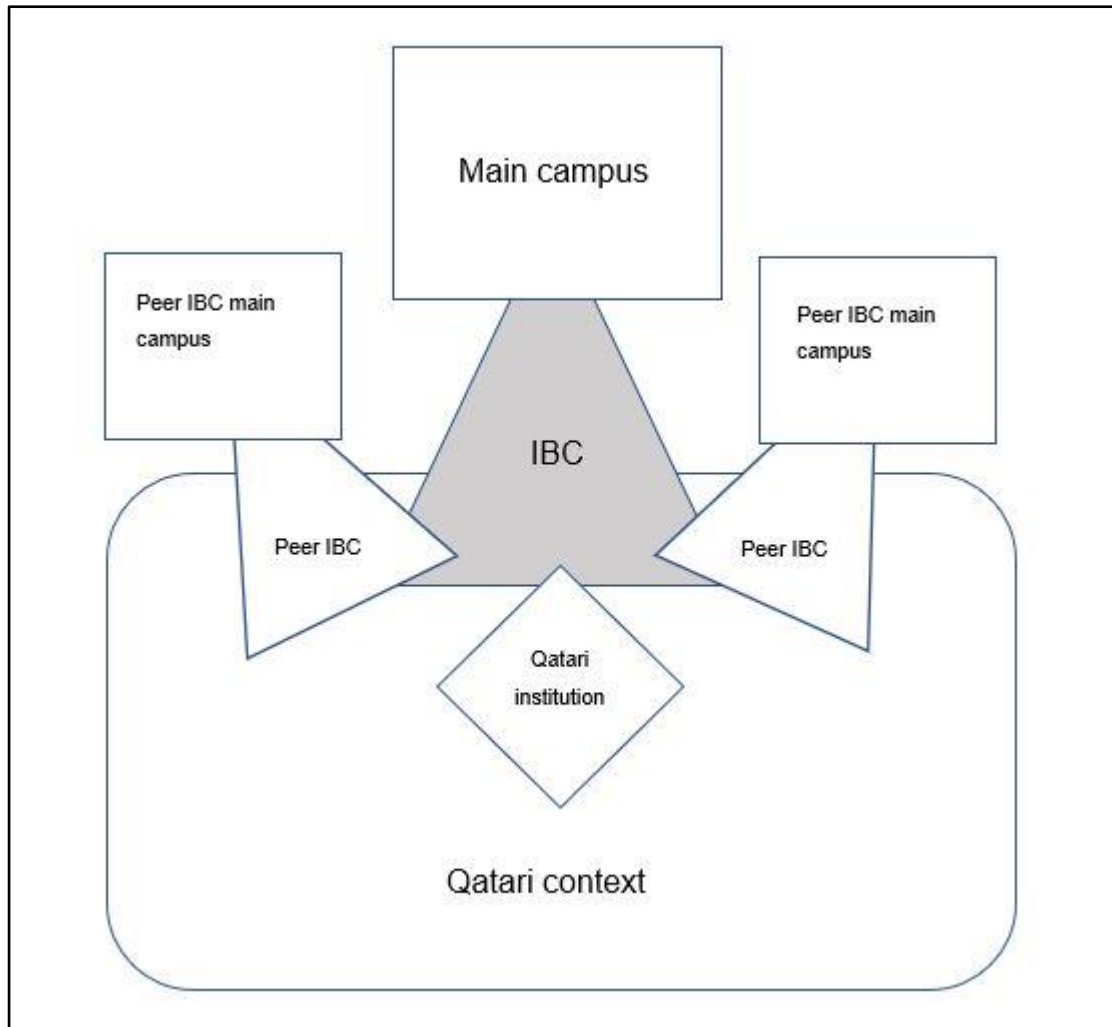


Figure 7.1. IBC relationships with other institutions in the Qatari context.

The Qatari context is illustrated as the big box. Intersections and relationships happen inside the Qatari context. The shaded triangle represents one IBC in Education City and above it sits its main campus. On its left and right are smaller shapes representing peer IBCs in Education City (there may, of course, be more than two), and the tilted square in the middle represents local institutions such as Dune University, of which there may also be more than one. I decided not to create Figure 7.1 with arrow shapes that set the direction from one side to another, as institutions' influence can be fluid between elements. Dumbre (2013) also found that IBCs influence the main campuses in addition to the main campuses influencing IBCs. There can be many invisible arrows coming from all directions that influence all the elements included in the illustration, including the Qatari institutions and the Qatari context itself. However, I intentionally placed the main campus on top of each IBC triangle because the main campuses make the final decisions regarding IBC practice.

This finding is in accordance with those of Dumbre (2013), Karam (2018) and Stanfield (2014), who found that IBCs in the Arabian Gulf do have a strong relationship with their main campus. Even though Dumbre (2013) discusses curriculum adaptation and implementation, and Karam (2018) discusses IBC sustainability, the general sense of both studies is that IBCs receive guidance from their main campuses, and that maintaining branding and accreditation is one of the most important reasons for this relationship. While student affairs can be different in terms of flexibility compared with curriculum implementation as in Dumbre's area of study, the principle of guidance from the main campus appears to hold true for student affairs. Stanfield (2014) found that the IBC he studied had more autonomy in its early years but became closely tied to the main campus in later years (Stanfield, 2014).

Even though I studied only two IBCs, the wider applicability of my model of relationships can be validated through Karam (2018), whose findings were that regardless of IBC structure, funding model, role, size, scope and governance, IBCs share similar organisational characteristics. From that we can also infer that it would not be unusual to find similarities in IBCs' relationships, as indicated by this research. These findings may also have a certain generalisability for similar context settings (Stake, 1995), such as other IBCs within Education City at least, or expanded to the Arabian Gulf countries, or to other IBCs around the world. In the following, I discuss those relationships further.

IBC policies and practice, in the general sense, come as directed from the main campus. These directions are not set; they can fluctuate and shift from one direction to another through time, based on the main campus decisions. One staff participant shared that in terms of practices and policies written to guide staff and students, the relationship between the main campus in the United States and the branch campus in Qatar went through a shift from focusing on the local context in Qatar in the years when they first started operating in Qatar, to being more like the main campus in the USA in more recent years. For example, Valley IBC showed more sensitivity to the local culture in its early years by writing down its own policy as a branch campus to reflect the local context. However, in later years and up to the present, the same Valley IBC in Qatar decided to defer to the main campus policies related to student life. Staff participants explained that the main campus wants all of its students around the world to fall under the same policies. These changes are illustrated by the following comment:

Staff-member 3 (Valley IBC): Over the last couple of years our rules have changed to more closely mirror what the rules are in the main campus. Maybe the first 8 or 10 years that we were in operation here [Qatar], our rules were very similar to the main campus, but we

would rewrite certain things because of our local context.... A few years ago our provost wanted to make sure it was much more consistent between the two campuses and that really the idea that we are not an independent operation, we are part of the larger campus. So, all of our rules had to be rewritten essentially to reflect back to the main campus.

Some of the differences mentioned here were about staffing and structure, but also cultural aspects usually included in the code of conduct.

Staff-member 3 (Valley IBC): We changed the language to include our local [in Qatar] campus making reference to Qatari or those kinds of things. Um, couple – about a year, year and a half ago, that was all changed now, so if you go to our local [IBC in Qatar] website for our, our campus here, click on the student rules, it actually links you back to the main [In the USA] campus student rules. So our students are still held accountable to those same rules [rules in the USA] even though we are in a local [in Qatar] context here.

In this context, Valley IBC's main campus is focusing on its practices in the USA, demanding that staff in Qatar hold Qatari students to some rules created and existing in the USA, not in Qatar. Stanfield (2014) found that in the IBC he studied, faculty and staff worked with more autonomy in its first years but not in later years. Dumbre (2013) found that IBCs do influence some curriculum changes in the main campus. Perhaps the changes in the main campus as a result of the IBC's influence as suggested by Dumbre (2013) led to similarity between the main campus and the IBC, which would explain why Staff-member 3 in my research stated that they no longer change the language to apply particularly to Qatar. However, the next example brings more complexity because religion is brought into the picture. River IBC is a Catholic university that did not initiate any denomination-related activities during its early years of operation in Qatar, as it wanted to be sensitive to local Muslim culture and Qatari students. In more recent years, however, the branch campus has begun to celebrate its religious heritage, with the inclusion of a Christian priest on the Qatari campus.

Staff-member 1 (River IBC): He's a Jesuit priest ... that's because it's celebrating the Jesuit heritage so that's why it's a Jesuit priest.

In this interview, Staff-member 1 indicates that the IBC/staff believe that this religious celebration might be a non-issue with the Qatari students, and in the following quote, Staff-member 1 expresses the IBC/staff opinion that they can act freely regardless of whether this conflicts with the Qatari context.

Staff-member 1 (River IBC): We recognise the local [Qatari] culture but we're not letting – we're not feeling like we have to tip-toe around it so much anymore.

This quote, stating that staff are recognising the Qatari culture but will not “tip-toe” around it, sounds as if perhaps with time, the IBC became more relaxed in term of its sensitivities to issues related to some Qatari cultural differences. It appears that the staff are not troubled with the idea of not recognising the Qatari culture, or are not as sensitive as they were when the IBC was first established in Qatar. One of the dangers of misrecognition (as defined by Taylor (1997)) is that the Qatari student body may be seen to be seeking approval from the superior culture offered at their IBCs. This does not support the QNV2030 goal of developing Qataris and preserving their culture, and can present a dilemma in relation to the notion of Qatar hosting IBCs to support its aim of achieving QNV2030.

Karam (2018) suggests localisation as one IBC sustainability factor in areas such as research and branch campus practice. As stated in Chapter 3 (de Wit & Meyer, 2012; Dumbre, 2013; Healey, 2018; Karam, 2018; Shams & Huisman, 2012; Smith, 2010), there should be a balance between localisation and global interest. However, given the fact that IBCs do localise some aspects of their practice and not others, perhaps future research can help in understanding this balance or define the expectations of both host nation and sending institution as to what should be localised.

Later in the conversation, Staff-member 1 continues to discuss the Jesuit celebration:

Staff-member 1 (River IBC): It was something that was always underplayed in Doha in our early years ... we always assume that students were afraid of our Catholic history, like: ‘We do not want to talk about it.’ But our students were completely non-plussed by it.

The passive reaction or silence of Qatari students may be interpreted as their having no concern about the discussed issue, but it may also be that this reaction is being misinterpreted by the staff. Shortly, I will discuss another story in which, because students thought that one staff-member was not understanding their cultural needs, they had to approach another Qatari staff-member to have their voices heard. I also will discuss further the silence of Qatari students on campus in Chapter 9.

The main campuses, perhaps, are not fully utilising an asset to them, namely the staff who spend more time in the culture and learn more about it, on the assumption that there is learning happening. Despite this, the main campus directs the IBC to be similar to the main campus, for

example by hosting a priest affiliated to the main campus denomination and adhering to policies and practices that are dictated in the USA. The following is a story shared by Staff-member 1 about judicial cases:

Staff-member 1 (River IBC): If it's a higher-level disciplinary issue ... that carries a bigger sanction that could lead to suspension.... then, we reach out to our main campus to make sure that we're doing the right thing. We talk about the case with them. They give us advice. If it's a very serious issue ... we have something called a hearing board. ... We actually have someone from [main campus] on the hearing board. ... We're getting a nice neutral person in [main campus] who doesn't know the student, who doesn't really know much about it but it has a nice, you know, they're completely objective about the facts in front of them.

Staff-member 1 did not indicate that they thought the process was bureaucratic; rather they saw it as a good opportunity to have someone neutral working on the case. However, neutrality can be achieved in different ways, rather than by reporting back to the main campus to check whether the IBC is doing the right thing as described, or having a remote member of staff sit in on a major hearing. Indeed, these approaches come closer to Karam's (2018) findings about the bureaucratic relationship between the IBCs and their main campuses. Moreover, having someone from the main campus who might not have experience of Qatar sit in on a major judicial hearing in the completely different context of a Qatar IBC can be connected to Dumbre's (2013) concerns about decision-makers from the main campus having no experience of working in the Arabian Gulf. Although Dumbre was talking about curriculum design, the concern is just as relevant to student affairs.

Both IBCs in this research demonstrate an interesting combination of following main campus guidance and trying to maintain independence from their main campuses in the environment and support offered to their IBC students. It appears, at least from my interviews, that they do not have enough autonomy to function like a fully fledged Qatari university. This is, of course, understandable; IBCs are not autonomous, and perhaps that is the point of an IBC – acting like an IBC. Karam (2018) states in his findings that a balance between IBCs and main campuses does exist in terms of autonomy and interdependence in the decision-making process. Moreover, all eight of his participants worked in leadership roles in IBCs and assured him of the importance of maintaining the IBC brand for the sustainability of the IBC. In contrast, Dumbre (2013) suggested that IBCs focus more on global standards than on local standards.

She found that there is pressure on the IBCs to align with the main campus for accreditation and contractual reasons (Dumbre, 2013). She concluded that this may lead to limited ability to localise the IBCs' practices, and she and Bakken (2013) concluded that effective support for Qataris still needed work. After all these years of operating, my research shows that in the context of student affairs, further investigation is still needed to support the local Qataris and take cultural differences into consideration.

What I find most intriguing in this regard is that staff from both IBCs indicated a shift in their Qatari cultural sensitivity. Karam (2018) and Lane (2011) suggest that IBCs may increase their success and sustainability by aligning the main campus goals with the hosting country's national vision, and through adapting practices to fit the local laws and culture. Since the IBCs in Qatar have been in operation for a decade, does this mean that they are successful in those adaptations or that, having now shifted away from cultural sensitivity as my participants shared, they might become unsuitable in the future?

This finding suggests that the longer an IBC functions in Qatar, the more the opposite of cultural adaptation takes place, and the less sensitive they become to the local context. This interesting behaviour raises multiple questions. Are IBCs trying to align with the experience of the main campus because they are delivering the same accreditation, as found by Dumbre (2013) when discussing the curriculum? If so, why was this not the case from the beginning when they started delivering their degrees in Qatar, especially with regard to out-of-class student experiences? In contrast, as we have seen, and as found by Stanfield (2014), they appear to have less autonomy in later years. What is the long-term impact on the hosted nation from such a shift in alignment and non-focus on the local context? Roberts and Roberts (2011) questioned whether nations like Qatar were interested in the entire package rather than simply the certificate from the university or the importing nation. These researchers also question whether Qatar fully knows what it is importing. There would be benefits from future research bringing more understanding to these questions.

7.2.2.2 IBC-to-IBC relationships and links with other peer institutions

Besides the IBC-to-main-campus relationship being a major factor in how IBCs function, the interviews revealed a dynamic of decision-making between an IBC with its peer IBCs or other institutions in Qatar. This is an area where there is minimal discussion in the literature, although

Bakken (2013) reports that cross-IBC relationships are important and are frequently requested by students who wish to interact with students from the other IBCs. In the following discussion, we explore some examples of how IBCs influence each other.

IBCs are sometimes challenged not by their main campus but by their peer IBCs. In Education City, peer IBCs sometimes hold events that include all IBCs, such as intermural sports between the IBCs students. To create such events, IBCs hold meetings with representatives from all IBCs. River IBC staff shared that Rocks IBC proposed during an all-IBC meeting their interest in creating a single-gender event; Rocks IBC is a USA-based IBC that was not part of this research. However, the other IBCs did not take them up on this request. The following story shared by Staff-member 1 illustrates the dynamics that IBCs have with their peers and other entities within Education City or in Qatar in general.

Staff-member 1 (River IBC): If you're playing [basketball] with the other American universities [IBCs in Qatar], the branch campuses generally did not have a problem [with mixed-gender] except with Rocks IBC, who, at that meeting said: 'We would also like the same rule' [segregated gender]. I think Rocks IBC has more women. More Qatari women. And, and as a result, they may also want a segregated basketball league. And I think they may have not found a voice but once Dune University said it, they found another ally. So, at the meeting, they said, 'Can we do the same?'

In the above quote, Staff-member 1 is explaining a discussion which happened in a collaboration meeting between different universities about basketball tournaments between universities. The environment offered is generally mixed-gender, but in the meeting, the issue of a single-gender or mixed-gender environment was discussed. Dune University, being a local, single-gender, female university, is interested in a single-gender basketball league. Rocks IBC, which has predominantly Qatari female students, asked whether they can also join Dune University's request for a single-gender environment for females. The staff member interpreted this as being the kind of collaboration which would provide Qatari students with a stronger voice.

In the above quote it appears that, even when an IBC has permission from its main campus for flexibility to be culturally sensitive in the best interests of its students, and its staff are willing to honour Qatari student requests, sometimes peer IBCs play a role in adding to the complexity of the situation. The other idea which emerges from the above quote is that sometimes IBCs

see the Qatari universities/institutions as the outlet for cultural sensitivities; hence Rocks IBC went to Sea University for support with the idea of creating a single-gender event.

The study findings revealed another example in a similar vein to the one above. In this case, Sea University took on the role of a cultural outlet for the IBCs. Sea University does not need to report to a main campus and, being a local university with Qatari staff, it was comfortable about carrying culturally sensitive events. Staff-member 2 from River IBC shared with me that their female students came to the student affairs office wanting to have a female-only basketball team. Then River IBC students found a Qatari female staff-member who worked in Sea University, and were able to ask her to organise an event which included them, even though Sea University was not their university.

Staff-member 2 (River IBC): They [River IBC students] actually complained about me for not understanding. And then it was a perfect thing that Fatima [Qatari female staff, name changed] was there, as well. She basically took them on.

The above quote indicates that the female Qatari students were challenged by Staff-member 2 about their female-only team. As a result, they complained about Staff-member 2 for not understanding them. Sea University, in this case, became the cultural outlet for those students. Therefore, Sea University takes on a relationship with IBCs as a partner for culturally appropriate activities, because they are not an American IBC, and therefore do not have the pressure of peer campus or main campus expectations. A noticeable difference between River IBC Staff-member 2 and Rocks IBC staff is that the former was complained about by the female students for not being understanding, and the latter were advocating for Qatari females. This raises a question about the element of staff approachability and understanding of Qatari students when something is needed and when something is doable by the IBC, regardless of main-campus-imposed policies and structure. Parallels can be drawn between Staff-member 2 about whom the Qatari female students complained for not understanding, and Staff-member 1's comments that after introducing the Jesuit heritage culture in Qatar IBC, their students "were completely nonplussed by it". Both staff are from the same IBC, which makes it interesting if this is something to do with this particular IBC.

My study reveals that the lack of student voice is shared among other IBCs from the alumni participants' perspective, and this will be discussed later in Chapter 9. Moreover, I am intrigued that the staff reaction was not to advocate for the students' request to understand their particular needs. Identifying this need shared by a group of students and supporting it would have been

easier than doing the same for a single student. This may be an example of “othering” (Said, 2003), in that the staff member might not have considered this group of students’ concerns to merit investigation and advocacy, or might have thought that a Qatari staff member in another Qatari university was more suitable to deal with the issue. A better practice might be for staff to advocate for the students and learn from their experience of working with Qatari students, with possible impact on and benefits for future practice and policies. This story echoes that mentioned in Hajjar and Gotto (2013), in which an IBC let go those Qatari students who wanted to opt out. The IBC in that case interpreted this as being flexible in working with the Qatari culture, when they should instead have been concerned about retention and finding ways to help increase inclusivity.

These data reveal the lack of student voice, on which, as noted in Chapter 3, minimal research has been done. I believe further exploration of the Qatari student experience with regard to this perspective is needed. The examples above also illustrate that there are differences between staff practices and approachability regardless of the IBC relationship with their main campus. In the next section, I discuss staff differences in managing their roles in the Qatari context.

7.2.2.3 IBCs and the Qatari cultural context

IBCs need to interact in the context they are hosted in, as shown in Figure 7.1. In some cases, IBC staff are trying to fit IBC practices with the local context. However, in other cases, they are using IBC practice to create a situation where the Qatari context must conform to IBC norms instead. The example below illustrates this point. In Qatar, public displays of affection, such as mouth-to-mouth kissing in public, are considered a non-modest act that is not acceptable. Bearing this in mind, Valley IBC Staff-member 3 approached the local context by maintaining main-campus-written policies in the following way:

Staff-member 3 (Valley IBC): If they're found kissing in the building, those kinds of things wouldn't be a violation of the [IBC] student rules but they're not appropriate for our local [Qatari] context. And so having some follow-up conversations with students about that and what the expectations locally [in Qatar] are.... If then the student chooses to not follow my direction, that could be interpreted as violation of the rules because they've been given a direction by a university official.

The above is an example of branch campus staff looking for solutions with which to adapt the branch campus's practices to the Qatari context. This echoes Karam's (2018) and Dumbre's (2013) findings about efforts made by leaders to fit the local context. However, the above quote is interesting because it shows that staff interpret the wording in their policies to help fit the Qatari context, rather than developing the policy itself to fit the IBC context. Even though individual staff are not always permitted to interpret things related to accreditation, this quote indicates that many things are *ad hoc* and open to individual staff interpretation and enforcement.

Another example of an IBC trying to fit the Qatari context is provided in the following story. Staff-member 1 found a way in which the Qatari culture can accommodate the conservative view of a Jesuit heritage. In the Qatari culture, there is no issue in discussing the idea of religion or being religious in a conversation; this is the same in the Jesuit heritage.

Staff-member 1 (River IBC): The Qatari culture has already enforced some of these [River IBC's] conservative concepts ... it [River IBC] makes it a safe space to be religious. Again, when this is in the United States, it's not really politically correct to talk about religion ... but the River IBC main campus celebrates the different religions.... In Qatar, in Islam, people don't think it's not politically correct to talk about religion. The fact that you are a religious person is a good thing and so, I feel like somebody who's Catholic here or Protestant here and actually really believes and lives out their religion feels more comfortable [in Qatar] than they do in the United States.

The above is an example of the Qatari context being fitted into the IBC context. If we consider the above two examples in the context of Figure 7.1, it sounds as if IBCs are trying to fit the big Qatari context box into the smaller IBC triangle. This has similarities to the example discussed in Chapter 4, where, when GU-Q publicised a proposed discussion about God's portrayal as a woman, Qataris were not happy about the topic for religious reasons. GU-Q is self-identified as a Jesuit university and as conservative in nature. Can such conversations find space in a Jesuit heritage but not within a Muslim context, or might holding such dialogues cause distress to both Muslims and the Jesuit cultures? How this dynamic works is, perhaps, a question for future research.

In Karam's (2018) findings, leaders state the importance of "adaptation of practices to fit with local laws and cultural context" (Karam, 2018, p. 200). The two stories above illustrate approaches by staff to fit the Qatari culture within the environment available to them in the IBC. However, this reflects only the views of staff I interviewed, since it is not written into

policies. Therefore, another staff member within the same IBC, or a different IBC, or a new staff member hired as a replacement for an experienced member of staff who leaves, could have a different approach. This is why we have seen Rocks IBC staff advocating for students while River IBC Staff-member 2 was complained about for not understanding. Furthermore, the lack of a clear written policy that reflects the Qatari context does not help clarify or develop standardised long-term solutions for situations in the Qatari context. Therefore, while Karam's finding (2018) that practices are adapted for the Qatari context is accurate, according to the findings of this study, there is still room for improvement.

One way that staff learn about working with Qatari students is by listening to them. Valley IBC and 2 share a similar student voice system, which includes elements like an open-door policy, focus groups and student parliaments. Nonetheless, the following quote is rather telling. Staff-member 1 was discussing a Qatari cultural matter but was not sure how sensitive it was to the Qataris.

Staff-member 1 (River IBC): I don't even know it but it doesn't seem to be an issue. Nobody [Qataris] talks about it so we [Staff in River IBC] don't – it doesn't come up as an issue here.

This quote includes an idea similar to that mentioned earlier when River IBC started integrating the Catholic heritage into its Qatar campus; Staff-member 1 said that it did not seem to be an issue with their students: "Our students were completely nonplussed by it". It is important to note that the silence does not necessarily mean consent. Silence might also mean that people do not feel able to speak up. The example above also indicates that learning about cultural sensitivity often happens when Qatari students react to IBCs' decisions, or at least this particular IBC or its staff member. This might be interpreted as postcolonial power over a subordinate culture (Said, 2003), in that their problems do not seem to be important and are not worth investigating unless it is perceived by the superior culture that the inferior culture needs to adjust. This is the case in my findings and those of the staff in Prowse and Goddard (2010), when faculty choose what to adjust in the Qatari context based on their own perceptions of what needs to be adjusted in the curriculum. Moreover, from the interviews, staff can treat the student voice differently when students are requesting resolution related to cultural needs. Could this be the reason why, in the Qatar Community College example from Chapter 3, the female Qatari resorted to a newspaper to voice her frustration at the mixed-gender graduation and her reasons for not attending? It appears that students feel that they might not have someone

who understands their uniqueness and differences, which therefore are not valued (Tylor, 1997). This idea will be unpacked further in Chapter 9, discussing student voice.

Student affairs staff through the history of American higher education have played an important role in understanding students and creating a comfortable environment for diverse learners, as discussed in Chapter 3. However, even as we recognise this, the question arises: are Qataris accorded their full rights to be in a culturally convenient environment in which they can participate equally (Martineau, 2012) in the IBCs in Qatar? This is an important question because, as found by Bakken (2013), one of the reasons for Qataris to attend an IBC in their home country is a concern about their culture and beliefs. There are examples in my findings that demonstrate attempts to accommodate these, such as no classes on Friday since Friday is not a business day in the Qatari week. Bakken (2013) suggests that IBCs interpret Qatari non-participation in events which have been modified with the intention of accommodating Islamic beliefs and culture as a refusal to embrace Western culture. From the Qatari perspective, however, the amended environment may not be enough to allow them to participate. If Qatari students are experiencing an environment where their needs are not recognised or are challenged in some cases, or their requests are denied, this could cause stress in the Qatari student experience. This will have an implication for the kind of dialogue that Qataris have with themselves in shaping their identity (Tylor, 1997), and will affect the identity they create in that third space (Bhabha, 1994).

The above stories coming from two different IBCs are indicators of staff learning about working in the Qatari context and finding ways to fit with what is provided/mandated by their IBC or the main campus.

My study can complement, for example, those of Dumbre (2013) and Karam (2018) and help to provide a fuller picture, both top-down and bottom-up, even though the studies have slightly different aims, in that Dumbre is about curriculum, Karam is about sustainability, and mine is about student affairs. Moreover, since most of my participants are non-Qatari staff members and do not have student affairs Master's degrees, and the majority of Hussain's (2018) Qatari staff members also do not have Master's degrees in student affairs, future research could undertake a comparison between Qataris and non-Qataris regarding their levels of competencies in supporting Qatari IBC students.

7.3 Chapter summary

This chapter aimed to explore staff perceptions of the environment offered in Qatar Education City IBCs. The research revealed some level of common experience background among staff that might favour them for potential employability in their respective IBCs, and may also influence their learning about working with Qatari students.

It was found that different types of relationships influence the environment offered, such as IBC to main campus, IBC to IBC, IBC to Qatari institutions, and IBC to local context, all of which were discussed in the light of the findings of this research and relevant literature. The dynamic of IBCs with these entities was captured in Figure 7.1. It was clear from the data that the main campus has a strong influence on IBC practices through policies and practices developed in and handed down from the home campus. Participating IBCs showed a shift in their sensitivity to culture from more to less sensitivity the longer they had been delivering their education in Qatar. The relationships illustrated in Figure 7.1 may facilitate or hinder the adaptation process of IBC practices to the local Qatari context. It should be borne in mind that there may also be other forces that are not within the scope of this research. Staff working in IBCs are adapting some practices but also might challenge Qatari students advocating for cultural modifications appropriate to their culture. There is a need for further exploration of the Qatari student voice and their experience as they perceive it. In the following chapter, I discuss the findings emerging from interviewing Qatari alumni who shared their experiences when they were students at Qatar IBCs.

Chapter 8: Findings about Qatari alumni student life

This chapter is about the main participants whom I wanted to understand. In addition, this chapter's findings set the scene for the following findings chapter. The findings reported in this chapter help us to understand the background and the context from which the Qatari participants come, which later will help us to understand the critical issues that will be discussed in Chapter 9.

The main interest explored here is university life in general, and more specifically extracurricular activities. It was clear from the data that participants filtered the extracurricular activities into ones they did wish to attend or take part in and some they did not. This filtration process sifts through a list of items they understand or value in their way of life, and thus contributes to the process of decision-making and the choices that students make. I discuss the differences among the Qatari participants when it comes to culturally sensitive topics, and focus in particular on making decisions as a Qatari female.

8.1 The key messages in this chapter

The following important findings are discussed below.

The family is the nucleus of the Qatari way of life; there is a relationship between the alumni families and the IBCs. It is important to recognise that Qataris are not an homogeneous group. Factors that shape the choices of participants to attend their IBCs which need to be considered are: early exposure to higher education, perception of Western education, experience of a different environment, Education City's reputation, university location, family influence, personal life aspirations after university, and the application process.

In the rest of this chapter, I will discuss in detail how analysis of the data led to these findings.

8.2 The family – the nucleus of the Qatari way of life

For the purposes of this research, family includes one or both parents, siblings, cousins, in-laws or any member of the extended family. This accords with Bakken (2013), who also regarded siblings and extended family as part of his participants' family influence.

Despite the fact that family influence on decision-making was not a specific question for this research, the findings revealed that family is extremely important to the participants, and family-related stories surfaced naturally during the interviews.

For students, family plays the role of anchor and compass. Family sets the general social norms for participants throughout their upbringing, and continues even afterwards to guide students' recognition of what is appropriate or desirable (Taylor, 1997). The findings also reveal the differences between Qatari families with regard to cultural interpretation and level of commitment to the mainstream understanding of religion and its practices. Nonetheless, regardless of their families and the way participants have been brought up, they still make their own choices, taking into consideration their families' values and other external forces – external to their families or external to the Qatari way of life in general. This latter finding is different from similar research (for example, Bakken, 2013) which describes Qataris on the conservative/liberal scale of categorisation. This can be interpreted as Westerners using their own terminology to describe Others (Said, 2003). Later in this chapter, I introduce from the findings of this research alternative ways of describing my participants, rather than as more or less conservative.

8.2.1 The importance of 'family'

In this research, family was found to be an important factor for student choices including the choice of which IBC to attend in Qatar. Participants brought up the influence of their families in helping them decide on their university education journey. The family theme highlights the importance of understanding Qatari family dynamics and relationships. Lynn and Mattocks (2006) suggested that it was important to understand the dynamics of the Qatari family on decision-making because this would impact on a range of areas of life, including schooling investment. Bakken (2013), in exploring the experiences of Qatari students in Education City,

found that the family influence on their participants' decision-making in choosing their university was key.

This appears to be recognised by Qatar Education City marketing, in which the importance of the close-knit family to the Qataris is a key feature, providing: "... a convenient alternative to travelling abroad for Qataris" (Ahmadi, 2015, p. 53). Knight (2014) suggested that one of the major benefits in a host country such as Qatar is the "ability to gain foreign qualifications without leaving home and ... continu[ing] to meet family" (Knight, 2014, p. 46). This is in agreement with Bakken's study which suggests that staying close to home has the "... advantage of allowing the student to still be surrounded and supported by family" (Bakken, 2013, p. 78), and also with Escriva-Beltran et al.'s systematic literature review (2019) which concluded that being close to family is a factor for students who attend an IBC (Escriva-Beltran et al., 2019).

What Knight (2014) suggested is very closely reflected in the conversation reported by one of my participants, Ruqaya, whose quote was used as an example in Chapter 6, in a discussion with her father as they tried to decide on a quality education while remaining close to each other. Note that, as mentioned previously and in the glossary, *italic* is used for quotes translated from Arabic to English, and non-italic for what has been said originally in English.

Ruqaya (female, Woods IBC): *So, my dad has a thing, investment in education.... He seeks perfection if you would say. He wants us to learn no matter what. He encourages us to study abroad; even my sister didn't want to study abroad. But he told her you are going to study abroad. I mean usually it is the opposite, the daughter wants to study abroad and the father is not keen. But no, my dad was paying a lot of attention to this thing. But when +those universities opened here, my dad said okay we have elite universities, which are not only prestigious but they have a name, global and everyone knows them, so why not apply here.*

In the above quote, Ruqaya recalls a conversation with her father which suggests that he would push his daughters to pursue what is perceived as a quality education abroad, although that is against mainstream thinking in Qatar. When he perceived an opportunity for quality education that was opening in Qatar, he suggested that she apply for it. Ruqaya mentioned throughout the interview how close her relationship was to her father.

The participants' relationships and their influence were demonstrated in a variety of ways. These impacted on the decisions made by the participants throughout their education journey.

The influence started with their university choices such as choosing a programme of study, included their out-of-classroom activity choices, and continued to affect travel abroad or decisions related to their professional future after completion of their programmes.

Of the 13 participants, the three who did not mention family influence in their interview, did not say that their family had no influence; they simply did not mention it.

8.2.2 The relationship between families and institutions

In my findings, three participants shared that they had non-student family members who joined a university out-of-class event. This is unusual according to Osfield et al.'s (2008) discussion about family interaction. Osfield et al. (2008) discussed UAE public and private universities and their interaction with Emirati families. Zayed University, which is a public university, encourages parents to interact with the university, but not the American University of Dubai, which is a private university. This was not as clear-cut in my findings in Qatar Education City, where different American IBCs had different dynamics in their relationships with families and their enrolled children.

The bond between family and participant is also seen in the shape of the time spent together. Seven participants gave priority to scheduling time with family over university activities if they conflicted as to time, day or season. The wider community also has an impact in the bonding arena, and participants preferred spending time with non-university friends over participating in university activities. The ranking revealed by the data appears to be: family, then friends, then university activities.

Preferred to be with family over extracurricular activity		
Aisha	Female	Woods IBC
Nawal	Female	River IBC
Muneera	Female	River IBC
Abdulrazaq	Male	River IBC
Jassim	Male	Woods IBC
Shaheen	Male	Valley IBC
Mubarak	Male	Valley IBC

Table 8.1. Choosing family over university extracurricular activities.

Brought family member to university activity		
Ameena	Female	Valley IBC
Ruqaya	Female	Woods IBC
Ibrahim	Male	Valley IBC

Table 8.2. Including family in university extracurricular activities.

Another example is provided by Abdulrazaq (male, River IBC) in a discussion about things that he could not take part in. He talked about a school trip in which students travel to “zones of peace and zones of conflict” countries. This trip had the potential to enrich his politics major. In the following example, there is conflict between family and university during the summer season.

Abdulrazaq (male, River IBC): I could have applied for it but I didn't.

Mohammad: Why?

Abdulrazaq: Umm, do you want me to say it bluntly?

Mohammad: Bluntly please.

Abdulrazaq: I don't feel it.

Mohammad: In what way you didn't feel it?

Abdulrazaq: [laugh] I mean they [River IBC] plan the trip in your vacation time. They go to Somalia and Cambodia. It would be nice vacation, but I don't want to go there.

Mohammad: Why didn't you want to go? Is it the destination or how you want to spend [the summer]?

Abdulrazaq: Yes, exactly. I want to travel to Dubai or Kuwait with my friends and if a longer vacation, will travel further with my family or friends it depends.

It is clear that Abdulrazaq would prefer to spend his vacation with his family or friends, rather than going on a university-organised trip that would enrich his professional and educational experience.

The following is Mubarak's story (male, Valley IBC), in which he mentions a conflict at a specific time between family and the university. During the month of Ramadan, Qatari families will tend to break their fast together. The time commitment is the only time for a meal that happens every day throughout the month. Despite the availability of a free Iftar organised by the university, Mubarak preferred to go to his family's Iftar.

Mubarak (male, Valley IBC): *Sometimes [the IBC] did Iftar in Ramadan; it was hard to go out, it was hard.*

Mohammad: *Why is it hard?*

Mubarak: *You know, in Ramadan we are used to seeing our aunts, uncles and siblings. It is a gathering, so it is hard to go out.*

In the above example, Mubarak is describing how it is hard to attend a free meal with college friends, which one might think would be a fun event for college students, because being with family was so much a part of what he was used to. However, not all Qataris are the same; some Qataris may have chosen to attend, and some of the ones who attended may have made a ‘hard’ decision.

From the above data about the importance of family, which also means the cultural and religious upbringing within families, and the bond between the families and the participants, we can see the affectionate relationship between the participants and their families, which results in decisions and setting of priorities that accommodate all the parties in the relationship. Family relationships as revealed by these participants can be viewed as the nucleus to the development of the participant’s understanding of their culture and religion, forming their cultural anchor and compass for their future direction.

8.2.3 Families and choice

The finding noted above is different from Bakken’s (2013) findings about the relationship with family. Bakken gives the impression that the importance of families in Qatari life and decision-making results in Qatari participants being overly controlled against their will by their families and their culture, which is seen as strict and hindering their development.

On several occasions, I noticed language similar to the following in Bakken’s report:

“Some participants described how families encouraged them to make their own decisions about their education, **while several remained concerned** about outside influences potentially affecting their culture and beliefs.”

(Bakken, 2013, p. 93, emphasis added)

And in the following, describing students’ experience in the mixed-gender environment being beneficial for their future:

[The mixed-gender environment] “offered encouragement to get to know the other ideas of students, **despite possible parental concern** about being in mixed groups.”

(Bakken, 2013, p. 96, emphasis added)

In the above it seems as if the students are enjoying a beneficial mixed-gender environment even though some parents are not happy about it. In the third example, it is suggested that the Qatari family relationship, influenced by Islam, can make the difference between student development or not.

“**The patriarchal nature of families**, influenced by the teachings of Islam, may continue to influence this process well into the future, despite progressive reforms already underway within Qatar.”

(Bakken, 2013, p. 83, emphasis added)

In the above, the Qatari family is seen as a hindrance to the development of the Qataris regardless of the country’s effort to progress. On multiple occasions, Bakken referred to his Qatari participants as being too controlled by family and culture; for example:

“Some students, though, voiced concern about the **strictness of the culture.**”

(Bakken, 2013, p. 111, emphasis added)

Despite this being a very direct criticism from students, on some occasions while reading Bakken’s work, I was left with the feeling that his Qatari participants wanted to be saved from their culture. Looking at the above quotes describing the family’s relationship via a colonial view, the question arises: can this be described as white men saving Qatari students from Qatari families and culture, similar to Spivak’s (1988) “white men saving brown women from brown men” (Spivak, 1988, p. 297)? This Western colonial view perhaps sees the Qatari family and their children as having this different relationship, and being the “others” (Said, 2003). It interprets this family dynamic and way of living as a hindrance to attaining “civilisation” (Said, 2003) and benefiting from the progressive reform in Qatar brought by Western education (Bakken, 2013). Further, Bakken describes change in the following way:

“The **changing social and religious climates in Qatar** suggest that opportunities are increasing for native students to become successful members of the workforce.”

(Bakken, 2013, p. 93)

Even though Bakken acknowledges that, for example, more females are entering the job market, this quote also suggests, from the colonial viewpoint, that as long as the “others” (Said, 2003) keep changing their way of life (or mimic a culture to produce a new version of their own culture (Bhabha, 2013), or find diaspora identities (Hall, 1994)), they are moving forward. However, Bakken (2013) also acknowledges that his participants were concerned about changing their culture. Further discussion about adaptations/changes made by the participants is provided in Chapter 9.

8.3 Qataris are not a homogeneous group

It is generally recognised that Middle Eastern Arabs have different traditions and culture (Rugh, 2002), but it is not necessarily recognised that, as in any group, there are individual differences among Qatari families. For instance, Qatari families may differ in their views on some issues like mixed-gender interaction (Bakken, 2013). In Rehal’s (2015) findings she discussed the different views of Qataris about leadership. My findings revealed that, while all participants and their families embraced the same belief and culture, they did so at different levels, and hence Qataris are different from each other even in the way they are brought up.

In fact, even though all participants did take their family background and mainstream social norms into consideration, six specifically acknowledged that not all Qatari families hold the same cultural convictions.

Moreover, all participants in different ways stated that not all Qatari students hold the same level of cultural practices and beliefs.

Hence, the different perspective that this research brings is that Qataris fall into a multi-layered spectrum of commitment to the mainstream understanding of religion and culture. The following figure illustrates the layers of commitment that Qataris can subscribe to within the mainstream understanding of the Qatari way of life.

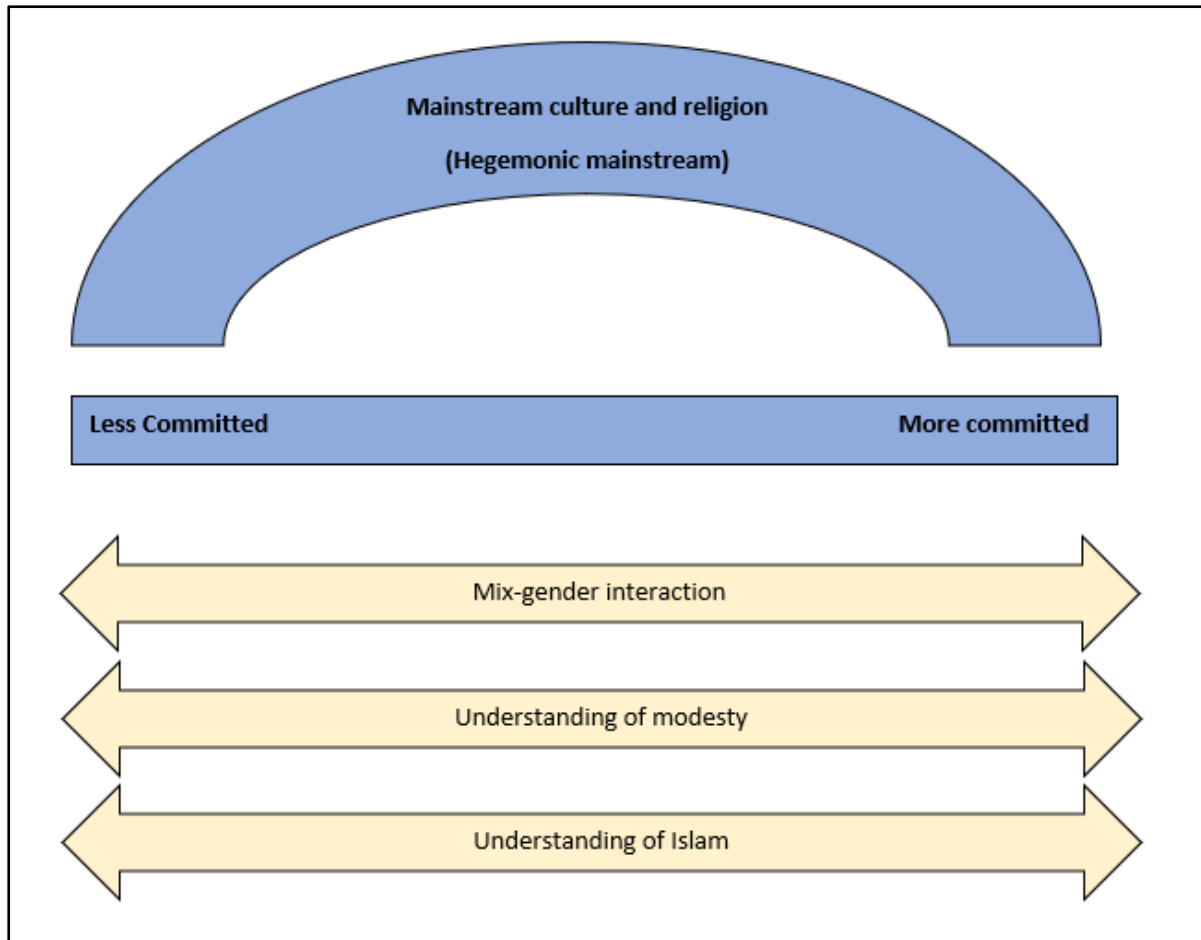


Figure 8.1. Commitment levels on a multilayer item spectrum.

In the above illustration, I provide the example of three layers, but the number of layers can be many more depending on the details of the Qatari way of life. The ideas or items coming from religion and culture on the spectrum can be small, niche concepts like mixed-gender interaction or much broader, like the understanding of Islam. Equally, items on the spectrum can be different from the ones provided in the figure, whether more or less detailed. Each idea is interpreted and understood in different cultures differently, and that shapes the mainstream way of thinking in a certain culture – for example, the understanding of modesty in Qatar can be different from the understanding of modesty in another Muslim country such as Turkey. This understanding of modesty shapes the mainstream thinking in a certain culture and then members of the community choose how much they want to commit at what level to that mainstream concept of modesty in their given culture. Different layers are treated differently in terms of commitment level – more commitment to a certain layer does not necessarily mean that the same person will choose to be at the same level of commitment in another layer. There are many influences coming from different walks of life that can affect the choices in the

spectrum of layers. This research does not mean to identify all these layers, although that may be an important direction for future research.

The participants I interviewed were all facing in the same direction, but they chose where to be on the spectrum for each different layer. Thus, an important idea emerging from these research findings is that the above choices shape the way of life of individual Qataris, rather than the more usual depiction of Qataris in the literature as being more or less conservative (Bakken, 2013), which may also be interpreted as more or less liberal. From a postcolonial viewpoint, the findings of this study show the limitations of the kind of colonial generalisation that results when Westerners create their own terminology to describe the orient (Said, 2003).

The following examples support the arguments above by showing some differences revealed by the participant data.

Nawal (female, River IBC) discussed how different families could have different approaches to upbringing based on different layers of factors that she called layers of an onion.

Nawal (female, River IBC): People assume that you as a Qatari represent the whole population, which is completely invalid and untrue.... this is the part when I step in and say this is when subcultures coming in and this is how societies divided all over the world. You can't look at one person and have it an indicator or the identifier for the whole society....

Mohammad: Do you consider yourself part of more than one subculture?

Nawal: Yes, I think everyone does.

Mohammad: Tell me about you.

Nawal: Me, Nawal, as I said your character develops as you grow up, as you go through different experiences. I think I belong to a subculture like being QF [Qatar Foundation] educated and what not. And you have my family's ties as well, your tribe and what not. Your cultural ties and your own beliefs and what not. Values you build on. So, those are like five or six [laugh] so it depends how you divide it. I have a subculture which is my direct and immediate family. And the bigger will be my tribe. And then you have subculture of being a Qatari citizen. So, it's kind of an onion. Where you just keep peeling the layers and you're going to have those different layers. That's why it's hard to have one person to be the face of everything.

In the above interview extract, Nawal clearly states that not all Qataris are the same, nor can one represent all. She further describes how each individual Qatari can go through different experiences that shape the person's understanding of his/her faith and culture and creates this person's values within the spectrum of layers, which Nawal calls onion layers. She uses the term subculture for the different groups and experiences that an individual can go through which shape their choices and provide the internal dialogue shaping their identity (Taylor, 1997).

Another example is provided by the following interview extract from Jassim (male, Woods IBC). Jassim described himself as "different". In this extract, he elaborates on why, and touches on one of the spectrum layers mentioned by Nawal (female, River IBC).

Mohammad: So, let's talk about different.

Jassim (male, Woods, IBC): So, different is that like, because I've had like a special, I want to call it a special like upbringing. I've been around non-Qataris all my life and then I've really grown up with them....

Mohammad: What is also different in you?

Jassim: Like, cause a lot of Qataris, they didn't grow in international school, international atmosphere and they might not accept like some of the situations I've been through. Like, I've been in a mixed school all my life and I don't see any problem with that personally, and like some people they like, even to this day, they don't, they can't accept that.

Mohammad: Yeah.

Jassim: Yeah. And I don't share the same, like, ideas as most of our population.

Mohammad: Yeah.

Jassim: And I have had heated debates with, with, like, people about this issue [mixed-gender interaction] and, like, there doesn't seem to be an agreement and it's not just like one person, it's multiple people.

In Jassim's example, he discusses how a certain education route has influenced his upbringing, which is for him the different experience that shapes his identity and thus his choices and understanding of the spectrum of layers. Jassim talks about having heated debates with people around him about mixed-gender interaction. This means they were having heated debates about one item on one layer, and where they should sit on the spectrum compared to the mainstream understanding. This type of debate can happen about different locations on the spectrum in all

the different layers. Moreover, the layer items and the choices may differ in time depending on mainstream thinking, which can also change in a certain culture. Two particular items from the spectrum that surfaced in the interviews with particular relevance for extracurricular activities will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

But first, let us return to participants' decision-making and choice of IBC.

8.4 Choice of IBC/programme of study

In this study, it was found that Qatari participants were exposed to different options in several higher education institutions: IBCs, Qatari universities within Qatar or universities abroad. This is also true in Bakken (2013), who found that Qatari participants have several options to consider. I was interested to learn about the participants' choice of their IBCs. The research findings reveal that different factors shaped the participants' choice, such as early exposure to IBCs, perception of Western education, Education City reputation, university location, the application process, personal life aspirations after university, and family influence on the university choice. Out of those factors, family was a prominent deciding factor. Participants mainly self-decided and they had the free will to do so, which confirms Bakken's (2013) findings. However, in this study, four participants studied at Education City because their families decided for them that they should not study abroad for various reasons. Further discussion is to follow.

8.4.1 Early exposure to higher education

All 13 participants agreed that their choice of Education City branch campus was the best fit for them, although their decisions might have been arrived at for different reasons. Apart from the key factor of family, which has already been discussed in the previous section, this section will further explore the factors that informed and shaped the participants' decisions.

All 13 participants stated that they had some information about what they aspired to study before beginning their application process and during their pre-university period. The information was on a variety of topics ranging from the type of educational system (for

example, resemblance to American education) to more specific goals such as majoring in Computer Science at Woods IBC.

Hessa (female, Woods IBC) shared her experience in her earlier years when she learned about the programme that she enrolled in.

Hessa (female, Woods IBC): I learned that River IBC had a computer science major. It was very early in my age so I didn't know what computer science was, and I don't know how they studied for it. But I was so excited, I got their brochure and hugged it like this [embracing her arms to her chest] for the love of it. Alhamdulillah [Thanks to Allah] after a struggle I got accepted.

Hessa's exposure to the programme/IBC when she was at school was likely to be an IBC recruitment brochure. Recruitment activity is one of the many different influencing factors in the participants' environment, even if they do not at the time grasp the full picture of the programme or what the university has to offer.

8.4.2 Perceptions of Western education

Other than early exposure, there is also a certain perception that Western education is better than what other types of education had to offer, which pushes Western education higher up the list of preferences for the universities that participants aspire to study at. This accords with Bakken (2013), who describes participants both aspiring to Western education and seeing the local university as an inferior option. In my findings, participant responses suggest that there is a positive perception of the Western education system as compared to Qatari higher education institutions, including Education City's main counterpart, and other institutions in the Middle East.

Western education as defined by participants includes American, European and Australian universities, which interestingly are those of the highest IBC exporting nations. The brand of these Western educational institutions, including Education City in Qatar, connotes high calibre peer students, well organised universities with plans that will allow participants to graduate on time, small classes, meaning a better faculty-to-student ratio, and a place that positively challenges students towards better growth. This perception of Western education was also found by Bakken (2013), whose participants

felt that they could attain better job opportunities, promotions and salaries through attending this strong Western education at IBCs.

For the participants in this study, studying abroad meant studying in a Western university and not abroad in a Middle Eastern university. Ali (male, Woods IBC) related a conversation he had with his father, who recommended that the type of university he applied to was important.

Ali (male, Woods IBC): *If you are going to study abroad go for something worth it, a valuable university.*

Ali explained that his father meant he should consider a non-Middle Eastern/Arab university. This perception, whether accurate or false, of a total elimination of Middle Eastern/Arab universities to be replaced by more 'valuable' Western institutions can be linked to postcolonial power affecting the above participant and can be extended to all the participants I interviewed. None of the 13 participants saw themselves studying at Dune University. For them, it lacked what they perceived Western education to be offering. However, one factor that needs to be taken into account here, is that a participant had to be an IBC alumnus to qualify for this research and to be interviewed, and in these circumstances, their view may not be unusual. Nonetheless, one might expect at least some participants to have at least considered Dune University to be another option, but none did. Besides the perceptions of Western education mentioned above, participants suggested that Dune University suffered from completion delays because of disorganised programme planning and university policies. One participant shared that she had heard from a student in Dune University that the study plan was not clear or kept changing, which can cause delays in the student completion time. However, none of the participants had experienced Dune University first-hand; their perceptions were shaped by information gathered from the surrounding environment.

Ruqaya (female, Woods IBC): *I have been hearing a lot of problems with girls being in [Dune University]. As they don't graduate fast enough, or they delay them. They change their study plan, so I said why put myself in such a situation when I can be in a prestigious university such as Woods IBC and River IBC.*

The statement above from Ruqaya shows her perception of Dune University as not being organised enough, which led to a delay in completing for some girls that she knew about.

Cichocki (2005) interviewed the associate Dean for Academic Affairs at TAMU-Q, Dr Holste, to explore the motives of Qatar in hosting TAMU-Q, and reported as follows:

“Dr. Holste (2004) explains that until the opening of TAMU-Q, Engineering education in Qatar had substandard. Although Qatar has national university, the engineering program is not considered competitive. Many of the programmes were substandard – lacking research and excluding women from many of the programmes (Holste, 2004).”

(Cichocki, 2005, p. 133)

Even though Dune University is not in the scope of my research, it is interesting to hear that delays are being noted, particularly by female students, or that they were excluded, as stated in Holste’s response to Cichocki (2005). This university operates in two parts, the female section which is managed mostly by female staff, and the male section which is managed mainly by male staff. Academic faculty come from both genders and travel to teach between the male and the female campuses. It would be interesting for future research to explore whether both campuses carry such a reputation and investigate the participant perceptions of why the delays happen.

Another interesting reason, for two of the thirteen participants, for choosing to study at a Western institution was that Arabic was not their strong language, and they felt their Arabic academic writing was weaker than their English academic writing. Even though they are Qatari participants and the Arabic language should be the default indigenous language in Qatar, this may have been the result of their background of education at private schools, which use English as the medium of instruction. The converse will also apply – those students who had more facility in Arabic as their indigenous language perhaps face challenges in English medium teaching in the IBCs. This was true in Bakken’s study (2013) where some of his participants found it challenging to study in their IBCs because of their weaker English language proficiency.

The participants I interviewed found tangible evidence for their perceptions when they saw or heard about Education City graduates flourishing in the job market in Qatar.

8.4.3 Experiencing a different environment

The value of Western education was not only related to the university brand and job prospects; participants also conveyed what they felt were the benefits of learning in a different environment. The case of Mubarak (male, Valley IBC) is illustrative. He had studied all his

life at a public school and wanted to study abroad, but family constraints did not allow him to do so. He related that he dreamed of living and studying in the United States of America, but being unable to, he shared what he gained from this compromise.

Mubarak (male, Valley IBC): *To experience an American culture at least.*

As part of his experience of living abroad he wanted to take care of himself, which included carrying out basic life tasks.

Mubarak: *Like, I want to be independent, to be fully independent. When I study in Qatar I have to go back home, my clothes and stuff are gotten by my family, they manage my time sometimes. But if I studied in America, no-one will help you with something. You have to manage your time, how you can study, you have to rent a flat, you have to pay the electricity bill, you have to pay the water bill; these things you learn only when you study abroad.*

Mubarak's views align with a concern of families who want their sons and daughters to acquire basic life skills, which was a goal of the participants themselves. Of the participants, Mubarak was the most explicit about that motive. Participants shared that their parents had concerns about their sons' or daughters' inexperience and thus discouraged them from going to study abroad. Others were overprotective and potentially hindered the growth of independence. The issue of learning basic life skills, the view of Western education being better, and the young people's desire for a different experience were interwoven fairly constantly.

The majority of the above discussions revolve around the theme of Western education itself being good, rather than singling out a particular programme or particular IBC. Viewing such education as valuable can be interpreted as a colonial view – the “postcolonial state seeking to [be] modernized” (Kirk & Napier, 2009, p. 133) – or, as discussed by Said (2003), the colonialisised seeking guidance from their coloniser and being unable to take care of themselves (Said, 2003).

8.4.4 Education City reputation

The reputation of Education City itself as a brand, separate from any particular IBC, was flagged by participants. They saw Education City as a place to get a good education, and to be in a positive, challenging environment that would contribute to their professional growth and help them to flourish in the job market. My findings here accord with those of Ahmad and

Buchanan (2016) that once an educational hub establishes itself as a reputable brand, then it will attract local and international students (Ahmad & Buchanan, 2016). This was also found by Vora (2014). When she explored international student interest in Qatar Education City, she found that her participants favoured Education City over being in the main campus in the USA (Vora, 2014). In addition, Escrivá-Beltrán et al. (2019) concluded from their literature review that reputation is one of the main reasons for students to join IBCs (Escrivá-Beltrán et al., 2019). My participants were exposed to a general idea of how Education City and the IBCs wanted to be seen through recruitment efforts, advertisements and word of mouth. Thus, they were informed of brand and reputation through knowledge gained from the surrounding environment, including families and agencies such as The World University Rankings and similar rankings websites and the Supreme Education Council – Qatar (now Ministry of Education) list of approved universities.

Bakken (2013) suggested in his findings that the amount of investment by Qatar leaders in Education City emphasised the importance of such a place to the Qataris, which was partially true in my findings. The participants' responses show a consistent view that Education City is not only a better fit for them than a local institution, DUNE University, but also a better option than the universities abroad, including the main campus of the actual university in Education City.

Jassim (male, Woods IBC): *I applied to universities both in the United States and here, and luckily, I was accepted here and like so, Woods IBC is better than a lot of the options I had in the United States. So, it was, like, for me it was a clear choice to go to a more advanced university here and take advantage of the opportunity that I had in my own country.*

In the above quote Jassim used the word "luckily" to show his preference for being at the Qatar IBC.

Ruqaya sees Woods IBC as being more competitive even than the main campus.

Ruqaya (female, Woods IBC): *They [Woods IBC main campus] can accept more students in a year than Doha [Woods IBC campus in Qatar]. They [Qatar IBC] wouldn't accept hundreds, at my time they would take 50 to 70 [students] only. Out of all Qataris, out of all applicants, they only take 70 or 50. So think about it, I am going to be the chosen one, you know! So I wanted to be the chosen one [laugh].*

Ruqaya here expresses how she views acceptance into the IBC as the result of a tough process; her admittance confirms for her that she is one of the elite.

Ali suggested that he would only apply to good universities. When I asked him “What is a good university?” he said:

Ali (male, Woods IBC): *I believe the ranking. And if it's on the Supreme Education Council list of universities.*

Here he meant ranking websites such as QS World University rankings, The World University Rankings and other similar rankings websites. He also meant the Supreme Education Council (SEC), which was the educational authority in Qatar at that time, and produces a list of approved universities that is updated over the years. If a university is on a list it means that participants can obtain sponsorship, or at least that their university degree will be accredited in Qatar after graduation.

However, being a “good” school went beyond a simple list and ranking. Other participants shared with me their reasons for applying. Their answers made a scattered picture, as exemplified by Abdulrazaq’s quote below. He started to explain how he became interested in Education City to begin with, then chose the IBC. I asked him what the reputation of Education City was and what the IBCs looked like for him and his answer was as follows:

Abdulrazaq (male, River IBC): *Education City in general is an environment that hosts special students. It is rare to find a student below average in Education City. All students are high performers. Classes are smaller; Qatar shows interest in Education City and all resources are channelled to it. Education City graduates are well known in the job market. So, they get access to better job opportunities compared to others. So, that's what made me choose Education City.*

In the picture Abdulrazaq paints above of Education City’s IBCs, he includes some elements that participants named as qualities of Western higher education, such as better access to the job market, but he also includes special elements of Education City itself, such as interest in it by the country’s government and resources channelled to it as a result.

The following table summarises participants' interest in the type of university they aspired to study in.

Participants' university option	Choice type	Total
Qatari institution was not a preference	13 self-decided	13
Study abroad was not a preference	7 self-decided (3 male – 4 female)	11
	4 family-decided (1 male – 3 female)	
Education City IBCs are seen to be the best fit	13 self-decided	13

Table 8.3. University preferences.

As shown by the above table, participants indicated that none of them was interested in the local university, echoing Bakken (2013) whose participants were also not interested in the local university. Eleven students did not prefer studying abroad, even though the majority stated that they were self-decided. In Bakken's findings, he noted that family usually have some sort of influence, regardless of whether students classify their decision as self-decided. This is also true in my findings, where participants made a decision themselves after weighing their options in the light of influencing factors including the understanding of what their family would prefer. While participants knew that their families would still support them regardless of the choice they made, they still ended up choosing to study in Qatar. When family decided, this sometimes took the form of a direct request from the family to the participant to consider education inside Qatar. It is worth noting that a little more than half of the participants are self-decided; in addition two more have study abroad as an option which means that the majority of the participants demonstrate flexibility in their choice. A minority of the participants (four participants) did not have the option to study abroad and the majority of those four are females (three females). This means that females are less likely to study abroad compared to their counterpart male participants. This conclusion is further supported by Ruqaya's comment

about her father being different from other families because he encouraged his daughter to study abroad.

Ruqaya (female, Woods IBC): *I mean usually it is the opposite, the daughter wants to study abroad and the father is not keen.*

The four participants who were likely not to study abroad also showed no interest in studying in a Qatari institution, which gives Qatar IBCs a special role in catering for their educational ambitions within their context preference. All the participants here agreed that Education City was the best fit for them, which also accords with Bakken (2013). This research finding suggests that Education City is filling a gap in Qataris' need for higher education. My Qatari participants want Western higher education but do not want to or cannot study abroad. Regardless of their reasons or circumstances, all participants see Education City IBC as the best fit for their needs in higher education. Note, however, that as mentioned earlier, all participants are Education City IBC alumni, which may have influenced their answers.

8.4.5 University location

Of the participants, 10 (five females and five males) reported that they enrolled in their IBCs because they were inspired, attracted, encouraged or even challenged into making that choice as they had a family member still enrolled or previously enrolled in the same IBC or within Education City. There did not appear to be a gender differential in terms of the choice of university location.

Aisha (female, Woods IBC) mentioned that she had the opportunity to study overseas but chose to stay in Doha, Qatar and enrol in one of the Education City's universities.

Mohammad: *Why in Doha not going abroad?*

Aisha (female, Woods IBC): *There are several things: my brother was studying here in Woods IBC as well. My sister and mom are around. If I would go abroad that means I will be there on my own.*

Eight participants discussed location as an issue for reasons like the convenience of being close to family. My findings suggest that the choice of location was for a mixture of reasons, but family bond and influence was one of the main ones.

In the following section, I further explore the family influence in the choice process.

8.4.6 Family influence on university choice

As noted in previous discussions, families form an anchor and compass for participants in their culture, religion and social life. My findings show that most participants had free will to decide their interest for themselves. In only four cases were family the ones who decided that the student should not go for long-term study abroad. Participants showed some sensitivity to their family preferences but also made decisions independently of their families' view. Some participants were discouraged in their choices, like being told not to join an IBC because it would be too hard for them, but chose not to listen to their family and made their own decisions. There are examples of participants getting discouraged and choosing to listen to their family, and some examples of participants choosing not to listen to their family's opinions.

Most of my participants did discuss their family's influence in the process when it came to university matters; eight of them mentioned that the choice of university was part of those decisions, and that family were an influence. This influence on the choice came in different forms, such as consultation, support, or an action that encouraged and inspired the participants. For example, Ruqaya (female, Woods IBC) was encouraged by her father's suggestion to apply to Qatar IBCs. Jassim (male, Woods IBC) explained that he applied to a Qatar IBC because his sister was already a student in the same IBC. Moreover, five came up with their own decisions regardless of the family's decisions and still reported receiving support from their families. Of these five, three were female and two male, indicating that gender was not a decider when it came to autonomous decisions.

In the following two examples about university choices, the first participant took her family's influence into consideration and the second did not.

Nawal (female, River IBC), understanding her father's opinion and her close relationship with him, weighed her options and came up with her own decision.

Mohammad: Why did you choose River IBC?

Nawal (female, River IBC): Right after high school the option of kind of leaving Qatar wasn't really feasible because of my background and my family ties and what not. I saw it was an opportunity to be part of Qatar Foundation.

A few minutes later in the interview, I asked the following question.

Mohammad: You mentioned your background and family life about being feasible or not living abroad, can you talk about it?

Nawal (female, River IBC): My parents weren't really in favour. I am quite close to my father so when I saw he wasn't very keen on me living abroad [laugh] I just decide to weigh my options and honestly, they weren't bad options. Like, seeing the standards that Cliff IBC or River IBC have to offer, and comparing that to any university abroad that I was looking into.

In the above, Nawal was in a dialogue of her own, weighing options and deciding for herself. This decision seems to be a cultural process unique to people in a similar background, and hence is worthy of further exploration. In the next chapter, I will discuss further participants' weighing options in their decision, especially when those decisions are culturally related.

Mubarak (male, Valley IBC) was mindful of his family's wishes but chose to make up his own mind as to the choice of institution to join to pursue his further studies.

Mubarak (male, Valley IBC): Although I heard from many people Qatar Foundation is very difficult, it will be difficult for students who have public schools because we studied all the subjects in Arabic like physics and maths and it will be difficult for us to start working in English, but I choose Valley IBC at Qatar Foundation because I wanted an American university.

When his family discouraged him from joining Education City's IBCs, worrying that his public education background would mean that he was less prepared in academic writing skills in English, he chose not to listen to them. He enrolled in one of the IBCs and graduated successfully.

8.4.7 Personal life aspirations after university

Apart from family influences, general social life did have an impact on choice of programme of study. Ameena and Ruqaya are two females who took into consideration when choosing a programme the length of the programme and the type of working hours it would lead to in the job market (such as in the medical field), because these factors might impact on their personal aspirations as well as their opportunities to get married. In the following extract, Ameena (female, Valley IBC) articulates her reason for choosing to study engineering and not medicine based on her personal life aspirations.

Ameena (female, Valley IBC): ... *if I study Biomedical sciences, I might take longer time in the programme like five years, at Canyon IBC seven or eight. Those things will make other things harder on me. For example, marriage, even the work is hard, and I feel it doesn't fit the Qatari female.*

Mohammad: *In what aspect does medicine not fit the Qatari female?*

Ameena: ... *Let's say I went to Canyon IBC for eight years and graduated, I would only be a doctor. General medicine. If I want to be majored, I would need more years, so I spend my life in studying. I do have other goals; my life is not only to study. I have social goals, open a business. I don't want to be imprisoned with studying.*

The above example shows that the personal aspirations after graduation that students consider can be social, financial or any other aspiration. Bakken (2013) also found that his participants weighed their options prior to attending a university, taking into account things like better prospects for future jobs.

8.4.8 The application process

The application process itself also contributed to the participants' decisions. The timing of the IBCs' application decision, transfer flexibility, and active recruitment outreach to prospective students were factors in the participants' decisions. Valley IBC stood out particularly as the most active in recruitment, perhaps because, as discussed by Lane (2011), good enrolment is one means of ensuring IBC sustainability. In my findings, more than one participant shared that Valley IBC was the fastest IBC to respond with the application decision, which meant that they did not need to apply to another IBC. Another participant mentioned that Valley IBC was the most flexible IBC in terms of accepting him as a transfer student and proposing solutions particularly for his case, and a third participant mentioned that Valley IBC made her feel wanted when the recruitment team talked to her in person, which made her choose to study there. To conclude, while other IBCs did not lack these qualities, it was evident from the participants I interviewed that Valley IBC excelled in these areas. It is worth mentioning that Valley IBC has the largest number of Qatari students enrolled in an IBC in Education City, and there is likely to be a connection between the active recruitment approach of Valley IBC and the number of Qatari students enrolled there.

The following example shows how Valley IBC were proactive in finding solutions for Shaheen's case. His transfer from the United States was a smooth and rapid process.

Shaheen (male, Valley IBC): *I applied to American university UAE A, American university UAE B, and Valley IBC. Those three.*

Mohammad: *So why Valley IBC not the others?*

Shaheen: *The application for Valley IBC finished earlier ... I was late for the application, but they admitted me as a transient student in the beginning. When I started, I eliminated the other two. If I got into Valley IBC, then it was done.*

Valley IBC found a solution that resolved Shaheen's particular case by allowing him to enrol in the middle of the semester, and also acted rapidly compared to other universities he applied for. In Ruqaya's case, Valley IBC made her feel wanted, so she enrolled in their programme even though Valley IBC was not in her plan to begin with. She shared with me her application story on joining Valley IBC.

Ruqaya (female, Woods IBC): *I didn't apply to Valley IBC, to be honest; I only applied to Woods IBC, River IBC, and Rocks IBC. I got accepted in both Woods IBC, and River IBC. I got waitlisted at Rocks IBC. By that time my ACT results were in and I had to pick them up from Valley IBC. So, the lady there called me and she was like why don't you apply to Valley IBC? At that time there weren't as many Qataris as they have now. Maybe that's why they wanted to catch more Qataris. So I was: Okay; this university wants me to apply to them, why not go to Valley IBC. So, they guaranteed my acceptance although it was May. And it was like very unexpected.*

The above story demonstrates Valley IBC's active role in recruiting students. Ruqaya later shared with me that the Valley IBC recruitment team made her feel wanted, valuable, and desirable, and this was the only reason she applied to Valley IBC and enrolled there. However, she did not graduate from Valley IBC but transferred to Woods IBC from which she later graduated. I asked her why, and she explained that she did not fit in with the other students; she felt isolated. Other students were so excited about being Valley IBC students, but she did not feel comfortable or connected with other students eagerly participating in university activities. Ruqaya also mentioned that the building's interior design contributed to her feeling isolated – she described it as a building with a lot of corridors that made her feel closed in, unlike her experience with the Woods IBC building design, which is more open. As interesting as this is, since my study is not about building designs, this is an area that other researchers

will need to explore. Ruqaya also shared with me that the reason she came to my interview was that no one had ever asked her why she left Valley IBC and she saw participating in my research as an opportunity to express her views on this. More about this last point will be discussed in the next chapter when I discuss student voice.

8.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have looked at the main theme of the Qatari way of life and Qataris' decisions about university. The findings here shed light on the participants' relationship with their families and the importance of this in shaping their decision-making and choices. This chapter also introduces the concept of Qatari levels of commitment, as illustrated in Figure 8.1: Commitment levels on a multilayer item spectrum. I also explored the participants' interest in and reasons for choosing their IBCs, which revealed that the main factors were related to their early exposure to higher education, their perceptions of Western education, Education City's reputation, university location, family influence on the choice process, personal life aspirations after university, and the application process.

In the next chapter, we will look at further findings in relation to specific cultural traditions, and the student voice.

Chapter 9: Findings – striving to adjust

The previous findings chapters set the scene for this chapter. Therefore, it is worth noting that in this chapter when I discuss the findings, I will also be including findings from Chapters 7 and 8 since they serve as background findings to this chapter.

9.1 The key messages in this chapter

In this chapter, I further discuss the concept of making choices when family, culture and religion are observed. The findings of this study reveal subtle discomfort in the Qatari student experience based on distinctive differences in their culture and religion, which in some cases leads to students being excluded from the college life experience in their respective IBCs. This finding can be linked to Roberts and Roberts' (2011) questioning of the suitability of American higher education for people from different cultures (Roberts & Roberts, 2011), since in Qatar, the sending nation is from the North (or the West) and the hosting nation is in the South (or East) (Altbach & Knight, 2007) and each represents a distinctive culture.

As mentioned earlier, my Qatari participants were conscious of their religion and culture in their IBC experience. This finding has important implications for IBCs, since fitting in with the host nation's culture is a factor in their sustainability (Lane, 2011). In addition, in Qatar, part of QNV2030 is identity preservation and development, and by fitting in with the culture, IBCs can be seen as aligning their goals with the host nation's goals – another factor which contributes to IBC sustainability (Karam, 2018). Hence, operating IBCs sustainably involves working between different cultures (Olds & Robertson, 2014).

I chose to call the common theme of this chapter “striving to adjust”. Roberts (2015) commented that Qataris, being a people with distinctive cultures, need to appreciate their own culture, as there is “value in preserving unique cultures” (Roberts, 2015, p. 10). However, in my findings some participants sounded confused about doing the right thing when comparing their culture and the Western culture regarding some of the activities in their IBCs, and also lacked guidance on how they should react in some circumstances. Participants had to go through various dialogues with themselves or with other people when dealing with university and cultural pressure. They were sensitive to culture not only when making decisions related

to their education journey, but also when looking beyond their institutional choices to their daily life as students in their IBCs. This sensitivity was more prominent in the female Qatari participants. It also appeared that participants go through some adaptation/changes in their sensitivity to culture levels during their education journey.

In this chapter, I discuss two concepts that may be items on the spectrum of commitment discussed in the previous chapter. Those two items surfaced through the interviews, with alumni participants discussing them directly or indirectly. I also discuss the challenges Qatari students face in voicing their distinctive culture, which can result in IBCs not meeting the participants' distinctive cultural needs. A failure to focus on localisation may influence the student experience (Shams & Huisman, 2012) and this research found that each participant had a unique experience. In some cases, that experience led to non-inclusion in some of their out-of-class activities, which may in fact offer valuable learning opportunities (Allison et al., 2012; Kuh, 1995).

A major contribution is the model that I propose at the end of this chapter, which can help professionals working in IBCs to think about Qatari students when designing educational or social activities that will likely increase Qatari student inclusivity in the future. This model can be more widely applicable to institutions offering educational opportunities to students with distinctive demographic backgrounds.

9.2 Choices and sensitivity to culture

Participants indicated that their choices, including those going beyond institutional choice, are influenced by their affiliation to the Qatari culture. This influence impacts on their daily decisions. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, Qataris are not all the same; therefore their sensitivity to culture varies and so do their experiences. In this section, I will elaborate further on the participants' choices considering their culture.

In my findings, the participants mentioned taking their cultural values, background, appreciation or understanding of their family, community and Qatari society's values into consideration when making their decisions, which is similar to Bakken's (2013) findings. The interview data indicated that throughout their educational journey, my participants usually

negotiated choices with themselves and decided to take up or voluntarily let go of options without involving other parties like their families in the process of decision-making.

In the following quote, Muneera (female, River IBC) is describing how her cultural values and background influenced her decisions.

Muneera (female, River IBC): There was this event when they go to Sealine for overnight, I don't think a Qatari female did go, or even a Qatari male.

Mohammad: Why?

Muneera: Because they go to Sealine for the weekend; it is just very hard for you to reason to go, it is not worth it.

Mohammad: Imagine I am not Qatari and tell me why?

Muneera: Because it is socially unacceptable.

Mohammad: Why?

Muneera: Because, umm. I don't know, this is how I grow up, this is like my code of conduct. And umm, as much as I respect complete integration whatever inside school, it is very hard for me to justify it outside the school. For example, especially during the weekend, especially sleeping, and staying in a camp for three days outside of Doha. Or even in Doha, so that's hard. But I get how it is important because there are expats [non-Qataris living in Qatar]; it is mostly expats who will go. I think it's called a gap-day weekend. So, it is basically for the new students as for orientation. So, I get why they go as they get to know each other. But it is culturally unacceptable for girls or guys to go. It is a social taboo.

Mohammad: Even boys don't go?

Muneera: Yes, they don't go.

Muneera continues the interview and mentions that she did travel abroad with the university, which includes spending nights away, so in the following quote she is comparing what made her choose to travel with a certain trip but not with the Sealine trip.

Muneera: I did travel, the reason was academic, but I can't reason it if there was no absolutely no academic gain from this trip.

To start with, Muneera clearly makes a distinction between curriculum, which leads directly to a degree, and out-of-classroom activities which are not linked directly to obtaining the degree

in her understanding. There are two elements worth noting in Muneera’s conversation. The first is that she sees such extracurricular activities as being created for expats, not for Qataris. This is a clear statement of misrecognition (Taylor, 1997) and as a result, she is not given an equal participation opportunity based on her culture – an equal opportunity that can be a basic human right (Martineau, 2012). The second noteworthy element is that Muneera used the word *hard* in the process of making a decision and weighing her options. This indicates that in making the decision, she has gone through a number of options and considerations. This challenge in making a decision probably leads to the type of conversation a person has with oneself when shaping one’s personal identity (Taylor, 1997).

This study finds that students do eventually acclimate after years in their IBCs, or perhaps just change. Knowing that IBCs facilitate the mobility of ideas and values (Knight, 2004), for students this change can consist of mimicking another culture or creating a new hybrid model in their third space so they can survive their journey (Bhabha, 2004). This idea of this acclimation or change will be revisited later in this chapter.

The process of making culturally sensitive decisions as discussed above is done by females more often than male participants – in my study five female participants and three male participants reacted this way. While this was an interesting feature of my study, it is not possible to generalise from this because of the small number of participants.

Participants who mentioned taking their background and their context into consideration		
Nawal	Female	River IBC
Muneera	Female	River IBC
Shammah	Female	Valley IBC
Ruqaya	Female	Woods IBC
Hessa	Female	Woods IBC
Shaheen	Male	Valley IBC
Mubarak	Male	Valley IBC
Ali	Male	Woods IBC

Table 9.1. Taking personal background into consideration when deciding.

A possible explanation for more females than males making decisions with these considerations at the forefront is that females are more sensitive to their cultural background and come to their decisions independently but also sensitively. There is further discussion about this and more quotes in Section 9.2.1. It may also be that the culture influences females more than males. For example, wearing a *hijab* influences the female experience significantly, making them more conscious about their participation in mixed-gender sport activities, as in the case of the female students who approached Staff-member 2 (River IBC), discussed in Chapter 7. This may also have

the implication that IBC environments are likely to be less inclusive and less convenient culturally to Qatari female participants compared with male participants.

In Bakken's (2013) findings, there is a theme of overprotecting female participants. In my findings, this may manifest itself in the fact that, as discussed in Chapter 8 Table 8.3, the families of three females decided in each case that she should not study abroad, compared with one male family. The reasons for this included cultural reasons, general safety and ability to care for oneself. A general concern mentioned by four participants was that their families see them as "younger adults" as opposed to grown adults. All four of the participants who mentioned being younger adults are female. While male participants also shared some concerns coming from their families about taking care of themselves, they did not express the view that they were perceived as younger adults. From interviewing Staff-member 3 (Valley IBC), discussing the applicability of student development theory between the USA and Qatar, the staff-member stated something similar to the above idea, comparing freshman (first-year) college students between USA students and Qatari students.

Staff-member 3 (Valley IBC): Our [Qatari] students tend to be a little more immature than [USA Students] and I think that comes from the family dynamic that most of our students tend to be like a little bit more sheltered environment as a family.

The staff member mentioned the above, stating that it is unlike students in the USA. In addition, the staff-member mentioned that in the USA, college students are referred to as men and women, unlike in Qatar where the following was the perception:

Staff-member 3 (Valley IBC): Until you are married and start having your own children, you are still sort of a boy and a girl. Um, that you know, once you are married and then you start becoming sort of a man and a woman.

It is worthy of note that the staff member mentioned both genders in these statements. This would seem to indicate that, despite only female participants in my study mentioning the issue of being "younger adults", this actually applies to both genders. From my findings, the closeness between participants and family that alumni participants show, which is typical of Qatari culture, is what leads to perceptions similar to that of Staff-member 3 that they are sheltered. However, the feeling that came across in my findings is that the closeness between the participants and their families comes from love and intimacy.

It may also be that this sense of being immature is the result of actions that are interpreted as immature. It is interesting here that all Valley IBC participants did not fully enjoy the university spirit event, which was described by Ruqaya (female, Woods IBC) as childish. More discussion of Ruqaya's comment will be found later in this chapter, Section 9.4.1. It appears that there are some differences in the standards of what is immature and what is adult in the perceptions of Qatari students, their families and Western IBCs. It is interesting to see these different perceptions, which are similar to those discussed in Chapter 3 regarding indigenous American students (Komives et al., 2003; Thelin, 2011). It would be worth exploring these issues in future research.

Being the youngest in the family also seemed to have an influence on how much participants are connected to their family. Shammah (female, Valley IBC), Hessa (female, Woods IBC), and Ruqaya (female, Woods IBC) reported being the youngest in the family and this may be the reason that their families, or at least one family member such as a parent, had a stronger bond with them. Similarly, with Mubarak (male, Valley IBC) being the only child after the loss of his brother, his mother asked him to study in Qatar instead of studying overseas. An example of how being the youngest sibling creates a different experience is provided by Ruqaya (female, Woods IBC), who related that her father had said to her:

Ruqaya (female, Woods IBC): *[My father said] you will be here with me, I can see you and everything. I didn't mention that I am the youngest [laugh] but this thing has a role in this situation.*

Mohammad: *What its role, being the youngest?*

Ruqaya: *Maybe I am a little more spoiled compared to others [siblings]. [My father] wants to see me when I am back home. He is more worried about me. Even when I was applying at Woods IBC during that period my father was behind it. I went with my father to the university to apply, he wouldn't leave me alone. Until today at my job, my manager and others talk to my father in Ramadan and Eid greetings. So, I am still under my dad's shadow [laugh].*

This stronger bond between youngest participants and their families is an echo of the link discussed by Escriva-Beltran et al. (2019) in a systematic literature review between being close to family and safety (Escriva-Beltran et al., 2019). A general theme of parents worrying about their children's wellbeing ran throughout my data, which is also consistent with Bakken's findings that participants felt being close to home "offered peace of mind to parents who were concerned about safety" (Bakken, 2013, p. 79). Bakken (2013) also noticed that some of his

participants were only children, and he described their parents as being "generally more restrictive"(Bakken, 2013, p. 80). While there is some alignment between Bakken's findings and my own, they are not the same.

In his findings, when Bakken describes his participants' difficulties with travel, he cites "the struggles of these students (who, more often than not, were female)" (Bakken, 2013, p. 80, parentheses in original). Even though Bakken's use of "restrictive" may be strictly correct, the reason for this is open to interpretation. I would suggest the struggle can be a struggle in the negotiation with oneself, since in my findings, females were more likely to take more culturally sensitive decisions than their male counterparts. In addition, I infer from my findings that being the only or youngest child creates a stronger bond between participants and their families, as in the case of Ruqaya when her father sent her older sister to study abroad but asked her, being the youngest child and having a stronger bond with the family, to stay in Qatar and study in one of the IBCs at Education City.

While, as with Bakken (2013), family influence is an important factor for not planning long-term study abroad, in my study it was not exactly as highlighted in Bakken's findings.

"For some students, families tend to be more conservative about religious and social issues; they direct students to make educational choices that will keep them closer to home. By staying in-country, students are able to both attend a Western university and remain in the culture and be less likely to be influenced by outside pressure that could cause them to change their thinking or beliefs."

(Bakken, 2013, p. 77)

Bakken uses words such as conservative, restrictive, direct, keep them close to home so they do not change their thinking and belief, and so forth. This creates the impression of a rigid and limited approach, rather than the situation in my findings which was that the majority of the time, the suggestion or decision was borne out of love and care between families and the bond with their children, and confirms the importance of family in this research, as described in some detail in Chapter 8. This finding demonstrates how differently student choices can be interpreted, depending on the lens through which one views them. Moreover, the choice of words in some literature, such as the example above, recalls Arshad et al. (2012) as discussed in Chapter 4, who describes the use of wording that can influence unconscious thinking, like that of readers of the literature and indeed professionals who work with Qataris in the IBCs.

This may be especially true if the reader comes from a non-Qatari culture and may perhaps have been influenced by media that have created a certain image (Hall, 1997), or other literature coming from a colonial perspective that describes people from the East in a certain manner (Said, 2003).

The reasons that cause families to be concerned can be distilled from the interviews as follows:

- 1- Cultural reasons, such as concern about whether the chaperoning staff have a good understanding of the culture.
- 2- Day-to-day tasks like meals, cleaning, etc., i.e. families believing their children cannot take care of themselves.
- 3- General safety, including the possible targeting of Muslims in non-Muslim countries, especially females who are easily identifiable through wearing *hijab*, for example.

One-third of the reasons concerning families related to cultural issues. Regardless of their family's concerns, it was clear from my data that students also have some autonomy in their decisions. Participants shared that their families were concerned about their long- or short-term travel. One female participant chose not to study long-term abroad for cultural reasons. Four females were supported by their families in deciding to do short-term study abroad for various reasons, regardless of whether or not this decision was the family preference. Even the ones who decided not to study abroad for cultural reasons, or whose family requested this, reported coming to a final decision themselves after weighing the options. The single participant who did not receive support from his family and described in his interview being "forced to study in Qatar" was Mubarak (male, Valley IBC). He is the only surviving child after the loss of his brother, and his mother made him study in Qatar because, understandably, she was worried about his safety.

It seemed to me that my participants are striving to find the land in the middle, to keep their culture and still pursue their dreams by acquiring what they described as a valuable education. Bakken (2013) also reports that his participants were open to change but wanted to remain respectful of their tradition and Islamic belief.

In the following section, I discuss at the micro-level two particular cultural items that surfaced from the interviews and that played a part in the making of culturally sensitive choices.

9.2.1 Mixed-gender interaction

Before I start discussing mixed-gender interaction, it is crucial to understand the concept of *alsiter*. This concept plays a significant role in female interaction with a mixed-gender environment based on women's understanding of modesty. *Alsiter* is an Arabic word meaning, in this context, the way people dress in modesty. This term can be used for both male and female, as both dress in modesty, but the type and level of dressing modestly are different between male and female, and are also understood differently based both on different cultures and on different upbringings within the same culture. The concept of modesty can be extended to more than physical dress but for the purpose of this section I will discuss only the dress part.

In the case of Muneera (female, River IBC), for example, she is not willing to wear the same sportswear as other non-Qatari females in the sport arena, because Qataris do not wear this type of clothing.

Muneera (female, River IBC): It is hard to participate in sports at the university because for example basketball the spectators are mixed. So, it is kind of hard to participate in that, so usually you see the basketball for example won't have Qatari girls in the team even if they know how to play, even if they are good.

Mohammad: what is the issue with the mixed spectators?

Muneera: Because it is mixed and they [Qatari females] are covered, so it is hard for them to play.

Mohammad: What do you mean covered?

Muneera: It is okay if you wear head cover and are modest and play, but it is weird as a Qatari female to do that. The spectators would have men, and it is just that not wearing your *abaya* is very unheard of, I mean.

Mohammad: In this context, what is the difference between Qatari and non-Qatari?

Muneera: Non-Qatari females are fine, they don't live here [Qatar] so they don't need to live by the social norms that we [Qatari females] all abide by.

In the above story, Muneera indicates that she as a Qatari Muslim is different from non-Qatari Muslims and her understanding of *alsiter* is different from the understanding of other Muslim females coming from different cultures. This example shows that social norms and the participants' commitment level to these social norms plays a factor in their day-to-day decisions. Even though there are Qatari professional sportswomen who choose to dress like other Muslim or non-Muslim sportswomen, Muneera, other female and some male participants

shared that they were not comfortable in their context of being a student in the university and participating in social or sport activities that required them to dress in a way that they chose not to. A further example concerning dress for non-sport activity is discussed by Ali (male, Woods IBC) later in Section 9.4.1. This concept is important to understand in the mixed-gender environment as it requires more of the Qatari female than just to be covered with *hijab* to take part in a sporting event with a mixed-gender group of spectators, for example. This concept of *alsiter* needs to be kept in mind as an influential factor in any discussion of mixed-gender interactions.

In my findings, both male and female participants find themselves in situations in the university environment where they do not fully understand where the cultural boundaries are, as in the story shared by Hessa (female, Woods IBC) when she felt harassed (discussed later in this section) or the story shared by Ibrahim (male, Valley IBC) about walking out of class with a female (shared later in this section). There is a degree of mutual understanding in the classroom, workshops and other academic or professional situations. However, when it comes to the general student environment, there was a degree of vagueness, and participants needed to find out how to set expectations and define boundaries. This was the issue which surfaced in the story shared by Ibrahim (male, Valley IBC) about an incident during orientation that will be discussed later in this section.

Bakken suggests that there is no easy-to-dictate rule to guide interactions in a mixed-gender environment (Bakken, 2013). He describes one participant who suggested that the more extroverted the person, the less difficulty they would have interacting in the classroom with professors and so forth (Bakken, 2013). However, unlike Bakken, my focus is on understanding out-of-class situations. My participants seemed to have a better understanding of in-class interaction boundaries, while out-of-class interactions produced difficulties in understanding and unclear boundaries. The following is an illustration from Hessa (female, Woods IBC):

Hessa (female, woods IBC): *At the graduation day, the dean reached out to shake my hand. Of course, I didn't shake his hand. I did this [placing her hand on her chest] because based on my values I won't shake hands. Some other Qatari girls are okay with it. My mom came to me saying 'Hessa, why did you embarrass the man?' I said 'Mom, I can't shake hands. What should I do?' I won't give away my values to please anyone in the world. I felt he [the dean] didn't like what happened but I am very happy.*

Incidents which give rise to these unclear interaction boundaries between the genders range from greetings, such as Hessa with the dean, walking out of class together as Ibrahim discusses

later, or taking part in activities together, whether in the location of the university or going out, and whether as friends or more than just friends, similar to the stories shared earlier by Muneera, or the masked parade story shared later by Ali, and segregating the lecture hall in Ibrahim's story also discussed later. In Bakken's findings, some of his participants had their first interaction in a co-educational environment at their IBC, as their past experience was in single-gender education (Bakken, 2013). Bakken further describes their difficulty in interaction as follows:

“For some students, it may be difficult to operate within a mixed learning environment after many years within the Qatari culture.”

(Bakken, 2013, p. 96)

In my view, Bakken does not do the topic justice when citing “Qatari culture” without recognising the distinctive differences between Qataris and their understanding of what Qatari culture is, what Islam is, and the different levels of commitment to the items on the spectrum of commitment by different people. One factor emerges from the data that contributes to mixed-gender interaction familiarity, and has a bearing on pre-university learning on setting boundaries and expectations between both genders. This is the participants' previous K-12 education, as illustrated by the story shared by Jassim (male, Woods IBC) in Section 8.3.

Bakken (2013) referred to the concern about the mixed-gender environment as based on Qataris being conservative. Bakken also mentioned that his participants were more accepting of the mixed-gender environment because they all had the common goal of studying. Rather than simply being ‘conservative’, my findings bring a more nuanced explanation that relates to participants' expectations of boundaries that are likely to be better understood in the classroom but less understood in the out-of-class environment, as in Ibrahim's story about walking out of class with a female student, shared later in this section.

Before I start discussing the participants' interaction, it is worth noting that participants can come from different pre-university educational systems, as explained in Chapter 2. K-12 education in Qatar exists in single-gender and in mixed-gender modes. The following table shows my participants' previous experiences of studying in the school system.

Participant gender	Type of school K-12	School gender
Female	Private	mixed gender
Female	Private	mixed gender
Male	Private	mixed gender
Male	Private	K-6 mixed gender 7-12 single gender
Female	Private and public	1-6 private single gender 7-12 public single gender
Female	Private and public	1-5 private single gender 6-11 private mixed gender 12 public single gender
Female	Public	Single gender
Female	Public	Single gender
Female	Public	Single gender
Male	Public	Single gender
Male	Public	Single gender
Male	Public	Single gender
Male	Public	Single gender

Table 9.2. Participants' gender experience in pre-university education.

The above table does show that there are differences in the Qatari participants' experiences in the pre-university mixed-gender environment. Indeed, more than half of the participants have no prior experience of mixed-gender environments in their K-12 education. Thus, when they come to a mixed-gender university, everyone has a different understanding of what the interactions between them should look like. Adding to this mix of complexity is the fact that Qataris are not the same and can come from different levels of commitment to the mainstream as discussed in Chapter 8. In addition to this, participants sometimes decide for themselves

regardless of their family's and society's approval, as discussed earlier in this chapter, which makes the understanding of interaction even more complicated for the participants. Bakken's (2013) findings suggest that the more familiar the student is with mixed-gender interactions, such as by participating in a mixed-gender pre-university school system, the more they are prepared for the IBC environment. He also stated:

“A mixed-gender experience was not the norm among students from more conservative families. However, some families seem open to the possibility of allowing their children to attend one of the schools at Education City, given the investment by the Qatar Foundation and the priority of educational reform championed by His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al-Thani and Her Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser AlMissned.”

(Bakken, 2013, p. 88)

To begin with, Her Highness's name ends with (A (l) letter L) instead of (A (1) number one), and His Highness is Hamad bin Khalifa not Khalifa bin Hamad. These are simple, honest typographical mistakes that all written documents can have, including mine. However, these two people are the most important people in Qatar, at least for the Qataris. They are like the President of the United States and the first lady, or the King and Queen of the United Kingdom at that time. From a postcolonial point of view, writing their names carelessly smacks of treating them like any other, non-important person somewhere out there in the Middle East where everybody is the same, being just the Others (Said, 2003). This thought is related to the beginning of the quoted sentence that stereotypes Qatari families when they are conservative, presuming that they are concerned about mixed-gender. The motive for Qatari family choice of whether to send their children to a mixed- or single-gender K-12 and higher education schooling system would be another interesting research question.

Bakken also reported in his findings that there was a positive general feeling in the mixed-gender environment.

“Participant B defined the atmosphere as a positive mixed-gender environment that matched her past experiences in a similar type of setting.”

(Bakken, 2013, p. 88)

However, Bakken's participant is someone who had previous experience in a mixed-gender environment. In Bakken's study, concerns about the environment are more likely to be from the families.

“Concerns relating to the educational environment are a struggle for some families who want to give students the freedom to choose where they want to study, but want them to stay in a familiar environment respectful of the culture.”

(Bakken, 2013, p. 87-88)

In my findings, on the other hand, several of my participants were themselves concerned and confused in the mixed-gender environment, as shared by Hessa when she felt uncomfortable or perhaps harassed, as will be discussed shortly. The different perspective that my study highlights is how participants with distinctive cultural differences strive to adjust in such an environment. In my study, I go further and deeper in the understanding of the participants’ concerns and their confusion about the mixed-gender environment.

More than half of my participants have no prior experience in a mixed-gender environment, just like Hessa in the following extract.

Hessa (female, Woods IBC) is in her first year in the Academic Bridge Programme which is not based in an IBC but is part of the Education City transition process towards being enrolled in an IBC. Hessa came from a single-gender pre-university education. The interaction between genders was all new to her.

Hessa (female, Woods IBC): I was shocked. It is all new for me that I am sitting talking to a man, a boy at that time... it made me feel stressed. Then we continued with university and with time I got acclimated.

In our conversation, I asked her what made her feel uncomfortable, and she answered:

Hessa: Because we are not used to it. So, I feel shy.

The stress Hessa experienced was caused by the shock of being thrown into the situation that she had never before experienced, with no gradual introduction to this new environment or help with the introduction of interaction with the other gender. A number of other stories came up in the participants’ interviews where faculty have purposely mixed male and female students in class assignments or as laboratory teammates. When students shared that they were uncomfortable with this, faculty suggested that they were doing this to prepare students for their place in the future workforce. While students understand that they are enrolled in a mixed-gender university environment, they are still looking to find a model of interaction that fits with their culture and will not make them feel uncomfortable, rather than the model imposed by

faculty. Hessa also mentioned becoming acclimated over time, an element of her experience that I will discuss later in this chapter.

Not having full understanding about boundaries could also lead to further discomfort, even to feeling harassed. In the following extract, Hessa shared her experience of her personal space being violated by a male student, but because the personal space for a Qatari female can be different from that of a non-Qatari female, she did not know how to explain it to someone at the university and just lived with it.

Hessa: *Once one guy kind of irritated me ... even though we didn't talk not even once. But he made me hate my life*

Mohammad: *So, what did that guy do to you?*

Hessa: *He didn't do something in particular, but he was looking.*

Mohammad: *Looking as staring at you?*

Hessa: *Yes.*

Mohammad: *So, this look made you uncomfortable?*

Hessa: *Yes. I mean there is no need ... we are sitting in a class; you should look at the teacher, why looking at me?*

Mohammad: *Anything else other than staring?*

Hessa: *I don't know how to explain it. When he passes, he passes too close.*

Mohammad: *Do you mean too close or literally his body touch your body?*

Hessa: *No, not body touching my body, but too close ... the corridor is wide, and I am standing next to the locker. Why would you pass too close to me?*

Mohammad: *Did you feel harassed?*

Hessa: *Yes, you can say that.*

In the above story, what the male student was doing can be explained in many ways but what is important in this context is what the female student felt. What is considered harassment in the Western world can be different from what is considered harassment for Qataris. Her personal space may be different from what is understood as such in the Western world. In this case, Hessa did not know how to find the help she needed or how to explain her position, as the boundaries are not clearly set. Participants were not sure what to share with their IBC and

what not to. This is confirmed in the interview with Staff-member 1 (River IBC) who mentioned something which can be linked to Hessa's confusion and concerns.

Staff-member 1 (River IBC): A couple of years ago, the US Department of Education came out with a new paper and it said that Title IX was extending to, um, to sexual misconduct and harassment. That if a student felt that they couldn't study in the place because they were intimidated by another student, then the university had to do something about that. . . . It doesn't have to be an assault or something. It could just be this sense of being harassed.

The sense of being harassed is similar to Hessa's story. At the time, she did not know what to do. However, after the IBC explained Title IX more widely, a few students came to talk about it with them.

Staff-member 1 (River IBC): When we explained this to our students, that if you have a Title IX issue, please come and tell us about it, I was surprised because the first (X number) reports [Number of reports omitted based on the staff request] that I got, and in one year, were all Gulf people. Gulf Arabs and a (X number) of them were Qataris [Number of Qataris omitted based on the staff request].

It is evident that once the IBC started explaining Title IX to their students, students had a clearer understanding of the boundaries and also the obligations of the IBCs in terms of US law to provide help to the Qatari students, rather than allowing them to feel confused or perhaps pushed further into interaction between male and female.

Both male and female students need to receive guidance and develop an understanding that fits their culture about the boundaries and what is appropriate and what is not. This may need to be achieved in a different way from the faculty actions mentioned earlier, and also not by decisions being made for them, as illustrated in the following extract.

This story was shared by Ibrahim (male, Valley IBC). The incident occurred when he first started his programme, during the orientation day for new students. Ibrahim's experience is a unique one, as he interacted with the first cohort ever at the university after its establishment in Qatar.

Ibrahim (male, Valley IBC): *The first cohort they were a little bit conservative, the following cohort were a little less, then less and less in the university in terms of culture. I remember during the orientation in my first year, we walked into the lecture hall. There was a teacher or staff-member, and one of the earlier cohort walked us in the hall and said this is the lecture hall. Girls sit on left side and guys sit on right side. So, the staff-member*

said: who said so? The student leader said: we are like this in Qatar. Then she said: where is it written like this in Qatar? It is not for you to say that. Then there was an argument between them.

Ibrahim said the first cohort's students decided where it was appropriate for the new students to sit, but this did not happen anymore because the staff did not let them sit in sides divided by gender.

There are three elements worth noting in the above story. The first element is that Ibrahim, himself a Qatari, describes his fellow Qataris from a colonial perspective, i.e. as conservative. The description "conservative" gives the impression that there should also be an opposite descriptor, but this was not the case with my participants. From my research findings in Chapter 8, all participants are in the same faith and culture, although they may be more or less committed. Ibrahim referring to his fellow Qataris as being conservative may perhaps indicate partial internalisation (Taylor, 1997); i.e. because Qataris have been described as conservative in a colonial way, they continue to describe themselves using colonial vocabulary.

The second element of this story is that things are being decided for the new students, like Indian females practising *sati* (Spivak, 1988). That is, as discussed in Chapter 4, they are taking on the role of subaltern. The student leader from the earlier cohort is making the decision for the new students, asking them to sit in seating divided by gender, perhaps thinking that he is protecting his culture. Then the staff-member also decides for the new students, by saying they should sit in seating not divided by gender, thinking she is giving them freedom.

This example is not a single incident; throughout the interviews there were stories about peer students trying to control other new students, and staff-members forcing Qataris to act like Westerners or thinking they were giving them freedom, as in the story shared by Ibrahim about seating allocation during the orientation mentioned earlier. These actions by staff were a concern for Roberts and Roberts (2011), who urged staff to resist the temptation to impose their personal values upon Qataris (Roberts & Roberts, 2011). The general theme here in my findings is much like the *sati* example; where the mainstream culture is pre-decided for the new students, then the IBCs' environment and personnel similarly pre-decided a new environment, for instance by shuffling male and female students together in order to "prepare them for the future job market". Both approaches deny the new students the freedom to choose what they want to do based on their own personal cultural positions. This shuffling together of male and female in classes was also mentioned in Bakken (2013). In his study, a participant

mentioned being switched to different partners every week for her laboratory class, which made her feel awkward. Bakken ascribed this student's feelings to not being prepared for such an environment, with which my findings agree.

Thinking more widely than just about mixed-gender interaction and how students are being treated in the process of preparing them for post-university life, Donn and Al Manthri (2013) expressed concerns about the speed of integration of IBCs with indigenous culture and whether or not the indigenous people are properly prepared for this and its consequences.

The last interesting element in the example above is the unique perspective that results from Ibrahim experiencing the first student cohort and then later cohorts. He describes IBC Qatari students as through the years gradually becoming less and less conservative, as he calls it. Regardless of whether this is perceived as good or bad from an outsider's perspective, the participants' voices about how they perceive it should be respected. Bakken's (2013) study also raised a concern that Qataris were being influenced by the events created in their IBCs to become more Americanised in culture, regardless of efforts made by the staff to be sensitive to the Qatari culture (Bakken, 2013). This is particularly interesting, as from my interviews I have noticed that there are some stories representing what can be seen as adaptations (as Hessa mentioned earlier: "*with time I got acclimated*"), or can be argued as changes being imposed on students.

When comparing their first years to their last years at the IBCs, my participants reported a change in their attitude toward certain topics. These topics may be different items on the spectrum of commitment discussed in Chapter 8. Muneera (female, River IBC) elaborates further on the constant challenging choices that they need to make as Qataris.

Muneera (female, River IBC): It doesn't matter if you agree or disagree with them [social norms], the social norms exist, and you have to abide by them. And you have to adhere to them regardless of your age, regardless of your background, and regardless of your education. And it is a conscious choice and conscious effort to do that for the local [Qatari]. You have everything you would need [in the IBC] to facilitate any act that you would do to break those norms. The university setting, the events happening at the university, the activities happening in the university, all of these are leeway, they are like gateways, you can participate and you can break the social norms, nothing stopping you except your conscience, so this is what I mean.... So you have the opportunity to do whatever you want. But then your conscience is what's stopping you from doing, going against how have you been raised, going against what society have taught you, what your religion has taught

you, be in something you do, something you say, the way you act, whatever it is. The opportunity is there [in the IBC] for you if you want to stray away.

Muneera's use of the words "stray away" to describe the change is rather interesting. At least from the Qatari perspective, the term would appear to have a negative connotation, for instance as straying away from the path of God. For Muneera, as a Qatari using the constant conscious challenge that she needs to go through means that she is often on the borderline of a negative outcome that she might not be interested in, namely straying away from her culture. Even though most participants are similar to Muneera, one participant, Ibrahim (male, Valley IBC), described himself as being different from other Qataris and being comfortable with this.

Ibrahim (male, Valley IBC): Most of my friends are non-Qataris ... a lot of people would say, even though I don't agree, they would say I am Americanised. Like I don't wear Thob unless for work and even on Thursday [casual day] I don't. I don't know how they [other Qataris] look at me ... All the people would wear a certain watch, I won't wear it. Because I am different.

Mohammad: What is the reason?

Ibrahim: I don't know, it is just my nature ... personally, I don't particularly choose to be different, but I don't feel I have to do what everyone else does.

He also shared his experience of being different from some Qataris in the way he interacted with the other gender.

Ibrahim: After the class, I was walking with a girl from the classroom to the library and talking about the class. Then one of the guys [first cohort at Valley IBC] came to me and told me 'Ibrahim, it is true we are in an American university but we are not in America. If you want to talk to her, send her an email.' ... Back then [first cohort], that's how some guys would see it [interaction with females out of class]. There was more segregation. There were some guys saying 'Don't do those things.' There was a little resistance. Maybe these days, things have changed.

Even though Ibrahim is the only one of my participants who did not share concerns about culture like the other participants, this does demonstrate the variety of differences among the Qataris themselves. This idea of differences was discussed earlier in Section 8.3 and illustrated with Figure 8.1 'Commitment levels on a multilayer item spectrum'.

From my findings, then, it seems that most participants are concerned about their culture, which accords with one of the reasons Escrivá-Beltrán et al. (2019) cite in their systematic literature

review for students choosing to study in IBCs: being close to family, and for cultural considerations (Escriva-Beltran et al., 2019). Since IBCs facilitate the mobility of ideas and values (Knight, 2004), they place Qatari students in multiple situations where they need to negotiate their identity with themselves (Taylor, 1997); where they need to find balance, adapt or change. This may result, perhaps, in creating their “third space” (Bhabha, 2004) that is not fully Western culture nor fully Qatari culture either, but a hybrid identity that thrives in the third space they create. This aligns with Hall’s (1994) concept of diaspora, as Qataris are producing a new culture. Although mimicking (Bhabha, 2004) another culture, they will never be part of that culture, but become dislocated from their own culture, thus creating a hybrid (Bhabha, 2004). The long-term prospect for hosting nations like Qatar is unclear (Becker, 2010) and the long-term impact of these changes to the participants is unclear to Bakken (2013) and to me as well. The important point, though, is that it should be the Qataris’ choice, made through well-informed decisions of what they want to change and what they want to preserve in this process, without any impositions.

9.2.2 Participants' voice

The issue of participant voice is reflected in the literature as well as in my participant interviews. At the broader, literature level, we need only look to Bakken’s (2013) study for an example. Bakken’s participant group was not all Qatari. He conducted a group interview which included eight students.

“...[w]ith four students being Qatari and the others of other ethnic backgrounds including Sri Lankan and Palestinian.”

(Bakken, 2013, p. 64)

Bakken’s criteria for inclusion in the focus group did not require participants to be Qataris or to be Muslims. I was not able to identify whether some or all findings are relevant to the Qatari or the non-Qatari participants, unless the participant clearly described him/herself as being Qatari in the quotes provided. Given the cultural sensitivities we have already explored, might the comments of other members of the focus group have steered the Qatari participants’ comments in a certain direction that might not have been followed if the non-Qataris had not been there? Viewing this situation from a postcolonial lens, did Bakken see all participants as

being the same, just “others” (Said, 2003)? The important question for this research to consider, therefore, is how could this impact on the Qatari voice in the literature or beyond?

Shaheen (male, Valley IBC) shared his story about the purpose of establishing a Qatari student club at his IBC:

Shaheen (male, Valley IBC): We [students involved in the Qatari club] want to show that the university in Qatar is not controlled by expats. Because all other student organisations at the university are all filled by expats [international students and expat staff]. So we are the Qatari voice in the university.

Shaheen shared different activities that the Qatari club was involved in which were aimed at catering for the interests of Qatari students, like a falconry photoshoot and a Qatari dish charity market. In the following extract, Shaheen is giving an example of a matter that touches Qataris in particular as the majority of them are commuter students.

Shaheen: Some guys [male students] when they have three hours' gap between classes, they would take a nap [in common areas in the IBC] for an hour or an hour and a half ... expat girls have no issues about sleeping there [common areas] on the floor. But it is impossible for the Qatari girls to lay down on the floor and sleep. We [Qatari student club] cared about them. It was personal to us as Qataris. We created this organisation to have the Qatari voice heard in the university.

Eventually, Shaheen stated, they were successful in obtaining a female-only lounge area.

At the student level, the problems around Qatari students having a voice are illustrated by Shaheen (male, Valley IBC). He shared that he and his Qatari, male and female, colleagues started a Qatari club, because the other clubs at their IBC were not creating events that met the Qataris' needs and interests. A group of male and female Qataris went through the process for establishing a Qatari club at their IBC, only to find out later that the Qatari club would not necessarily be filled by Qatari members. All non-Qatari students can apply for the club membership and take the few roles that will make decisions and plan events for the club, i.e. in this case, for the Qataris. Moreover, the non-Qatari students form the majority (60% as discussed in Chapter 2) of the students on campus. How, then, would the non-Qataris who became members of the club know how to help the Qataris? Shaheen's story might be compared to a black women's club in a university in the USA where the club members are predominantly white men. Whose voice is going to be heard in that club? It is important,

therefore, to explore further the issue of student voice, which is done below in light of the data provided by my participant interviews.

The findings of this research reveal that Qatari participants' voices are not fully heard and communication and understanding will need improvement from both sides: helping Qataris to understand how to approach their needs and voice themselves; and helping staff to listen to the distinctive differences among the Qataris. Participants shared their voice through personal communication with student affairs, in writing, through student leaders, or by being student leaders and therefore being part of university organisation themselves.

Bakken (2013) suggests in his findings that there is a general positive feeling in relation to students sharing their voice.

“[T]he ability to communicate effectively and share concerns with professors is noted as a positive student experience.”

(Bakken, 2013, p. 88)

However, in this research, I am not focusing on in-class professor-to-student relations, but on out-of-class learning. Apart from this positive feeling, which can in some cases be true, when focusing on out-of-class experiences and the student voice, my results show that some missing pieces need to be put in place for communication channels to work properly.

In the earlier story about Hessa, she was asked why she could not share her voice. She said that she did not know how to complain about it and whether the staff would understand her perspective of being uncomfortable. Even though she was not in an IBC at that time but in ABP in Education City, expats were working at ABP and she was not sure if they would understand her. However, as we saw in Chapter 7, in the interview with Staff-member 1, the staff-member brought up a sexual harassment campaign that the IBC was conducting. The IBC advertised that staring at someone can be considered harassment and after that the IBC received multiple complaints from female students about being stared at. It is clear that Qatari students are not fully aware that non-Qatari staff can understand the sensitivity of their personal space. Staring is one example of this – there are many other sensitive topics that Qataris do not know that expats understand.

This idea of Westerners or non-Qataris not understanding the Qataris' cultural sensitivity is found in many of my participants' interviews. Qataris on some occasions found it discouraging to approach non-Qatari or Western staff in relation to cultural matters. Participants mentioned

on more than one occasion that they would not talk to staff about their cultural opinions as staff would not understand, as illustrated by the story of Ruqaya with Woods IBC staff that will be discussed shortly. More than four participants indicated that staff did not understand Qatari culture so participants did not bother themselves any more about it. This notion of Qataris avoiding discussing their cultural opinions with staff-members can be connected to the Staff-member 1 interview where it was stated that when the IBC started introducing its Catholic heritage to the Qatari campus, the Qatari students had no reaction to it. Staff-member 1 stated: “Our students were completely nonplussed by it”. Moreover, the same staff-member discussing another cultural issue stated:

Staff-member 1 (River IBC): I don’t even know it, but it doesn’t seem to be an issue. Nobody [Qataris] talks about it so we [Staff in River IBC] don’t – it doesn’t come up as an issue here.

Based on some experiences that participants shared in this research, it seems that Qatari students are being silenced from sharing their cultural perspective. This can be problematic if it skews the staff perception of what is needed, as in the case of Prowse and Goddard’s (2010) study of the same institution in Canada and Qatar, with faculty making changes in their curriculum in Qatar based on the faculty perception of what needed to be adjusted (Prowse & Goddard, 2010). Moreover, from a colonial viewpoint it may be that local issues are seen as less important, so they dismiss them and make no efforts to investigate or understand or take action unless the issue has been creating a problem (as happened with the God conversation in GU-Q discussed in Chapter 3). None of the Arabian Gulf countries have created systems to monitor quality assurance in imported programmes (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Perhaps there is a need to create a document similar to the one published by the Alaska Native Knowledge Network (1998), to provide guidance and standards for IBCs providing Qatari education. This guidance would contribute to IBCs’ understanding of the Qatari cultures, as urged by Roberts (2015). IBCs could work around the standards, ensuring that their quality of education remained intact while still delivering what is most beneficial for the Qataris, rather than relying on personal perceptions.

Ruqaya is one of the participants who approached a senior student affairs staff-member with a cultural issue. Not only did she not receive help, she was criticised by the staff, as she described it. Ruqaya felt uncomfortable on campus about inappropriate dress and behaviour by expat students in the cafeteria. Ruqaya mentioned that these particular students were continuously crossing the line culturally and being too intimate in public which made her uncomfortable.

Ruqaya (female, Woods IBC): *We in Doha are not used to those things ... Hugging or whatever. A thing can't be happening in Doha [in public].... I mean they were intimate.... I felt it was wrong.*

Ruqaya approached student affairs staff and the following was her experience.

Ruqaya: *She [Woods IBC staff-member] didn't talk about the other girls, she talked about me. She said: 'You can be inappropriate to someone else [by wearing make-up]. For example, I can be inappropriate to you by not wearing hijab.'* That's what she said.

Instead of feeling listened to, Ruqaya felt attacked. The staff-member appeared defensive, taking the conversation away from the students being inappropriate and making it into a conversation about whether or not Ruqaya was wearing makeup or the staff-member was not wearing *hijab*. While the staff-member may have been trying to explain other values to Ruqaya, by moving the conversation away from listening to what concerned Ruqaya to imposing staff values on Ruqaya, the staff-member was doing precisely what Roberts and Roberts urged staff not to do (Roberts & Roberts, 2011). The spectrum of commitment discussed in Chapter 7 can help future staff understand where their students fall in commitment level in terms of the mainstream understanding of items and social norms. If the staff-member had understood this, she would probably have understood that not wearing *hijab* as an expat, or wearing make-up as a Qatari female, can both be within the social norms, and the majority, at least of my participants, fall into a similar area. But this is not the case when two students are being too intimate in a public place. Therefore, the spectrum of commitment in Chapter 7 can provide an understanding for future practice. The spectrum of commitment can be developed further to shed light on more items than *hijab*, make-up, intimacy and so forth.

There is also another complex component to the idea of voice. At least three participants believed that once they physically walked into their IBC, they were no longer bound by the Qatari culture; therefore they stopped abiding by their cultural norms.

Muneera (female, River IBC): River IBC is on American soil; once you walk in the university it is unlike other universities. So, when you go, you are on American soil, so you don't have to abide by the same [Qatari] rules.

I asked Muneera how she knew about the status of River IBC being “on American soil”. She responded that this was common knowledge. Similarly, when the Woods IBC staff-member

discouraged Ruqaya in her cultural complaint, she added that Woods IBC was an American and not a Qatari university and therefore was not bound by the Qatari culture.

The following is a continuation of Ruqaya's earlier conversation about the inappropriate actions of the expat students. After she had shared her views, she reported the following response from the Woods IBC staff-member.

Ruqaya (female, Woods IBC): The staff-member told me: 'This is an American university not a Qatari university.' But I told her: 'This is in the land of Qatar. I mean, that's true there are no much Qataris but in the end ... it is a public place. We brought [IBCs] here ... not that they forced themselves to come. We can enforce our rules in this ...' She told me a word that I really didn't like ... Woods IBC is American; that's how she said it to me ... I felt she closed all doors in my face.

Ruqaya continued to say that she could probably win the argument over the staff if she involved different parties in the situation, like the police or leadership personnel from the Qatar Foundation but she said she did not have the mental strength to enter that battle. She just wanted to graduate, finish her studies and not have to deal with this wider issue.

After the interviews, I personally reached out to a senior Qatar Foundation staff-member to confirm whether the IBC status was correctly described. The Qatar Foundation senior staff-member did not confirm that IBCs were essentially "on American soil". This kind of assumption can be problematic if the two sides, Qatari and American, are not clearly defining their boundaries, but let it be done based on personal judgement. This can influence the environment for students for the whole of their college life.

Even though not all stories are as harsh as Ruqaya's, from the example above, it is evident how this participant and other students in similar situations can be discouraged from sharing their cultural point of view with staff who may not be willing to understand what students are trying to convey from their cultural perspective. Having staff who encourage cultural characteristics is a better way for IBCs to equip their students with the confidence that will enable them to contribute to life holistically, as well as to social life and the workforce (Arshad et al., 2012).

It is also interesting that some of the literature, such as Vora (2014) and Lane (2015), discusses the fact that at the IBCs Qatari students have more freedom of speech, and may discuss issues like criticisms of the Qatari government. In fact, my Qatari participants show that, as an environment that provides appropriate space for Qataris to be able to exercise free speech (and be listened to) in regard to their distinctive cultural differences, IBCs need some improvement.

Given that IBCs purport to encourage democracy and free speech, but do not appear to listen to their Qatari students, my participants, and students in IBCs generally, may justifiably question the models of democracy presented to them within IBCs.

One of the aims of this research was to confirm whether there are tensions simmering beneath the surface in the Qatari student experiences in their IBCs with regard to their culture, and it shows that this does indeed exist and needs further attention. In the literature review, it was evident that there is a lack of Qatari student voice. Moreover, from the findings reported here, I can confirm that improvements are needed in helping to encourage Qataris to step forward and ameliorate the lack of distinctive voices on campus as well. The major improvement that is needed, however, is for IBCs to create a suitable platform for listening to those Qatari students as they explain their different, distinctive culture. Future research is needed into what form this might take, and how best to prepare IBC personnel to listen to and understand different perspectives of Qataris.

One important role of student affairs professionals on campus is to help students to develop holistically (Komives et al., 2003). Because Qataris are not included in some out-of-class learning opportunities, Qataris are missing part of their holistic development in their IBCs as they are not taking part in valuable university social and educational activities that can develop some parts of their skills and personalities, such as decision-making, moral development (Allison et al., 2012) and personal development (Kuh, 1995). This raises an important question: if Qataris are being excluded as a result of cultural insensitivity on the part of the IBCs, what implication does that have for the contract between Qatar and the IBCs in relation to developing Qataris? From listening to the reasons that participants gave for their non-inclusion, and preparing the findings of this research, I was able to create a model which has the potential to help future activities designers to think about Qatari students and students with a similar demographic. This model is explained in the following section.

9.3 Creating an inclusive environment for Qatari students in programmes

In this section, I continue addressing the findings of this research as well as providing a model that can help professionals working with Qataris in Qatar to think about Qatari student

inclusivity in their programmes. When considering the broader idea of when participants avoid taking part in out-of-classroom university events, the findings reveal three major factors and four supporting or non-supporting elements. In the following section, I will explain what the factors and elements are and how they work together.

9.3.1 Non-culturally specific reasons for not participating

To start with, I acknowledge that my participants shared similar reasons for avoiding out-of-classroom activities for non-cultural reasons, although these reasons were also linked to the Qatari demographic, such as:

- academic demands
- commuting reasons, and
- general interest.

When discussing the academic workload, my participants acknowledged that to meet the requirements of American universities, they had to work extra hard compared with their non-Qatari peers, for reasons related to English language proficiency and/or pre-university educational preparation. This echoes Bakken's (2013) findings that some of his participants were challenged in their studies based on their English language proficiency and the new studying process, which can be particularly challenging for students coming from different backgrounds regarding school systems. To be successful, they need to develop new studying habits (Bakken, 2013).

Shammah shared her experience of needing to make more effort than other, non-Qatari students, and linked this to their educational background, which helped them to be better prepared.

Shammah (female, Valley IBC): *Qataris were studying more than non-Qataris. It was more challenging.... I feel our schooling wasn't that okay. Even though I was in an international school, it wasn't the right international school.*

Although she was not one of the students who emerged from the Qatari governmental school system, she acknowledges that her international school was not the right one in terms of preparation for her American university system, and this led her to spend more time and effort

on achieving her academic goals. That is why, she says, she did not have as much extra time as she would have liked to spend on out-of-classroom activities.

The second barrier to participation is commuting. All the participants in this study were commuter students. They do not tend to live on campus for various reasons, such as the importance of family among Qatari participants, as discussed in Chapter 8, which influenced them to live at home. This was further facilitated by the fact that Qatar is a small country, as discussed in Chapter 2, with a maximum of one hour's drive from nearly any place in the country to Education City. Being a commuter student creates a problem when there is a gap of several hours between the time of the last class of the day and the start time of an event. Sometimes, there is a gap of several hours. Participants therefore prefer to go home after class and would find it exhausting to commute back again for the activity. It would be easier if the time gap was smaller, which might encourage them to join in more frequently.

The last non-culturally specific barrier to participation is the difference in general interests, such as their future prospects. All my participants had some sort of sponsorship or scholarship arrangement, except for one who was not sponsored for his first two years but then received a sponsorship for the subsequent years, up to his graduation. Sponsorship was provided by governmental or non-governmental companies and organisations, which require the participant to work for the sponsored body after graduation. That means that they do not have to work towards job application, like Bakken's (2013) Qatari participants who were guaranteed their employment after graduation by their sponsors. Therefore, as Qatari students, my participants' interest in their outlook for the future is different from that of non-Qatari, unsponsored students. Student affairs create activities, such as résumé writing, job-searching and job-interview workshops, which the participants with sponsorship are less likely to require. This does make them more fortunate than others, but also uninterested in the same job-search activities. In this case, it may be that the IBCs seek out what interests these students professionally given their specific demographic.

9.3.2 Culturally specific reasons for not participating

In this section, I explore what I found unique about the participants being Qataris, and I focus on the question of why they did not take part in out-of-class events for cultural reasons. In investigating this aspect, my focus was more on why they did not participate than on why they

did. In my findings, it was clear that many Qataris did not take part in out-of-classroom events for cultural reasons. These out-of-class events may be called many different things: co-curricular activities, extracurricular activities, events, socials and so forth. For the purpose of his study Bakken defined “‘*extra-curricular*’ as activities and events, either academic or athletic, which occur outside of instructional times” (Bakken, 2013, p. 103, italics in original). For the purposes of my research, however, I have also included in that definition social activities and non-academic learning opportunities, because they are part of the IBC environment experience and are considered valuable learning opportunities (Allison et al., 2012; Kuh, 1995) and an important element of IBC campus life (Bakken, 2013).

In this regard, Bakken states:

“The lack of student participation is viewed as not embracing the Western culture, even though the activities are taking place in an environment that is cognizant of Islamic beliefs and culture.”

(Bakken, 2013, p. 103)

The question that comes to mind is, if the IBCs are cognizant of Islamic beliefs in delivering their activities, why are the Qatari students not attending? As discussed in Chapter 8, perhaps the cognition and understanding of Islamic, Qatari culture is yet to be fully grasped by the IBCs, so that they can create an environment that is attractive to the Qatari students and perhaps be more inclusive. My findings shed further light on what the Qatari participants are factoring into their decisions and what they see in that offered environment that triggers their cultural perception of whether an out-of-class event is inclusive or non-inclusive.

Understanding the Qatari participants’ decision-making process is crucial, as this is likely to lead to better inclusion for this student body. In interviewing Staff-member 1 from River IBC, I asked what adjustment is being made in practice to ensure activity inclusivity for the Qataris. Staff-member 1 said that they plan the event around all the students in general, rather than concentrating on the Qataris, and it is up to the Qatari students to opt out or opt in. Staff-member 1’s answer is similar to the practice at WCMC-Q as discussed by Hajjar & Gotto (2013), who suggest they are being flexible about the Qatari culture by not pressuring Qataris who decided to opt out from the university social, out-of-class experiences. However, both practices fail to question why they choose to opt out; the model from this research is an attempt to answer that question. The model is a contribution to knowledge and practice.

9.4 Finding the key to inclusivity for Qatari students

My findings are that three major factors shape the participants' decision-making in attending or not attending out-of-class events. These are:

- 1- the type of event
- 2- the timing of the event
- 3- the perception of the location of the event.

There are four supporting or non-supporting elements that further encourage or discourage the participants, such as:

- who is there or is going
- whether the event is accompanied by a major goal, such as an academic outcome
- where the event falls in the participant's priority list
- non-academic competitiveness.

The findings of this study could be presented in several ways. The way I have chosen to present them is through a combination lock model. This innovative and original approach provides a readily understandable way of viewing a complex issue. Just as in opening a combination lock, if the major factors are not aligned, Qatari participants are more likely to avoid joining an event, and hence the event can be non-inclusive for Qataris.

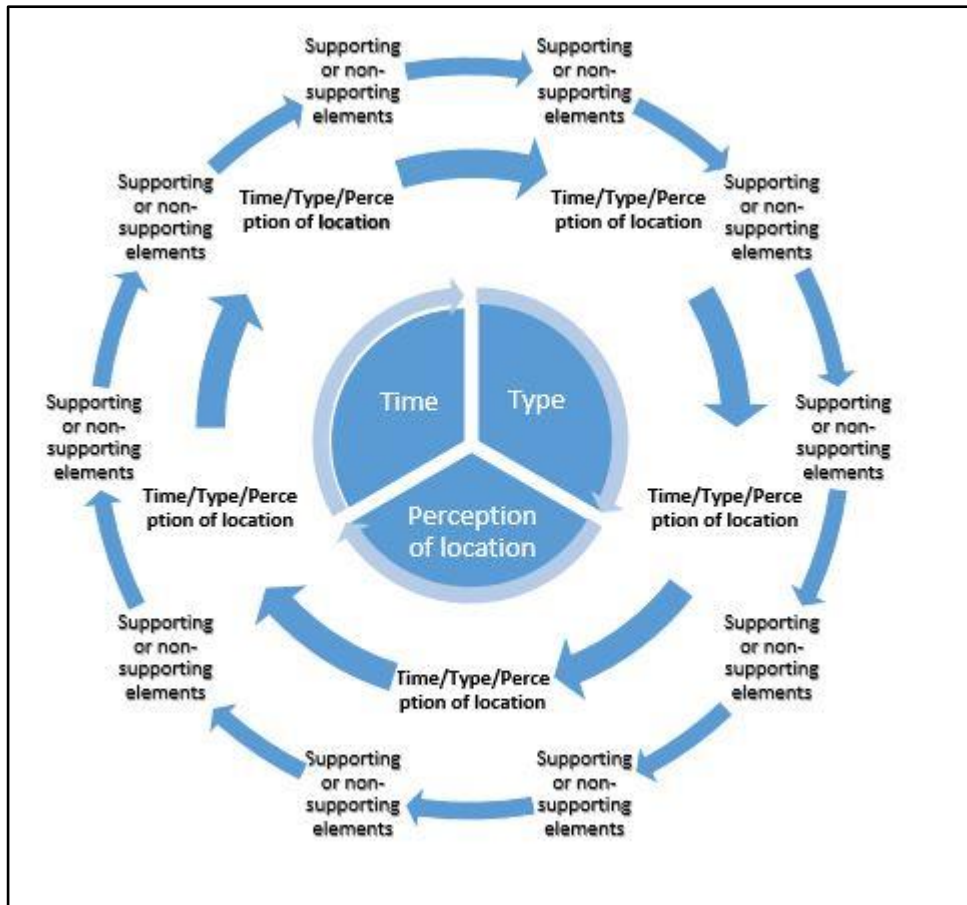


Figure 9.1. Combination lock model.

The first, inner layer, consisting of the three core factors, is the most important. In the second layer, those three factors might overlap, meaning that two or more factors might be present at the same time, which would make attending an event more complex. The third layer, supporting or non-supporting elements, is the least important, but it does have a role in the participants' decision-making. Taking these combinations into consideration when creating a social or educational activity can unlock the potential of inclusivity for Qatari students' active engagement; hence the name combination lock model.

In the following section, I will further elaborate on the type, time and perception of location; however, most cases would combine more than one factor in the model.

9.4.1 Factors: type of event

The type of event was the reason most frequently mentioned by all participants for avoiding joining an event. 'Type' includes the type of activity, the topic or the setting of the event. The

activity might be physical, such as a water-balloon fight, or it may involve a topic of conversation containing matters that are sensitive for the participants, such as discussions with sexual content or related to God, whether for an academic class or in a conversational setting that could give rise to heated debate. In Bakken (2013), one of his participants mentioned not being interested in attending live music events. Bakken concluded that events dominated with dancing and music may not attract Qatari students based on their culture. While to some extent this accords with my study, it is important to take into consideration the spectrum of commitment level discussed in Chapter 8, and also, that dancing and music are only two examples of the *type* of event.

The participants disliked the type of physical activities that are often part of sport and other events, such as the Valley IBC University Spirit event where they described having to run and shout, water balloon fights as mentioned above, and similar activities that consisted of jumping, running and shouting, as Ruqaya describes them below. All participants I interviewed from Valley IBC who brought up the subject of University Spirit during their first-year induction day said they did not enjoy the prospect of running, shouting and jumping as part of the event; it was described by Ruqaya, in the extract below, as childish. They felt the same about other water activities in which people jump, fall and get wet. From their stories, it seemed that not all Qataris avoided those types of activities or failed to enjoy them, but it was a strong factor among all my participants.

Ruqaya (female, Woods IBC) shared her thoughts about her experience when she was a student at Valley IBC before transferring to Woods IBC after a few semesters.

Ruqaya (female, Woods IBC): Having the [university] spirit. I don't want to be rude, but I feel they [Valley IBC and other Valley IBC students] exaggerate ... they are excited, and as it is okay to scream in the hallways, they are very happy about it.... First of all, a woman's voice should not be raised, she respects the place and the people she is in.... It [University] is a place where people are studying in.... This is childish, you are not in high school anymore. Okay, maybe this thing happens in the States, but our customs and traditions as Qataris, leaving expats aside, we shouldn't go screaming and kekeke [laughing out loud]; we are in an American school or American University and that's it. We shouldn't strip our traditions away and go with the flow. This does not fit us.... As an adult in a university, those childish actions you can leave at home.

Ruqaya acknowledges that this kind of event may be fine when it happens in the United States, where the custom originated, or when other expats are emulating it in Qatar, but she clearly

states that these actions do not fit her understanding of how adults should behave. This understanding of adult behaviours can be included in Figure 8.1 as an item on the spectrum. She is trying to define her understanding of what is acceptable according to her social norms. She believes that adults should be more restrained in their actions and that the university is a place to be restrained. Even if you still feel playful, you should leave that impulse at home, because a place of study is not a place for playing. She further discusses that being a Qatari woman places more expectations on her behaviour.

Ruqaya (female, Woods IBC): *Qatari ladies, they should be poised.*

Mohammad: *What does this mean, the word you used, poised?*

Ruqaya: *It means balanced. I mean grown up mentally. I mean jumping around and screaming, you can do that between your friends when you are in a place like your female friend's house or whatever but not publicly.*

Ruqaya understood why she did not take part in such activities, while other participants were not sure why they did not feel comfortable taking part in this type of activity and described it as feeling rather old.

Hessa (female, Woods IBC): *I tried to take part in some activities, but I feel I am too old for this.*

She mentioned seeing other students going to dance activities and she was confused about why she was not interested in such activities.

Hessa: *I feel something inside me that I want to be a normal student like them.*

Hessa came across in the interview as confused and perhaps was like that when she was still a student. This can be a complicated conversation for a student to have with themselves (Taylor, 1997). Perhaps she was negotiating her culture, wanting to mimic another culture (Bhabha, 2004) in order to feel normal as stated.

Some types of events can be inappropriate for Qatari participants from start to finish. Ali (male, Woods IBC) shared with me his story about a masked parade event that the university hosted on campus. He was aware of it, having seen it advertised around the campus, but avoided going to the event himself. Here, I asked Ali what the participants wear for the parade other than masks:

Ali (male, Woods IBC): *Suits for men and a dress for girls. It is like a party.*

Mohammad: *And why did you not go?*

Ali: *What! The idea of a masked parade is to go dance with someone you don't know and if you like each other then you take off the mask. I think that's the idea. So, I didn't feel it is suitable.*

Mohammad: *Suitable in what sense?*

Ali: *Culture and traditions.*

Mohammad: *Tell me more about how it is not suitable in terms of culture and traditions? Imagine I am not Qatari.*

Ali: *At the end, you get to meet someone and do what? And to start with, you dance with her, which is not acceptable in our culture and traditions. Then when you like each other then what? I don't know how it works. Even if nothing happens, to ask a girl for a dance is not acceptable in terms of religion or traditions. So, there is no reason to go.*

Later I asked Ali if he knew who participated in that event.

Ali: *Non-Qataris the majority; I am not aware of a Qatari who took part in that event.*

Party dress was one issue. Although Qataris do not always dress in the traditional manner – in some scenarios shared with me in this research, females wore other types of clothing than *abaya* and men wore other than *thob* – but these related to specific purposes, such as the school's requirements for lab work or sports, and this was not an issue. However, party dress was inappropriate, especially for females in relation to the concept of *alsiter*. Dresses are not usually worn by females for parties in a mixed-gender environment; they are typically reserved for an all-female environment or at home within the family. However, the bigger challenge posed by this event is the custom of a male asking a female to dance with him. Ali's underlying understanding is that this behaviour relates to dating and out-of-marriage relationships, which is not within the social norms of Qataris. Even though the university did not advertise it in such a way, that was Ali's perspective concerning the basis of such an event. These activities, as Ruqaya said earlier, do not suit Qataris.

The type of conversation is also something to be avoided by the participants, as when it becomes a heated conversation about politics and religion or has sensitive content regarding sexual matters. Through the stories my participants shared with me, it was evident that they would accept things that they would not usually do if they related to academic outcomes, as academic activities have high priority for them. Nevertheless, Mubarak (male, Valley IBC)

shared his experience of a discussion in class that had sexual content, and in which neither his Qatari peers nor he himself could take part, especially in the presence of female Qataris.

Mubarak (male, Valley IBC): *[We] would watch a movie and comment about it. Sometimes the movie has some scenes that makes you embarrassed.... There was a scene when a lady was fixing something in a car. And there was a man staring at her body. So, he [professor] asks us what do you see? We can't say it – you get it? I feel it is difficult to stand up and say he was staring at [sensitive body part].... If he [professor] asks what do you see? I can't say it excites me sexually. You can't say such things in front of the other gender.... I would say the majority of Qataris, like eighty per cent feel reserved about saying anything. We tried to look busy. To do anything, like open a notebook and try show we are busy doing something like writing notes while he [professor] is discussing this thing.*

However, Mubarak told me that it would be acceptable for him to share his thoughts on the topic in writing. He would also be open to sharing them orally if he were in a one-gender school, or in another country like the United States. In this case, the type of conversation is the major factor. The presence of Qatari females made the discussion of the topic more complex for the Qatari male participant, leading him to avoid discussing it, which is a non-supporting element that will be discussed further later in this chapter. The surrounding environment of Qatar also created a sense of responsibility as to what to discuss. This observation leads into another topic that I will further explore in the following section.

9.4.2 Factors: perception of location

This refers to what participants believe this specific location entitles them to, what reputation it brings with it and what they feel comfortable doing in it. The location could be as big as a country like Qatar, or as specific as the room the event is held in. When in Qatar, the surrounding environment plays a role in the kind of choices the participants make: for example, addressing sensitive topics. The same participant, Mubarak, when explaining that he would not feel comfortable discussing sexual content, added that he would be more open to this type of conversation if he were not in Qatar. Thus, he expressed a wish to be respectful to the surrounding environment, which included being respectful to Qatari females in the same location and to the Qatari community in general.

Mubarak (male, Valley IBC): *But if we are in the USA, you will feel free to talk.*

Therefore, the location of the country has a part to play for Mubarak and perhaps for the others who did not feel comfortable discussing the topic in that class.

The location of the event within Qatar also has a role. For example, the gala dinner is an annual event organised by Valley IBC in an hotel.

Mohammad: *What do you feel about the location of the gala?*

Shaheen (male, Valley IBC): *They are doing it in the hotel because restrictions are taken out. In the hotel, girls can dance with boys you know. Hotels have no restrictions, you know, they have discos and like that ... that is a smart move by the university that they are doing it in a place far from Education City.*

Mohammad: *How do you see it being a smart move?*

Shaheen: *Instead if they [university] ruin the reputation of Education City, then people [Qatari community] will come and talk about it. Because there are a lot of people would start talking that the university did such and such in Education City or would say I passed by Education City and saw boys and girls are dancing. So, this is not an image of a university that you want to see. A simple ceremony is not a problem.*

By using the words “ruin the reputation of Education City”, Shaheen clearly defines two points. First, that such an event is outside Qatari mainstream social norms, which makes it totally unacceptable to the Qatari community. The second point is that because the location and timing, i.e. in an hotel in the evening, carry a bad reputation within Qatari cultural norms, this will reflect on Education City itself. Stating that there are no restrictions indicates that observance of the traditions and culture of Qataris is almost non-existent in that situation. This is a complication that would deter Qataris from joining the event.

Shaheen also shares Ruqaya’s idea of favouring humble activities over exaggerated ones like dancing in the following story.

Shaheen (male, Valley IBC): *Everyone should be in a suit. Formal. [Students] go for a dinner and give [recognized students] trophies; they play music and dance. A lot of Qataris are against this matter. They say: no way, what is that? ... It seems like this event is isolating us – we, the Qataris. Wearing suits*

Mohammad: *Even Qataris have to wear suits?*

Shaheen: *Last year I heard Qataris came wearing thob and they let them in. If you really want to come with a thob they will accept allowing you to enter with a thob. But you are*

supposed to come wearing a suit ... but there are some [non-Qatari female students] who are a little bit free, because it is not in the university, it is in a hotel. So, they could come wearing short clothes like this.

Throughout the interviews, particularly in the data related to this section of the findings, participants shared their understanding that non-Qatari staff would not be sufficiently aware of Qatari culture to pay attention to these details related to Qatari culture. One participant argued that the organisers should pay attention to the issue by learning about Qataris or hiring a Qatari staff member to represent Qatari culture. Some participants tried to share their views with IBC staff, and sometimes they were challenged, as discussed earlier in the student voice section.

9.4.3 Factors: time of event

Timing played a role for the Qatari participants in their decision on whether or not to attend an event. This included factors such as being a commuter, being a Qatari female, or just being a Qatari with a different priority when the event conflicted with a family occasion.

As discussed earlier, if the time of the event creates a bigger gap between the last class and the start of the event, it can discourage commuting students from joining the event.

The timing of the provision of meals affected participation, such as Iftar during the month of Ramadan, as shared in Mubarak's story in Chapter 8. Qataris tend to avoid this particular meal in the university as they want to have it with their families, and families have a higher priority than out-of-classroom activities, as I discussed earlier in the importance of family section. Another participant mentioned the following:

Jassim (male, Woods IBC): To create more events midday ... not have to go home and come back to attend that event.

As noted previously, most Qatari students are commuters, and all of my participants commuted as students. This meant that timing could make it particularly hard for Qataris who would have to drive back and forth when events happened in the evening, as shared by Jassim and some other participants.

Mubarak (male, Valley IBC): Sometimes [the IBC] did Iftar in Ramadan; it was hard to go out, it was hard.

Mohammad: Why is it hard?

Mubarak: *You know, in Ramadan we are used to seeing our aunts, uncles and siblings. It is a gathering, so it is hard to go out.*

This is an example of the magnified effect of the combination lock model. This quote refers to two factors, the type of event, Iftar, and the timing. In the case presented here, we are looking particularly at timing, but either reason can be important. In addition, the importance of family is obvious in this example, as Mubarak chose to spend his time with family rather than with the university.

Females tend to have more defined times when they should be back home, compared with their male peers, especially when they are late for non-academic purposes. Different female participants define lateness slightly differently; for some it is as early as seven in the evening, for others as late as ten, but all agree that somewhere around eight and nine means that it is late. One participant mentioned that her father was the one who gave permission and set the time; for the rest of the participants who shared their timing stories, it was the mother, as for Hessa in the following example:

Hessa (female, Woods IBC): *There are a lot of things I wanted to go to at the university like they show movies sometimes, but I didn't go, maybe because it was late.*

Mohammad: *What time is late for you?*

Hessa: *8:00pm. But in later years I stayed at the university until 10:00pm. In early years, I had to go home by sunset prayers [sunset prayer times vary based on sunset time in Qatar] but that was my own rule, no one told me to do this and that. There have been days I stayed at the university longer to study ... girls can't be late for more than 10:00pm or 9:00pm – it doesn't have to be at the university, even if I am not in the university. I think this is nonsense, I mean why? When I talk about it with my mother, she said we are raised like that.*

Mohammad: *What do you think it should be?*

Hessa: *Midnight-12:30am.*

Mohammad: *What is the difference between 10:00pm and midnight? Why then and not 2:00am?*

Hessa: *No, 2:00am is scary outside.*

Mohammad: *Scary in what sense?*

Hessa: *I don't know, the people out there, I don't feel comfortable. Otherwise I would go, I don't mind. But people look at you as if you are the kind of girl that goes out at that time.*

Mohammad: *So, is midnight okay for you?*

Hessa: *Yeah, I don't know ... I am okay with any time as long as I am not doing something wrong.*

In the above story, Hessa challenges her mother about the time she has to come home in the evening. However, an exact time is still a vague area. She concludes that she is fine with any time if she is not doing anything wrong. Nonetheless, what I understood from her was a strong opinion that her mother's timing was not working for her. From her interview, I realised that there is no strong reason for considering a particular timing appropriate, other than what most people do or how to fit in within today's Qatari community. Timing can, therefore, also be an item on the spectrum that different people can interpret personally compared to the mainstream.

By contrast, Qatari males did not bring up the subject of being late, but two male participants avoided university activities on the basis of timing. When an event fell in the summertime, one participant wanted to travel with his friends; and in Jassim's case, he did not attend any events that took place on Thursday after seven in the evening.

Jassim (male, Woods IBC): *So, it was like they always came at a bad time. It's like Thursday night [last day of the week in Qatar], Thursday at seven pm. I don't want to stay at university Thursday night. I want to go out and enjoy myself with my friends. So, like, for me, there was always, like, a time conflict going on with these events that occurred.*

For Jassim, it was a time conflict because his friends had priority over the university's out-of-classroom activities. In the importance of family section, I discussed the fact that my participants would place family first, friends second, then university out-of-classroom activities. Jassim shared with me that if the event were earlier, so as not to conflict with his friends, he would go to it, and then he would not miss being out with his friends.

Let us now move on to discuss the four elements that can make some difference to decision-making when one or more of them accompanies the three major factors of time, type, and perception of location.

9.4.4 Elements in decision-making

The four elements are:

- Who is attending?
- Whether the event is accompanied by a major goal?
- Where the event falls in the participant's priority list?
- Non-academic competitiveness.

Participants are more likely to join an event if they know someone from their inner circle and comfort zone will be part of the event or will even be going with them to that event. For example, I noticed in Mubarak's interview that he was not comfortable discussing sexual content in the presence of Qatari females. Ali shared with me that he would go to the masked parade if he had another friend to go with him to watch it. That happened with Ali's Qatari female friend, who went to watch the masked parade with her Palestinian female friend.

Some stories that were shared were about something that would not usually be considered, such as travelling with the university, especially in the case of female participants. Exceptions could be made only when the trip was accompanied by an academic goal like taking summer classes. That would indicate travelling for study, with study as the major goal. For the external observer, this may result in the seeming anomaly that an activity like spending one night in the desert within the same country and within one hour's drive can exclude most Qataris, especially females, while spending weeks overseas, thousands of miles away from home, for an academic goal such as summer semester in the main campus does not raise cultural concerns for the participants.

As mentioned in earlier stories, participants would not mind having a meal provided by the university but when it comes to a specific event like Iftar, which perhaps has more significance for the participants during the month of Ramadan, the participant would choose a family Iftar over the university Iftar.

Several participants avoided participating in some activities as a result of demands upon their time. An example would be writing an application for admission to a university trip. This can perhaps be linked to the extra efforts Qatari students need to put in to compensate for their lack of English proficiency and the gap in other subjects that their pre-university education did not prepare them for, as mentioned earlier.

9.4.8 Participants do not always have the choice

In the end, it is worth noting that the participants did not always have the choice about participating or not in an activity. Their existence on campus includes them in some activities regardless of whether they are interested in these activities or not. In one out-of-classroom initiative, which was called “spread the love” and was timed around Valentine's Day, anonymous students would go online and write down someone's name. Then on the event day, the named person would receive a red rose from an anonymous individual.

Ali (male, Woods IBC): *Many [students] were against it. You could get a flower while sitting among your friends; because it is anonymous you wouldn't know who. Could be a male, could be a female.*

Mohammad: *What is the problem if you get it from a female?*

Ali: *Personal image.*

In this event, all students enrolled at that university were automatically part of the activity, even if they did not wish to be; there was no choice. Ali at that time had a role at the university as one of the student leaders. He tried to have this event, or at least the anonymity part of it, cancelled, but his voice was not heard, and the event was implemented. This story also can be linked to the issue of student voice discussed earlier. Even though Ali was not an ordinary student, he was a student leader who might be considered to have a better connection with staff, yet he stated that the IBC did not listen to him.

A common opinion is that Qatari participants signed up to these things to begin with, wishing to be in a Western educational institution that gives them an “authentic, Western university cultural experience similar to the home campus” (Bakken, 2013, p. 86); as Mubarak (male, Valley IBC) was quoted in Chapter 8, “*to experience an American culture at least*”. Nonetheless, in my findings, participants showed concerns about events that are too American for them. One of the reasons participants chose to be in Qatar IBCs is to be close to home and in the same country, which accords with Ahmad and Buchanan's (2016) findings that once an educational hub is created in a certain locale, students from the same or similar culture prefer to study in it. This idea also does not conform to the literature that discusses the efforts made to localise the IBCs (Dumbre, 2013; Karam, 2018), thereby perhaps making an IBC less authentic and similar to the main campus.

My findings show that while Qatari students were on many occasions striving to adjust or change culturally to enjoy this different educational experience, their distinctive cultural differences were nonetheless important to them, and the efforts made by IBCs, which make them a little different from the main campus, were still not fully meeting these needs.

9.5 Chapter summary

In this findings chapter, the common theme was that participants strive to adjust. The chapter explored areas from the data where participants found the need to adjust in an environment that they described as being more Western in relation to their Qatari culturally distinctive differences. From Chapter 8, we understand the concept of commitment levels and in Chapter 9, I discussed two concepts which emerged from the participants' interviews, *alsiter* and mixed-gender interaction. Both can be placed in the spectrum of commitment and can aid our understanding of Qatari culture further than labels used elsewhere, like conservatism. Understanding mixed-gender interaction, which causes confusion for both Qatari males and females, is facilitated by recognising the complexity of differences in Qatari pre-university experiences, which can contribute to the IBCs' understanding of what that interaction should be. This chapter also discussed the Qatari student voice. There has been little literature that brings student voice to the fore as this research does. Moreover, it has been found that the Qatari student voice is not fully heard in their IBCs, which discourages these students from seeking what is suitable for their differences. This research also discusses general and cultural reasons for participants not taking part in extracurricular activities. Some of the activities did not take into consideration culturally sensitive elements which in some cases led to the creation of a non-inclusive environment for Qatari students. An innovative combination lock model is proposed from the findings of this research to help future professionals design activities that will be more inclusive for Qatari students. The model also provides a starting point for researchers to test it from in similar IBCs with Qatari students, other situations with students of a similar demographic, or in different cultures.

Chapter 10: Summary, conclusions and contribution

10.1 Summary

This research was begun in response to the scarcity of empirical work about Qatari students' experience in Qatar IBCs, and aimed to explore the Qatari experience on their education journey at the IBCs in relation to their culture.

The study took place in Qatar, located in the Arabian Gulf. In order to locate the study in its appropriate context, the history of education in Qatar was discussed along with the current landscape of K-12 and higher education. In addition, the unique culture shared by the Arabian Gulf countries with Qatar, and the relationship Qatar has historically and today with the world, were outlined. The demography of Qatar was discussed, with the significant fact that Qataris are minorities in their own country. The introduction of IBCs was presented in the context of QNV2030, which is Qatar's map for the development of the country, including the indigenous Qataris and the importance of preserving their culture. Additional policies were brought to the attention of the reader in terms of supporting Qataris, such as the Qatarisation policy and the Arabic language protection law. These laws are designed to protect the Qatari identity, or at least part of it.

The literature review introduced the background and operation of IBCs and discussed the benefits and drawbacks for both the sending and hosting nations, including issues such as IBC sustainability. Because student affairs is concerned with developing and implementing out-of-class learning opportunities and the holistic development of students on campus, and since this research is concerned with out-of-class learning in American IBCs, the American model of student affairs was introduced. The history and development of student affairs and its preparation of diverse learners was discussed, including the profession's recent development in the Arabian Gulf. The literature survey indicated a gap in the literature in terms of the Qatari student voice, and unpublished academic material signalled the possibility of issues simmering beneath the surface that required exploration.

This is the first research about Qatari students in Qatar IBCs conducted by a Qatari researcher and hence may be the first that is likely not to be influenced by a colonial view – how the West views the East. Therefore, the literature on postcolonial theory was also studied, and a

postcolonial lens was used not only to review some of the existing literature, but also to view the findings. With an understanding of postcolonial theory, it can be seen that key authors assume a relationship of superiority of the West over the East in multiple areas, culture being one example. This separation of our world and their world, the notion of superior culture and failure to recognise other, distinctive differences, i.e. non-recognition, could cause some confusion within the conversation Qatari students have with themselves as they develop their identities (Taylor, 1997). In some cases, this may result in Qataris being silenced, or needing to create a third space where they are dislocated from their culture and perhaps become hybrid (Bhabha, 2004) and diaspora (in the sense of Hall (1994), which is related to cultural scattering, rather than geographical scattering). In the IBC environment, this manifests as Qatari participants being offered solutions for their cultural confusion or trials of adaptation. The solutions offered by some staff members or faculty are based on Western or perhaps personal standards of the right choice, and are often proposed without the participants' input.

The qualitative research study consists of one-on-one interviews with thirteen Qatari alumni representing three IBCs, and four non-Qatari student affairs staff members currently working in Qatar IBCs, representing two IBCs. Each interview is treated as a single case for analysis and themes were brought to the surface. Thereafter, themes were compared across the interviews. Preparation for data collection, from designing the questions and linking them to the aims, the process of obtaining approvals, conducting both pilots, and the actual interviews were discussed. The challenges faced by the researcher and how they were managed were also addressed. Data management was explained, from storing the data to transcribing and translation, and finding themes through the cycles of analysis. Limitations of the research are discussed, and measures were taken in regard to ethical issues, bias, trustworthiness and credibility, as well as authenticity, transferability, and dependability.

10. 2 Conclusions

The earlier concerns about simmering issues were indeed borne out by the interview data.

The findings of this research study are presented in three chapters. One concerns the staff and IBCs and the other two concern Qatari alumni participants. The findings suggest that while some adjustment is made by IBCs, there is still a need for improvement. This finding related

to IBC effort is in accord with some of the findings of other literature, such as Dumbre (2013) and Karam (2018). Moreover, it was found that the relationship between the IBCs and other bodies that govern their practices in Qatar had a significant bearing on how they approached making adaptations. These bodies are the main campus in the sending nation, peer IBCs or local institutions, and other stakeholders like the hosting nation and accreditation bodies. A model helping to identify the nature of these relationships was presented to aid in understanding the complicated dynamic within which IBCs function.

The first chapter discussing the Qatari alumni data showed that family is a prominent factor in establishing the participants' understanding of social norms and their culture and religion. However, the most important thing about this recognition is that this factor and other, perhaps less significant ones, create an environment where there are individual differences between the Qataris, which tend not to be recognised in the thinking of IBCs. Examples of other factors are their pre-university education experience and whether that was mixed-gender or single-gender. All of these factors shape each student's individual understanding of boundaries and expectations in their interactions with the other gender. A multi-layer spectrum of commitment model was presented to help IBC staff to identify the factors that might affect the individual student view, and to see how those factors are present on a spectrum of acceptability. This model will aid staff-members from outside Qatar to move beyond the often-present concept of simply 'other' to a much more nuanced approach to working with Qatari students.

It was found that while Qatari students do acknowledge and appreciate the efforts made by their IBCs to make adjustments, they are nevertheless likely to go through some challenges in relation to their distinctive differences in their cultural and religious approaches, which in turn cause non-inclusivity in their educational experiences at the IBCs. The research confirmed the notion developed during the literature survey that Qatari participants faced some challenges in voicing their distinctive differences, and concludes that the way in which the Qataris are being listened to is an area needing improvement. It was shown that Qatari participants went through hard decisions when managing family upbringing and the IBCs' offering, as they strove to adjust. Some were confused as between their culture and what is being offered, some detest what does not conform with their culture and religion, and some accept things willingly, hesitantly, or on some occasions unwillingly, when they find themselves in a situation over which they have no control. For these students, all of these decisions were made with their main goal in mind, which is to graduate from their IBCs. Some participants felt that they were being acclimated or perhaps changed.

While some of the findings confirm previous literature findings (e.g. Bakken (2013) and Rehal (2013)), this study, with its postcolonial approach and the perspective of a Qatari researcher, brings a different view and understanding from what is currently available in the literature. A significant tool to emerge from these findings is the combination lock model that identifies areas affecting students' decision-making in relation to participation in out-of-class activities, and shows how they intersect with each other. This model allows staff to be better informed in assessing the factors they need to take into account when designing inclusive activities.

The limitations of the study are recognised. As the researcher, my personal bias may have influenced the discussion of the data (Bloor & Wood, 2006). These limitations are acknowledged and discussed in detail in Chapter 5. While as a case study it may have limited generalisability, this project can shed light on the Qatari students' experience in Qatar IBCs. In addition, the development of the models provides more generally applicable tools for those looking at a similar demographic outside of Qatar.

10.3 Contribution and directions for future research

The research findings presented in Chapters 7, 8 and 9 shed light on multiple elements that can contribute to the literature on exporting and importing higher education into distinctive cultural environments, and provide a base and ideas for future research.

In Chapter 7, I discussed the work experience of staff and how this might make them attractive as employees for their IBCs. Future research can explore qualified professionals working in Qatar IBCs and the professional development required for working in such a context. The dynamic of IBCs is also discussed, making efforts to meet the expectations of the host nation stakeholders, and also making an effort to keep the IBCs' standards for its brand and accreditation. Future research can explore the room for improvement noted in these areas, such as what might be written into IBCs' processes and policies, and what kind of expertise relevant to this field can be cultivated to facilitate such creation and writing. A large step has been taken in this study to refine the understanding of inclusivity for Qataris. It provides ideas about better guidance for professionals working with Qataris in IBCs, and can also be extrapolated to the establishment of IBCs in similar nations.

Future research can investigate:

- what criteria constitute the qualities of student affairs/IBC staff to best support Qatari students
- how IBCs can develop policies based on studies that specifically target the development and inclusion of the indigenous Qataris and how those policies can be documented and standardised for standard implementation
- how the agreement between Qatar and IBCs can be best monitored and guided for mutual benefit.

Future research can also build on the work here about broader policy, such as Qatar Foundation's and IBCs' leadership in relation to defining boundaries, flexibility, and understanding expectations both in terms of education delivery and cultural sensitivities. Future research can also explore ways in which an IBC can be adjusted to fit its local host culture without affecting its accreditation and brand, and the type of education that the stakeholders are seeking. Future research can help with understanding the balance of what to localise and what to globalise, and with defining the expectations of both the host nation and the sending nation. Future research might provide new perspectives by using different theoretical frameworks, such as feminism. Another approach for future research might be, for example, to test the full spectrum of student experience through undertaking a quantitative survey using the qualitative findings of this research as a basis.

In Chapter 8, the findings reveal the importance of family and how its influence within the Qatari culture shapes the participants, and in turn how their understanding of this shapes their decision-making and their choices. Future research can explore how to use this strong bond between families and students to enhance their educational experience. How can the family tradition and culture and the IBCs intersect for the best interests of the students? As pointed out in this study, there are implications for students attending IBCs and their families and culture, and future research can explore this impact.

An important contribution of this study is the recognition of Qatari individual differences, and this report adds to the theoretical base by introducing the concept of a spectrum of commitment with different commitment levels, rather than the term 'conservative' widely used in the literature to describe Qataris. Qatar today provides options for a range of layers on the spectrum of commitment. This study recommends that Qataris themselves should decide of their own free will what changes they can embrace and what part of their culture they want to preserve. These choices should not to be imposed by anyone else. Future research can build on this and

explore and add different items to the spectrum of commitment, further refining the understanding of the mainstream position for those items and exploring where individual students are positioned in relation to the mainstream. Future research in this area could be informed by questions such as:

- What are the layers on the spectrum of layers, and how do Qataris make their choices within that spectrum of layers?
- What do Qataris want to preserve in their culture, and what are they interested in embracing? How is that decision being made?
- What is the best model for a safe, welcoming, and respectful environment that will allow Qataris' different distinctive culture and voices to reach and be listened to by policy-makers and implementers?

An additional possible direction for future research may be further analysis of the factors that shape the choices people make in positioning themselves. This study provided an exploration of various reasons participants give for their IBCs choices process; future research can potentially incorporate these perceptions into a tool to help prospective students make informed decisions.

In Chapter 9, the findings explored Qatari students making their choices while being sensitive to their culture. Two concepts surfaced as particularly important: *alsiter* and mixed-gender interaction. The possibility of including these in the spectrum of commitment model in Chapter 8 was discussed. Mixed-gender interaction also brought attention to the differences that Qatari students can have in their pre-university experiences. This provides the basis for future research to explore ways of enhancing the Qatari students' ability to adjust to such new environments and perhaps find an appropriate model for Qatari mixed-gender interaction which details appropriate expectations for both genders. The most important part of this chapter is the discussion of Qatari student inclusivity, and the combination lock model as a starting point for IBC professionals designing inclusive out-of-class activities for Qatari students. Future research can test the concept of the model for its applicability and further develop it to enhance Qatari student inclusivity. The model can be tested for its transferability with the same population, a similar demographic population, or other cultures, to explore the applicability and transferability in those circumstances.

In conclusion, the efforts made by the Qatar Foundation and the IBCs in Qatar are groundbreaking efforts; they pioneered the establishment of IBCs in Qatar. Similarly, the alumni

interviewed were pioneers in experiencing IBCs in Qatar. Many positive acknowledgements were offered by the Qatari participants and the staff members, as both enjoyed their experiences, and found them enriching and positive for their lives in general. However, we are at the beginning of the journey, at least from the perspective of my study. In September 2019 during a live discussion with one of the ACPA's Commission for Global Dimensions of Student Development, Dr Gudrun Nyunt shared with the audience:

“I think as officers and as professionals at universities ... we might not know how to do study abroad, through a racial justice and decolonisation lens. Or how to work with international students in that way. But we need to start asking: how could we do it and try out different things?”

(Nyunt, 2019)

Through this researcher's timely, innovative approach to analysis using a postcolonial lens, this study sheds a different light on the experience of Qatari IBC students, and provides new ideas and tools for use in working towards this goal.

On the one side, this can help host nations understand the influence of their chosen IBCs and thus provide perspective on the process of negotiating arrangements and hosting IBCs. It also provides perspective on how IBCs align with the host mission and vision, including recognising items valued by the host nation along with their mission and vision. These may include sustainability of the host's valued distinctive cultural differences among their students – in Qatar, as expressed in QNV2030, “modernization around local culture and traditions” (General Secretariat for Development Planning, 2008, p. 4).

From the other side, this research will also help IBCs understand the complexity of establishing and operating in another country and culture, which in turn will help the sending nation and institutions to be better prepared for doing so. Through its findings and some of the practical tools and models provided, this study can help IBCs to support their indigenous students by providing a productive environment that is open to distinctive differences, resulting in better inclusivity. This has the potential to contribute to the success of the mission and vision of the institution through broadening its brand, creating sustainability, and playing a role in the development of the host nation such as Qatar, Arabian Gulf, and any other host nation with distinctive cultural differences.

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Glossary

Abaya or Abayah: Dress-shaped or like a robe open from front; from shoulder to ankle with long sleeves. Females wear it on top of their clothes. Made of light fabric, it comes in different colours and designs, although the majority are black. Can be called different names with different designs in neighbouring countries.

Alsiter: This Arabic word means 'modesty' and can encompass both dress and behaviour.

Burqa or Burka: A full-face covering with a slit for eyes and one-line divider in the middle. Can be different styles depending on country and culture.

CMU-Q: Carnegie Mellon University branch campus in Qatar.

Expat: Nationals of countries outside of Qatar who have moved to work and live in Qatar. Expats represent different nationalities, ethnic backgrounds, religions, and social economic statuses.

GCC or Gulf countries: Gulf countries are countries subscribed to the Gulf Corporation Council (GCC). There are six countries including: State of Qatar, Sultanate of Oman, State of Kuwait, Kingdom of Bahrain, United Arab Emirates and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. These six countries generally share, to some extent, language, religion, and culture but they also have their own distinctive differences. All of them have access to the Arabian Gulf, hence the name Gulf countries.

GU-Q: Georgetown University branch campus in Qatar.

HBKU: Hamad bin Khalifa University.

Hijab: A head scarf which covers the hair and is worn by females. Comes in different colours, usually matching the *abaya*'s colours. Can be called different names with different designs in neighbouring countries.

Holy month of Ramadan: This is a full month in the Islamic lunar calendar, which Muslims observe. The month moves approximately 11 days earlier every year compared with the Gregorian calendar. Observing Ramadan includes maintaining exemplary general behaviour in terms of self-discipline, increasing the number of prayers and Quran recitations, increasing charity such as giving away money, making efforts to do good deeds, and fasting. Fasting means abstaining from food

and water from dawn to dusk, remembering less fortunate people with less access to food and water.

IBC: International Branch Campus.

Iftar: This is the meal taken when Muslims break their fast at dusk. Culturally in Qatar, and most Muslim communities, Iftar takes the shape of a social meal where family members or friends get together, rather than just a meal. Government and private bodies have been seen in recent years to hold Iftar events for their employees as a social gathering once during the month of Ramadan.

LEED: Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design.

Niqab: Full-face covering with a slit for eyes without line divider in the middle. Can be different styles depending on country and culture.

NU-Q: Northwestern University branch campus in Qatar.

OBHE: Observatory on Borderless Higher Education.

Sealine: An area located approximately one-hour's drive south of Doha, considered a national park where sand dunes meet the Arabian Gulf sea. It is known for being a camping destination for locals, expats and tourists.

TAMU-Q: Texas A&M University branch campus in Qatar.

Thob or Thobe: White dress from shoulder to ankle, with long sleeves, made with light fabric. Is the male national dress in Qatar and the surrounding countries but can be called different names with slightly different designs.

Tribe: Qataris are generally a tribal people but there are also non-tribal people in Qatar who are referred to by their family name. Family names in Qatar can be either non-tribal or tribal. Tribe or family names can originate from a profession they practised in the past, a location they came from historically before living in Qatar, a specific person's name such as their great-grandfather, or a description applying to them historically. People subscribing to each tribe or family name could hold similar or different upbringings, values and experiences.

VCU-Q: Virginia Commonwealth University branch campus in Qatar.

WCMC-Q: Weill Cornell Medicine branch campus in Qatar.

Codes used in the quotes

The following codes are used in Chapters 7, 8, and 9 to represent the work done when transcribing and translating:

- *Italic* typing is translated from Arabic to English.
- Normal typing was originally spoken in English.
- Typing in **bold** is my own emphasis in the quotation.
- An underlined name is a pseudonym substituted for confidentiality.
- An ellipsis ... means that part of the quote has been taken out to shorten the quote and help the reader focus on the relevant part of the quote.
- Brackets are used to indicate an action which the participant did in the interview, such as [laugh]; for naming something mentioned earlier in the presented quote, to help the reader understand the context of quote; or where a word has been substituted for clarity but was not part of the original quote.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Blank question list

Alumni pilot 1 questions – were not used for the actual study:

- 1- Could you please talk about what you know about the university you studied at?
What did you want to get out of your experience? (expectations)
- 2- Could you please share with me how you enrolled at the university? Please start with how you heard about it until you were fully enrolled.
- 3- Could you tell me about your experience during the first month at the university?
- 4- What out-of-classroom activities did you take part in? What did you want to get out of your experience?
- 5- Throughout your experience, what factors distinguished you from your peers as a Muslim or Qatari? (Looking for what made the student stick out among others)
- 6- Could you share some stories of your experience during your college experience you think would be different if you were not Muslim or Qatari?
- 7- What do you think will be different if you were not Qatari or Muslim on that campus?
- 8- What efforts have you noticed from others to accommodate you as Qatari or Muslim student?
- 9- From your experience, what channels have you observed and experienced that allow students to express their voices or opinions?
- 10- Could you share some first-hand stories and experiences that make you feel that Qatari or Muslim students' voices are heard?
- 11- Could you share some first-hand stories and experiences that make you feel that Qatari or Muslim students' voices are not heard?
- 12- Being a Qatari or Muslim, what would you recommend doing to make your branch campus/Education City a better place for future Muslim and Qatari students?
- 13- What questions do you think I should have asked you?
- 14- Do you have anything to add?

Appendix 2. Alumni interview questions – used for pilot 2 and for the actual study

- 1- Why did you choose to come to this university?
 - Which other universities did you consider attending? What were the other options you explored?
- 2- Can you tell me what you know about student affairs?
 - Follow-up questions about their experiences of student affairs support during their studies
- 3- Can you give me three phrases that your closest friends would use to describe you to a stranger? What about describe you as a Qatari to a stranger?
- 4- Could you talk about your experience of adjusting to university life: Any support you needed and received and from whom?
- 5- Could you share with me aspects that distinguished you from your peers as Qatari?
- 6- Were there activities you could not take part in? (Why, gender, faith)
- 7- Can you tell me what student affairs activities you have used?
 - A- Why?
- 8- What efforts have you noticed from student affairs staff to accommodate you as a Qatari? Or Muslim?
- 9- What have you done to express your needs to student affairs staff?
- 10- Did student affairs influence your experience in either positive or negative ways? Tell me more.
- 11- What would you recommend doing to make your branch campus student affairs activities better suited to future students?
- 12- Do you have anything to add?

Appendix 3. Alumni information sheet and consent form



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Alumni Information Sheet and Consent Form

Branch Campuses Student Affairs: Student Experience and Implication

What is this study about?

This study has two parts. One part is to explore the experiences of alumni students of services provided by student affairs and the second part is to seek the views of those who work in student affairs about how they provide for Qatari students within their branch campuses.

Qatar Foundation was established to promote the development of Qataris as its highest priority. Education City's handpicked USA branch campuses sought as a means to achieve this development and to achieve Qatar National Vision 2030 by building a knowledge-based economy. The Student Affairs department in each branch campus plays an important role in this educational development. I am therefore keen to hear your views about your experiences and to learn from them.

Who is conducting this study?

My name is Mohammad S. Alkuwari. I am undertaking this study as part of my PhD degree at Moray House School of Education at the University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom. I am a Qatari national, hold a Master's degree in Student Affairs from the University of Kansas, USA and a Bachelor's degree in Education from Qatar University.

How is this related to you?

As an alumnus of one of the branch campuses chosen to be in the study, your experience is valuable to help me understand how Qatari students experience their

educational journey. Information you provide might also identify good practices to improve student affairs in an international setting.

Taking part in this research:

The participants will be able to choose the interview location. It can take place in one of Hamad bin Khalifa University's Student Centre meeting rooms or a meeting room at the participant's workplace.

The interview will be a maximum of one hour and a half long. A few questions are prepared to stay on the main research area but open to other topics related to student affairs experience. The interview can be in Arabic, English, or Arabic and English simultaneously upon the participant's preference.

Consent:

This study has obtained Ethical Approval from the Ethics Committee of Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh. Participating in this research is voluntary and you can withdraw from taking part before, during or even after the interview. Participants will receive a brief summary of the study upon completion of my degree.

Confidentiality:

I will keep notes and any digital voice recording made will be stored in a safe space with the researcher. Files on the researcher computer will be encrypted. Only the researcher (and supervisors) will have access to them. I will ensure that your name is not used and there will be anonymity. I will offer each participant an opportunity to select a pseudonym. I will shred the notes and recording will be deleted from the voice recording and from any transcript software and computer files three months after the completion of my degree.

Use of results:

The study findings will be available upon completion for a range of readers and stakeholders e.g. students, staff in the branch campuses and particularly in the student affairs departments.

If you have further questions, please email me at [Mohammad's University of Edinburgh email account]

If you **agree to take part of this study, please complete the form below and email back to me at:** [Mohammad's University of Edinburgh email account]

Name of Participant:

Email address:

Signature:

Date:

For further clarification, you can contact the research supervisors:

Dr Pete Allison FRGS

Head of the Graduate School of Education and Sport

Senior Lecturer Values and Experiential Learning

Sport, Physical Education and Health Sciences

University of Edinburgh

[Dr Allison University of Edinburgh email address]

Dr Rowena Arshad OBE

Head of Moray House School of Education

Co-Director of the Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland

Education, Community and Society

University of Edinburgh

[Dr Arshad University of Edinburgh email address]

Appendix 4. Staff question list used for the pilot and for the actual study

- 1- Would you please talk about what you know about the university you work at?
- 2- Can you please share with me what kind of students you work with – their backgrounds and demographics?
- 3- Some staff members tend to interact with students on a daily basis, some work with schools policies, procedures, and leading a team of professional staff or maybe something else. In your current role, can you describe to me your job and what you do?

If working with students (Level 1 staff):

- 4- Can you talk about out-of-classroom activities that you do?
- 5- Can you describe your experience of working with Qatari students taking part of out-of-classroom activities?

If working with university policies (Level 2 staff; also can be used for Level 1 staff):

- 6- Can you talk about what kind of policies, procedures, and directions to team you work with you think might have some influence on Qatari students?
- 7- Can you describe your experience implementing policies, procedures, and leading your team in terms of working with Qatari?
- 8- Can you share with me your story, how you ended up working at this university?
- 9- What made the university interested in you for this role?
- 10- Can you share with me your learning journey in working with Muslim and Arab students?
- 11- What shapes your practices, dictates your practice, as a professional in this field?
- 12- Can you share with me some stories of when you needed to customise practices to fit Muslim and Arab students?
- 13- Can you share with me what kind of channels/methods Arab and Muslim students can share their opinions and needs through and the process of finding feasible solutions? A story of first-hand experience of such students sharing their opinions and needs?
- 14- Can you describe your practice if you worked in another institution?
- 15- In your opinion, what things can be done to enhance Qatari student experience?
- 16- Anything to add?

Appendix 5. Staff information sheet and consent form



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Staff Information Sheet and Consent Form

Branch Campuses Student Affairs: Student Experience and Implication

What is this study about?

This study has two parts. One part is to explore the experiences of alumni students of services provided by student affairs and the second part is to seek the views of those who work in student affairs about how they provide for Qatari students within their branch campuses.

Qatar Foundation was established to promote the development of Qataris as its highest priority. Education City's handpicked USA branch campuses sought as a means to achieve this development and to achieve Qatar National Vision 2030 by building a knowledge-based economy. The Student Affairs department in each branch campus plays an important role in this educational development. I am therefore keen to hear your views about your experiences and to learn from them.

Who is conducting this study?

My name is Mohammad S. Alkuwari. I am undertaking this study as part of my PhD degree at Moray House School of Education at the University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom. I am a Qatari national, hold a Master's degree in Student Affairs from the University of Kansas, USA and a Bachelor's degree in Education from Qatar University.

How is this related to you?

As a staff member from one of the branch campuses chosen to be in the study, your experience is valuable for learning about the field and understanding how Qatari

students experience their educational journey. This is helpful to identify good practices of improvement and promote the profession in the international setting. This is also needed to improve the nation of Qatar and can shed light on improving other branch campuses in different countries.

Taking part in this research:

The participants will be able to choose the interview location. It can take place in one of Hamad bin Khalifa University's Student Centre meeting rooms or a meeting room at the participant's workplace. The interview will be a maximum of one hour and a half long. A few questions are prepared to stay on the main research area but open to other topics related to student affairs experience. The interview can be in Arabic, English, or Arabic and English simultaneously upon the participant's preference.

Consent:

This study has obtained Ethical Approval from the Ethics Committee of Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh. Participating in this research is voluntary and you can withdraw from taking part before, during or even after the interview. Participants will receive a brief summary of the study upon completion of my degree.

Confidentiality:

I will keep notes and any digital voice recording made will be stored in a safe space with the researcher. Files on the researcher computer will be encrypted. Only the researcher (and supervisors) will have access to them. I will ensure that your name is not used and there will be anonymity. I will offer each participant an opportunity to select a pseudonym. I will shred the notes and recording will be deleted from the voice recording and from any transcript software and computer files three months after the completion of my degree.

Use of results:

The study findings will be available upon completion for a range of readers and stakeholders e.g. students, staff in the branch campuses and particularly in the student affairs departments.

If you have further questions, please email me at [Mohammad's University of Edinburgh email account]

If you **agree to take part of this study, please complete the form below and email back to me at:** [Mohammad's University of Edinburgh email account]

Name of Participant:

Email address:

Signature:

Date:

For further clarification you can contact the research supervisors:

Dr Pete Allison FRGS

Head of the Graduate School of Education and Sport

Senior Lecturer Values and Experiential Learning

Sport, Physical Education and Health Sciences

University of Edinburgh

[Dr Allison University of Edinburgh email address]

Dr Rowena Arshad OBE

Head of Moray House School of Education

Co-Director of the Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland

Education, Community and Society

University of Edinburgh

[Dr Arshad University of Edinburgh email address]

Appendix 6. Qatar Ethical Approval



Date :June 22, 2016

Ethical approval Certificate

Dear Mr. Mohammad Al-Kuwari,

The letter serves as an ethical approval for the research project titled "Branch Campuses Student Affairs: Student Experience and Implication". The project is by Mr. Mohammad Al-Kuwari, for his Ph.D. 's project. The study consists of two parts. The first part is a survey to explore the experiences of alumni students of services provided by student affairs. The second part, via questionnaires/survey, is to seek the views of those who work in student affairs about how they provide for Qatari students within their branch campuses.

The surveys include collection of identifiable information, and therefore, it has been categorized as expedited review, category 7.

Please be informed that in accordance with MOPH basic policy, the regulations state that "research involving...interview procedures... (is exempt from this policy) unless (1) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subject can be identified directly or through identifiers linked to the subject and (2) disclosure of the human subject's responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation". Under conditions mentioned in (1) and (2), the proposal must be reviewed by an Institutional Review Board Committee .

If we can be of further assistance, please contact us at 974-4407-0363 or via email at IRB@moph.gov.qa

Sincerely,

Eman Sadoun
Manager, Research Division
Ministry of Public Health

Appendix 7. Email recruitment sent to alumni through HBKU alumni office

Dear HBKU Alumni

My name is Mohammad AL-Kuwari. I am a PhD degree candidate at Moray House School of Education at the University of Edinburgh, UK. My research is about Qatari male and female student experiences at their respective branch campuses as they journey through their Bachelor's programme. If you have graduated between 2013 - 2016 from any one of the following branch campuses, I would invite you to participate in the PhD research interview:

- [Valley IBC] at Qatar
- [Woods IBC] at Qatar
- [River IBC] at Qatar

You are invited to take part in the interview to learn about your valuable experiences. It is a one hour long interview, conducted by me at your choice of location; it can be your workplace or at the HBKU Student Centre. This interview is completely confidential and any identifiable information will be changed. For more details please find the Alumni Information Sheet attached.

Please contact me at my University of Edinburgh email [Mohammad's University of Edinburgh email address] to schedule the interview or to answer any question you have. If you are not interested in taking part of the interview but you still want to share something please feel free to email me or text me on my Qatari WhatsApp number [Mohammad's personal phone number]

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Mohammad AL-Kuwari, PhD Candidate – The University of Edinburgh

Appendix 8. Valley IBC approval to access staff

DIVISION OF RESEARCH
Human Research Protection Program



October 4, 2016

Mohammad Alkuwari
University of Edinburg

Dear Mr. Alkuwari,

We have reviewed your research study titled "Student Affairs on International Branch Campuses: Student Experiences, Cultural Exchange and Implications." We understand that the purpose of this research study is to explore international branch campuses in foreign countries and how they respond to the needs of indigenous students of that host country. You would like to recruit 2 participants who are staff at Student Affairs at [REDACTED]-Qatar. The information provided to the participants clearly indicates potential risks and benefits to participants along with the voluntary nature of the study. With this said, we authorize you to conduct your research at [REDACTED]-Qatar to interview two staff members as outlined in your protocol. If you have further questions regarding this authorization, please feel free to contact this office. Thanks for including [REDACTED] in your research endeavors.

Sincerely,



|

Appendix 9. Collection of demographic details about students

Name	
Nationality	
Gender	
Age when graduated	
Branch Campus graduated from	
Graduation Year	
Lived on campus	
<p>Enrolled directly at branch campus after high school?</p> <p>Explain</p> <p>Example: Academic Bridge Program, Community College, transferred from other university, took a break after high school, had a job?</p>	
Marital status while pursuing degree	
Disability would like to declare	
Meeting Date	
Meeting Time	
Meeting Location	

Appendix 10. Collection of demographic information about staff

Name	
Qatari or GCC national / non-Qatari or non-GCC national	
First language	
Language spoken	
Self-identified ethnic background	
Years in Qatar	
Years working in this branch campus	
Years living in GCC country (s) prior to Qatar	
Branch campus	

Appendix 11. Alumni interview details

Interview date	Interview location	Method of recruitment	Graduation year	Institution affiliated	Gender
June 2016	Qatar-Education City	In Person Approach at Graduation Day 2016	2016	Valley IBC	Male
June 2016	Qatar-Education City	In Person Approach at Graduation Day 2016	2016	Woods IBC	Male
July 2016	Qatar-Education City	HBKU Alumni First Email	2009	Valley IBC	Male
July 2016	Qatar-Work place	HBKU Alumni First Email	2016	Valley IBC	Female
July 2016	Qatar-Work place	HBKU Alumni First Email	2011	Woods IBC	Female
July 2016	Qatar-Education City	HBKU Alumni First Email	2015	Valley IBC	Male
July 2016	Qatar-Education City	HBKU Alumni First Email	2015	Woods IBC	Female
July 2016	Qatar-Education City	HBKU Alumni First Email	2015	Woods IBC	Male
Aug 2016	Qatar-Work place	HBKU Alumni First Email	2013	Valley IBC	Female
Sep 2016	Qatar-Education City	HBKU Alumni Second Email	2015	Woods IBC	Female
December 2016	Qatar-Education City	HBKU Alumni Third Email to River IBC Alumni	2015	River IBC	Male
January 2017	Qatar-Education City	HBKU Alumni Third Email to	2015	River IBC	Female

		River IBC Alumni			
January 2017	Qatar- Education City	HBKU Alumni Third Email to River IBC Alumni	2015	River IBC	Female

Appendix 12. Details for staff interviewed

Institution affiliated	Interview date	Recruited through	Interview location	Position level
River IBC	Sep 2016	River IBC Channelled email	Qatar – River IBC	Entry
River IBC	Sep 2016	River IBC Channelled email	Qatar – River IBC	Managerial
Valley IBC	December 2016	Valley IBC Channelled email	Qatar – Valley IBC	Entry
Valley IBC	January 2017	Valley IBC Channelled email	Qatar – Student Centre	Managerial
Woods IBC	-	-	-	-
Woods IBC	-	-	-	-