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Admissions, Enrollment & Pre-College Preparation
A Foundation Year Program In The Arabian Gulf

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In fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Leadership and Learning in Organizations

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ABBREVIATIONS

ASCA	American School Counselor Association
BACP	British Association for Counseling and Psychotherapy
EC	Education City
E-MCH	Early and Middle College High School
EFNE	Education For A New Era
EMI	English as the Medium of Instruction
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
IACAC	International Association for College Admission Counseling
IBC	International Branch Campus
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
MSA	Modern Standard Arabic
NACAC	National Association for College Admission Counseling
QF	Qatar Foundation
QP	Qatar Petroleum
QU	Qatar University
SEC	Supreme Education Council
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UFC	University Foundation College
2030	Qatar National Vision 2030

GLOSSARY

Arabization: The national strategy of promoting Arabic language skills at the secondary and post-secondary levels in response to prior English language initiatives.

Community School: Also referred to interchangeably as ‘private’, it is a form of school that offers curriculum from a country other than Qatar, generally for the children of a specific group of expatriates living in the country. Schools are typically sponsored by the respective embassy affiliated with that group or collection of groups (e.g. American School of Doha for United States and/or Doha College for United Kingdom).

Diglossia: A term used to describe the existence in Arab countries of two distinct linguistic varieties of the Arabic language: a high variety (H) and a low variety (L). Speakers of Arabic use the H variety, known as Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), in formal communication. L variety is used in daily communication and/or as their native language. The local Qatari colloquial Arabic is similar to Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.

Education City: A planned educational development sponsored by the Qatar Foundation that houses six American universities, dormitories, student services and other major recreational facilities like an equestrian center and World Cup soccer stadium.

Expatriate(s): Also referred to interchangeably as ‘expat’ or ‘resident’, a person who lives outside of their native country. In relation to The State of Qatar, this pertains to person(s) who live permanently in the country with sponsored residency (by an individual, corporation or government entity).

House of Al Thani: The ruling family of Qatar is a Sunni Muslim dynasty that has linkages to tribes living in present-day Saudi Arabia and has ruled the peninsula continuously since the 18th century. The royal family is much smaller than other families in the region and numbers less than 10,000 members.

Independent School: A publicly funded but privately-run school established through education reform. The first independent schools were opened in Fall 2004 and they have since been renamed ‘government schools’.

International Mindedness: A term used describe the influence international schools have on adolescent local students in terms of individual and collective identity, career aspiration, and type of university they attend. It is measured by items relating to awareness of other cultures, cultural tolerance, and universal affiliation.

Majlis: Often referred to as a ‘place of sitting’ in Arabic, this place serves as a venue for gatherings of administrative social or religious purposes in the Arabian Gulf countries.

Qatarization: The national strategy of developing a competent Qatari national workforce of 50 percent through education, training, and support.

TIMELINE OF EDUCATION IN QATAR

- 1948** – First public school for boys
- 1956** – First public school for girls
- 1956** – Ministry of Education established
- 1976** – Qatar University, the first public university, is created as a college of education
- 1997** – Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar is built as the first of six American branch campuses at a sprawling new multiversity campus dubbed ‘Education City’
- 2001** – RAND Corporation commissioned to develop a comprehensive report and plan of action for education in the country
- 2002** – Supreme Education Council (SEC) created by Amiri decree #37
- 2003** – Higher Education Institute is built to promote opportunities for higher education and administer scholarships
- 2004** – Independent (government) Schools created
- 2004** – Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP) developed to serve as a start-up incubator for enterprises, research and development.
- 2006** – Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF) created to provide competitive research funding for faculty
- 2006** – National Professional Standards for School Teachers and Leaders launched
- 2007** – Qatar Office of Registration, Licensing, and Accreditation created
- 2008** – Qatar National Vision 2030 is adopted to outline how Qatar will use resources to move towards a knowledge-based economy.
- 2012** – Arabization reforms enacted
- 2012** – Sidra Medical and Research Center established as a \$7.9 billion and 412-bed teaching hospital in partnership with Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar
- 2017** – Government Ministries reduce the number of approved higher education institutions for approved scholarships by 50% including all U.S. community colleges
- 2020** – Global Studies Institute announced to provide online government approved undergraduate and graduate degrees

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the last five years, a new postsecondary institution named University Foundation College (UFC) commenced operations in the Middle Eastern State of Qatar. Similar to pathway programs in the United States catering to international students, UFC provides academic preparation for high school graduates prior to university study including understanding lectures, completing assignments, and building social relationships due to linguistic and cultural barriers (Elturki et al., 2019). With the State of Qatar seeing a significant drop of -26% in the enrollment of students in the United States according to the most recent *2019 Open Doors Report*, knowing more about the impact on student enrollment at preparatory programs is particularly important to the field of international admissions and recruitment. The program has struggled to meet aggressive enrollment targets and the inability to attract students who fit the institutional profile is perceived by leadership as an existential threat to the organization's core business. This study draws on previous research in the region regarding identity, determinants of university choice, university preparation, cultural and social capital, and staff development theory to apply realistic, actionable, and inexpensive strategies to increase student enrollment. To investigate the challenges facing UFC, I propose the following study questions:

1.1 What drives enrollment decisions at university academic preparation (bridge, foundation pathway, etc.) programs?

- a) What is the relationship between high school type and student enrollment?
- b) What is the relationship between socio-economic privilege and student enrollment?
- c) What is the relationship between identity and student enrollment?
- d) Is the decision to attend a foundation year program one of last resort?

1.2 After accounting for student variables of any type, what institutional factors most influence the enrollment of new students?

- a) What factors most influence staff development and retention?
- b) What differences exist between UFC and other more established institutions in Qatar?

In the fall of 2018, I began the first steps of conducting a small-scale qualitative study design on admissions for UFC. 99% of the student population was international, non-native English speakers, and persons of color. Data collected from students was found to be dissimilar from interviews conducted with staff, internal human resources policies had stymied organizational growth, and external events had significantly impacted enrollment. The Early College Model (E-MCH) is generally applicable to foundation year programs with students from low income backgrounds, but student composition is vastly different in Qatar. Hofstede's six cultural dimensions are helpful in analysis of the country context. Although the effectiveness of the cultural dimensions framework for Qatar is not necessarily agreed upon, others maintain that the framework can be affective in identifying aspects of student behavior that would have ordinarily gone unnoticed (Prowse & Goddard, 2010). This study found the emergence of identity as a key takeaway from interviews with staff and students. The identification of three interconnected identities for students, staff and programs assist decision makers by providing a new form of analysis to focus on critical factors impacting student enrollment.

After identifying the linkages of enrollment decisions to factors that influence staff development and retention, I provide recommendations of policy and practice specifically targeting staff and student improvement. In response to the challenges faced in student enrollment, I recommend the following policies of practice:

1.3 Student Improvement Recommendations

- Build an orientation and leadership short course upon entry;
- Design a student ambassador program for prospective students;
- Form a parent training program to increase awareness in the community;
- Establish an alumni association, calendar year events, and annual reunion.

1.4 Staff Improvement Recommendations

- Develop localized professional development schedule to incorporate region-specific culture and language;
- Implement staff standards and participation in professional associations;
- Create annual admissions and recruitment strategy;
- Extend HR policy revisions, understanding expectations and clarity regarding compensation.

This study supports a significant finding that is generalizable for other institutions in the region: understanding regional context, language and identity is critical for improving student enrollment and ensuring a diverse student body. Institutional policies aimed at cultivating staff development opportunities may be helpful in fostering a community that will more effectively support enrolling students.

2. CONTEXT & PROBLEM

2.1 Introduction

For those pursuing the study of language, race, religion, identity, and nationalism, any one of the *Khaleeji* Arab States offer a fascinating case study. The smaller principalities are recently established, relatively small, and homogenous with clearly identified non-citizens. The focus of this study is on a new institution of higher learning located in the State of Qatar. Qatar's distance from regional conflict and religious homogeneity of its citizens, has created an environment of relative harmony with lack of dissidents, ideological flexibility and diplomacy (Kamrava, 2009). It is a country dominated by expatriates (also interchangeably referred to as "residents" or "non-Qataris") and has been an intersection of languages and cultures for centuries. After gaining independence from the United Kingdom in 1971, 98,000 of Qatar's population of 158,000 were migrant workers with South Asian workers outnumbering Arabs by three to one (Witte, 2015). Over the last twenty years, Qatar has seen tremendous investment in education due to ample oil and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) reserves. Like its neighbors, Qatar has sought to address the demand of English in higher education and the workplace through a series of systemic policy changes and educational investments to counter this demographic unevenness. The discussion of whether or not to use Arabic or another international language like English as the medium of instruction (EMI) is not limited to Qatar as several other countries in the region (e.g. Jordan, Lebanon and UAE) have implemented at the primary, secondary and higher education levels (Ellili-Cherif & Alkhateeb, 2015).

The sociocultural context is further complicated due to exceptional aspects of the Arabic language. People in various Arabic speaking nations have dissimilar words and differences in sounds of letters, pronunciation, word endings, gender markers, and everyday words. This is attributed to *Diglossia*, which is a linguistic situation that began with the spread of Islam. When Arabic met other languages, and non-Arabs began to speak the language, a situation evolved where people used two or more types of Arabic in the same country (Al Suwaiyan, 2018). This is evident when Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is used to watch the news or write business communication, but not in everyday jargon. In a nation where there are so many nationalities, EMI has evolved as the common practice of communication, but is frequently taught by clusters of nationalities for different segments of the population. Egyptians, Palestinians, Jordanians, and other Arab nationals are hired to teach at K-12 schools and many university instructors are from North America, United Kingdom and Australia (Syed, 2003).

2.2 Problem of Practice

In post-secondary education, a phenomenon emerging in the region is that of foundation year programs. They can be stand-alone for-profit enterprises or affiliated with existing brick and mortar universities. In the United Kingdom and the United States, providing intensive English programs to recruit international students from non-native English background is growing (Hossler & Bontrager, 2015). In the neighboring Sultanate of Oman, private higher education institutions have grown to meet the demands of high school graduates for higher education that public universities have not been able to meet market demands (Ismail & Al Shanfari, 2014). Despite the emergence of many preparatory one-year academic programs in countries located in the Arabian Gulf specifically dedicated to training students for study in the West (e.g. Canada, United Kingdom, United States), and more specifically, members of the Gulf Cooperation

Council (GCC), organizations have struggled to meet enrollment targets and matriculate students to their partner colleges and universities worldwide. What is frequently perceived as a local problem, quickly turns into a global student persistence issue as Universities enroll fewer international students and lose critical tuition revenue. Failing to successfully enroll students in foundation year programs also affects crucial multicultural initiatives at partner universities. Today this is increasingly important as the global higher education market, which is valued at \$65.4 Billion in 2019 and projected to reach \$117.95 Billion, is under threat from negative economic consequences and travel restrictions affecting the mobility of international students (Symonds, 2020).

2.3 Regional Context

There has been a substantial increase in higher education institutions in the Arabian Gulf region, commonly referred to as the “GCC” for the regional Gulf Cooperation Council economic and security cooperative group. In the United Arab Emirates (UAE) alone over the last 20 years, the country has seen a small group of 5 institutions in 1990 grow to 71 in 2013 (UAE MOHESR, 2014). The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is similar, with only King Saud University in 1957, and quickly making substantial capital investments to establish 168 more universities by 1998. Despite its abundance of both oil and LNG, the State of Qatar, a small peninsula jutting out of the Arabian Peninsula, started just as modestly with one university in 1973 and 150 students. During the years of 1998 and 2017, 17 new higher education institutions opened (Crist & Powell, 2017). With the expansion of local universities and creation of International Branch Campuses (IBCs), an emerging industry of preparatory programs has emerged to assist students in the academic, social and cultural adjustment to Western higher education. In 2016, there were approximately 180,000 students enrolled in nearly 250 international campuses around the globe (Redden, 2016). As new organizations choose the target market and mode of entry (e.g. full IBC, dual enrollment agreements, foundation year programs), three major factors: ownership advantages, location advantages and internationalization advantages all impact performance of the organization and compel managers to negotiate a wide range of obstacles (Shams & Huisman, 2012).

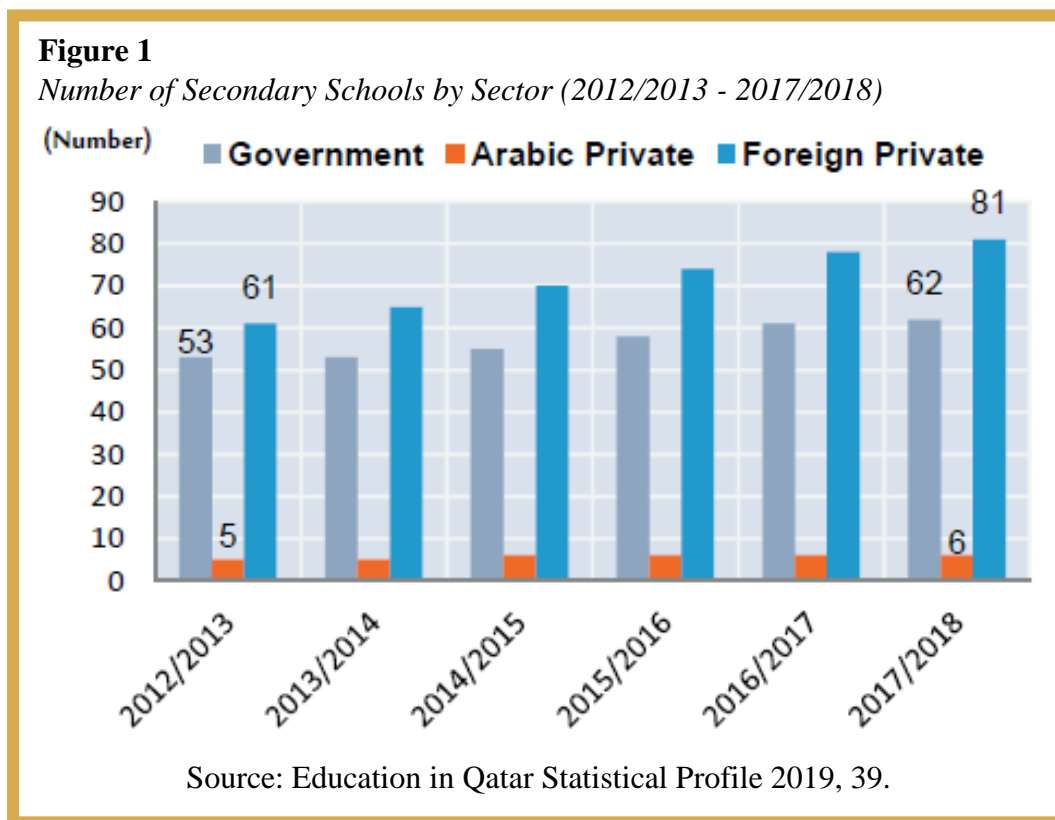
2.4 Country Background

The State of Qatar has emerged from a history of small pearling and fishing settlements in the 19th century, to that of a major global powerbroker ruled by the *Al Thani* family with immense fossil fuel reserves. Its people descend from migratory tribes of the Arabian Peninsula including *Bedouins*, *Hadar* which have roots in the regions of Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, and those of African origins (Hillman & Eibenschutz, 2018). Until the middle of the 20th century, education consisted of the *Kuttab*, known locally as “traveling educators”, focused on Arabic language and religious readings from the Quran (Nasser, 2017). With proceeds from the state oil company Qatar Petroleum (QP), schools began to be established the public and private sector turned its attention towards investment in education.

In 2002, the government commissioned the *Rand Corporation* to launch an ambitious educational reform dubbed Education for a New Era (EFNE). The goal of the plan was to create standard-based curricula in basic subjects (Arabic, English, Mathematics, and Sciences) and

promote EMI in mathematics, sciences, and technology (Brewer et al., 2007). The reform immediately drew criticism and the Supreme Educational Council (SEC) issued a subsequent decree reinstating Arabic as the language of instruction in primary and secondary schools and targeted majors at Qatar University (QU) (Mustafawi & Shaaban, 2019). This is referred to locally as the *Arabization* of the educational system.

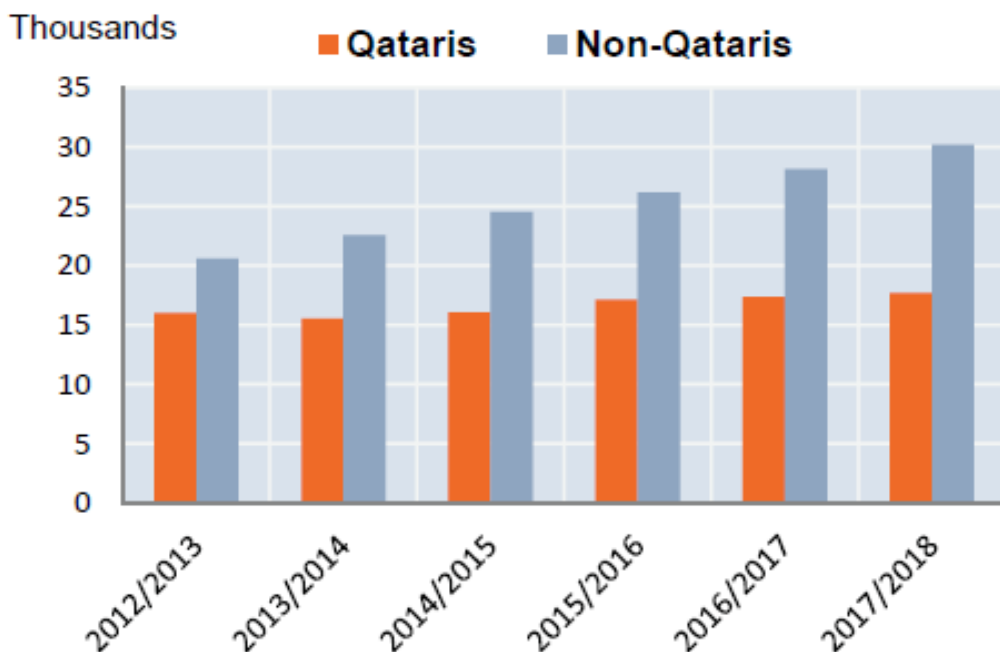
In 2008, the government announced an ambitious policy referred to as the Qatar National Vision 2030 (2030) to outline how the country will use resources to move towards a knowledge-based economy. The last five years have represented tremendous growth in the construction of new K-12 schools (Figure 1). They are broadly classified in three categories: government, Arabic private, and foreign private. I define international students for the purposes of this study as any individual who has completed high school, is not a citizen, resident or green-card holder of the United States of America and interested in pursuing a bachelor's degree. Alumni (Graduates) of the program are the unit of analysis for the purposes of this study.



Gender continues to be a significant issue and driving force in education for Qatar. Since the country's inception, education has been segregated from kindergarten through university in government funded institutions (Ibnouf et. al, 2014).

The investment in new schools is directly linked to a population boom in school-aged children from those who have been born in the country and those who accompany their parents who relocate to Qatar for employment purposes (Figure 2).

Figure 2
Number of students (000) by Nationality (2012/2013 – 2017/2018)



Source: Education in Qatar Statistical Profile 2019, 39.

The geographically small principality has transformed itself into an educational hub with the founding of Education City (EC). This 12 km² development on the outskirts of the capital Doha is home to eight branch campuses of highly ranked international universities specializing in their very best academic disciplines like Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service, Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism and Cornell University’s elite Weil Cornell Medical College. Five main drivers have been significant in the development of the campus: region-specific tradition to import “best practice”, regional and global competition, local education reform and policies, national liberalization initiatives, and globalization, internationalization of education, and transnational education (Khodr, 2011).

The country is also trying to greatly increase the advancement of science in a region where most neighboring countries spend less than a tenth of the average spending level, or 0.15% of gross domestic product on research (Frank, 2006). With the increase in dedicated funding to create homegrown universities capable of education a workforce in the twenty-first century, ministries of education and government officials have turned their attention to preparation for university study.

2.5 Site Description

University Foundation College is located in Doha, Qatar. The institution is a member of the United Kingdom based consortium known as NCUK. As with all post-secondary programs in the country, it must be approved to operate by the SEC. My point of contact(s) were a director (or equivalent) and department manager (or equivalent) of a unit tasked with the recruitment and

admission of students. The organization and the subjects are of interest to the field of student affairs, admissions and international student services given unique religious and cultural concerns as well as a gap in the literature. UFC commenced operations in Doha with the specific goal of helping residents and citizens of the country in embarking on the necessary academic preparation for admission to three-year university programs in the United Kingdom or four-year university programs in the United States. Examples of a few of the well-known universities students can matriculate to are the University of Birmingham, University of Manchester, University of Kent and the University of Sheffield. After enrolling in the program and taking courses, students will apply with the United Kingdom based UCAS application system (Table 1).

Table 1

UCAS Applicants - State of Qatar (Declared Country of Domicile)

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
# of Students	120	130	150	180	270	230	270	310	290	310

Source: January Deadline Analysis: Monday 15 January 2018. UCAS Analysis and Research, Published on Monday 5 February 2018 at www.ucas.com.

The organization is fully staffed with a group of multi-lingual expatriates of varying education (from bachelors to doctorate) and operates out of a one building state-of-the-art new campus in a central location in the capital city of Doha. The students are a mix between a majority of Qatari citizens and local expats who have spent the majority of their lives in Qatar. A significant majority of the students have attended both Qatari public and foreign private schools which is a representative sample of the overall population. The method of instruction is English, and the overwhelming majority of the students speak English as their second or third language.

Figure 3

Photograph of The University Foundation College campus on Al Jazira Al Arabiya street in Doha, Qatar (2020).



Source: <https://ufc.edu.qa/>

UFC is not your typical community college, bridge program or post-graduate ESL immersion experience. A large portion of the students enroll because they are unfamiliar with the western university application process - but they have immense political and socio-economic resources. A significant segment of the student population is eligible to be “sponsored” by the government for undergraduate study inside the country or outside. Students in the overall population typically did not take advantage of the

opportunities offered at their high school, have low English testing scores (IELTS/TOEFL), or are simply not interested in taking the SAT/ACT to gain admission to a university in the United States.

Entry requirements are based on students having finished the equivalent of high school/GED which is referred to as the General Secondary Education Certificate (*Shahadat Al-Thanaawayya Al-Aama*) with successful completion of an overall average of 50%. Students are expected to score the minimum equivalent of a 5.0 on the IELTS or 35 on the OTEFL iBT. In addition, as is most frequently the case, the most qualified male students in the larger national high student population would have obtained sponsorship from a government ministry to likely attend university in the United States or Canada and female students would have most likely obtained admission to one of the six American universities in Education City or the larger public QU.

2.6 Student Population

Student interest in fifth- or six-year plan for college in the United States are typically those seeking dual degree programs (e.g. BA/JD, BS/MD) or pursuing another advanced degree. In the GCC variations of the foundation program are both common and now mandated by ministries of education. In 2017, there were 30 public universities in KSA, and all required students to complete the foundation year program in order to enter the four-year specialized fields dependent on high school academic performance (Dakhiel, 2017). As admissions offices at universities around the globe cope with an increasingly interconnected world where students are likely to consider attending university outside of their native country, Qatar is a bit of an outlier having seen a significant drop in the enrollment of students in the United States according to the most recent *2019 Open Doors Report* (Table 2). This is likely attributed to the 2017 government decision to reduce the number of approved universities for family funded and government scholarships (Education USA, 2018).

Table 2

Qatari Citizens Studying In The United States of America

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
# of Students	979	994	1,191	1,252	1,443	1,420	1,127
Source: 2018 Open Doors Report (published by IIE, funded by the U.S. Department of State)							

Further complicating the situation for staff members is that high school preparation is widely acknowledged as being inadequate for modern Western (or Eastern) higher education study (Zyed, 2003). Knowing that students are willing to stay home in order to attend college, and more specific evidence about the factors and variables impacting student enrollment at preparatory programs is particularly important to the global field of international admissions and recruitment.

3. STUDY QUESTIONS

3.1 What drives enrollment decisions at university academic preparation (bridge, foundation pathway, etc.) programs?

- a) What is the relationship between high school type and student enrollment?
- b) What is the relationship between socio-economic privilege and student enrollment?
- c) What is the relationship between identity and student enrollment?
- d) Is the decision to attend a foundation year program one of last resort?

3.2 After accounting for student variables of any type, what institutional factors most influence the enrollment of new students?

- a) What factors most influence staff development and retention?
- b) What differences exist between UFC and other more established institutions in Qatar?

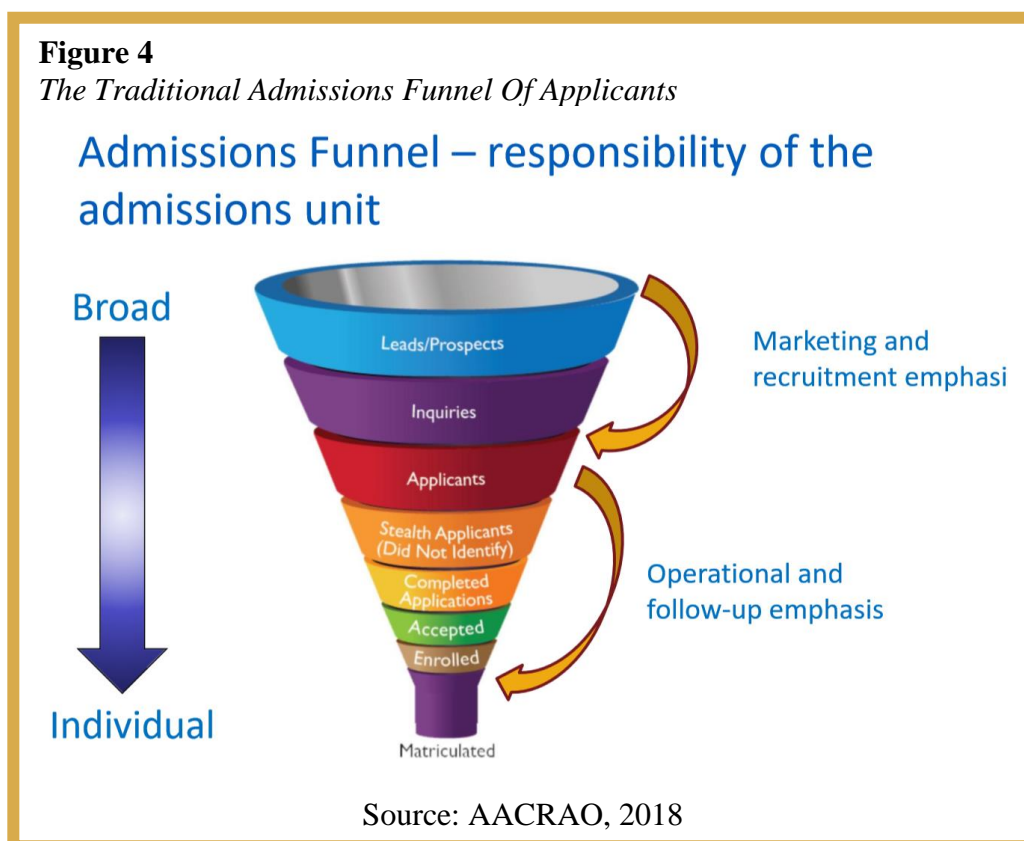
4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR STUDY QUESTIONS

There is a significant gap in the knowledge of admissions, enrollment and academic preparation provided in for-profit foundation year programs across the globe. A survey of previous studies in the region, revealed that there have been five similar studies conducted in The State of Qatar. They have focused on determinants of college choice selection (Mustafa et al., 2018), student persistence in higher education (Khalifa et al., 2016), influence of international schools on perception of identity (Kanan & Baker, 2006), globalization's effect on local culture (Elshenawy, 2017), and student development at an EMI university (Pessoa et al., 2014). This study serves to provide critical information about factors that influence student choice to attend the program as well as possible influences on their experience once they were enrolled.

4.1 Recruitment & Admissions (Prior To Enrollment)

Of great debate around the in higher education circles is how to build the ideal formula to attract a more diverse and more accomplished student population. International students are big business. For example, Australia's reliance on the revenue stream as part of its export market now accounts for AUS \$22 billion in 2016 (up from 17% the previous

year) which has led to the growth of foundation year programs (Katkins, 2017). Much of the responsibility in attracting students is shouldered by admissions and/or recruitment personnel (Figure 4). Traditional universities rely on standardized examinations like the SAT or ACT to help measure indicators of academic success at the next level. Foundation year programs are left with inconsistent high school transcripts which can vary from school to school and standardized English proficiency tests IELTS, TOEFL or Duolingo. Other attempts to investigate whether certain admissions activities such as interviews have proved inconclusive. A higher education institution in Scotland studied this across six cohorts and concluded that generally the average



score for interviews is not a predictor of success in the program but could help student services staff in better allocating their resources (Donaldson et al., 2010).

4.2 Student Satisfaction (Retention)

One study conducted at Washington State University in the United States, concluded that sociocultural experiences focused on the collaboration between domestic and international students, offered once students are enrolled in the program, are a more positive influence on student success in the program (Elturki et al., 2019). Further evidence to support that the student experience ultimately shapes retention and future enrollment is also evident in the UAE where a study at a branch campus of a British University found that teaching quality and variables directly associated with the students' program of study had the most impact on student satisfaction (Fernandes et al., 2013). Another study at Yarmouk University in Jordan, suggests that student cultural intelligence is high in their Arabic foundation year program and that no statistical differences exist about gender (Al-Jarrah, 2016).

Exploring the case of neighboring KSA sheds further light on foundation year students from a similar culture, religion and language background as well as the sometimes-arbitrary factors staff members should consider. By examining social identity theory of groups, one learns individuals are categorized in order to understand and identify them. Second, that individuals adopt the relevant category that best describes them. Third the groups start comparing and competing with other groups (Habbash & Idapalapati, 2016). Perceptions and satisfaction with the program are particularly crucial to success. At Al Baha University, researchers observed that variables like the distance between the university and housing made a statistically significant difference in perception of student services (Alghamdi, 2015). Studying male and female students at Yanbu University, located in the refinery town that shares the same name, saw that there are significant differences based on gender and geographical location pertaining to values and attributes of an effective foundation year program (McMullen, 2014). Nearly a 10-hour drive north at Qassim University near Riyadh, researchers found that reductions in class size, weekly quizzes, and extracurricular activities restore student's motivation thereby increasing learning and improving working relationships between students and faculty (Daif-Allah & Alsamani, 2013).

4.3 Professional Development & Standards

Understanding cultural nuances of students, the organization and the region is only part of the solution for Middle East based admissions officers. Research suggests that staff and faculty at foundation year programs are not receiving the support they require. At King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah, researchers found that faculty perceive the institution is placing its needs ahead of employees (Mansory, 2019). Improvement can be seen in areas of teacher monitoring, evaluation, workloads and compensation issues. Professional development offered one possible solution where culture could be incorporated to address needs. At Taif University next to the border with Yemen, researchers found evidence to support the belief that differences in employee perceptions of learner-centered instruction was linked to qualifications and years of experience (Tawalbeh, 2015). Despite the inconclusive nature of existing literature and studies regarding foundation year programs, there is a definite dearth of studies focused on the

admission of students. It would be beneficial to those in the profession to examine their perceptions of what is working and pursue areas of opportunity in order to help organizations that employ and enroll a diverse community.

5. STUDY DESIGN

5.1 Instrumentation & Sampling Procedure

The study consisted of two phases (Table 3). Initially, I conducted needs analysis group meetings with the two primary staff contacts during the fall semester in 2018. After identifying areas of concern consistent with the research questions, I subsequently conducted separate semi-structured ethnographic staff interviews approximately one month later. All staff interviews were conducted at their place of work (on-campus) and in their offices or meeting rooms to ensure comfort of the participants. The second phase of the study began in the spring semester of 2020 with semi-structured interviews with recent graduates. Over the course of four weeks one-on-one semi-structured inductive interviews utilizing snowball sampling and egocentric network sampling of alumni from the program. Snowball sampling is a strategy for generating a sample because the ethnographer's initial contacts will be used to generate additional contacts, and as the ethnography proceeds, the sample will enlarge (O'Reilly, 2012).

Table 3

Data collection instruments and timeline

Data Collection Instrument	Timeline	Date
Program Needs Analysis Meeting	Fall Semester	Sep-18
Staff Interviews	Fall Semester	Oct-18
Student Interviews	Spring Semester	May-20

Due to the current health conditions and local travel restrictions in the country of Qatar, the interviews with conducted over the phone and via *Zoom*. Recruitment of willing participants was a challenge and contributed to a smaller than expected sample size.

By focusing on alumni, I avoided conflict of interests that could have been present with currently enrolled students as well as student privacy concerns in the United Kingdom, United States and Qatar. I utilized a realist ethnography approach that reported objective data in a measure style uncontaminated by personal bias, political goals and judgement (Miller & Salkind, 159). To better understand the awareness of the broader student network, it is helpful to map out network members and strive to unearth the egocentric and shadow networks (Health et.al , 2009).

Sample Egocentric Network	
Ego 1:	Alumni leader studying at a university in Qatar
Alter 1:	Friend who is also an alumnus studying in the UK
Alter 2:	Friend of cousin who is also an alumnus studying at a different university

Shadow Network
Intimidated
Parent Influence
Language Barrier(s)

Recording was an issue with participants given privacy, political and cultural concerns in the country. For interviews conducted via *Zoom*, female subjects were not expected to turn the camera on during the interview. Interview sheets served as a roadmap for the interviewer to ensure that most questions are answered as well as documentation and notes from the interview sessions.

5.2 Participants

The target sample size was 30 participants all over 18 years old. Recruitment of participants was more problematic than expected. Despite receiving contact information from peers, not all alumni were willing to speak. Five participants elected to be interviewed across several nationalities (Table 4).

Table 4
Distribution of sample according to type of school & gender

Participant	Gender	Nationality	Native language	Major	HS language of instruction
1	F	Jordan	Arabic	BA	English
2	M	Jordan	Arabic	EN	English
3	F	Lebanon	Arabic	BA	English
4	F	Palestine	Arabic	OT	English
5	M	Qatar	Arabic	EN	English

Note: BA = Business Administration, EN = Engineering, OT = Occupational Therapy

Gender of the sample was balanced. Nationality was a concern as the sample consisted of less Qatari nationals than the overall population (20% vs. 46%). A notable item of this sample is that all participants attended a private high school with English as the primary language of instruction.

5.3 Materials Collection & Analysis

During the initial program needs analysis meetings, staff had furnished documentation regarding internal policies, memos and university placement data (e.g. where students go after they finish the program).

Examples of Documentation:

1. University placement data (2017-18)
2. Internal Consulting Report (Competitor SWOT Analysis)

The legacy of the dominant Arab and/or Qatari culture in the school system is linked to the historical development of the local economy on the Arab peninsula.

Most pre-petroleum education in Qatar occurred within the family and the lineage group. Pearl-farmers would teach their sons how to find the perfect oysters and sail the *dhow*. Mothers and grandmothers would teach girls the essential skills of survival. They would also serve as *mutaween*, traditional teachers and enforcers of moral order. In fact the memory of traditional teaching is not so distant. Both male and female *mutaween*, unrecognized and uncontrolled by the state, still exist in Qatar, even if the state has appropriated most formal education functions (Fromherz, 2012: 153).

As indicated by Fromherz, traditional norms, views and education is changing but still a fabric of Qatari society. The need for an understanding by local families to take part in the immersion of other cultures is a necessity in order to prepare students and parents for the modernizing educational and professional climate in the country.

Another key factor impacting learning in local communities is the impact of broad K-12 design and implementation of educational reform that took place in the early 2000s when the ruling Al Thani family approached the U.S. based Rand Corporation to help overhaul and provide multiple recommendation(s) for modernization. The reforms set about the stage for different schools catering to quite dissimilar communities to emerge.

In addition to the publically funded government schools, there are three types of private schools in Qatar. One type, called ‘community schools’, is geared toward the children of expatriates in Qatar (including Indians, Pakistanis, British, and Americans); schools of this type are sponsored by the embassy for the relevant country. The second type, called ‘international’ schools, follows a foreign curriculum but is not under embassy sponsorship and often enrolls the children of both Qataris and expatriates. The third type, known as ‘private Arabic’ schools, follows an Arabic curriculum and is geared to Qataris and other Arabs who want to follow the traditional Qatari curriculum in a private school setting (Brewer, 2007: 21).

The establishment of an educational system that semi-subsidized private community schools focused on specific culture(s) and/or languages(s) often reinforces segregated communities and lack of learning between groups. The interesting case with Qatar, is that many private community schools still fight to obtain 30-50% of their students from the local citizen population. Therefore, there are indeed existing cases of knowledge transfer, intercultural learning and community engagement.

In such an expatriate filled environment where families transition in/and out of a community on a regular basis, there is a notion that first families seek to secure an educational setting as close to their home country as possible, and second, that international teachers fulfill

the minimum time requirement as per their contract and then are off to the next adventure in a different country. As Fillmore has suggested, there is a necessary component to the equation of combining schooling, language and students and that is the notion of community action.

Finally, teachers should help parents understand that the only way ethnic languages and cultures can survive in societies like the United States is through community action. Immigrant communities have historically been involved in supporting heritage language and cultural programs. This requires community action, and such action can be taken only by members of the immigrant community. Community action is necessary if the family's language and culture are to survive the process of becoming Americans (Fillmore, 2000: 209).

The theme of community action was lacking in Qatar prior to 2017 (implementation of the political and trade embargo of the country by four larger neighbors) and that the major external pressure placed on the tiny country forced local residents and citizens to learn more about one another and engage on a daily basis – much more frequently than had been done in the past (Mitchell & Allagui, 2019). This prompted resident(s) to reflect on their host nation and citizens to examine why residents stayed in the country and exhibited such signs of patriotism.

Materials Sample 1 – “Student University Placement & Destination 2017-18”

The student placement process at the site is a comprehensive operational endeavor that seeks to assist students in completing the British university application process (UCAS) and is defined by three distinct processes: Pre-Application, Application and Post-Application. Students are provided individual and group counseling sessions as well as individual support sessions on preparing personal statements and reviewing drafts. Initial observations of staff perceptions have shown that language, gesture and interactions between the students and counseling staff vary greatly based upon nationality. The students are perceived as viewing one another as having more power than the staff members and local Qatari students foresee the staff as being there to do most of the “heavy lifting” with regard to the application process. In this scenario, power is distributed in an uneven manner benefitting certain students and staff have not done a great deal to address this tilted relationship (in all fairness there has only been one year of placement thus far).

The Multicultural paradigm as introduced by Ladson-Billings and Tate, can be quite helpful in identifying the disparities between local Qatari students and students, staff and/or faculty of other nationalities. I believe a comparison can be made between their analysis of whites and students of color and the situation we have mentioned above:

The second meta-proposition that we use to support the proposition that race continues to be significant in explaining inequality in the United States is that class- and gender-based explanations are not powerful enough to explain all of the difference (or variance) in school experience and performance. Although both class and gender can and do intersect race, as stand-alone variables they do not explain all of the educational achievement differences between whites and students of color. Indeed there is some evidence to suggest that even when we hold constant for class, middle-class African-American students do not achieve at the same level as their white counterparts (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 51).

As in the example from the United States, there are additional variables besides class and gender to help example the educational performance of different groups. At this site, the complex labor and immigration laws that govern the country have reinforced a socially constructed set of beliefs that places certain nationalities ahead of others and creates a social ladder where titles, degrees and hard work are deemed less important. Non-Qatari students, staff and faculty have little incentive to resist their position and frequently take up the path of least resistance in order to secure their continued success (either placement at university or employment). This negative impact on learning has immense potential to significantly impact participants at the site in the long term.

Materials Sample 2 – “Academic Bridge Programme and the NCUK International Foundation Year: A Comparison By Learning Outcomes”

The second sample of discourse collected at the site is that of an internal memo that is driving decision making at the highest levels. This document stresses the comparative advantage of UFC versus their primary competitor. Instead of providing a roadmap for staff and administration to propose strategy and assign KPIs, it has created a situation where the department is positioned in an adversarial role with senior management because of a perceived lack of performance despite having what is a documented superior academic product. When observing individuals describe this situation, their choice of language was guarded and conciliatory in an effort to minimize the impact on their day to time responsibilities. The perceived pressure that the document has created negatively impacts participants learning in respect to gaining more knowledge of the local high school market. Instead of focusing on determining when and where to recruit high caliber students who are a better fit for the program, participants are left to make sure that their daily activities align with that of the expectations of senior management.

I believe that pursuing a strategy of integrating Micro-, Meso-, and Marco-Level Concerns by Martin, could be a way for the department to better understand their target audience and thereby better address expectations by senior management (Martin, 2012). Through integrating socialization-identity and racialization frameworks, they would be able to address to fundamental questions:

1. What does it mean to be a learner and doer of college foundation courses in the context of being Qatari?

And

2. What does it mean to be Qatari in the contexts of learning and doing college foundation courses?

Once these hypothetical questions can be answered and analyzed, staff will be better equipped to interact with their primary audience (e.g. current and prospective students). Staff will also move past quantitative concerns that serve to only address short term enrollment. By understanding what motivates students and families and improve messaging (electronic and print), they will be

able to more productively support opportunities for growing the applicant pool and thereby increasing the number of potential students.

6. STUDY QUESTION 1 ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

What drives enrollment decisions at university academic preparation (bridge, foundation pathway, etc.) programs?

- What is the relationship between high school type and student enrollment?
- What is the relationship between socio-economic privilege and student enrollment?
- What is the relationship between identity and student enrollment?
- Is the decision to attend a foundation year program one of last resort?

6.1 High School Type and Student Enrollment

As citizens of one of the world’s wealthiest nations per capita, young Qatari people in Doha can be generalized as privileged. They live in both the richest and one of the safest countries to live in around the globe. In addition to the country being benign from violent and petty crime, it is viewed by residents and visitors as having a unique way of retaining ancient customs and yet still embracing modernity. One author described the scene as, “downtown, you notice Qatari women in their black *abaya* smoking *shisha* and their hair flowing out from underneath their veils...People carry cell phones and wear jeans and baseball caps without feeling that their culture is threatened because of the strong sense of identity stemming from family and religion” (Elshenawy, 2017). The balance of these ancient customs represents a challenge for many young people. They are faced with experiences from all that globalization has provided but at the same time dependent on family and traditional tenets that can be described as, “tribal values also suggest that individual success translates to tribal success and that students may be motivated to succeed and their successes may be seen by others, thereby placing them in their group’s esteem or collective. Many Qatari students are motivated by their social locus: they are more likely to seek an education to have the esteem and, consequently, the privilege they seek from their group” (Kalifa, 2016).

Table 5

Distribution of school type in sample vs. population

School Type	N	n
Independent (Government)	49%	0%
International	51%	100%
Total	100%	100%

Learning more about the student participants high school background was important in understanding their academic preparation prior to applying (Table 5). Other studies have noted that students in foundation year programs cite the lack of advising as a critical detractor in the overall experience (Khalifa et al., 2015).

6.2 Socio-economic Privilege and Student Enrollment

Most of the information gleaned from the literature, focuses on the student experience with teachers once enrolled in respective program(s). In addition, much of the research has been focused on the United Kingdom, United States, New Zealand and Australia with sparse coverage of the Middle East and North Africa (Holden, 2018). If one approaches admissions from the enrollment management vantage point of a complete lifecycle from prospect to matriculant, and that happy alumni are the best future recruiters for the program, investigating the student experience is critical for creating an environment where students complete the program and successfully matriculate to four year universities. Gaining cultural intelligence about the region, language and culture is imperative to reduce onsite tension, improve overall learning and better equip staff members with insight about their prospective and current students in order to better shape admissions and recruitment strategies as well as ensure students who start the program ultimately complete their course of study (Table 6).

Table 6
Personal & Program Codes

	Adequate high school preparation	Unfamiliar college application process	Parents Attended University	Siblings Attended University	Non-native English speaker	English difficulty	Academic difficulty	Faculty Support	Admin Support	Happy with facilities	Friends w/ classmates	Still in contact w/classmates
1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
2	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
3	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1
4	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
5	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1

Note: 0 = no, 1 = Yes

In the examination of the literature, authors tend to lump male and females together when discussing the effects of globalization and interactions with western thought and culture. Increasingly, parents and family members are referred to by the students to help shepherd them through this unfamiliar territory. As one author summarized, “Both males and females cite parental advice and religious values as important drivers, and they see their parents mostly as facilitators in helping them get the job or career that they desire. 56% of females report societal views as being helpful in their job and career aspirations, suggesting their traditional views about the role of women in Qatar may be changing” (Constant & Nadareishvili, 2008: xi). However, the labor market is changing as more and more women are now finishing high school and undergraduate studies before moving on to careers in both the private and public sector – all taboo short a short time ago. Interviews

100%
Student participants
who believed they had
a positive experience
attending the program

with student participants confirmed that the majority had a very positive experience and were proud of attending the program (Table 8).

Table 8

Indicators of student satisfaction with their experience at a foundation year program in the State of Qatar

Indicator	% students agreeing with the statement
I had a positive experience attending the program	100%
I'm proud of the academic work I accomplished	80%
The program helped me attend my top university and/or location	40%
The investment in time and money was worth it	80%
I recommend the program to friends	80%

6.3 Identity and Student Enrollment

My initial observations were confirmed that a major hurdle for learning was that there was a sizeable portion of the students who are just “going through the motions”. These individuals are enrolled because of the program’s access to U.K. universities and have little perceived incentive to work on academic fundamentals outside of qualifying for the direct entry into the U.K. universities. At the site, student motivation and morale are perceived to be quite low. A major area of concern for administrators is how to increase these two factors when students enter the program, sustain during the year of enrollment and improve/maintain the appropriate academic performance necessary to matriculate to their interested U.K. university (Table 9). In later interviews with staff members, I learned that, in their opinions, barriers to community learning was greatly impacted by decisions from leadership. When viewing the students and their time in the program, it would be beneficial to refer to “the individual’s trajectory of learning can be considered in terms of his or her engagement with the practices of the community as he or she moves from peripheral to more central participation” (Greeno & Gresalfi, 2008: 171). The notion of increasing student participation in the community of learning and/or activity system will be instrumental in combatting the negative behavior that some students exhibit.

Table 9

Common responses to interview questions by participant category type

Interviewees	Responses
Category: Students	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Although I liked high school, it did not prepare me for university.2. Both I and my parents were unfamiliar with the university application process.3. The program more than adequately helped me meet the minimum requirements for my intended university.4. I enjoyed my experience - both academically and socially.5. I am proud of having attended the program and recommend it to friends and family.

6.4 External Pressure On Learning

Another barrier to learning is external pressure faced by a 2018 law that compels recent Qatari male high school graduates to enter mandatory military service for approximately one year. Information was scarce when the new law was announced and all programs and universities in the country were on pins and needles over the summer waiting to see what the ramifications would be. Unfortunately, this severely impacted the new class at the UFC resulting in a 50% drop in student enrollment for the new year. In addition to the operational and budgetary ramifications of an event of this magnitude, the reduction in students could also have a tangible and immediate impact on student learning dynamics as there will be less students in the classroom and they will be majority female.

6.5 Defining Power & Privilege

After phone and in-person interviews, interactions at the site supported my initial observations. The role of power and privilege was seen through two lenses. The first example was seen through the student level by examining interactions between local Qatari citizens, expats and front-line teachers. The second aspect was visualized through examining the interactions between staff and senior management. I was able to find two data samples of discourse in the form of formal memos that are driving organizational decision making. The first materials sample which was the aforementioned, “Student University Placement & Destination 2017-18”, consisted of flow charts and operational processes dictating how teachers and staff members should interact with students throughout the course of their 1-2 years in the foundation program. In addition to the operational component of the document, there is also a reporting aspect which identifies nationality and university destination.

The second materials sample in “Academic Bridge Programme and the NCUK International Foundation Year: A Comparison By Learning Outcomes”, was an internal report that was produced at the senior level to help guide staff and management in assessing their primary competitor. To further investigate these two forms of discourse and positioning at the site, I focused on three key readings which I believe contribute to unearthing the nuances:

cultural stereotypes as defined by Van Langenhove and Harre, the multicultural paradigm by Ladson-Billings and Tate, and integrating Micro-, Meso-, and Macro-level concerns by Martin.

Power, privilege, and positing at UFC are really no different than the broader society in the state of Qatar. Students frequently reinforce stereotypes between one another, staff and faculty. I find it beneficial to refer to Van Langenhove and Harre and their discussion of stereotypes as social constructs in order to understand positioning between the different groups: “By locating cultural stereotypes within a certain moral order and by acknowledging that our society can be conceived as a complex collection of moral orders (some independent of each other, some partially overlapping) that can be specific for a sub-group or general for almost the whole society, it becomes clear that there are always exist different social representations of the same objects” (Van Langenhove & Harre, 1995). The acknowledgement of a socially constructed set of beliefs that drive how participants view power and privilege helps the researcher understand the abnormal positing of students in a Gulf country. There is both a written and unwritten hierarchy between nationalities that drive student interactions between each other and their teachers. Certain groups believe they are beyond reproach and can “skate through the courses” while others are perceived as hard working but possess lesser financial means or come from a less privileged background.

6.6 Increasing Opportunities of Learning

Clothing (*Thobe, Abaya*), language (Arabic, English) and gender have historically been symbols of participant power, privilege and positioning in the Gulf region. They are important variables for us as researchers to understand when investigating onsite inter-student, staff and faculty behavior. As Patrick and Turner have noted, the transfer of students learning-related processes across cultural-educational contexts can be vital for the research in investigating learning (Turner & Patrick, 2008). Their use of Rogoff’s three planes: personal, interpersonal and community-level are one approach that we could use moving forward to explain the difficulties facing participants in the two aforementioned scenarios.

I contend that a socially constructed set of stereotypes and multicultural paradigms have significantly impacted power and privilege at the site. Perhaps, as Martin has stated, one area of opportunity moving forward is to address the staff and teachers who are interacting with students: “Many of these new teachers know very little about the history of the community, and they struggle to engage the children they teach” (Martin, 2012: 55). Replacing teachers or staffers who do not bend over backwards to assist students appears like a relatively easy fix as it could be completed internally and would involve simply rotating the underperforming faculty out based on surveys or some other review process. This does not address long-term inherent issues that will continue to plague the program. Another and much harder observation to address is that of how socially constructed stereotypes can be neutralized in this educational system in order to level positioning and improve participant learning. I recommend that the site implement two academic offerings to help productively support opportunities to learn. First, with the introduction of a student leadership course focused on life skills and student responsibilities at the university level, students would be obligated to improve their attitudes and dedication to the program. Second, I argue that an introduction to university life in the United Kingdom focused on the traditional coeducational residential model of universities and utilizing case studies of

program alumni to illustrate successful paths to UK universities, would sharpen participants focus and improve motivate to learn.

7. STUDY QUESTION 2 ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

After accounting for student variables of any type, what institutional factors most influence the enrollment of new students?

- a) What factors most influence staff development and retention?
- b) What differences exist between UFC and other more established institutions in Qatar?

7.1 Staff Development and Retention Findings

Learning about the site changed dramatically when speaking with staff members. I had initially thought that the site could focus on student learning in order to cultivate a more productive environment, however, after rereading the authors, it has become apparent that viewing Hand and Gresalfi's lens of joint accomplishment could be very beneficial: "joint accomplishment between individuals and their interactions with norms, practices, cultural tools, relationships and institutional and cultural contexts" (Hand & Gresalfi, 2015: 190). Viewing the site as a collective effort between students, staff and faculty helped to visualize that there are multiple issues at play with the various discourses that exist in the admissions practices the site uses (Table 7).

Table 7

Common responses to interview questions by participant category type

Interviewees	Responses
Category:	
Staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. We are not recruiting the "right" students (e.g. academically).2. We have tried different types of recruitment activities with limited success.3. Collaboration exists within departments but not between departments.4. I do not have the support I need from the institution.5. I am concerned about my position and the future of the program.

I selected the staff members at the site because of professional affiliation but also since they held different positions in the campus hierarchy and worked in the same division. Both originate from different backgrounds, education and social strata. I sought a small but representative sample of the overall staff population which was predominately local, from the MENA region or the United Kingdom.

Staff Interview Participant #1

- Position: Director (or equivalent)
- Education: Graduate level
- Work Experience: Academic appointments at major universities, extensive business and sales experience throughout the MENA region
- Motivation: concerned, worried about not being able to meet KPIs, lack of support from senior management
- Identity: discussed themes about gender, nationality, and (mis)perceptions in the region

Staff Interview Participant #2

- Position: Manager (or equivalent)
- Education: Terminal degree
- Work Experience: secondary and post-secondary teaching experience
- Motivation: concerned about perceptions of others and how the team is doing
- Identity: discussed themes about nationality, native language and ethnicity

“
We want to be a center of excellence and send students to Ivies, but we are stuck with people who don't know what courses to take.

-Staff Participant #1

“

During the interview when the individual recently offered me a new position...I politely declined. I perceived the individual's response as inflammatory and chauvinistic.

-Staff Participant #2

Discussions About Distribution Of Power

- Extensive discussion about top-down reporting
- Perceived power in the hands of 1-2 individuals
- Members of the department felt powerless in decision-making process
- No tangible methods to document feedback or assess activities
- Lack of meetings, consensus and coalition building
- Weaponizing “Gender”

Discussions About Motivation & Identity

- Motivation centered more on management & how it negatively impacted day-to-day motivation
- Participants indicated a general desire to be motivated & create a successful operation
- Compensation and benefits were rarely discussed
- Participants viewed their identity in the form of their career path and/or educational background
- Identity discussion was concentrated around feelings about gender & less about Race/Nationality

7.2 Peer Institution Analysis and Findings

The experiences of these individuals challenged my preliminary observations about the site because the challenges they face pose a real threat to what Hand and Gresalfi describe as “the dynamic interplay of individuals and resources” (Hand & Gresalfi, 190). Although the individuals themselves identify through their position, background or nationality, the department, and more important the program, fail to collectively establish a joint accomplishment of identity through their various activities.

As we continue march towards the end of the second decade of the 21st century, the rush to open international offshore sites for US universities has started to wane. With the construction of Duke Kunshan University, NYU Abu Dhabi and Yale NUS, the last significant survey of the industry estimated that the number of branch campuses around the globe sits at approximately 162 campuses as of 2007 (Altbach, 2015). Despite the lapse in new construction and/or expansion of fresh campuses, an important issue remains for existing campuses. For those living and working in the Middle East and North Africa where social, cultural, economic and religious factors play a huge role in everyday norms and behaviors, how does an institution reconcile its home campus reputation and academic excellence with a completely foreign culture and thought process?

Numerous scholars in the region, including Bollag, have stated in discussing the specific case of Education City the six American universities operating under the umbrella of the Qatar Foundation (QF), “another issue for the Gulf countries is the liberalizing social impact such ventures may have on their very conservative societies. The American institutions provide the same western-style education at their Education City branches as at their home campuses. Classes are co-educational, for instance, and students are expected to have strong opinions and to voice them” (Bollag, 2016). The question of how to prepare new staff and faculty for the cultural shock and immersion they will face in their new work environment and provide the tools necessary for a successful translation is an emerging threat to the successful melding of existing thought, culture and quality from the main campus for each respective university.

A challenge to success of the IBC is that of perception and cultural immersion. Shams and Husiman have described these as isomorphic pressures where, initially institutions are obliged to conform to institutions of the host countries, and second, universities are required to maintain the home campus identity across borders (Shams & Huisman, 2014). Several studies have examined the role of culture of memory and identity creation and/or student perceptions of branch campuses in comparison to the main campus, specifically at the high school level in the UAE (Wilkins & Huisman, 2013), undergraduate level in Malaysia (Chee et. al, 2016) and Turkey (Sahin & Mebert, 2010), at the graduate level in Canada (McCarthy et al., 2010) and regarding faculty located on regional campuses in the United States (Poling et al., 2009). However, I argue that there is a need to conduct research regarding campus staff and faculty at global sites due to dynamic cultural issues that are not prevalent in Canada or the U.S. There is an immediate need to investigate the issue of new cultural absorption of new hires at many universities in the region in order to improve campus morale and bridge the historical divide between predominately North American staff, global faculty and an increasingly regional (e.g. Middle East and North Africa) student body.

8. CONSOLIDATED DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Although fifth year programs in the United States are limited to a handful of preparatory boarding schools (e.g. U.S. Naval and U.S. Military Academy(s) Prep Schools NAPS/MAPS), dual enrollment has been a proven model for successful post-secondary enrollment. It is recognized for multiple purposes: advanced academic options for high-achieving students, preparing a skilled workforce for the 21st century, and increasing college access (Barnett & Stamm, 2010).

8.1 Early College High School Model

In the early 2000s, *The Early College High School Initiative* emerged as a dual enrollment for credit option sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation with support from Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Ford Foundation, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The programs were established as small and autonomous schools where students can achieve up to two years college credit while finishing their high school education. In 2004, there were 46 E-MCH schools with 6,533 students. Fast forward to 2014, and courses for dual enrollment credit were offered in every state and the District of Columbia (Zinth, 2014). Comparisons can be drawn between E-MCH schools with programs similar to UFC, however, student composition is vastly different. At E-MCH schools, students are overwhelmingly low income, rural, and take the courses in order to reduce college costs. At UFC, students are high income, urban/suburban, and enroll in the program due to lack of academic preparation and/or familiarity with university application processes. Evidence to support this differentiation has been explored by researchers. One study found that dual enrollment programs positively impact college degree attainment for low-income students while holding weaker effects for peers from affluent backgrounds (An, 2013). One potential area with applicability to the situation in Qatar is that of an E-MCH model in Michigan. The fifth-year program, which is embedded within high schools, allows participating students to earn a high school diploma and a significant amount of college credits through students graduating in five years instead of four (Barnett et al., 2015). With the announcement of SUNY Adirondack offering online credit courses at the new Durham School for Girls, a new option could potentially be introduced for credit dual enrollment programs in Qatar (Doolittle, 2020).

8.2 Hofstede's Five Dimensions

Investigating Hofstede's six dimensions: individualism vs. collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, femininity vs. masculinity, short vs. long term orientation, indulgence vs. restraint in terms of Arab culture and the socioeconomic situation of Qatar further helps raise questions surrounding the challenges at UFC. According to researchers, various religious and heritage aspects have a significant impact on the organizational environment and/or business cultures (Obeidat et al., 2012). Different managerial theories must be applied that are different than those of main campuses versus their branch campuses located in the region. As GCC populations are similar in traditions, culture, religion, local language and political systems,

countries like Qatar are seen as homogenous and different than other Arab populations (At-Twajri & Al-Muhaiza, 1996).

Qatar shares several of the characteristics described in Hofstede's findings. It is a collectivist society with a high score on the masculinity index, but scholars argue that generalized findings to all Arab countries are not applicable as Arab nations vary in their similarity with regards to GDP, disposable income, social life, government intervention, educational institutions, level of literacy and economic infrastructure. (AlKailani et al., 2012). The dimensions of power distance and long-term orientation have been shown in one study with students from Qatar to have significant differences with Hofstede's original country values (Eringa et al., 2015). Although the effectiveness of the cultural dimensions framework for Qatar is not necessarily agreed upon, others maintain that the framework can be affective in identifying aspects of student behavior that would have ordinarily gone unnoticed (Prowse & Goddard, 2010). Another possible limitation is that there could be language differences between the students and the professors. One study of graduate students in Sudan, recognized that misunderstandings between students and teachers could be linguistic rather than cultural (Cronje, 2011). Despite competing information from scholars, Hofstede cultural classifications can validate the importance of a cultural perspective in explaining employee support of change initiatives (Aldulaimi, 2012).

8.3 Three Interconnected Identities

During review of the relevant literature and data collection, I have uncovered the emergence of three interconnected identities between students, faculty/staff and programs. First, the existence of a distinctive *Student* identity (Qatari vs. expat, male vs. female, public government vs. foreign private school) influences university decisions. The concept of international mindedness is a specific aspect of students growing up in the Arabian Gulf. Two explanations have been developed by researchers to explain this phenomenon. First, Qataris have great exposure to other cultures daily during their personal and professional lives. Second, the majority of Qataris travel widely during their vacations further exposing them to a vast array of cultures (Baker & Kanan, 2005). Differences have also been explored between those who attended foreign private schools versus those who attended public government schools and the results showed that students differed in the way they perceive themselves and their career choices (Baker & Kanan, 2006).

Student perceptions of their learning environment are a critical component to retention and graduation. While this has not been extensively explored in Qatar, researchers have explored this topic in neighboring UAE. One study refutes the premise that students are unhappy with IBCs in relation to quality, political or ideological issues (Wilkins et al., 2012). Another describes a scenario where teaching quality, academic support, student services, facilities, management of the program, and assessments associated with the specific course of study had the most recognizable impact on student loyalty and satisfaction (Fernandes et al., 2012).

Second, the existence of a **Faculty/Staff** identity (MENA experience, first international assignment, Arab vs. Non-Arab, White vs. Non-White, nationality, religion, gender) shapes the organizational culture and impacts the teaching and learning experience. Staffing branch campuses and/or remote locations of existing universities represent tangible barriers to success. The impact on teaching has been directly linked to attracting and retaining an international cadre of staff able to deliver quality teaching (Wood & Salt, 2018). Composition of faculty and teachers at the high school level have tremendous trickle-down effect on universities in the country. In public government schools, 72% of teachers are expatriates and 99% of principals are Qatari nationals (Romanowski et al., 2019).

Third, an organizational identity I refer to as **Program** (attached to a university or stand alone, integrated with major, location, homogenous population, country regulations, sponsored vs. non-sponsored) greatly influences the success of the institution. Level and proficiency of English also has a substantial impact on learning strategies. Research has shown that more English language learning strategies embedded into regular classroom activities should be pursued at the university level (Al-Buainain, 2010). Cost of the program has not been cited in the available literature as a barrier to student success.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS OF PROGRAM POLICY & PRACTICE

Staff Improvement Recommendations

1. Localized professional development schedule to incorporate region-specific culture & language
2. Implementation of staff standards & participation in professional associations
3. Creation of annual approved admissions & recruitment strategy
4. HR policy revisions, understanding expectations & clarity regarding compensation

9.1 Localized Professional Development

I propose to offer a solution that implements the three concepts of scaffolding (local technology), spacing (assigning an Arabic peer mentor) and dual coding (linking images with new cultural terms). As Bonk and Kim have asserted, offering scaffolding as a teaching method is an effective way to help improve a person's interest in a task or problem that would not have mastered when *Extending Sociocultural Theory to Adult Learning* (Smith et al., 2013). The experiment will last twelve months and consist of two categories of subjects, staff and faculty. The sample size will be relatively small because of the availability of new hires. The site typically will only have 5-10 new staff and faculty every year.

Phase 1 – Pre-Employment: All new hires will be sent via email a survey prior to on-boarding that asks very elementary questions about Arabic thought and culture to gauge the persons familiarity with the subject. Individuals will be shown a mixture of words and images containing themes such as major historical sites across the region (e.g. *Al-Masjid a Nabawi*), food (e.g. *shakshuka*) and culture (e.g. *Al-Battullah* face covering). Additionally, they will be asked if they are of Arab descent or have previous formal or informal Arabic language education.

Phase 2 - Onboarding: After their arrival in Qatar, subjects will have a meeting within the first 30 days to discuss the results of their pre-employment survey and willingness to learn more about local language and culture. Depending on the level of interest, a small test group will be formed and paired with peer tutors who are native Arabic speakers and/or originally from the region. The goal for this subgroup is to test the speed with which the new employees can absorb cultural terms and concepts when exposed to regulated meetings with their peer mentor. The native speakers will be asked to “drop by” or arrange weekly meetings with their assigned subject and to take the individual to culturally significant locations (e.g. *majlis*, coffee shop, restaurant, library, etc.)

Phase 3 – First Year of Employment: All participants will be given monthly survey assessments with the same words and pictures as their initial pre-employment survey. The goal will be for increased learning of existing concepts of those without prior exposure. Quarterly in person meetings with the researcher will also be scheduled to introduce other themes not discussed on the survey to measure new cultural cognitive acquisition and possible Arabic language improvement.

This initiative will provide quantitative data to support a critical problem on campus because of the small student population. Interactions between campus members are frequently

encouraged to engage one another in social and professional settings. By improving new culture immersion and acquisition, this improvement will assist in helping new hires adjust quicker to their new environment and appreciate the language and culture of their new surroundings. Conversely, it will also determine which new hires are unwilling or not supportive of new language and culture immersion. They might be more motivated for their new employment opportunity for financial or other benefit incentive. It is assumed by the researcher that most of the new hires are interested in the local culture prior to employment, however, this could be overestimated without the use of pertinent data.

9.2 Staff Standards & Associations

For decades, the admissions profession has promoted an inclusive community through continued professional development, annual and regional meetings, and an overt honor system guiding interactions between admissions officers, high schools, prospective students and families. A key recommendation regarding admissions practices at UFC is encouraging staff to join one of the relevant professional organizations:

- American School Counselor Association (ASCA)
- British Association for Counseling and Psychotherapy (BACP)
- National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)
- International Association for College Admission Counseling (IACAC)

All four espouse a member obligation to promote ethical behavior and standards within the profession. These values are vital for UFC staff to operate by and provide a baseline for the department to subsequently base performance. With the current health pandemic, staff are able to participate in professional development events that are more frequent and offered for free.

9.3 Admissions & Recruitment Strategy

The creation of an annual strategic plan is imperative for staff to move past the current practice of reactionary recruitment activities. One practical idea to drive decision making on what recruitment events to participate in, is to develop a coding system for events to keep track of important items like attendance, academic quality of prospective students, and cultural fit of the students with the institution. Employee learning about accomplishments & mistakes can further be initiated by conducting small-scale interviews with recently enrolled students and/or surveys to learn more about their first contact with the department. Multi-year initiatives have been shown to have particular efficacy at other private universities in the region such as Lebanese American University (Issa Nauffal & Nasser, 2012). This strategy will assist in developing a plan centered on the target audience in order to create relevant KPIs and ensure realistic goals and/or outcomes.

Follow-up questions for department staff members:

Question 1: Are cultural nuances (factors) being incorporated into their recruitment strategy and/or application review process?

Question 2: Are staff and faculty being hired who embrace cultural values of their students and/or the region? If so, are these individuals being retained?

Question 3: Can the team predict successful completion of the program during the recruitment process (e.g. during interviews, information sessions or one-on-one consultations)?

9.4 HR Policy Expectations & Compensation

With the help of HR, the organization should document and then distribute more information around annual reviews and performance appraisals to create greater transparency about terminations, promotions and bonuses. Pay for performance at for-profit universities has garnered a substantial amount of attention in the mainstream media and scholarly journals. Cases like the class action lawsuit against Keiser University in 2010, recent Corinthian Colleges bankruptcy and Concordia University's campus closure announcement in 2020 are all evidence of a declining demand from students and negative attention for incentivized staff pushing students to take out far more in student loans than they possibly could have sustained. In contrast to state and federal guidelines in the United States, a significant issue in Qatar is the perplexing issue of how citizenship ties into compensation, benefits and employment contracts. After scanning the available literature, scant information is available about HEIs in Qatar but there have been studies written about practices at QP.

Generally, pay for performance compensation is frowned upon in higher education and in the field of admissions. There are specific regulations prohibiting its use in the field of admissions as governed by the professional association (*NACAC*). This is particularly interesting when you compare offices at universities in the U.S. with their peer institutions in the U.K. being run more like corporations and routinely being "numbers driven". The situation at UFC is notably different to that of US institutions. Employees have very specific enrollment targets and KPIs. Based on information obtained during staff interviews, employees are held accountable and relieved of duties if they do not achieve those goals. If those team members do reach their goals, they are compensated accordingly. An argument in support of these types of incentives would be that employees are invested in the success of the institution. In addition to pay for performance compensation (e.g. commissions and/or bonuses), authors have noted, about profit sharing, that most studies find that such plans have no detectible effect on productivity or profits (Lazear & Gibbs, 2015: 251).

When researching literature outside of the region, I found cases from around the globe that generally were not in support of pay for performance systems at educational institutions. A merit performance system was implemented in Argentina for faculty that attributed its success to three critical factors: the actors targeted, the incentives used to enrich policy objectives, and the economic resources mobilized (Sarhou, 2016). In a study conducted at a Jamaican university, researchers found that the academic staff was inclined to retain their present annual increment payments and union negotiated increases during the implementation of a performance based pay system as long as it has a structured performance appraisal system and clearly defined objectives (Williams & Preziosi, 2011). In Australia, researchers found that a new performance related pay practice has little support and is counterproductive at Swinburne University (Harkness & Schier, 2011).

One significant problem with pay for performance at universities is the *Free Rider Issue*. Pay rises as performance rises and declines as performance declines (Lazear & Gibbs, 2015: 252). Universities would be no exception to this rule given the preponderance of staff and faculty who are focused on student learning, organizational culture and disinterested in the competitive nature of a pay for performance scheme. This concept highlights a fundamental problem with pay for performance as compensation for even those high performing individuals or teams could be very negatively impacted by average to below average employees. Professional development opportunities are one tactic that UFC could use to address *Employee Sorting* in the form of offering a very specific benefit. Firms offer a benefit of this nature to incentivize as well as implement a form of employee sorting.

A program like UFC might offer to pay for a worker's education (certificate, bachelor's, master's or doctorate) because this has great value for employees who want additional education but provide no value to those who do not (Lazear & Gibbs, 2015: 316). The university is sorting out the good workers from the bad because the more able workers would gladly take the benefit as opposed to less competent workers who would prefer a cash compensation (bonus). According to interviews, UFC does not offer substantial professional development opportunities. This has been one way that the organization has seen negative turnover from qualified staff that it could have retained.

Introducing the concept of gender when investigating HR processes at major organizations in the Gulf region can be both a challenge and an opportunity. The lack of hiring of women and women in key leadership roles are well documented. To address nationality and gender dynamics, the concept of localization of human resources is challenging. Policies such as *Emiratization*, *Qatarization* and/or *Saudization* are local government mandates to hire their own citizens to fill jobs in key sectors. The primary argument in support of these policies is that one needs to set targets of hires to keep organizations honest in hiring local citizens instead of expatriates from other countries. One set of researchers have observed that despite trying to empower local citizens, the labor market initiatives have generated an inefficient quota system, a culture focused on prestige as opposed to performance, strict cultural and gender practices for women, education systems that are not market driven, and an inequitable social contract (Williams et al., 2011). It is my own personal observation, while working in the region, that there has been a notable impact on organizations by these policies in the form of hiring entry level and mid-level manager roles. However, at higher levels, there is a tendency to reward and/or promote based on nationality as opposed to merit.

When comparing the concepts of localization and gender to other regions around the globe, a study of a top Chinese University found that male professors earned more from research and less from teaching than their comparable female counterparts even though male and female professors showed no statistically significant difference in the total performance-based pay. The study further concluded that professors then tended to invest more time in areas where they have the comparative advantage to maximize total income given the piece rate nature of bonuses (Guo et al., 2016). This is a terrific example of how pay for performance policies can influence an organization with unique cultural dynamics. In a culture and society far different than the Arabian Gulf, individuals will

work hard to push their own competitive advantage as opposed to relying on government mandates.

Bringing up nationality can be a challenging subject in organizations. For some countries, it is against the law. In Qatar, it is legal to consider nationality in the HR arena. The topic is ingrained in the local business culture for decades due to small populations and rapid industrialization. Labor and citizenship have been tied together when discussing employment practices in the Arab Gulf States because of the small populations and lack of trained local labor force. As a result of the need to import thousands of skilled and unskilled foreign workers, or referred to in Arabic as *ajanib*, an organic link between labor and citizenship has been created and their presence is perceived as a temporary phenomenon (Nakhleh, 1977).

Nationality also can come into play when looking at organizational commitment and performance. In a study of Qatari national employees (they aren't the only employees as there are plenty of expatriates also) at a petroleum company, researchers found that there is a positive relationship between employees' beliefs regarding training benefits and organizational commitment (Al-Emadi & Marquardt, 2007). Another study in the Gulf, looked at HR approaches in Qatar. The sample consisted of 31 human resource managers working at small to large corporations (Al-Horr, 2011). The author determined that half of the companies have a detailed recruitment plan for the future, most encourage "buying employees" as a recruitment policy and that they target a specific nationality (e.g. the native population). In UFC, hiring by nationality is allegedly a common practice. It is further complicated through a government supported system of permanent vs. temporary contracts, sponsored vs. unsponsored (for visa purposes), expatriate vs. local contracts. The segregation of employees by the state can be perplexing and unfair. Universities are put in the challenging situation of providing contracts and offers to employees that might not be representative of their true worth. A simple illustration of this is an expatriate worker who has spent many years in the region. The hiring organization could very likely offer him/her a "local" contract in order to satisfy government quotas and pay less in benefits (e.g. housing, annual plan ticket, dependent housing).

Although this is not as applicable with older and more established HEIs or universities, it could be argued that it would be advantageous for the program to provide executive compensation in the form of stock options or company ownership at UFC. If options are not too far out of the money, then the firm can tie pay more strongly to performance measure for options than the stock itself (Lazear & Gibbs, 288). A recent study about Chancellor pay in the United Kingdom determined that there is evidence that those executives widened participation for students from comprehensive secondary schools and those from areas with low university participation. In addition, securing income flows through grants positively impacted compensation (Bachan & Reilly, 2015).

Using data from 761 private universities in the United States, one researcher found that the president's pay is linked to performance in the previous period and the pattern of pay for performance varies across universities of different types (Bai, 2014). Of significant interest is that the researcher did not find that president pay is linked to relative performance evaluation as measured by the institution's *U.S. News & World Report* ranking. In another study exploring pay for university presidents at private universities, the researchers found that schools providing

“excess” compensation relative to their peers, improve their reputation and resources to a greater extent in the following two years in comparison to their peers who do not award the “excess” compensation (Parsons & Reitenga, 2014).

Corporate Social Responsibility could be another method to combat some of the issues with regards to localization, gender and nationality. A recent study in fossil fuel industry in Qatar found that while corporations engage in policies focused on education, health, sports or the environment, they frequently neglect to focus on human rights, labor and/or anti-corruption measures (Kirat, 2015). The skies are the limit in the quest for moving towards a knowledge-based economy. As Parcero and Ryan investigated, Qatar ranks well below benchmark countries using the four pillars framework of Information and communication technology, education, innovation, and economy and regime (Parcero & Ryan, 2017).

Student Improvement Recommendations

1. Comprehensive orientation & leadership short course upon entry
2. Design of a student ambassador program for prospective students
3. Formation of a parent training program to increase awareness in the community
4. Establishment of an alumni association, calendar year events, and annual reunion

9.5 New Student Orientation

At the time of matriculation, I recommend the implementation of a comprehensive orientation program for students. Time, institutional support, funding, outside resources, programming, and international students themselves have been cited by researchers when discussing initial problems for new students (Steglitz, 1988). With the current health situation, there is an opportunity to narrow down the scope to an online orientation. There is precedent using predeparture orientations historically provided to international students in their home country prior to their enrollment at U.S. institutions. Research shows that moving the orientation virtual, provides a great tool for students to see the expectations and benefits of their new academic life as well as incorporating a sensitivity to viewpoints and feelings of the international student (Murphy et al., 2002). The offering of a short non-credit leadership course will further empower students and signify a change of learning environment from that of high school. It is important to differentiate UFC from their previous high school so that new students do not view this as an extension of their existing academic experience. Lastly, both provide students the opportunities to leave their comfort zone, meet new friends and build a positive outlook before they embark on a challenging academic endeavor.

9.6 Ambassador Program

A tool of the trade for university admissions offices is employing current students, in an either paid or volunteer role, to engage prospective students and their families. Little about student ambassador programs is written and their effectiveness is challenging to accurately measure. However, researchers at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia, found that the role of student ambassadors positively influences retention and success (Green, 2018). With the short enrollment time of UFC being only one year, the creation of a cadre of current students able to interact with prospective applicants at recruitment fairs, during campus

tours, and at admissions open houses would offer an additional resource to employ in the next admissions cycle.

9.7 Parent Training

Despite the enormous wealth present in the local community, interviews with students revealed that parents were unfamiliar with the application process and other preparation needed by international students when applying to universities in the U.S. and U.K. There is existing evidence by researchers in Qatar supporting the notion that parent involvement in a child's education leads to higher educational expectations. One such survey, showed that student gender and grade level positively affect their educational expectations and parental involvement was marginally significant (Sellami, 2019). Parent Leadership Training for African American parents in an urban setting in the U.S. can serve as a model for a more thorough attempt to motivate parents through a community- university partnership (Smalley & Reyes-Blanes, 2001). Parents in the country are generally less likely to intervene in children's university education in Qatar due to a similar lack of familiarity with higher education. However, the aforementioned study showed that personal outreach by researchers directly to parents had a considerable impact on their willingness to participate.

9.8 Alumni Association

The creation of alumni associations at universities began many years ago. The reasons are varied, but traditionally universities sought to build affinity and raise funds to boost the endowment. Although an alumni association would certainly assist with admissions activities, there is an opportunity to use the group to help graduates apply knowledge acquired during their education to help their societies. Researchers studying alumni in Ghana, have shown that international higher education student mobility can generate social change in home nations (Campbell & Lavalley, 2019).

10. STUDY LIMITATIONS

Although the sample is representative of the broader population in terms of gender, nationality, secondary school education and native language (N = 55), the main study limitations are the sample size (n = 5) and generalizability. This is a common limitation for researchers in Qatar and previously noted in studies examining reasons for not pursuing post-secondary schooling (Stasz et al., 2007). The language of the study was conducted in English which was a non-native language of participants. The program has a short lifespan so can be hit or miss on student engagement which could also affect internal validity.

Aspects impacting external validity are the diplomatic, geopolitical, and economic blockade of Qatar by its neighbors which began in the summer of 2017. This unforeseen crisis has affected the entire institutional strategy as it is almost logistically impossible to recruit students from four neighboring countries (Bahrain, Egypt, KSA, UAE). The impact of the current COVID-19 health crisis also impacted the study because student interview recruitment was especially challenging.

There is evidence to support the idea that socioeconomic differences are emerging in the areas of secondary schooling. One study suggests that a growing for-profit education sector may be deepening existing inequalities leaving poorer families' access to lower quality education (Ridge et al., 2016). Others have acknowledged that the problems facing educational organizations in the country are not limited. One line of thinking contends that sociocultural issues, tensions between IBC leadership and home organizations, and conflicting expectations impact success of campuses in Qatar like those in Education City (Walsh, 2018).

One additional limitation directly related to contentious university admissions, is that students were not asked about their standardized test scores. Although there is a shift towards test optional policies for the 2020-21 admissions cycle by many universities due to lack of in-person and virtual sittings, requiring program participants to take an exam like the SAT could possibly aid in both the admission to the foundation year as well as the placement for U.S. and U.K. universities after completion. *The College Board* recently conducted a study with international higher education universities that provides evidence to suggest that the SAT is a continued predictor of student performance specifically for international universities with EMI (Marini et al., 2020).

11. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this investigation was to further explore factors and variables that affect new student enrollment. Based on interviews conducted with former staff and students, a sincere and strategic investment in people (both on the staff and student side) is recommended. In addition to reforms at the K-12 level and less vague curriculum and policy guidance from regulators, foundation programs in the country must strive to develop an authentic education philosophy that works in the local context (Khoury, 2017). The study of non-native English speakers in Arabic language settings has further application in other regions like the United States where Arabic has quickly jumped to the second most frequent home language of ELL students (Figure 5).

Figure 5

Number and percentage distribution of English language learner (ELL) students in U.S. public schools and number of ELL students as a percentage of total public school enrollment, by the 10 most commonly reported home languages of ELL students: Fall 2016

Home language	Number of ELL students	Percentage distribution of ELL students ¹	Number of ELL students as a percent of total enrollment
Spanish, Castilian	3,790,949	76.6	7.7
Arabic	129,386	2.6	0.3
Chinese	104,147	2.1	0.2
Vietnamese	78,732	1.6	0.2
English ²	70,014	1.4	0.1
Somali	38,440	0.8	0.1
Russian	34,843	0.7	0.1
Hmong	33,059	0.7	0.1
Haitian, Haitian Creole	31,608	0.6	0.1
Portuguese	28,214	0.6	0.1

¹ Detail does not sum to 100 percent because not all categories are reported.

² Examples of situations in which English might be reported as an ELL student's home language include students who live in multilingual households and students adopted from other countries who speak English at home but also have been raised speaking another language.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, EDData file 141, Data Group 678, extracted October 18, 2018; and Common Core of Data (CCD), "State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary and Secondary Education," 2016-17. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2018*, table 204.27.

Source: IES National Center For Education Statistics, 2019.

Understanding student motivation in the admissions process continues to be critical for post-secondary institutions. Extrinsic motivation is a well-documented problem with non-credit-bearing courses over a significant period (Al-Hendawi et al., 2018).

During the summer of 2020, the State of Qatar is attempting to outrun the current health pandemic by investing in online delivery of undergraduate and graduate programs with the

creation of the Global Studies Institute - which is a public/private partnership with *Shorelight International* (“Ministry approves US”, 2020). The countrywide transition to virtual learning due to the current health pandemic presents an opportunity to further study the difference in learning between online education, blended classes and the notion of flipped classrooms in foundation year programs. Previous research in Qatar, has found that blended learning with video lectures at home combined with learning in class, can improve the student experience (Syam, 2014). With closed borders, parents focused on keeping their sons and daughters at home, and students less motivated to seek overseas education, now is the time for UFC to implement recommendations in order to attract more prospective students before new competitors become even more entrenched in the market.

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APPENDIX

A. IRB Approval

1. IRB# 192351 Approval Letter from Vanderbilt University, December 17, 2019

B. Interview Protocol

1. Student Interview Recruitment Email
2. Consent for Participation in Interview Research
3. Student Interview Protocol

A. IRB Approval

Human Research Protections Program – HRPP
Supporting the work of the IRB and Providing HRPP Oversight



RE: IRB #192351 "Peabody EdD Capstone - Student Engagement & The Foundation Year In The Arabian Gulf"

Dear Alexander E Schultes:

A designee of the Institutional Review Board reviewed the research study identified above. The designee determined the project does not qualify as "research" per 45 CFR §46.102(d).

(d) Research means a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. Activities which meet this definition constitute research for purposes of this policy, whether or not they are conducted or supported under a program which is considered research for other purposes.

The purpose of this project is to evaluate the focal organization, University Foundation College located in Doha, Qatar for a Capstone Project.

As this does not meet the "criteria for research" as described in 45 CFR §46.102(d), IRB approval is not required.

Please note: Any changes to this proposal that may alter its "non-research" status should be presented to the IRB for approval prior to implementation of the changes. In accordance with IRB Policy III.J, amendments will be accepted up to one year from the date of approval. If such changes are requested beyond this time frame, submission of a new proposal is required.

Sincerely,

Louis Clifford Rhodes MBA
Institutional Review Board
Behavioral Sciences Committee

Electronic Signature: Louis Clifford Rhodes/VUMC/Vanderbilt : (e159ccf02f42a272f849d339469944a0)

Signed On: 12/17/2019 9:27:59 AM CST

1313 21st Ave., South, Suite 505
Nashville, TN 37232
www.vanderbilt.edu/irb

1 / 1

B. Interview Protocol

1. Student Interview Recruitment Email

RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

Email invitation to participate will be sent to alumni of the foundation program in order to solicit volunteers. Snowball sampling will be administered to secure participants who are willing and able to participate in the study

(Insert Date)

Dear (Insert First Name):

Greetings!

I am conducting research as part of the capstone requirement of my doctoral program at Vanderbilt University.

I would very much like to speak to you about your experience as a student in the University Foundation College Program in Doha, Qatar.

Should you agree to participate, I will contact you to setup a phone or in person interview at a time of your convenience. During the 30-minute conversation, I will ask you about your personal background, social and academic interests while attending the University Foundation College Program, current academic status and/or future career interests.

I hope you will choose to participate in this study – the first of its kind in the State of Qatar!

Looking forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Respectfully,

Alex Schultes
Doctoral Student
Peabody College
Vanderbilt University

2. Consent for Participation in Interview Research

Vanderbilt University Institutional Review Board

Informed Consent Document for Research

Principal Investigator: Alex Schultes

Revision Date: November 7, 2019

Study Title: Student Engagement & The Foundation Year In The Arabian Gulf

Institution/Hospital: Peabody college, Vanderbilt University

This informed consent document applies to adults (18 years of age and older).

Name of participant: _____ Age: _____

The following information is provided to inform you about the research project and your participation in it. Please read this form carefully and feel free to ask any questions you may have about this study and the information given below. You will be given an opportunity to ask questions, and your questions will be answered. Also, you will be given a copy of this consent form.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You are also free to withdraw from this study at any time. In the event new information becomes available that may affect the risks or benefits associated with this research study or your willingness to participate in it, you will be notified so that you can make an informed decision whether or not to continue your participation in this study.

1. What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to understand student engagement within a university preparatory and/or foundation year program You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a current/former staff member or graduate (alumni).

2. Procedures to be followed and approximate duration of the study:

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to participate in a 45 minute interview that asks questions about your knowledge and experience surrounding programs, practices, and processes at the foundation year program. We may also request relevant artifacts and/or documents related to your practice. Please note that researchers will remove from these materials any information that would personally identify you and will assign you a numeric identification code.

3. Expected costs:

There are no costs associated with this study.

4. Description of the discomforts, inconveniences, and/or risks that can be reasonably expected as a result of participation in this study:

There are no serious risks that can be reasonably expected as a result of participation in this study. The main inconvenience is the time required for participating in the interview. In addition, you will be asked questions about the school and district in which you work, which may present some risk to your employment.

5. Good effects that might result from this study:

a) **The benefits to science and humankind that might result from this study.** This research will contribute to our understanding of how foundation year programs design and

implement effective practices for students. This knowledge of effective practices could inform educational policy and practice.

b) The benefits you might get from being in this study. The findings from this research could be used to develop and implement an intervention for students at your previous institution.

6. Compensation for participation:

There is no compensation for your individual participation.

7. Circumstances under which the Principal Investigator may withdraw you from study participation:

You may be withdrawn from the study if you do not have relevant experience to discuss the design and implementation of effective practices.

8. What happens if you choose to withdraw from study participation?

If you choose to withdraw after your participation has begun, the interview will end and no further questions will be asked. Any information you have provided up to the point of withdrawal will be maintained as described below.

9. Contact Information. If you should have any questions about this research study or possibly injury, please feel free to contact **(Alex Schultes)** at **(+974 5034 1343)** or my Faculty Advisor, **(Dr. Chris Quinn Trank)** at **(+615 875 9196)**.

For additional information about giving consent or your rights as a participant in this study, to discuss problems, concerns, and questions, or to offer input, please feel free to contact the Institutional Review Board Office at (615) 322-2918 or toll free at (866) 224-8273.

13. Confidentiality:

Diligent efforts will be made to ensure that your participation in this study and your responses remain confidential. Your name and the names of individuals with whom you worked or went to school with will never be used in either data entry to research products that result from the study. Results will be presented so that no person is individually identifiable. Researchers will remove any personally identifying information, assigning a numeric code to identify participants and schools. Only key study personnel will have access to the coding system. Artifacts and research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to these records, for up to 1 year, at which time it will be destroyed.

14. Privacy:

All efforts, within reason, will be made to keep your personal information in your research record confidential but total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Your information may be shared with Vanderbilt or the government, such as the Vanderbilt University Institutional Review Board or the Federal Government Office for Human Research Protections, if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.

STATEMENT BY PERSON AGREEING TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY
I have read this informed consent document and the material contained in it has been explained to me verbally. All my questions have been answered, and I freely and voluntarily choose to participate.

Date

Signature of participant

Consent obtained by:

Date

Signature

Printed Name and Title

3. Student Interview Protocol

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Using a semi-structured approach, participants will be asked the same following questions to help guide the conversation.

What is your nationality?

What is your father's profession?

Have your parents attended university?

Do you have siblings?

If yes, have they attended university?

Where did you attend high school (Government Independent School, Community School, or International School)?

Did you apply to universities after college or enroll directly in the foundation year program?

If yes, then list universities:

If no, was foundation year your 1st choice?

Did you like high school?

If yes, did you consider yourself a good student: If no, please explain:

Did you have a positive experience attending the foundation year program?

If yes, what were the reasons:

If no, please explain:

Are you proud of attending the foundation year program?

If yes, what were the reasons:

If no, please explain:

Was there family pressure to attend foundation year program?

If yes, what were the reasons:

If no, please explain:

Do you keep in touch with your classmates from the foundation year program?

If yes, through what medium(s)?

If no, please explain:

Admissions, Enrollment & Pre-College Preparation

A Foundation Year Program In The Arabian Gulf
August 2020

In fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Leadership and Learning in Organizations
Peabody College of Education and Human Development
Vanderbilt University

Dr. Christine Quinn Trank, Capstone Director

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