A Longitudinal Mixed Methods Study of Twelfth Grade Qatari Students' Higher Education and Occupational Choices and the Role of Family, Friends, and School as Factors Influencing These Decisions

By

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Dedication:

For my six-year-old daughter Moza Bint Nasser Bin Abdulla; for she has devoted an equal share of sacrifices for this work to see the light.

Declaration of original authorship:

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged

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Abstract

This study aims to find out how Qatari twelfth-grade students make decisions relating to their future education and occupations. It is based on information drawn from a mixed methods longitudinal research study carried out over one year in two independent schools in Qatar (one girls' and one boys' school) – schools chosen because they had the highest numbers of Qataris attending twelfth grade in the year of data collection. Quantitative data was drawn from a questionnaire answered by 308 Qatari students (185 girls and 123 boys). Qualitative data was obtained by interviewing 21 Qatari students twice (11 girls and 10 boys). The first round of interviews took place while students were in their last semester of schooling and the second round of interviews took place after the students had left school. This study found that parents, especially the father, and older friends are very important in young Qataris' career decision-making processes, leading us to consider the methods currently used in school career guidance. It suggests that these may need to be re-thought to ensure they are suitable for everyone. This study also highlights the social pressure applied to Qatari boys, a pressure which interferes with them making their future career decisions freely.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In my professional life, I have worked closely with young students aged between thirteen and eighteen years old, as a teacher for fourteen years and then as an academic advisor for three years. During this time, I experienced the tremendous social, economic, and educational change that Qatar had gone through in the last two decades. I worked in the old educational system, experienced the educational reform in 2002, and dealt with hundreds of students each year. It was in my professional experience as an academic advisor helping students with their university applications that I recognised that many students struggled with making decisions regarding higher education. Although I had tried to help these students by providing decision-making workshops and the necessary information regarding subjects, universities and scholarships, most of these students still struggled in taking decisions regarding their higher education and future occupations.

Qatari students enjoy many educational privileges, such as generous scholarships and the availability of good higher educational programmes. Moreover, after graduating, they have few problems finding employment. With all these advantages and privileges, I found it very puzzling that these students evidently struggled to take decisions regarding their higher education and future occupation, and it was then this research question first emerged. As will be explained, it is essential for the Qatari government to align its people's occupational choices with labour-market needs, something which is not currently the case.

Reading into the research regarding students' occupational and higher educational choices, a person can see that it is a common phenomenon across the world, especially with increasing globalisation and the uncertainty around jobs, occupations, and the labour market. Nevertheless, the researcher still firmly believes that Qatari students enjoy privileges that no other students across the globe do and that therefore they should surely struggle less in making occupational decisions. In the researcher's opinion, Qatar is a unique country regardingin terms of its fast-growing economy and its social structure. A piece of research carried out by RAND Corporation in Qatar in 2006 regarding Qataris' occupational choices compared two cross-sectional samples of Qatari men and women; one group graduated from secondary school in 1998 and the other group graduated from secondary school in 2006. This research showed that the Qataris' occupational choices do not align with labour-market need.

It also highlighted gender differences in the selection of occupations, where Qatari men mainly choose military and police force occupations and Qatari women are constrained by cultural expectations that confine them to the expected array of "female" occupations such as teaching. In the researcher's opinion, as an insider, the comparison between these two cross-sections is not straightforward and therefore does not draw an accurate picture of the Qatari people's social and economic journey; Qatar has changed tremendously, both socially and economically, and those in the 1998 group did not have the same chances to join higher educational programmes or the same occupational choices as those in the 2006 group. Moreover, these two groups come from different educational systems, where the 1998 group studied under the traditional educational system and those in the 2006 group experienced the educational reform and studied within the independent school system. Another piece of research carried out in Qatar in 2006 found that the type of school attended appeared to influence the student's educational and occupational aspirations significantly (Kanan & Baker, 2006). The sample for the study comprised a range of different types of schools in Qatar: international co-ed schools, public single-sex schools, and magnet[1] public single-sex schools. Kanan and Baker (2006) found that the school curriculum was linked to the professions that students aspired to, where those students who have attended scientific schools aspire to scientific professions such as engineering and physics, and those who have attended international schooling are more likely to aspire to medicine, law and business. Kanan and Baker also noticed that for those Qatari students who attended public schools in Qatar there were more traditional occupational choices, where females tended to aspire to teaching and male students wanted to have careers within the military. These types of schooling differ both in scope and in the schools' visions, which might be an explanation for the significant differences noted in their students' aspirations regarding future education and occupations. One other recent piece of research in Qatar was carried out by Jacobson (2015), in which she interviewed six young, ambitious Qatari women aged between twenty and twenty-seven, who were educated in an international private university, regarding their employment ambitions. Jacobson found that Qatari women valued education and used education to challenge social constraints. She also highlighted an existing tension in the workforce and in family relationships because of the shift in gender norms in Qatar. It is obvious that Jacobson concentrated on a small sample of a small section of Qatari girls who were educated in an

[1] Magnet schools are public schools established in Qatar to cater for students who wish to pursue studies in engineering or the sciences. The medium is English; the curriculum is Qatari. Recently, these schools were transformed into independent schools.

international university, which indicates that they belong to a socioeconomic background that is unlikely to reflect that of all Qatari girls.

The question that this thesis seeks to be able to answer is how do Qatari twelfth-grade students –male and female – make future choices relating to education and occupations and what factors influence these decisions? Other questions include what is the role of family, friends and school in Qatari twelfth-grade students' future educational and occupational decision-making. Moreover, is gender an issue in the future educational and occupational plans of young Qataris? This research is unique for several reasons. First: this research is the first study of its kind in Qatar where a longitudinal approach is adopted. This research followed the journey of Qatari students' in making decisions about their higher education and occupation from secondary school to after leaving school. It took into consideration both boys and girls and used mixed methods to best serve the purpose of this research – highlighting the Qatari students' journey in taking a higher educational and occupational choice and the factors influencing such a decision. It took a sample of two independent secondary schools, one boys' and one girls', with the highest number of Qatari students attending twelfth grade – the last year of schooling in Qatar – in the year of data collection. Despite the existence of previous research carried out in Qatar, comparing two independent secondary schools – one girls' school and one boys' school – using interviews with students in their transition phase from school to college or work is, to the researcher's knowledge, the first of its kind in Qatar. The transition phase from school to work or higher education is a critical time for making decisions about future education and occupations. In the transition phase from school to higher education or work, students are forced to face the reality that there are practical requirements such as academic performance, which the students will not know the result of until the final government-approved grades are announced. It would be interesting to see whether or not Qatari students end up pursuing the career they aspired to in secondary school. Second: this research has highlighted some interesting gender dimensions and added some interesting knowledge to the broader field of gender studies. Third: it has also added to the understanding of advising, information and guidance in different contexts to the broader literature on the subject.

It is useful to start this thesis by describing the contextual background of the research. This chapter will give an overview of Qatar's political and economic situation, the social structure of Qatari society and families, and the role of men and women in that society. It will also give an overview of the educational reform and career guidance that is offered in the

independent schools in Qatar. It will conclude with the present situation and the rationale behind carrying out this research.

1.2 Qatar

The State of Qatar is an 11,521 square kilometre peninsula located on the western coast of the Arabian Gulf and is bordered by the kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the south. In the mid-1800s, Qatar was a poor British protectorate known mostly for its pearl industry. These days Qatar is one of the world's most important oil- and gas-producing countries and contains the world's third-biggest gas field. This introduction chapter about Qatar will cover some elements about the country that are relevant to the scope of this research; this will help to place the study in context and present a clearer picture of the research problem, sample, results, discussion and findings.

1.3 Qatar's political situation

Qatar was previously a British protectorate and gained its independence in 1971. Qatar is a monarchy and is ruled by the Al Thani family. The year 1995 was a landmark in the modernisation of Qatar, when His Highness Shaykh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, The Father Amir of Qatar, came into power. During his eighteen years of ruling Qatar, Shaykh Hamad was an enlightened, modern leader who lifted up the country and raised the profile of Qatar economically, internationally and socially. He was able to make Qatar secure economically by discovering and liquefying the third-largest gas field in the world and he also ensured the country took its place internationally by securing the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser Al Missned, the second wife of The Father Amir, has played a leading role in modernising Qatar socially. She is seen as role model for a great many Qatari women and girls. She has played and is playing an active role in liberating Qatari women within the currently acceptable cultural boundaries (Bahry & Marr, 2005). Unlike rulers' wives in most Gulf countries, she plays a remarkable role in the development of Qatar. Her Highness Sheikha Moza is considered the "the prime mover" of many educational and social developments and reforms in Qatar, such as the establishment of the Education City, the Supreme Council of Family Affairs and Al Jazeera's children's channel (Bahry & Marr, 2005).

1.4 Qatar's economic situation

Qatar is dependent on oil and gas for its financial security. As mentioned above, it controls the third-largest gas field in the world. Whilst the Qatari government is trying to invest in non-energy sectors, oil and gas still account for more than half of the Gross Domestic Product (HUKMOOI, 2015). The country has one of the highest incomes per capita in the world. The wealth of the country is invested in many social programmes, such as education, universities, and health care programmes (Berrebi, Martorell, & Tanner, 2009).

Qatar has a population of approximately 2.3 million (HUKMOOI, 2015), 12 per cent of which are Qataris (bq, 2014). According to a Human Rights Watch report in 2012 Qatar has the highest ratio of migrants to citizens in the world. Even though Qatar has a small working-age population it is developing rapidly (Donn & AlManthri, 2010). The key element behind this growth is the country's dependence on importing most of its workforce needs for both low and high skilled labour(Cathleen Stasz et al., 2008). Table 1.1 shows that Qatar depends on non-Qatari workers, which make up almost 94 per cent of the work force; Qataris represent only 6 per cent of the people in the work force. Furthermore, Qatari men and women cluster in certain occupations, such as army and police occupations for men and teaching for women (C. Stasz, Eide, & Martorell, 2007). Such dissonant occupational selections by the Qatari people compared with the local labour market exaggerate the dependence on migrants to fulfill the gaps in labour-market need. This research will focus on Qatari students' higher educational and occupational decisions and the factors influencing such decisions. Since Qataris enjoy higher educational and occupational privileges given by the Qatari government to its citizens, this research will study only Qatari participants to narrow the scope of the research and have more specific results.

Table 1-1. Percentage of employed people by nationality and gender in Qatar

	Qataris	Non-Qataris
Male	4.5	95.5
Female	17.3	82.7
Total	6.1	93.9

Source: Statistics Authority, labour force survey by sample, Qatar, October 2011

Qatar published the Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV 2030) in 2008. QNV "aims to transform Qatar into an advanced country by 2030, sustaining its development and providing a high standard of living for all its people—for generations to come" (GSDPQ, 2011, p. 2). QNV 2030 is based on four pillars: Human Development, Economic Development, Social Development, and Environmental Development; Human Development is the first of those four. The government of Qatar believes that its oil and gas resources will run out some day and its future economic success will depend on its people and key to this is education. The Qatari government is and will be working hard to provided students in Qatar with a first-rate education; building a modern world-class educational system is a major target for the government (GSDPQ, 2008).

1.5 Social structure of the Qatari people

The social structure of Qatari society is based on kinship, which most Qatari people value and respect. Qatari people are very well informed about their descent and their ancestry in general, and a Qatari person would be able to explain easily their relationship to potentially hundreds of people to whom they are related. Information about family names and family honour is passed on from parents to children, and Qatari people, especially the men, make sure that their children maintain their kinship honour. It is worth stating here that the use of the word "family" in this research refers to the extended family. Moreover, research has revealed it is not simply blood that connects the Qatari people; affinity and nurture form undeniable kinds of connections that add different dimensions, both in the type of relationship and in the number of kin (Guindi, 2012). In a life example given in the article 'Milk and Blood: Kinship among Muslim Arabs in Qatar', the author shows how two people can be related to each other through three different types of relationship at the same time (Guindi, 2012). Social networks in Qatari society can be described as dense and very complex. Such networks have been described as "collective social nature" and a "close-knit structure", where individuals' successes are an add-on to the social capital of the family as a whole (Khalifa, Nasser, Ikhlef, Walker, & Amali, 2016, pp. 11,16).

1.6 Family structure in Qatar

Although Qatar has gone through several recent social and economic reforms, it is still a conservative Arab Muslim country (Jacobson, 2015). Qatari society is built around family names, which represent a tribal system. A typical family tree can be traced back many hundreds of years and people are very well aware of their origins. The family name is carried by the males of the family; this means that sons and daughters are given their father's name and their father's family name. Women in Qatar keep their father's name after marriage but cannot pass their names on to their children. Most Qatari families live in urban environments, with the greatest concentration living in Doha – the capital of Qatar. The typical family unit in Qatar has transformed from being an extended family to a nuclear family in terms of household living. In reality, however, the social structure and values of the extended family are still almost untouched by time and social reform; the tribal family names, the hierarchical structure of authority, family values and networks are all still in place (Al-Ghanim, 2013). Men in the family have authority over other family members and women are subject to this authority (Al-Ghanim, 2013, p. 347). However, while the father is considered the head of the house, the mother has "a good deal of power" inside the family; respect of and obedience to parents are Islamic values that are enforced by society (Nydell, 2012, p. 39). Because of their position of authority, the men in the family are responsible for all their family members; this is the case not only in a social sense but also a legal sense, and is true for all the Gulf countries (Al-Ghanim, 2013).

Qatari children grow up in a social structure that includes hundreds of relatives such as uncles, aunts, grandparents and cousins, with whom the children maintain strong relationships. Family loyalty and obligations carry a deep social value. Having a good job, succeeding in business, or having a good education brings benefit not only to the individual but also adds to the overall collective honour of the family name. Children's success in life is related to and affects their parents' success, so parents take credit or blame for their children's success or failure (Nydell, 2012). So when talking about family in Qatar in this research, the term does not mean a nuclear family of parents and children; it includes at least grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. These people might not live in the same house but they keep in touch with each other often and most families in Qatar will gather in the house of one of the family members weekly. At such gatherings, information flows from one person to another, which is a key factor in young people's career decisions. Not only do these gatherings allow information to flow, but they also enable the extended family members to connect with each

other and form a social network that adds to a person's social capital. That said, it is worth stating that Qatar is changing rapidly – socially, economically and politically – and information from any study that is more than five years old has to be taken with some caution.

1.7 Qatari men and women

Qatari society is formed on the bedrock of the family, and as mentioned above, family is formed of extended family relationships that are close-knit even though members do not live in the same house. In a nuclear family there is a man who is the head of the house; this is usually the father, or may be a brother or an uncle in the case of the absence of the father; women in the family are the ones to be taken care of and they have to show obedience and respect to their men. This may sound somewhat medieval, but in reality women in Qatar have a considerable amount of power in the family, especially older women. However, because of the need to keep to social norms and values, when in public, women show respect and obedience (Nydell, 2012). Just like other Muslim women, Qatari women may seek modernisation, acquire an education, and aspire to professional occupations, but they are expected to preserve their identity as Qatari, Arab, and Muslim (Al-Malki, Kaufer, Ishizaki, & Dreher, 2012). Demonstrating individuality over family values, for both men and women, young or old, in Qatar would be offensive culturally and to the family.

Qatari men in the past were more educated than Qatari women, but this situation has reversed in the course of the last two decades (Berrebi et al., 2009). Indeed, three quarters of the students in Qatar in higher education are girls (Jacobson, 2015). Although women have made considerable inroads into the workforce and in employment terms have come a long way in the period from the 1960s to the present day, it is still not considered enough. Qatar came the one before last in a world ranking – 183 out 184 countries – in terms of women in the workforce (TheWorldBank, 2012). In the labour market, ambitious Qatari women have found themselves having to negotiate their position because the notion of working women challenges the existing social structure and gender norms in Qatari society (Jacobson, 2015). Sometimes it is hard for Qatari girls to work in certain types of occupation since they need the blessing of their nuclear family; this is especially true for girls who are raised in families who are resistant to change (Bahry & Marr, 2005). Bahry and Marr (2005) have concluded that there are five reasons why Qatari girls go out to work: the need to meet the higher standards of living in modern-day Qatar, changing social conditions, leaving home, making use of their knowledge and education, and the presence of household servants. The authors have called

this last reason of Qatari families having household servants to help with children and housework an "unspoken reason" and they think it urges Qatari women to work (Bahry & Marr, 2005, p. 109). This removes the burden of childrearing from the shoulders of young Qatari girls and helps them aspire freely to a profession, something that is also evident in the following review of relevant literature. Bahry and Marr also highlighted that some Qatari men have problems accepting working women because they prioritise their jobs over their husbands. The authors claimed that some Qatari men remarry because their working wife has not had the time for them. As a Qatari working woman, I find this explanation offensive to Qatari women who are trying hard to improve themselves and their country, and it neglects to take into account the fact that Qatari men remarry simply because they can. Qatari girls have taken and are continuing to take advantage of the educational opportunities that they have been offered over the last decade and have proved themselves, but employment is another story, one that is outside of the scope of this research.

Segregation in Qatar is present not only in the education system and the work place; it reaches almost every aspect of Qatari society. For example, Qatari houses represent how embedded gender segregation is – there are designated spaces for women only and others for men only, with no links between the two (Farah & Klarqvist, 2001). In the design of Qatari houses, there is a living space for men only known as *"majles*", where male family members gather, sit, discuss issues, and welcome male visitors (Sobh & Belk, 2011b). *"Majles*" or male living space is relevant to the Qatari male participants in this research and the term will reappear in the results and discussion chapters, referring to the place where some of the boys have taken their future occupational decisions. This masculine value of "being in the *majles*" discussing issues with male friends and relatives highlights the strongly masculine environment Qatari boys are raised in even at home.

The liberation of Qatari women was generated from top down when His Highness Shaykh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, The Father Amir, took office. His appearance in public and in the media with his wife Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser Al Missned standing beside him was unprecedented at that time in the Gulf countries. Her Highness Sheikha Moza has taken a pioneering role in changing and improving the status of women in Qatar (Bahry & Marr, 2005). Her hard work has made her a role model for young Qatari girls and girls in the Gulf countries generally. Thoughtfully and cautiously, she is paving new ways for Qatari girls and women (Bahry & Marr, 2005).

1.8 The educational reform in Qatar

In 2002 the State of Qatar initiated "Education for a New Era"; a new educational reform. The main focus for the reform was to modernise the education system to align with international educational systems. Qatar has tried to imitate "successful economies with successful educational systems" like Singapore, Canada and New Zealand (Donn & AlManthri, 2010, p. 49). One result of the reform was decentralising the schools, which saw central governmental schools transformed into independent schools; "an independent school is a government-funded school that is granted autonomy to carry out its educational mission and objectives while being held accountable to terms agreed to in an operating contract" (Romanowski, Cherif, Al-Ammari, & Al-Attiyah, 2013b, p. 112).

The main idea behind the educational reform is to modernise the educational system to bring it in line with international educational systems. Some of the new features that the reform introduced are:

- Independent schools, which means that the school has full control of its budget and employment.
- The main medium of teaching became English and Arabic is limited to Arabic and Islamic classes.
- The introduction of subject standards.
- Teachers have more freedom over the materials and books used in the classrooms.
- Classes have to have maximum of 25 students (this used to be 40–50 students in a classroom in some schools).
- New school buildings, Internet zones, computers, modern science laboratories, and big budgets for teacher professional development.

The reform has not only affected schools; higher education has changed profoundly also. As cited in Sharif & Kassim (2012, p. 36) "The Qatari higher education sector is developing at a rapid pace". The Qatari government is willingly spending billions of dollars to establish international high-quality higher educational institutions for its people. As an example, "Weill Cornell Medical College has been promised 750 million dollars over eleven years by the Qatar Foundation" (Krieger, 2008, p. 5).

Qatar has become a fertile soil for higher education institutes. Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) has managed to partner with several

international prestigious universities to offer their programmes in Qatar such as: Weill Cornell Medical College, offering a medical programme and Texas A&M University, offering programmes in chemical, electrical, petroleum, and mechanical engineering. The entrance requirements were raised to an international level. A student has to have a minimum of 5.5 in IELTS (International English Language Testing System) and 22 to 26 in ACT (American College Test) in some majors, or equivalent test scores, to be able to be admitted to Qatar University. Qatar University has also established a two-year foundation programme for those who do not meet the requirements, with no guarantee of entering the university. A lot of big names in the Qatari market like Q-Tel, Qatar Petroleum, and Hamad Medical Corporation, have started offering scholarships for students who can then be employed.

However, the level of students' achievement was often not satisfactory enough for the international universities, meaning it was difficult to be admitted onto their competitive programmes. A professor from one of the American universities based in Qatar describes Qatari students as "kids who cannot succeed because they are not up to speed" (Krieger, 2008, p. 10). A key issue is considered to be the quality of teachers in the independent schools, which is affecting students' achievement. According to the Supreme Education Council (2011), 31 per cent of teachers who taught in Qatar at that time had no formal qualifications and students were not happy with their teachers. In a survey by Booz & Co. in 2013, 63 per cent of students in Qatar thought that their teachers did not fully understand the course materials. Students tended to hold negative attitudes toward school, teachers and learning as a result.

Before 2002, The Ministry of Education had full control over schools. It provided everything from teachers to books and pens. Schools were single-sex schools offering twelve years of schooling. A student would go to school at six years old and go through six years of elementary schooling, three years of preparatory schooling and three years of secondary schooling. Students graduate from secondary schools from two tracks of study (literature and science); where a literature track would concentrate on history, language and Islamic studies and the science track would concentrate on mathematics, physics, chemistry, and biology. At the end of the twelfth year students would take a national final exam and depending on the student's GPA and track, he or she would be entitled to pursue a certain speciality, such as engineering. For example, a student who graduated from a literature track and has a GPA of 90 per cent can choose any major that is not from a science background, like English, history, geography, religion and so on. On the other hand, if a student graduates with 65 per cent he or

she will be limited to certain subjects like history. So, students are solely judged by their GPA and the track they have taken. However, in deciding these tracks and then specialities, students receive very little formal guidance or support.

After leaving school, Qatari students have so many choices. Some of these choices are studying at Qatar University, which will accept all Qatari applicants who meet the GPA subject-related criteria (Qatar University, 2015). The Qatar Foundation also hosts several international programmes such as engineering and medicine (Qatar Foundation, 2015). Several colleges also operate in Qatar, such as College of North Atlantic. Students who decide not to go on to higher education can find a place in the army or police service or other governmental jobs that do not require a Bachelor's degree. Furthermore, The Ministry of Education and big corporations in Qatar such as Qatar Petrolum will sponsor Qatari students who wish to study abroad if they apply and meet ministry requirements.

Although it appears that students have numerous choices after graduating from secondary schools, many students are not always able to get accepted by their first choice. Poor performance becomes a serious barrier to pursuing additional schooling for Qatari school graduates (C. Stasz et al., 2007) .

Moreover, the flow of graduating from school to studying in a university has been interrupted by international tests. Universities in Qatar ask students to submit international test scores like IELTS (International English Language Testing System) and ACT (American College Test) as a part of their application requirements. Students have to prepare for these tests outside of schools and at their own expense. Students have to retake these tests until the desirable score is reached. Usually students prepare for these after leaving school, so they can end up losing at least a year. To address the problem of this delay, the Institute of Education has established a mandatory class to be taught in secondary independent schools called "University Preparation". This class has some teaching of IELTS and ACT preparations and some university skills. Some students do not benefit from this class because they are not sure whether they need to fulfill these requirements in the first place. From the researcher's experience, not knowing what they want to study and do in the future, and therefore the requirements for those aims, has created a barrier to students benefiting from such educational interventions.

1.9 Towards career guidance in schools

In order to deal with school graduates who, struggle to complete their higher education and in making informed decisions about their future careers, the Higher Education Institute was launched in 2005. One of the departments is called The Advising Career Development Centre. This centre offers advice to students regarding the best choices to make and offers help and support to get accepted onto a programme that will satisfy them (SEC, 2015a). At that time, no one in the independent schools in Qatar had an official and formal role to guide students in making decisions regarding their study, future education or occupations. Yet the challenges as well as the needs of Qatar indicated that there was a need to help and support students to think about their future career choices much earlier in their school career. This resulted in the Education Institution creating a new position in secondary schools called "Academic Advisor". The researcher has worked in a secondary school as an academic advisor and as a career counsellor in the Higher Education Institute, so most of the information regarding career guidance in schools is obtained from the field through my professional experience.

The Academic Advisor's role is to guide students with their career choices as well as providing information and helping them meet the international tests, deadlines, applications, recommendation letters, and other university requirements. Each secondary school has one Academic Advisor regardless of student ratio. Because of the scarcity of trained career guidance personal, Academic Advisors can hold any Bachelor degree. There are no specialised routes that qualify a person to be an academic advisor or, any training provided. Left on their own with what appeared a rather vague job description, Academic Advisors tried to do what they could in guiding students. Yet even opportunities to do this were limited, with time only available during students' breaks, which can be thirty to forty minutes per day. As independent secondary schools vary in size, some with as many as seven students and some with only thirty students, one academic advisor has to manage all of these students in the forty minutes of break time. Moreover, school administrators began to overload academic advisors with administrative work. Therefore, lack of specialisation, lack of time allotted, unequal student ratio, and overload with administrational work have contributed to an anecdotal perception of the low performance of academic advisors regarding career guidance.

By the time this research data was collected, Academic Advisors were working in schools, which means they are supervised by the Education Institute, and in 2010 the

Education Institution and Higher Education Institution agreed to share responsibility of Academic Advisors in schools hoping to educate academic advisors and help them understand their role. Figure 1-1 illustrates the three institutes that make up The Supreme Education Council:

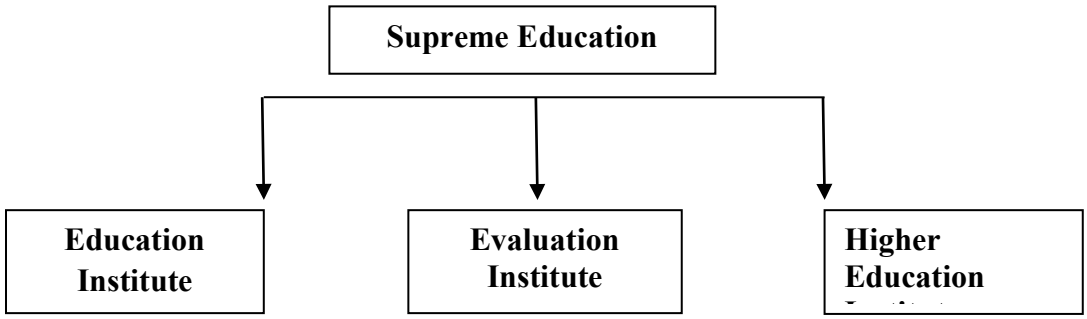


Figure 1-1 Supreme Education Institutes

This move helped academic advisors understand their job but was considered to not be far-reaching enough. Sharing supervision but not sharing evaluations between the Higher Education Institute and head teachers created some conflict in following orders especially if one person – the academic advisor – has to satisfy two institutionally different supervisions. In 2015, the Higher Education Institute handed the responsibility of academic advisors back to the Education Institute. All this uncertainty has negatively affected academic advisors' attitude towards work.

1.10 Career guidance for all

Students are not restricted to seeking career guidance and advice about higher education in their secondary schools; there are other places in Qatar that students can receive career guidance. Qatar Career Fair (QCF), Qatar Foundation (QF), Advising Career Development Centre at the Higher Education Institute, and Bedaya Centre are just some examples of resources students can draw on for help regarding their future career decisions. Services such as QF and Bedaya Centre go into schools. Indeed QF has adopted a series of hands-on workshops for schools' academic advisors and launched several programmes to support talented students in schools("Qatar Career Fair and US Embassy Conclude Successful Career Counselors Training Workshop," 2015). QF's intervention in secondary independent

schools in Qatar is very notable and by going into independent secondary schools they advertise their programmes and attract talented students. Most of these services focus on talented students who have some idea about what they want to do in the future but are still not really sure. Many students need support and guidance but do not know what to do and where to go.

1.11 The present situation

It is clear that Qatar has a small population but a high labour demand where each hand counts. A high percentage of Qatari students graduate from high school not knowing what they want to study or what they want to do. From the researcher's experience, young people often miss universities' application deadlines, spend a great deal of time to get international test scores, or start searching for what they want to do after graduating from school. This delay, in turn, impacts negatively on the labour market, as well as leading to a proportion of the potential workforce being unproductive or making the wrong choices. The fact that there is often a time gap – up to one year sometimes – between when a student graduates from school and when they start university can exacerbate this problem. For example, the researcher has dealt with many students who spend up to a year preparing for tests such as IELTS. To add to the issue, personal experience from the field suggests students do not receive sufficient guidance or have an appropriate amount of career guidance in schools. What is being offered in schools regarding career guidance is also not reaching all Qatari students because of the academic advisor–student ratio; this is a concern shared by most academic advisors in Qatar. This lack of direction means a greater deficiency in valuable human resources, which runs counter to the Qatar National Vision 2030.

In all the above factors, the student is the cornerstone. These young adults are the main resource for the future of Qatar. Their future decisions matter to Qatar as much as it matters to them. Policy makers in Qatar recognise that the occupational decisions our youth is taking are not aligned with the National Vision 2030(Cathleen Stasz et al., 2008). How do young Qatari students make their future occupational and educational decisions and what factors affect them? What resources do they draw on and what support do they need? Understanding how they make their decisions will help in developing a guidance service that will serve both the needs of students and their country.

In the context of a great deal of educational change and especially Qatar, young people can sometimes feel confused or overwhelmed with choices and decisions that will

effect the rest of their lives. Why do they make the choices they do and what matters in their decision-making? This is what this thesis is intending to explain. Jacobson (2015) has highlighted that rapid changes in the educational and economic opportunities available for Qataris have created "tensions between the desire to maintain cultural traditions and economic modernization" (p. 5). In the light of the above introduction, the researcher decided to explore the decision-making process for Qatari girls and boys. The researcher noted that the final year of schooling appears to be crucial and consequently, a good transition phase to explore. The twelfth year of schooling is the last year for students in Qatar to attend school and by the end of that year all students have to take standard final examinations. The grades these students achieve by the end of this year are critical for their educational and occupational decisions, because they can limit or boost their decision depending on their academic achievement. The researcher therefore decided this was a critical period for the Qatari students in terms of their career decisions and so designed the research around that time, as will be explained in the methodology chapter.

To summarise this chapter, an understating of Qatar is important to contextulaise this research. First, it is no secret that Qatar is a rich country with a small population and a strong labour market demand. The development of Qatar was enabled by the courageous decisions of His Highness Shaykh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, The Father Amir, with his wife Sheikha Moza bint Nasser Al Missned standing beside him. Qatari society is a culturally conservative Muslim society that is centred around families, where men have more power in the family and control over their wives and daughters. Boys carry family names and girls do not pass the family name on to their children. A great reform was initiated in 2002 to modernise the education system, though the formal education system in Qatar is still segregated by gender. Many students had been falling behind and not meeting the requirements of international universities, and the role of academic advisor has been created to help students with their future educational and occupational decisions. A wide array of university programmes and generous scholarships are available for Qatari students, both boys and girls, once they have graduated from secondary school. Regardless of all the resources that the government has invested in helping Qatari students to take advantage of the variety of educational opportunities, some students still struggle with making a decision about their educational and occupational future. It is critical to explore the journey of Qatari students' career decision making, from the time they are at school to after they have left school. Knowing the factors that might influence Qatari students' future educational and occupational decisions would

help set an insightful framework for career guidance in school that would be truly beneficial for all students.

This thesis is comprised of seven chapters. The first chapter introduces the problems and the contextual background of Qatar politically, economically, socially and educationally. The second chapter reviews the literature regarding the role of globalisation, family, gender, friendship, and school in influencing students' higher education and occupational choices. The research questions, paradigm, design and sample are discussed later in the methodology chapter. Methods of data collection and methods of data analysis are also discussed in the methodology chapter. The results have been divided into two chapters. Chapter four presents the girls' results and chapter five presents the boys' results. Chapter six disscusses how much influence family, gender, friends and school have on the research participants' decision-making process for their future occuaptions. The research conclusions are presented in chapter seven. Recommendations, strengths and potential limitations of the study, and areas for further research, are also discussed in chapter seven.

This thesis is considered to be a contribution to knowledge in this field for three reasons. First, unlike the literature in the West - literature that often sees the mother as the most influential in children's occupational choices - this study makes an interesting contribution to the sociology of education because it highlights how the father is the most influential for both boys and girls. This is particularly relevant for those societies, where hierarchical social structures are still in place, such as in Qatar. Secondly, students rely heavily on their informal networks, not the formal structure that is in place, so this study is the first of its kind in Qatar to highlight the importance of these networks in students' occupational decisions. Therefore, to develop an effective career guidance framework it is important to consider these networks and to include and use them. Thirdly, it was to the researcher's surprise, as a woman, to discover that men in Qatar experience a degree of discrimination. Therefore, this research adds a contribution to gender studies – especially those focusing on the Middle East, which tend to concentrate on women's equality.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

As mentioned previously in the introduction chapter, twelfth-grade Qatari students struggle to make future occupational and educational decisions despite the availability of good higher education programmes and generous scholarships. This research will try to highlight how Qatari students make their future career decisions and what the main factors are influencing their decisions. It is a national matter for Qatar because, with a small population and big market demands to make the best use of their youth, trying to align its youths' future career options with the country's future needs is important. The first step in this journey is to understand how Qatari students settle on their future educational and occupational decisions. Decision-making processes have been studied in detail by psychologists, economists, and market researchers. In this research I will explore the social factors behind making certain decisions rather than others. In studying this issue, in this chapter I shall review the literature regarding the effect of globalisation, family, socioeconomic class, social capital, cultural capital, gender, friendship, school, and school counsellors on students' career decisions.

The literature included in the following chapter draws on a range of research from around the world, specifically: Kenya, Turkey, Nigeria, Belgium, France, India, Australia, North America, China, Middle East, etc. as well as the United Kingdom. These draw on research that primarily adopts quantitative surveys or mixed methods of survey and interviews. The literature used incorporates sample sizes from just a few hundred to several thousand and with participants mostly ranging in age from twelve to eighteen years old, with some participants older but looking back to the occupational choices they made earlier in their lives. Many of the research studies drawn on in this literature review adopt a cross-sectional design although some are longitudinal in nature. The theoretical framework of these is not always evident, particularly for the very quantitative studies. However, many draw on social and cultural ideas and the importance of these is also reflected in the framework this research is situated in.

2.2 The context of globalisation and career decision-making

The Oxford dictionary defines globalisation as "The process by which businesses or other organisations develop international influence or start operating on an international scale" (OED, 2016). Globalisation is a world-wide movement that has helped open channels to

money, goods, services, people, and jobs to flow, boundary-less, across nations (Pan, 2005). Innovation in information and communication technology has accelerated its effect by connecting businesses and people (Ogasawara, 2007). Globalisation has not only dismantled trade barriers, but has also spurred the outsourcing of employment, enabling citizens of both developing and developed countries to reconsider their career development tracks (Collin & Young, 2000). Some people argue that it is an economic process, but "never before in history has there been such rapid change in people's lives" (Pan, 2005, p. 31).

Arguably whilst globalisation has created new opportunities for work, it has also increased young people's insecurity, making career-decision information processing a Sisyphean task, since adolescents find it increasingly hard to predict the future. This means that their career options, as well as the costs and benefits associated with attaining a specific educational degree are also difficult to evaluate (Robert & Bukodi, 2005). A young person has to establish him- or herself in a new social context that globalisation enforces and this is significant in countries like Qatar. This is because, globalisation enhances competitiveness, which means that young people who have no or little work experience or insufficient education suffer the most (UN, 2011). Uncertainty, competitiveness, and security are issues that a young person has to deal with while thinking about his or her future path (Miles, 2003).

This uncertainty, competitiveness and insecurity was raised by Beck in his book *Risk Society*, which was first published in English in 1992. Beck defines risk as " a systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernisation itself" (Beck, 1992, p. 21). Beck (1992) argued that globalisation has helped distribute not only the good things but also the bad. He proclaimed that scientific and industrial development has resulted in risks and hazards that are irreversible and that future generations and the environment will suffer the most. He gave the Chernobyl nuclear power plant crisis as an example of the risks and hazards that are beyond anybody's control and that would affect people's lives forever. In a lecture for The Sixth Annual Lecture on Human Rights 2011, Beck gave the Arab Spring as an example of such hazards that might cross national boundaries and shape people's lives, and all people can do is to manage risk in an effort to minimise any potential damage (TAUVOD, 2011). Beck's work fits into this research ontology because the young have to take future occupational decisions in a rapidly changing world whose main feature is uncertainty. Beck (1992) also highlighted the fact that the labour market requires mobility – something that is at odds with a close-knit social structure such as

family and ties to a certain geographical region, and that adds to young people's concerns and anxiety when considering their future occupations.

2.2.1 Benefits and problems of globalisation

Globalisation is considered to have created winners and losers – career paths that were once prestigious have lost their prominence, and those that were considered of second order have become highly paid. Munshi & Rosenzweig (2006), for example, examine the effect of the Indian caste system on career guidance to argue that the obsolete institutional framework failed to acknowledge labour market fluctuations, with men being advised to follow careers that are no longer promising, and women, traditionally ignored in career advising, winning the market offering of highly-paid white-collar jobs. In fact, women appear to be the social group that has benefited most from the new globalised career dynamics (Munshi & Rosenzweig, 2006). This study will try to find out if this is the case for young Qatari girls. In part this is because globalisation has not only impacted on the prevalent domestic female gender models, but has also allowed women to pursue careers from home and complement the responsibilities of mothers and workers (Hutchings et al., 2012). Work from home opportunities have spurred the creation of post-organisational careers as the "significance of organisations as the central arena for professional careers decreases" (Mayrhofer et al., 2005, p. 38), with employees no longer relying on organisations for the provision of a specific career path, but rather on their own flexibility and leadership to forge it themselves. The uncertainty that globalisation has produced and careers moving out of traditional places has made it more complex for young people when making a career decision (Pan, 2005). In turn, this has also influenced the educational process, as universities have had to shift their educational practices from preparing graduates for one long-term life employment to teaching flexibility and skills necessary for maintaining short-term contracts and a myriad of career paths (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009).

It can be assumed that globalisation has therefore affected career guidance; the results of globalisation can be considered to have led to a convergence of local career guidance practices, so that local societal values assume a secondary role in the career counselling process, with advisers referring to the established Western models when giving advice (Watts & Sultana, 2004). To a certain extent, Watts and Sultana predicted a gradual integration of Western guidance practice within the specific cultural and societal context, with both clients and advisors acknowledging the dynamic nature of contemporary workplaces. Globalisation

has therefore led to the internationalisation of career guidance and practice, not only because job characteristics and responsibilities become identical across the globe, but also because a growing number of career advisors received education abroad and have implemented the foreign methods and tools within the domestic practice (Savickas et al., 2005). Such a perspective, however, remains contested, as Herr (2008) notices globalisation has not led to the universal applicability of one or more guidance frameworks, rather that international career practice has diverged from the established Western practices as each nation has modified them to suit the specific societal structure. Despite the debate, "globalisation is such a significant factor in cultural homogenisation that efforts in the career development field may be toward identifying more cultural commonalities than differences" (Young et al., 2007, p. 7). Nevertheless, if nothing else, globalisation has changed the way young people and those in the work force reflect upon their own choices and professional development, so that employees assume much more proactive stances regarding their career choice and development to remain competitive in the employment market (Herr 2008). In addition, the jobs in the globalised world have necessitated individuals committing to lifelong learning and continuous self-development, rather than employees focusing on task-performance (Schultheiss & Esbroeck, 2009). Consequently, school-to-work career guidance practice has had to account for the globalised opportunity structure, in order to change the perception of middle- and low-income students and assist them in acquiring knowledge about labour market, and teaching them to negotiate their career futures (Hartung & Blustein, 2002).

Designing an effective national career guidance programme, however, is dependent upon the interests of the various stakeholders – a good public policy has to integrate the interests of employee organisations, students and parents (Watts, 2008). Although career guidance policy remains exclusively within the national domain, international organisations like OECD and the EU have been offering policy advice and measuring progress in the sphere (Sultana 2004). For example, career guidance interventions – whether in the form of initiatives that stimulate life-long learning or in the form of establishing the right to vocational guidance – have also been used within the expanding remit of the European Union in the past 20 years as a mechanism to promote the competitiveness of European economies (Watts et al., 2010). However, what is clear is that for young people, making career choices is not straightforward and is influenced by a range of macro factors; other sources are also of importance in the process.

2.3 The role of family on career choice selection

Some argue that in a dynamic socioeconomic world, family has lost its influence over its members' vocational lives because of globalisation, but evidence suggests this is not the case (Udoh & Sanni, 2012). Family profoundly influences a child's developmental ability to evaluate choices and this evaluation is an essential process in selecting an occupation (Udoh & Sanni, 2012). For example, a person's rationale for making particular choices will be connected to his or her cultural and social capital, and is very different from one person to another (Grenfell, 2012). A large number of studies have confirmed that parents' attitudes towards occupations significantly influence their children's occupational choices (Miller, 2000; Udoh & Sanni, 2012). Indeed, researchers studying the career choice process point out that family is often the main social factor in influencing young people in selecting their future careers (Gati & Tal, 2008; Kniveton, 2004) and – regardless of globalisation – this trend is present both in studies conducted in Western countries like Germany (Dietrich & Kracke, 2009) and in emergent markets such as Lebanon (Nasser & Abouchedid, 2006). It is suggested that a family's cultural and social capital, socioeconomic class and family members are all factors that affect adolescent career choice.

2.3.1 Family socioeconomic class

The socioeconomic class of the family is considered to be strongly influential in terms of children's career choices. Ken Roberts considers career choices to be predetermined by the student's background and culture, and believes that the opportunity structure has not changed dramatically over the years; instead, students from low-income families still end up in lower-quality universities (if at all) and eventually in lower-paid jobs. The imbalances in the selection of career paths can be attributed to a lack of opportunities pertinent to specific social classes (Roberts, 2009). Several studies have also shown that middle-class parents focus more on their children's education and try to use all available resources to secure their children's future (Grenfell, 2012; Helve & Bynner, 2007). For middle-class parents, accumulating educational qualifications in order to gain better cultural and social capital is important. This is because it allows the family to move up the social ladder, or at least secure their socioeconomic place and make sure their children do not drop out of their social class. Furthermore, the background of parents belonging to a more advantaged social class (Ali et al., 2005) and a student's perception of economic capital both impact on self-efficacy and career-choice decisions, as "students who reported greater economic resources, social power

and social prestige also reported greater confidence in their abilities to complete career decision-making tasks" (Thompson & Subich, 2006, p. 299). Sutherland (2013) revealed that parents' expectations for their children are often passed down through several generations, which leads to children staying in the same socioeconomic class as their parents, with almost the same level of jobs. It is inevitable then that this will impact on career choices.

In addition to being constrained by lower levels of cultural and social capital, working-class young adults also chose not to opt to high-ranking universities. Some do not make particular choices because they are constrained by financial/material aspects, such as buying books or paying a fee for a test that is a requirement (Helve & Bynner, 2007) whilst others choose not to attend high-ranking universities because they fear they will not fit in and expect to experience a lack of belonging (Ball, Davies, David, & Reay, 2002). Even high-achieving students from working-class families might shun high-ranking universities because they worry about the way they speak, dress, and behave. They even refrain from expressing their opinions, to avoid being judged by fellow students they perceive to be wealthy and privileged (Gevertz, 2014).

On the other hand, Beck (1992) claimed that social class has lost its relevance in today's modern societies and therefore, social inequality has shifted from being centred on wealth to being centred on risk. In this context, families are driven by minimising the risk of falling off the social ladder or at least holding on to their position in society. He also highlighted the emotional strain placed on families because of modernisation. Modernisation in his view requires individuals who are mobile and free to choose with no constraints whatsoever, which is in conflict with basic traditional social roles revolving around gender, family and marriage. Indeed, in Beck's view, modernisation places the burden of taking wrong or risky decisions on the individual. He suggested that competition has increased because of the change in the labour market and that individuals have found they need to take control of their future plans without reference to anyone else. This process of individualisation has added considerable strain to family life, where all members have found themselves having to juggle several life roles at once. Indeed, in Beck's view, females will struggle the most in this individualisation process because they are the ones who are tied to child rearing, which makes it harder for them to compete.

2.3.2 Social capital and cultural capital

According to Bourdieu, social capital refers to resources available for a person based on connections and group membership (Grenfell, 2012). These connections exist either in the family or within the community and are accumulated over time. They provide information and resources and facilitate action that is otherwise not available for a person. Since information, connections, and action funnel career choice, social capital is considered to be an important concept when looking into adolescents' career decision-making. Coleman (1987) differentiates between two levels of social capital – one between parents and children and another between families. He refers to the latter as "closure". Putnam (2000), on the other hand, classifies social capital as bonding and bridging capital. He describes bonding social capital as relationships that link people who are of the *same* group, like nationality, class and colour, whereas bridging social capital refers to the ties that link people across different groups, for example, people from different social classes or nationalities.

Since this research is taking place in an Arabic country, it is worth mentioning the negative side of social capital – the social capital that gives advantage to some people over others just because they have the right connections. This is called *Wasta* in Arabic. It exists in other societies but it is known by different names; for example, it is called *blat* in Russian and *vitamin-B* in German. *Wasta* is a type of nepotism or favouritism that confers advantage to one person over another, just because of tribal relationship or close friendship (Smith, Huang, Harb, & Torres, 2011). *Wasta* is a form of negative use of social networks and people in the Arab world are very aware of the existence of such social capital. Furthermore, it "can be found in all aspects of Arab society: education and university admissions, job applications, government service" (Ramady, 2016, p. 13). According to Ramady (2016), "in the Arab countries, succeeding or failing may depend heavily on the scale and the scope of Wasta" (p. 3). People who lack such connections are usually frustrated and have negative feelings towards society, as will be shown by some of the participants in this research. Ramady (2016) has acknowledged that *Wasta* is a form of social capital and has tried to place it into Boudieu's and Putnam's social capital theories. He placed *Wasta* in the heart of Bourdieu's theory of social capital, where reproduction of class and inequalities depends on those with connections. For Putnam's positive social capital that benefits society through volunteering, *Wasta* can be viewed as the negative complement. Ramady has also highlighted that kinship ties weaken state institutions.

Parents' social capital can play a definitive role in adolescent educational and occupational choice; this is because parents introduce their children to their social network. These networks provide resources that contribute to the young adult's wellbeing (Helve & Bynner, 2007). In some societies, a telephone call to the right person makes all the difference (Nydell, 2012). An illustration of this point is students' educational success. Research has indicated that students' educational success is strongly related to their parents' relationships with schools and teachers – strong social capital – because they reinforce the values of education (Fuller, 2009). Devine (2004) suggested that parents who have succeeded in school themselves are better able to help their children in school, so they gain better qualifications, which in turn can lead to better jobs.

Parental support and engagement is a form of social capital. Parental career-related engagement is positively linked to an adolescent's career maturity and career exploration (Dietrich and Kracke 2009). Rogers et al. (2008) reported that social support from family and peers was the most significant factor in explaining engagement in career planning, as students who receive such support demonstrate higher levels of career maturity than those who do not. Furthermore, parents also influence the process of gathering information about potential higher education opportunities, as together with various media, they represent the nearest reliable source of information about educational opportunities (Al-Fattal, 2010). Indeed, Witko, Bernes, Magnusson, and Bardick (2005) indicated that senior high-school students mostly approach their parents when it comes to career planning. Lack of support for adolescents' career decision-making by parents has also been examined. The article 'History Repeats Itself' revealed that parents' own career explorations affect the strategies they use to direct their children. The parents' own histories and the absence of support from their own families is passed on to their children (Sutherland, 2013). In a study of 283 French high-school students, researchers found that children of families who are less involved in their children's education request less information from family members and school counsellors regarding career decision making (Vignoli, Croity-Belz, Chapeland, Fillipis, & Garcia, 2005). Moreover, in a study of 359 German adolescents, the researchers found that parental support is positively associated with adolescents' career exploration, and that parental interference and lack of engagement result in decision-making difficulties (Dietrich & Kracke, 2009). Dietrich and Kracke (2009) also found that boys experience less parental support and more interference in their career decision-making (p.115).

Young people who have little or no social capital may find its influence unfair or even offensive (Helve & Bynner, 2007) because they may feel they do not have an equal chance as they cannot reach the right people. Interestingly, by contrast, some young people with overly strong bonding social capital but little bridging social capital think that they need to distance themselves from these strong bonding networks in order to be accepted and get by in wider society (Holland, Reynolds, & Weller, 2007). This is something that will be explored later in this thesis.

As well as resources that are endowed by family, volunteering is also a central measure of social capital according to Putnam. By helping others and doing good for other people, students stretch their social network. It was found that "the highly educated people … are more likely to volunteer, to donate, and to give blood" (Putnam, 2000, p. 118). Interestingly, there seem to be certain types of networks that nourish and promote volunteering and it is through social networks that a person discovers volunteering opportunities; it has also been reported that volunteers were very often recruited by friends and relatives (Apinunmahakul & Devlin, 2008). Paik and Navarre-Jackson (2010) revealed that volunteering is conditioned by being recruited, and demonstrated that social ties influence volunteering. So, do students' own social networks encourage them to volunteer and by doing so do they accumulate more social capital? And do students whose social connections are weak not get the chance to be asked to volunteer, and as a result their social capital is restricted?

According to Bourdieu, cultural capital facilitates educational success, which is in turn associated with occupational advantage. He argued that cultural capital enables students from backgrounds high in cultural capital to gain a higher educational advantage, in terms of educational success and this helps maintain their higher-status positions in the world of work. He did not deny that less fortunate students could gain a good education and benefit from it, but he suggested that these students find the educational system more of a challenge, because the educational system tends not to reward highly the cultural capital of the less advantaged students (Sullivan, 2001).

A family's cultural capital refers to non-financial assets like knowledge, skills, and education that parents pass on to their children. Cultural capital can be embodied like habitus and the use of language, or it can be objectified like a piece of art. It also can be institutionalised, like academic qualifications (Bourdieu, 1986). In their early lives, adolescents are exposed to cultural capital through their family and their family's wider

networks (Helve & Bynner, 2007). Taste, heritage and habitus are a result of field and agent exposure over time; they formulate a person's cultural capital, which is inherited and accumulated (Grenfell, 2012). Ball et al. (2002) describe students' choice of HE as a matter of taste. Parents nourish their own cultural capital for and in front of their children and the children observe and absorb this culture and way of thinking. This, in turn, affects their ways of thinking and their decision-making as young adults.

Parental occupations may also have a considerable impact on a student's career choice (Udoh & Sanni, 2012). Parents act as a primary role model for their children's occupations. They model, discuss, and provide insight and information about their occupations (Levine & Sutherland, 2013). Parents tend to either dismiss or show additional support for certain occupations, which affects how their children make a choice. By responding to their children's curiosity, parents actually teach them about their occupations (Liu, McMahon, & Watson, 2015). Some families pass on their interest in certain occupations to their children, so one might see several generations of one profession in a single family. Indeed, some professions, such as medicine, are found to be rooted in family background (Cavenagh, Dewberry, & Jones, 2000). A child in such a family would, for example, find it hard to escape the pressure of being a lawyer or at least thinking about being one.

Family values and culture therefore are considered to influence young adults' career choices to varying degrees. For example, religion, which is a strongly embedded family value for many, has also been found to affect young adults' career decisions. In a study in Kenya, religion was mentioned as a factor influencing secondary-school students' career choices (Edwards & Quinter, 2011). Some parents' religious beliefs can limit the ambitions of young adults wishing to pursue certain careers, such as singing or acting (Helve & Bynner, 2007). Conversely, such beliefs might increase the desire to pursue a career in religious studies, for example. Parental influence is even greater in Eastern cultures, where parental obedience is of central importance. Indeed, in some religions, such as Islam, parental obedience is a not only a social value but also a religious one. Children are expected to obey their parents and fulfil family expectations, which is important when considering family influences on career decision-making. According to Cheung and Arnold (2010), in China social actors such as family and teachers implicitly set the performance goals adolescents have to aspire to and they scrutinise adolescents' development. Not surprisingly, in their study they found that *individually* oriented achievement motivation was not a significant driver in career exploration and self-discovery for Hong Kong students, a hypothesis that was upheld when

they used the same tools to test for socially oriented achievement motivation. This situation is even more apparent in the context of occupations for Middle Eastern girls. In countries where gender segregation is preferred, as in the United Arab Emirates, parents not only influence their daughter's occupational choice, but also control the decision of whether or not she should seek employment at all (Rutledge, Madi, & Forstenlechner, 2014). This is interesting and the role of parents in girls' decision-making is something this thesis also explores.

Students' career choices are also influenced significantly by their parents' level of formal education (Udoh & Sanni, 2012), which is an aspect of their cultural capital. Education has long been used as an instrument to consolidate families' cultural and social capital. Some families tend to accumulate educational degrees because they are seen as symbolic capital that will enhance their social capital. Indeed, according to Bourdieu, education has been used to widen social separation. He argues that people who occupy certain positions in a field – education – are often very embedded in it and tend to reproduce the pattern in their families (Grenfell, 2012). Ball et al. (2002, p. 62) have reported that students whose families are "previous users of HE" are aware of the various rankings of different universities, which is a strong sign of "social class-institutional related differences". Udoh and Sanni (2012) found that the parents' level of education affected their children significantly at secondary school level. Parents who hold degrees expect their children to gain the same or a better degrees (Liu et al., 2015). The role of education becomes apparent in Ferreira et al. (2007) who investigated the factors leading to premature ending of high-school studies and concluded that the children of parents who had not completed their secondary qualifications were also willing to enter the labour market without a diploma. This conclusion is also supported by a study of school "drop-out" parents; here the researcher found that such parents felt less engaged in their children's career aspirations and provided only emotional support. These "drop-out" parents were found to lack the knowhow to support their children in taking a career decision (Sutherland, 2013). However, by contrast, a study by Kniveton (2004) found that the educational level attained by the parents had no significant impact on their children's future educational options.

2.3.2.1 Embodied cultural capital

Language is one important aspect of embodied cultural capital. It is a predictor of how rich or poor one's human environment is. According to Bourdieu, linguistic capital is the ability to produce expressions for a particular market: "… all speech is produced for and through the market to which it owes its existence and its most specific properties." (Bourdieu,

1992, p. 76). Bourdieu argues that access to legitimate language in a specific field is not equal. There are certain linguistic components that are very related to specific fields. For example, if we take higher education as a field, there are linguistic components that are field-specific, such as university ranking, subject ranking, IELTS, SAT, GRE, and so on. Students who have no relatives who attended higher education lack these linguistic components and rely on school network for help (Farmer-Hinton, 2008).

The use of language is a predictor of one's social class. Class is usually associated with what is considered the proper way of talking and appropriate selection of words. Some accents, linguistic codes, and vocabulary are coordinated with specific social class (Gaine & George, 1999). In non-English speaking countries, use of English vocabulary in everyday speech is a predictor of well-educated family members. There is a symbolic image associated with speaking the English language that casts English as cultural capital (Lan, 2011). Even though Vaish and Tan (2008) were examining the inequality of use of English in Singapore's schools, he noted that students' English linguistic capital was associated with high SEC (Social economic Class) and allowed the student to read and watch television in English. Since English – in Qatar – is the medium for academia, college process, applications, universities' websites, and scholarship providers' websites, students with high English linguistic capital feel less hesitant in applying, whilst it might be a barrier in the application process for students with low English linguistic capital.

2.3.3 Gender expectations in career choice

The difference in the vocational choices of men and women has been researched extensively (Darcy & Tracey, 2007; Su & Armstrong, 2009; Einarsdottir & Rounds, 2009), with the researchers placing an emphasis on gender difference in vocational interests. For example, it was found that gender is the main factor influencing young people's aspirations to work in the IT industry, where males are more likely than females to consider and pursue a career in this particular industry (Zarrett & Malanchuk, 2005). Gender differences were also found to be important in students' selection of a particular higher education institution. In a study carried out in six South African universities, females place much more emphasis on campus security and quality of teaching in their selection of a university, while males emphasised social life and peer influence (Wiese et al., 2010). In addition to this, subject selection is also to be found to be affected by gender, where females tend more often to select humanities and social sciences while males lean more towards mathematics and physics

(Ayalon, 2003). Considering the gendered educational and vocational variations, Eccles (2011) stresses the need to explore and develop a comprehensive framework of women's vocational choices rather than studying why women choose different vocations to men, to acknowledge the lack of longitudinal studies, and to explore the personal and contextual changes influencing career selection for both genders. There is also a need for separate career counselling frameworks for women as their career development is burdened with employment stereotypes, sexism and the pay gap – issues that are unlikely to be encountered by men (Bimrose, 2008).

Scholars have acknowledged that the most substantial variations in career preferences could be attributed to gender difference. For instance, substantial information about gender differences in career choice was revealed in Holland's Occupational Themes (RIASEC), although the test was based on personality factors. Su & Armstrong (2009) performed RIASEC tests on over 500,000 participants to discover that women traditionally score more highly on the artistic, social and conventional components, while men excel in the other three – realistic, investigative, and enterprising. Such a discrepancy is very pronounced among representatives from ethnic and minority groups; for example, a high level of incongruence in the RIASEC models has been recorded for African American females, implying that there is a stronger factor that influences career choice and creates such incongruence, such as social background (Kantamneni & Fouad, 2011). Such typological scores, combined with the fact that women score highly on both maths and verbal competences (Ceci et& Williams, 2009) might explain women's preference for the social sciences and their under-representation in science? However, even in the case where men and women score identically on the RIASEC tests, women are still found to prefer interests and occupations they associated as being pertinent to their own gender such as teaching and nursing (Einarsdottir & Rounds, 2009). Scholars have also found that women selecting a career in a male-dominated field such as engineering tend to cluster in specific departments, like architecture or chemical engineering, again forming occupational "pockets", with men dominating in one sphere and women in another (Zengin-Arslan, 2002). Talking of gender, (Francis, Hutchings, Archer, & Amelling, 2003) found that girls are much more ambitious educationally than they were twenty years ago and they may now aspire to careers that are traditionally pursued by men.

A much more unconventional approach to women's career choices is offered by Kleinjans (2009), who proposed that women have an inherent aversion to competition, which causes them to underperform in education and jobs in comparison to men, eventually leading

them to abandon potential career options where the struggle for salaries and promotions is intense. Pierre Bourdieu (2001) attributes women and men's choice of vocations to the masculine domination he sees as inherent from the beginning of time, where men and women are classified differently based on physical features with societies reinforcing these differences by assigning words, dress codes, colours, behaviours, and vocations that associated with each of them. For Bourdieu, because of masculine domination, women are unconsciously encouraged into vocations that will not threaten the authority of man; with society helping to embody this segregation and domination of masculinity. With more men in power, the idea of a female job that is appropriate to her gender and one that is motherhood friendly, such as nursing and teaching, has become obvious. For Bourdieu (2001), male domination has also added a hierarchy in the division of occupations like: doctor/nurse, executive/secretary. Moreover, men have added a status factor to their vocations that is not for women, which reinforces the double standards. For example, the nobility distinction factor that has been added to some roles, for example, a 'chef', who is usually a man, as opposed to a 'cook' who is usually a woman (Bourdieu, 2001). Whilst Bourdieu wrote from a very Western perspective, these ideas can be seen across many cultures.

Beck (1992) argued that in a modern world a person is free to choose and have more personal autonomy, but the reality is that a person is constrained by traditional social structures such as gender, family, friendships and ties to a regional culture. He emphasised that modernisation requires not only change in structure but also a change in relationships between social structure and social agents. Beck has suggested that in order for modernisation to successfully advance, individuals have to "release themselves from structural constraint" (Beck, 1992, p. 2). As mentioned previously, Beck illustrated that even though women in the modern world have been given the freedom to choose they are still limited because of child rearing, which will always be a part of their lives. With this said, in prosperous societies such as the Gulf countries, girls are less constrained by having children compared with their peers in Western countries. This is because of the availability of affordable babysitters and live-in nannies. Even though some studies have pointed out the negative sides of depending on foreign labour on society's values, they have not denied the fact that it has opened new doors for girls to aspire to and pursue a career, while worrying less about the burden of everyday housework and childcare (El-Haddad, 2003). As cited in (Fuller, 2009, p. 28), Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2001, p. 102) noted that females nowadays are more ambitious and "value autonomy and independence … because it promises recognition and money of their own".

That said, the evidence for gender differences in vocational interests is far from conclusive; it has been suggested that gendered vocational difference originates from environmental rather than from structural factors. When controlling for factors such as school, teachers, and subjects in schools, Andreea-Elena (2014) found no significant difference in the vocational preferences of boys and girls, a result that she attributed to the diminishing gap in the conventional understanding of "male" and "female" jobs. Policy, practice, and legislation have supported "domestic ideology" for women where certain subjects are taught for girls only or certain subjects are male dominated, which directs girls to certain streams and means they end up gathering in occupations like nursing, which then become deemed to be female vocations and not appropriate for a man (Gaine & George, 1999).

Although globalisation has increased the range of viable career choices for both genders, it is premature to rule out gender–job stigmatisation. Herr (2008, p. 52) for example, suggests that "stereotypes about 'men's work 'and 'women's work'… constrain persons from pursuing preparation and access to jobs they could perform well and enjoy but are stigmatised or thought of only in gender terms." Furthermore, we not only see gender segregation on the horizontal plane of occupations (with men traditionally working in careers that are not deemed appropriate for women), but also on the vertical plane, as men are often the ones to occupy the senior managerial positions, while women fill the more menial labour and junior positions (Jutting et al., 2006). Such a perceived occupational barrier is often cited as a reason for modest female career aspirations and underperformance (Inkson & Elkin, 2008).

Ortner (1996) argued that culture has developed a universal embedded way of thinking where nature is to blame for women's underperformance or performing less well than men at certain types of work. She pointed out that women's physical, social, and psychological circumstances contribute to the idea of her being closer to nature than men; and over the years culture has entrenched this concept. Gaine and George (1999) explained the ideology of women associated with domestic life and child caring as the reason for the loss of her productivity in the family in the beginning of nineteenth century. Gaine and George argued that in transforming from a productive family unit to public production sphere, women agreed to work in lower-paid jobs to maintain family income and over time lost the skills their ancestors had and so become more dependent on men. The consequence of this is that it makes her powerless and it becomes entrenched in culture. Gaine and George also added that men helped enforce the ideology of women and work after the Second World War. At that time, men emphasised their need for a clean house, beautiful wives and healthy children as an

argument to keep women at home, which was supported by child developmental theories about children not being separated from mothers for long periods of time. It also ensured that women returned to the home when the war ended, allowing the returning soldiers to have employment.

As noted earlier, gender stereotyping is also observable in family recommendations for career choices. Borg (1996) found that boys are much more often advised to pursue career paths leading to managerial positions by their family and close relatives. Females tend to underestimate their ability and have less self-confidence or lower expectations for success, especially in maths and science (Frome, Alfeld, Eccles, & Barber, 2006). Not surprisingly, females are less likely to attribute career success to their own efforts, even if they report high self-esteem (Patton et al., 2004). Some research has considered the role of fathers in the early lives of girls, looking at the influence of masculine encouragement to boost confidence and "permission" to pursue their careers. According to research in Lebanon, the fathers' educational level was strongly correlated with their daughters feeling successful in their occupations (Nasser & Abouchedid, 2003). The father's level of education was also highlighted in Li and Kerpelman's research, where the father's level of education was related positively to the daughter's willingness to negotiate a career path in the case of disagreement occurring between the parents and the daughter regarding her career future (Li & Kerpelman, 2007). Li and Kerpelman (2007) also highlighted that the daughter's attachments to her parents, with little separation of her feeling from that of her parents, acts as an obstacle in pursuing career plans that are different to those of her parents. To make their own choices, daughters tend to have the need to have an "implicit permission" from their parents to do so (Li & Kerpelman, 2007, p. 9). However, the most significant restriction on women's career choices is the prevalent perception (shared among both genders) of the primacy of domestic obligation for women, which either results in women pursuing a career below their potential, or in conflicts between domestic and work responsibilities (Chen, 2008). Indeed, the most significant predictor for women dropping out of male-dominated occupations is the desire to have a flexible job that allows them to have a family (Frome et al., 2006).

Gender socialisation is also considered to play a major role in young adults' occupational and educational choices. Boys and girls form their beliefs about gender identity by watching their parents and the people around them. By observing mother and father roles in the family, children build in a belief about their role in life, which in turn is likely to affect their occupational choices. Children are considered to relate to their gender by observing the

power structure within the home; the financial control and family decisions in the home in which they are raised (Jungen, 2008). According to Jacobsa, Chhina, and Bleekera (2006), an adolescent's gender-typed occupational choice is related to parental expectation. Young people who were raised in a gender-socialised family are more likely to aspire to gender-typed occupations. Moreover, girls who are raised in authoritarian families experience career indecision more than their male siblings (Koumoundourou, Kounenou, & Siavara, 2011). Mothers and fathers advise their daughters and sons about occupations differently, for example, the daughter of a stay-at-home mother is expected to also stay at home after she has children; the same expectation is present for a daughter-in-law (Weinshenker, 2006). Working mothers tend to deal with their daughters and sons differently, providing more support and advice about occupations and the work environment (Maier, 2005). Maier (2005) argues that by doing so, mothers actually reinforce gender stereotypes. Girls' gender-typed career aspiration has been the focus of most of the research relating to socialisation and gender-typed occupation, while the research carried out on boys' occupational aspirations shows they are mostly related to their fathers' occupations rather than how fathers socialise their sons (Jungen, 2008). A father's own gender socialisation was not considered a factor when advising their children about occupations, and they tended to encourage entry into technical fields such as engineering (Simpson, 2003). This point about giving advice is, however, questionable in the Arab world, where an authoritarian Arabic male culture is still strongly prevalent. For both boys and girls, it has been found that the majority of occupational discussions happen with mothers at the beginning and fathers are involved afterwards (Maier, 2005) and this is something this thesis will also explore further.

Gender stereotyping is also based on social class. The literature suggests that when boys come to make career decisions they hold specific ideas about not only what it means to be a man but also about what careers are acceptable to male members of their background; this is an issue to which this present research will return. Gottfredson and Becker (1981) argued that gender identity is central to the career decision-making process of men and boys. Stereotyping and the centrality given to gender can partly explain male career choice but, as the cohort studied in this research demonstrates, not every young man operates in this way. In a study of students' gendered career expectations in fifty-five countries around the world, the researchers found that by fifteen years old, students' occupational plans are already segregated by gender. Sikora and Pokropek (2011) support the idea that gender identity is constructed culturally rather than biologically and by the age of fifteen, a student's career

plans are firmly gender-typed. Some occupations are viewed culturally as feminine or masculine and this therefore limits choices, despite the talent the student has. These values are immersed in the students' own value systems early in life and unless a shift in values happens, this trend in gendered selection will go on (Sikora & Pokropek, 2011). Gender-related maturity seems to play a role in young adults' career choices. Research has shown that girls mature earlier than boys in their career attitudes (Creed & Patton, 2003). Girls in single-sex schools have also reported higher career aspirations than girls and boys in co-educational schools (Bardick & Bernes, 2005). Young females have reported concerns about marriage and child rearing alongside having a job, which was not a concern among young boys (Kniveton, 2004). In a study in France, career explorations were related to different factors for both girls and boys in high school; career exploration was positively related to girls' fear of failing; for boys, career exploration was positively related to fear of disappointing parents. The researchers have explained this by suggesting that family expectations are higher for boys than for girls and that is why they put more pressure on boys – to fulfil gender and family expectations (Vignoli et al., 2005).

The sociocultural set up of some regions like the Arabian peninsula is governed by traditions that steer occupational choice towards certain careers that are gender-appropriate (Elamin & Omair, 2010). Such traditions are so entrenched that people will be punished if they choose outside of the acceptable range. For example, a person's marriage chance – especially for women – is affected by occupational choice (El-Sanabary, 1998). In a study in Saudi Arabia, men expressed traditional attitudes towards working women, where women were allowed to work but only if family came first, they worked in appropriate occupations and did not come into contact with unknown men (Elamin & Omair, 2010). In such societies, a female's awareness that some males would not want or, would indeed prohibit, their wives from working in a mixed-gender environment would impose a limit on the occupational choices she felt she had (Baud & Mahgoub, 2001). Furthermore, in some universities in the Gulf there are gender restrictions on entry to some fields of study. For example, Qatar University – the only public university in Qatar – offers civil engineering only to boys and architectural engineering only to girls. Baki (2004) argued that a gender-segregated education structure reverberates in the labour market by restricting female entry into certain fields of study and thus limiting women's access to the complete job market.

Inequality does not disadvantage women only. Inequality can be performed on both men and women. Kimmel (2000) argued that the separation of two spheres – men and women

– has affected not only women but also men. The ideology of separate spheres has left both men and women unhappy; and whilst women have made huge progress from the nineteenth century, from leaving home to accomplishing a good share in the workforce, men are still "searching for a way back into the family…praying for a return to the old gender regime". Kimmel argued that it is because of these frustrations men tend to join male-only groups such as "promise keepers" – in this research boys desiring to join army and police occupations – in search of fulfilments of masculinity. It is only recently that men have recognised the inequality that was imposed on them by the ideology of the separate spheres (Kimmel, 2000, p. 267). An affirmation of the silent pressure that is imposed on men by this separation is the research that shows that false practising of masculinity to appear strong might be the cause for men dying younger than women (Courtenay, 2000); although eating habits have nothing to do with this research, the wellbeing of young boys does. Courtenay's research took place in the United States and found that it is the belief of being strong and masculine that affects the wellbeing of men. The researcher argues that in societies that reward accomplishments and tie masculinity with being strong, men equate masculinity with power even in essential everyday habits such as eating, which made them take unhealthy eating decisions just because they are seen as "the strong" sex (Courtenay, 2000). And it is because of masculinity that men also overload themselves at work to increase productivity (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009). On the surface of masculine societies, it appears that men enjoy power, but beneath the surface men suffer when they are attuned with masculine stereotypes (Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Rudman, 2010). Some research has highlighted that the idea of boys being a disadvantaged group in education is being used as a tool that would benefit men and entitle them to work they have not deserved, but this same research has not denied that such idea benefits only some groups of boys, such as those with economic privilege, but certainly not all the boys (P. Gilbert & Gilbert, 2001). It is worth stating in here that the masculine field is plural and men view themselves within groups (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009), something which is heard in the Qatari boys interviewed as will be seen in the boys' results chapter.

In summary, girls' and boys' educational and occupational choices are argued to be related to and influenced by their social environment. Across nations, boys and girls dress, act, and are expected to do different things, dependent on their gender. This societal differentiation passes on certain habits, which affect boys' and girls' ways of thinking and in turn, their decision-making processes. This aspect of career and educational decision making will be explored as it relates to the Qatari context.

2.3.4 Individual family members and their roles

As we have seen, parents are argued to have differing roles in their children's occupational choices, alongside debate as to which parent has the greatest impact on the career decisions of young adults. Looking at this in more depth, Agarwala's (2008) study examined how management students ranked their career influencers, and discovered that fathers were often the person who influenced vocational choice most. This was the case for both male and female students – mothers also being the second most influential for girls. Another study comparing national and international students in the context of career decisions found that the father was the one among family members who was the most influential across all groups (Singaravelu, White, & Bringaze, 2005). Some researchers argue that mothers influence their children's career choices more strongly than fathers simply because they talk more with their children, respond to their questions, and may even take them to their place of work (Liu et al., 2015); (Helwig, 2008). In a questionnaire of 384 young people aged between 14 and 18 years old, Kniveton found that the same-sex parent is the more influential when it comes to future career choice, with mothers being more influential for girls and fathers being more influential for boys, followed by the opposite-sex parent (Kniveton, 2004). Kniveton also found that the eldest child is more likely to be influenced by the father and the youngest child to be influenced more by the mother (Kniveton, 2004). Several pieces of research, such as (Paa & McWhirter, 2000) and (O'Brien, Friedman, Tipton, & Linn, 2000) have illustrated that the mother is the one who has the greatest influence on her daughter's career decision. Li and Kerpelman (2007) have acknowledged that mothers and fathers differ in the role they play in their daughter's career decision and by balancing her mother's closeness and her father's authority, the daughter can feel the freedom to pursue her career plans. Vignoli et al. (2005) studied the patterns of parental influence on adolescents' career exploration and choices, and argue that girls are more susceptible to parental influence than boys are, mostly because they receive more support from parents for their vocational choices in comparison to boys (Dietrich & Kracke, 2009). This idea is supported by research carried out by Marmenout and Lirio (2013) with Emirati girls, where they discovered that "only male sponsors enable Emirati women to actually achieve their career ambitions" (p.158). In a study of African American males who studied engineering, four out of six participants stated that it was their fathers' influence that make them end up going into engineering, one stated it was due to his mother and the sixth stated it was his cousins (Moore, 2006).

Throughout a person's life, input from siblings is important and its effect undeniable. Kniveton's work indicated that parental influence weakened from elder to younger children and that the elder children influenced their younger siblings more than their parents did when it came to career choice (2004). Research supports the conclusion that older children can act as positive or negative role models that can influence their younger siblings. Students with an older brother or sister who struggled because of a lack of achievement tend to work harder and have higher aspirations (Schultheiss, Palma, Predragovich, & Glasscock, 2002). Indeed, older siblings have been found to pave the way for their younger siblings to attend college (Miguel Ceja, 2006). Interestingly, despite the study finding that younger siblings felt that they had no influence on their older siblings, some older siblings reported that their career choice had been affected by caring for their younger family members (Schultheiss et al., 2002).

Parents and siblings are not the only influence within the family; extended family and relatives also play an essential role in young adults' lives. To be precise, the word "family" in some societies, such as Arab, implies the meaning of "over a hundred fairly close relatives" (Nydell, 2012, p. 63). Family members like grandparents, uncles, aunts, and other relatives were mentioned when adolescents were asked about who influenced their career choices. In a study carried out in the United Kingdom in 2000, the researchers noted that adolescents who went on to become medical students has been exposed to doctors in their extended family; these students also reported "more uncle and aunt connections" (Cavenagh et al., 2000, p. 899). In a study carried out in Bahrain in 2012, the researcher reported that 15 per cent of the participants had decided to study nursing because they have been inspired by relatives who were nurses (Eman, Cowman, & Edgar, 2012). Similarly, when Kenyan high-school students were asked about the factors that had influenced their career choices, the most common answer was having a friend or a relative in certain career (Edwards & Quinter, 2011). In some societies, for example, in Latin America and the Middle East, where familial goals take precedence over individual goals, families apply pressure to young adults to make a career choice that will benefit or at least sustain family cultural capital (Singaravelu et al., 2005). These ideas clearly connect with Bourdieu's notions of cultural and social capital.

2.4 Friendships and career choice

However, as well as drawing on their parents' social capital, young adults also develop and build their own. They do this by drawing on the resources that they are members

of, such as school classes, friends, and volunteering communities. Young people can also build social capital through social media, although this is beyond the scope of this research. Being a member of a sports club, for example, supplies young people with networks that help them bridge social gaps and create ties that are essential for positive life. Moreover, such clubs enhance self-esteem and give a sense of achievement (Helve & Bynner, 2007). The more immersed a student is in these groups, the more beneficial these connections will be (Raskoff, 2014). As Putnam states, "Fund-raising typically means friend-raising" (Putnam, 2000, p. 121).

Friendship is one of the strongest bonding networks that young people build. It is an important factor affecting a student's educational and occupational decision in three main ways. The first is that the student relies on friends' social support. The second is the wealth of connections and resources that runs through these friendship networks, and the third is the importance of friendship for a student's well-being and self-esteem (Helve & Bynner, 2007). Indeed, it was found that most people, both male and female, got their jobs through friends (Nasser & Abouchedid, 2003).

Regarding students' career aspirations, it has been shown that friendship influences students' future educational and occupational plans. Fuller (2009) highlighted that students with different levels of educational aspirations are influenced differently by their friends. Low aspirers are the most influenced by their friends, tending to follow them to the work place after school. Medium aspirers tend to be influenced positively by their friends and follow them to college. Unlike the medium and low aspirers, friendship ties tend to be looser among high aspirers and their future occupational and educational plans are far less influenced by friends (Fuller, 2009); this is the case with most of the students in this study.

It is possible that some students might compromise their educational choices in order to stay with their friends, because of the fear of losing them (Sinclair, Carlsson, & Björklund, 2014). The desire to maintain high-school friendships can also lead to students selecting their university, and even educational choice, so that it matches that of their friends (Sinclair et al. 2014). Likewise, having "college-bound" friends – friends who will be attending college after school – increases the likelihood of a student applying for a college course (Alvarado & Turley, 2012). In a later study, Alvarado and An (2015) concluded that having a college-bound friend has a positive effect on a student's college-readiness. Furthermore, peers were found to be an important factor in young people's college choice (Fletcher, 2012). For an

indecisive student, peer determination to pursue a specific career track has been reported to motivate the student to gather further information about alternative careers and reconsider their choice of university major (Walmsley et al., 2010). Furthermore, recent studies indicate that peers and friends may be the primary influencers in career decision-making for non-traditional career aspirations, especially for young people from families from a low social class (Singh and Chander 2013); respondents from rural backgrounds cite them as the main motivators to pursue a career in education.

An interesting phenomenon is observed by Kiuru et al. (2012), who discovered that young people who are best friends in adolescence eventually end up on a similar career path. The same is true for the educational choices, as the educational aspiration of their peers was a statistically significant predictor of educational attainment (Kao & Thompson, 2003). Older friends tend to have an interesting role in a high-school student's life where they have been found to provide a comfort zone for students in their transition to high school. They provide practical information, such as locating classrooms, and emotional support, such as preventing the new student from being bullied. Older friends also help their friends to "bridge out" to new friends (Helve & Bynner, 2007).

Students' own cultural capital revolves around the "like us" factor, affecting their selection of close friends who typically have the same social backgrounds (CRE, 2004 and 2005). For instance, the Commission for Racial Equality (2004) report claimed that 90 per cent of white English people have no or few friends from black and minority ethnic backgrounds (CRE, 2004 and 2005). The same can be said about ethnic communities; a study conducted in Britain concluded that Caribbean young people select their close friends from those who have the same ethnic background (Helve & Bynner, 2007). This process of choosing friends from the same background is called "homophily". In a study of several American high schools, Currarini, Jackson, and Pin (2010) concluded that students choose their friends based on racial bias. By choosing close friends from the same background, a student forfeits many advantages that might arise from networks between friends from different backgrounds. This selection on the basis of shared backgrounds highlights the strength of embodied habitus that these students inherit unconsciously from family and also highlights how cultural capital can restrict social capital. However, it also highlights the difficulty in finding and making friends with those from different networks. Putnam (2000) encourages civic participation to overcome these cultural barriers and develop inter-ethnic

friendships, which creates bridging networks that enhance social capital between people; something this thesis also considers.

2.5 The role of school and career guidance counsellors

As already noted in the section on family, cultural capital is an important theoretical concept as it is very much linked to taste and dispositions, which is important when considering choices and aspirations. Coleman (1987) has articulated what he called "the division of labour", where parents are responsible for career and income and school is responsible for children's education. For Coleman, schools can provide opportunities, make demands, and give rewards for the socialisation process of a child, but not attitudes, effort, and conception of self, which can only be provided by the home environment. He argued that by leaving the task of socialisation to the school, children lack positive attitudes, effort, and conception of self, and in order for schools to be effective, families have to take their fair share of responsibility in socialising children. He stated that "schools, to be effective, must change as families change, must be adjusted to the conditions of the institution they complement" (Coleman, 1987, pp. 35,36).

Thrupp (as cited in Archer & Hutchings, 2000), has drawn attention to the ways that schools develop processes that reflect their SES (socioeconomic status) mix (Thrupp, 1999, p. 125). Certain schools or colleges have rules and expectations that have an impact on students, for example, they will affect the way students dress, behave, and speak. The school environment and expectations also make some educational and career choices more obvious than others, and work as a part of an unconscious *habitus*, driving students' occupational and educational choices towards the school's philosophy. Moreover, research has shown that teachers, and therefore schools, strongly affect students' academic achievement (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005).

If we agree that school environment and philosophy affect students' career choice, the geographical location and type of school is also critical. Since students commute to school every day, where a family lives can be an advantage or disadvantage in terms of access to different types of school. Prime locations where good schools are located usually have very high house prices, which people with low incomes cannot afford. As a result, these good schools tend to reproduce the existing system because students with similar social backgrounds are mixing together.

The geographical location of schools matters in terms of how much these school environments can provide to meet students' aspirations. Schools are dependent on their geographical location for several reasons, including tax income – in countries such as the USA where schools are dependent on property tax – surrounding community resources, availability of good teachers, local population, local market and so on. Schools in places such as inner cities, where there may be a higher proportion of people on a low income, have to deal with considerable financial difficulties and social issues. Families in such locations are often coping with issues like single-parent households, poverty, gang culture, drug use, and so on, which are transferred into the schools (ERO, 2013). Schools in such locations have to deal with all these issues on low budgets and with low-paid personnel. Such financial and social issues affect school and the aspirations it has for its students. Such an environment is not as productive as schools in the suburbs where tax income, good school facilities, availability of good teachers, community involvement and opportunities for scholarships are higher (Roscigno, Tomaskovic-Devey, & D., 2006). Moreover, students attending a school of low socioeconomic status had less access to influential networks that might support their future career than students in schools of higher socioeconomic status (Gonzalez, P., & Jovel, 2003). This is a factor that this study will investigate, specifically where scholarship providers tend to approach schools that are already renowned academically and who have students from the social backgrounds they would like to attract.

A student's ability to access institutional resources like universities and scholarship providers is directly proportional to their accumulative social, cultural, and economical capital (Fuller, 2014). Indeed, even seeking information is affected by social and cultural capital. Calarco (2011) has shown that students from lower classes hesitate to approach teachers and ask questions, often because they lack the knowledge of when and how to seek help. Calarco (2014) also added that teachers respond differently to students from different social backgrounds and spend more time in discussion with the students from more advantaged backgrounds because these students will be confident in approaching teachers, which students from less advantaged backgrounds are not. In research conducted in England to study girls' aspirations, relationships with teacher and staff was a distinct difference between low, middle, and high aspirers. It was found that low-aspiring students (those that wanted to leave school as soon as possible) had poor relationships with teachers and staff. Where the relationship between students and teachers was reasonable, the girls could be seen to be middle-aspiring girls (those who wanted to continue to college only). On the other hand, high-aspiring girls

(those that wanted to go to university) were more active in school life; they were more engaged in volunteering work and student mentoring within school and therefore had a very good relationships with teachers and staff (Fuller, 2009). High-aspiring students who had developed a good relationship with authority in school, such as with teachers and school administrators, reaped the benefits of a host of academic and social resources (Jack, 2016). It was found that students who sustain contact with school personnel – who serve as gatekeepers – benefit the most from opportunities that are offered, such as internships, university places, workshops, and school competitions (Jack, 2016). This access allows these students to build more social and cultural capital, which is the case for this study's female participants. Student–teacher relationships can thus be seen as essential for students, especially for those who come from low-income families. Students benefit from a positive student–teacher relationship both academically, by trying to fulfil their teacher's expectations, and socially, by enhancing their self-esteem (Gallagher, 2013).

Arguably, all relationships within school are important in understanding students' aspirations. Specialised school personnel, like social counsellors and academic counsellors, form a social network of support for students. M Ceja (2000) found that high-school students struggle to make decisions about their future career when their social network at school fails to help them sufficiently in navigating the college decision-making and planning process. These social networks within the school are essential for providing guidance and information, exploring financial aid, completing formal applications, all of which help students navigate their future plans smoothly. Plank and Jordan (2001) highlighted the critical role that school counsellors play in guiding students and helping them to make informed career decisions. In their longitudinal study, Plank and Jordan identified the regular absence of someone to provide information and guidance for students of low socioeconomic status. The more efficiently guidance and information is provided in school for all students, the greater the likelihood of students of low socioeconomic status making the best of their potential to plan for their future (Plank & Jordan, 2001). The quantity and quality of school counsellors is a measurement tool that is used to determine the quality of the school (Gandara & Bial, 2001). In spite of these assumptions, the reality of school counsellors in high schools is very different. McDonough (2005) has reported several logistical issues with school counselling that prevent school counsellors from fulfilling the requirements of their job as they should. Some of the issues reported are role conflicts, professional development needs, accusations of acting as gatekeepers based on their personal assessments, additional administrative duties,

and student to counsellor ratio. These issues, reported in the USA in 2005, are very similar to the issues that counsellors in Qatari schools face, and therefore this is an area this thesis considers, although not in great depth.

2.6 Theoretical framework

In situating this research within a theoretical framework, Bourdieu's ideas of social reproduction provide a useful way in which to explore the important ways that social context matters in exploring career choices making. Whilst Bourdieu's ideas are very much focused on the West, his ideas around cultural and social capital and the role of families is interesting and provides a useful means to explore the Qatari context. Exploring Bourdieu's ideas around the role of family, particularly how family relate to cultural and social capital as well as gender, would be interesting and useful within the Qatari context.

However, although Bourdieu is very useful as a theoretical framework because of his focus on the role of culture and status, it is worth noting that there are numerous critiques of his ideas. For example, theorists such as Goldthorpe (2007) and Jenkins (1992) all argue against the deterministic nature of ideas such as culture capital and the inherent lack of autonomy suggested by his theory. In addition, the very Western focus of his research may mean it will work less well in other contexts where notions of status are less grounded on economic resources and where religion is more important to cultural practice. Finally, a focus that is solely on the role of family ignores the value of school and of students as agents in their own right (Fuller, 2009). That said, he is still very useful as a starting point.

2.7 Chapter summary

In this chapter, the literature that is related to influences on secondary students' career decisions has been reviewed. This review has tackled several societal factors that are considered to have an impact on students' future educational and occupational decisions: globalisation, family, friendship, gender, and school are all influential factors that play a role in students' future career plans. All of these factors have been considered, to some degree, in relation to cultural and social capital, which can be seen as important in governing the frameworks students use to inform their decision making, albeit often unconsciously. It has highlighted how a student's environment socially, culturally and economically shapes embodied values that can be seen to influence choice. In the light of this review, Qatari

twelfth-grade students' future educational and occupational decisions will be explored, to take account of the role that these factors may or may not play in the decisions they make.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The research methodology comprises the philosophical assumptions about the best way of answering a research question and provides a road map for conducting research. Methodology is a research strategy that starts with the researcher's intellectual interests; passing through the subsequent design, methods chosen, instruments for data collection, data analysis, and so on. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) have defined methodology as "a broad approach to scientific inquiry specifying how research questions should be asked and answered. This includes worldview considerations, general preferences for design, sampling logic, data collection and analytical strategies, guidelines for making inferences, and the criteria for assessing and improving quality." (p. 21)

This chapter starts with the questions, rationale, aims, and objectives of the research. It will cover the research methodology, which will discuss research paradigms, approaches, design, sampling, methods of data collection, time design, methods of data analysis, and ethics. This chapter will also state the research's strengths and some of its potential limitations.

3.1.1 Research questions

This research is designed to answer the following question:

- How do Qatari twelfth-grade students – male and female – make future choices relating to education and occupations and what factors influence these decisions?

Questions related to this include:

1. What is the role of family, friends and school in Qatari twelfth-grade student future educational and occupational decision-making?
2. Does gender matter in the future educational and occupational plans of young Qataris?

3.1.2 Research rationale

As mentioned previously in the introduction chapter, in 2002 the State of Qatar initiated "Education for a New Era", a new educational reform. The main focus for the reform is to modernise the education system to align with contemporary international educational systems. However, the level of achievement of students was often not good enough for the

international universities because of two issues: 1) The quality of teachers in the independent schools. According to the Supreme Education Council (2011), 31% of teachers who teach in Qatar have no formal qualifications. 2) The students' poor performance. Although students have numerous choices after graduating from secondary schools, a lot of students are not always able to get accepted into their first choice. Poor performance becomes a serious barrier to pursuing additional schooling for Qatari school graduates (C. Stasz et al., 2007) . And even with high achievers, in the researcher's opinion some students have not had clear information about the admission system and the differences between different programmes and universities, because the higher education system has suddenly boomed in Qatar, and having up-to-date access to all this information by a student becomes yet another barrier.

As cited in (Sharif & Kassim, 2012, p. 36), "The Qatari higher education sector is developing at a rapid pace". The Qatari government is willingly spending billions of dollars to establish international high-quality higher education institutes for its people, and it is very harmful if its citizens cannot benefit from it. For example, "Weill Cornell Medical College has been promised 750-million dollars over eleven years by the Qatar Foundation" (Krieger, 2008). A professor from one of the American universities based in Qatar describes Qatari students as "kids who cannot succeed because they are not up to speed" (Krieger, 2008, p. 10). "Without…more incentives among students to maximise their qualification and match them to what the market needs… such reform will continue to have limited prospects" (M. Gray, 2013, p. 140).

In order to deal with school graduates who struggle to complete their higher education and decide thoughtfully on their future careers, the Higher Education Institute was launched in 2005. One of the Higher Education Institute departments is called The Advising Career Development Centre. This centre offers advice to students who come forward to seek advice regarding the best educational choices to make to best pursue their occupational aspiration and offers help and support to get the student accepted into a programme the student desires. At that time, no one in the independent schools in Qatar had an official role to guide students in taking decisions regarding their study or future education or occupations. The need to help and support students to think about their future career choices earlier resulted in the Education Institution creating a new position in secondary schools called "Academic Advisor", whose role is to guide students with their career choices as well as help them meet the international tests, deadlines, and other university requirements. Each secondary school should have one Academic Advisor regardless of student ratio. Since career advising is new in Qatar, there is a

very limited amount of personnel who are certified in career counselling, which as a result makes school administrators hire academic advisors who can do the job. The Academic Advisors can hold any Bachelor degree, so there is no certain route that qualifies a person to be an academic advisor; some schools demand good English and communication skills for the job. There is an ongoing call for starting career guidance earlier in the preparatory schools, but because of a shortage of staff this has been postponed.

The role of career guidance in schools presented in the role of the academic advisor is supposed to be helping students make thoughtful educational and occupational choices that match their academic abilities and their career aspirations. This role or career guidance is crucial for students in schools to be able to smoothly establish a career pathway. This research will look into Qatari twelfth-grade students' occupational and higher educational decision-making process. In particular, this research will be trying to explain the factors that might influence the Qatari students' – both girls and boys – occupational and educational choices. Understanding how young Qataris make their future educational and occupational decisions and the factors that might influence this decision will enable the Qatari government and those who are interested in students' career decision-making to better help Qatari young people. By doing so the Qatari government would deliver an insightful and well-informed framework that would be beneficial and supportive for the Qatari students.

The researcher has worked as an academic advisor in independent schools for two years and as an Advising and Counselling Officer in the Higher Education Institute in Qatar for one year. Through this time, she has dealt with a lot of Qatari students who struggle to make an occupational decision despite all the options available. Through that experience, the researcher was surprised by Qatari students, especially those who are high achievers and have tremendous educational, occupational, and financial resources; it was a question that she had for some time: why do such students, with such support and resources, struggle to take educational and occupational decisions? From the researcher's experience, this subject has to be studied from the students' points of view. The students' journeys have to be explored. In order to deliver good educational policy that will help guide students to smoother transition from school to work, students' educational and occupational decision making has to be explored.

3.1.3 Conceptual framework

Since there are some disagreements between scholars about the definition of fundamental terms used in this study like “career” and “career guidance”, it is important to clarify such terms. It is also useful to clarify some culture-related terms like “independent schools” and “secondary schooling”.

- Career: an occupation undertaken for a significant period of a person’s life and with opportunities for progress(Press, 2014).
- Career guidance: A service intended to assist people, of any age and at any point in their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers(OECD, 2004).
- Occupational decisions: Decisions related to a student’s future occupation.
- Educational decisions: Decisions related to a student’s higher education.
- Qatar: An Arab Gulf State.
- Independent schools: Government-funded schools that are granted autonomy to carry out their educational mission and objectives while being held accountable to terms agreed in an operating contract(Romanowski, Cherif, Al-Ammari, & Al-Attiyah, 2013a).
- Secondary schooling: Three high-school years: tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. Students are fifteen, sixteen and seventeen years of age.
- Twelfth graders: Students who are in their final year of schooling, which is the twelfth grade in the Qatari educational system, where by the end of the academic year, all twelfth-grade students in the governmental schools have to pass a unified national examination in order to be awarded the secondary school certificate.

3.1.4 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to understand how Qatari twelfth-grade students, both female and male, choose their future career and what factors affect this decision.

3.1.5 Research objectives

- To identify and describe the factors that affects Qatari students’ occupational and educational decisions making.
- To explore the processes of decision-making and explore the journey that the Qatari students go through until they settle on an educational and occupational decision.

- To inspect the difference between male and female Qatari twelfth-graders in choosing their future education and occupations.

3.2 Research methodology

Choosing the appropriate methodology depends on several aspects that the researcher has to decide on before conducting the research. The following section will look in to some issues that should be taken into consideration in deciding on a research methodology.

3.2.1 Research paradigms

Our observations and understanding of the world is controlled by a "fundamental model or scheme" which is called paradigm (Rubin & Babbie, 2008, p. 43). It is where a person stands that then shapes his or her views and understanding of the world. A paradigm is best described as a "worldview" or ontological position (Creswell, 2014). A research paradigm comprises four concepts: ontology, epistemology, methodology, and ethics (S.Lincoln, 2003). Gilbert (2008) defined ontology as the assumptions about the nature of reality. Questions like, what is the world? What is the meaning of being human? What entities can be said to exist? Answers to these questions shape a person's ontological position. There are two main ontological positions; these are objectivism and constructivism. Objectivists believe that the world exists apart from the observer. For objectivism, social phenomena are independent of social actors (Bryman, 2004). The second ontological position is constructivism. Constructivists see the world as socially constructed. They believe that social phenomena and their meaning are highly dependent on social actors (Bryman, 2004).

The second concept is epistemology. Epistemology is the philosophical assumptions in relation to the way we know the world and the relationship between us and the known. There are two main epistemological positions; these are positivism and interpretivism. For positivism, life and knowledge is a straightforward thing. The things that can be obtained by our senses are true and what cannot be scanned by our senses are not (Williams & May, 1996). Positivists see the world as objective and measurable and believe that social reality can be studied objectively as natural science. Reality is what our senses can sense. What can be seen, smelt, touched, etc. is reality (D. E. Gray, 2004). Researchers within this paradigm deal with facts, not with values. They use scientific methods, instruments, and numerical data in order to generalise findings. Interpretivists, on the other hand, ponder that "the world we see around us is the creation of mind. Our observation of a social phenomenon depends on our minds

(Williams & May, 1996). Interpretivists seek understanding through observing people in their natural setting and everyday experiences. Researchers in this paradigm position themselves in the research because they are aware that their own backgrounds influence their interpretations (Creswell, 2014). Examples of interpretivist approaches are symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, realism, hermeneutics, and naturalistic inquiry (Gray, 2004).

Methodology focuses on the best means for gaining knowledge about the world. According to Rubin & Babbie (2008), there are three methodological positions as to how best to conduct a social research: positivism, interpretivism, and critical social science (2008). Each paradigm has its own beliefs and it is crucial for a researcher to have a clear idea of his or her paradigm. A researcher's paradigm will influence the research methodology, which will affect the research findings.

Finally, ethics is the moral aspect of research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). There are several professional associations like the British Sociological Association (BSA) and the Social Research Associations (SRA) who have developed ethical codes to ensure the integrity of research. Each subject has its own ethical codes where researchers have to make sure that there is no harm and deception to participants.

Creswell has added a fourth paradigm or a worldview, which is the Pragmatic Worldview. The pragmatic worldview is concern about solving the research problem, and so concentrates on the solution that works without being obligated to any philosophy in particular. Pragmatists believe in reality and think that we need to stop arguing about what is real. Researchers usually using mixed methods seek justifications for using a certain method over another (Creswell, 2014).

3.2.2 Research approach

A particular epistemological position will naturally lend itself to a particular methodological framework and there are three research approaches: quantitative and qualitative, and mixed-methods. Each which will be discussed in the coming section.

3.2.2.1 Quantitative research

In this approach researchers tend to deductively and objectively test theories. They depend on measuring things using research instruments that seek to establish relationships between variables. Results tend to be quantitative data. Two popular designs that are used in this approach are surveys and experiments (Creswell, 2014). Quantitative oriented researchers

usually subscribe themselves to positivism or post positivism. Quantitative research provides data that is statistical, precise, and specific. Their findings are also usually generalisable.

3.2.2.2 Qualitative research

Qualitative research is a much inductive approach to research. Inductive approach means studying particular cases in order to reach a generalised theory. In other words, it is an approach that is interested in looking in an individual experience in order to understand and explore a social phenomenon. In this approach researchers immerse themselves in the participant's setting so as to observe their actions, feelings, and opinions. Qualitative research is often exploratory in nature, which means it generates information about unknown aspects of a phenomenon. Some research designs that are associated with this approach are narrative, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study design (Creswell, 2014) and include things such as interviews and observations. Many qualitatively oriented researchers adopt an interruptive or constructivism paradigm. Qualitative research produces data that is narrative, thematic, deep and rich, but it is less likely to be generalised.

3.2.2.3 Mixed methods research

Gilbert has defined mixed methods as "using two or more research methods within a project" (2008, p. 126). This approach involves integrating qualitative and quantitative data using distinct designs. Convergent parallel, explanatory-sequential, exploratory-sequential and transformative mixed methods are four designs within this approach (Creswell, 2014). Researchers using a mixed methods approach usually adapt the pragmatic worldview. They analyse data, integrate findings, and draw inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches in a single study (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). In a typical mixed methods research, narrative and numerical data is often acquired. Triangulation and transformation – quantitising or qualitising – are two strategies used in analysing data obtained from a mixed methods research. Brewer and Hunter (1989), as cited in (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p. 42) pointed out that "multi-method approach to research is superior to mono-method approach" because it provides a ground for data triangulation. Triangulation is a technique borrowed from surveying techniques and it is the use of two or more methods to check the results. It is a powerful validation tool if a researcher can prove the same point from different sources of information.

There are a lot of advantages to using a mixed methods design. First of all, since methods are very well linked to paradigms, researchers will have a new perspective, which is

very crucial to understanding (Gilbert, 2008). Another advantage is that it increases the accuracy of the findings through triangulation (Gilbert, 2008). Moreover, combining a qualitative with a quantitative approach broadens the researcher's understanding of the research problem.

To obtain the most informative answer to this research question, the researcher adopted a mixed method approach. In the researcher's opinion, it is very beneficial to combine the quantitative data with the qualitative information as this enables a more complete picture of the Qatari students' occupational decision-making journeys to emerge. Quantitative data will provide the descriptive elements of the whole sample, which will allow the comparison of boys with girls, and those who know with those who do not know what they want to do. It will also offer a wealth of descriptive data for the whole sample, such as the parents' occupations and level of formal education, which allows the researcher to picture the nature of the whole sample. This information will also allow the researcher to recruit suitable volunteer students to participate in the interviews. Furthermore, it will provide a starting point for the interviews and will help familiarise the researcher with the students' overall impressions about the subject. The qualitative data will provide a deeper understanding of the issues that are the subject of the questions. It also will help the researcher identify from the students' accounts other factors that might not be explicit in the data. Hearing students talking about their experience will give a better understanding of what the student goes through in taking a higher education decision or choosing an occupation, so it is the combination of the quantitative and qualitative data that will enrich this research.

3.2.3 Researcher paradigm

In life, decisions play a big role. Every decision we make affects our lives and is affected by who we are and where we are coming from. One of the early decisions we take in life is what we study, and what we study determines what we do; what we do has a great impact on us, our family, and our society as a whole.

Students have to take decisions related to their education as early as the tenth grade – what kind of study or stream of study they will be following – which can enable their progress or limit their future options. If a student is very aware of who they are, what they like, and how they are, decisions on a study stream will help them concentrate on their future and work towards their aim. On the other hand, if a student is not that sure of who he/she is, what

he/she likes, and how capable he/she is, decision on a study stream will restrain and limit their future options.

This research desires to investigate the process that students go through before settling on a pathway decision. Since the researcher intended to understand the process that Qatari twelfth-grade students go through before settling on an educational path for their career, the interpretivist epistemology is the appropriate way of gaining the insight needed. Thomas (2009, p. 75) has stated that "the main point about interpretivism is that we are interested in people and the way that they interrelate; what they think and how they form ideas about the world; how their worlds are constructed". We can understand knowledge by observing people closely through listening to them talk, hearing their feelings, and observing their body language (Thomas, 2009). Positivist epistemology, on the other hand, will not be appropriate in understanding this phenomenon we are studying since it involves a lot of feelings and social and psychological processes, which are hard to measure, if they can be measured at all. The world in the eyes of positivism is measurable and observable and depends on what we can measure objectively (Thomas, 2009), which is not the case here. This is because it is people's experiences that are the main source of data to understand the social reality of this research (Gray, 2004). Although this research will be mainly interpretative qualitative research, it will integrate some quantitative tools such as questionnaires to help better understand the issue and enhance validity and triangulation. Therefore, this research will use mixed methods to collect the data, but it will be qualitative-oriented research.

Information about a student's decision-making journey can be demonstrated through their actions, feelings, expressions, confusion, changing decisions, and so on over time. The research intends to look into the social and psychological part of the student journey up to the point they settle on a decision, therefore a longitudinal approach has been selected. This research adopts a longitudinal approach combined with using mixed methods in order to provide rich and insightful information of a quality that would be hard to obtain otherwise. Following participants from their last year in school up until leaving school (approximately one year) will reveal factors influencing their occupational decisions that cannot be obtained otherwise. Time is crucial in taking an occupational decision because such a decision affects a person's well-being for a large part of his or her life; to therefore carry out a piece of research focusing only on a certain period of time and not follow up would provide only a snapshot and not the detail surrounding the issue. The researcher wanted to obtain the maximum amount of data that can be collected to help examine and clarify the main factors affecting

Qatari students' occupational and higher educational choices – such a need can only be met by adopting the longitudinal approach.

3.2.4 Research design

The research design is the plan that the researcher adapts to conduct the research. There are different design frames that structure and define the research. The researcher can choose the best design to best answer the research question. The researcher can stick to one design or mix between designs or let it emerge as the research goes on (Thomas, 2013).

For a mixed methods research, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) have classified mixed method designs into mono-strand designs and multi-strand designs. They have identified five families in the multi-strand designs: parallel, sequential, conversion, multilevel, and fully integrated mixed designs. "Parallel mixed designs are designs with at least two parallel and relatively independent strands – one with qualitative questions, data collection, and analysis techniques and the other with quantitative questions, data collection, and analysis techniques. The qualitative and quantitative strands are planned and implemented to answer related aspects of the same overarching mixed methods research questions" (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 152). Results from both qualitative and quantitative strands are then used to draw inferences to generate a conclusion.

Parallel mixed designs allow researchers to "simultaneously ask confirmatory and exploratory questions, thus verifying and generating theory in the same study" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p. 152). Despite this, whilst parallel mixed designs are very powerful, they are very difficult and challenging to conduct because it requires expertise in both qualitative and quantitative methodology and can therefore be hard to integrate qualitative and quantitative data to draw coherent findings (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

In this research, parallel mixed design will be used as the best design to answer the study questions in the researcher's opinion. Two parallel strands will be conducted simultaneously. For the quantitative strand, a survey will be constructed and distributed to twelfth-grade Qatari students. Quantitative data will be collected, such as students' study tracks, desirable future occupation, educational plans, source of information, family, friends, and academic advising in the school. Student's opinions about their satisfaction of several issues like school career guidance, access to knowledge about labour market needs, and scholarship availability will be gathered. Students will be asked to volunteer to be interviewed

in the questionnaire. Then the qualitative strand will come into play. For the qualitative strand, the selected students who have volunteered will be interviewed twice, at different points in time: one while they are in school and the second after leaving school. The original intention was to interview the participants three times, but by being constrained the need to submit the study in time the researcher decided it would be better to interview the participants twice. The interviews will provide insightful qualitative data that will extend the information collected via the survey. Results from both the quantitative strand and the qualitative strand will be integrated to help explain the findings related to male and female Qatari twelfth-grade students' career choices.

A longitudinal study will be conducted in this research because time is a critical factor (Thomas, 2009) for twelfth-grade students when making a career decision. The twelfth year is the last year for Qatari students in school. On leaving school, there is a transition phase between leaving school and entering the world of work – including studying for a profession. The target of this research is to capture the student's critical transition phase from twelfth grade to whatever path they have chosen. To achieve this aim, this study will be a longitudinal one following a panel of twelfth-grade Qatari students – girls and boys – as participants for just under a year (eleven months). The study will follow the participants' career decision-making from twelfth grade to after leaving school.

Vaus has indicated that "longitudinal study can reveal a great deal about the direction of change at a societal, organisational or individual level" (2001, p. 115). He has also suggested that longitudinal design helps study career choices by studying the order of events to understand how people develop pathways. Saldana (2003, p. 16) has identified two reasons to conduct a longitudinal study. The first is to capture "the depth and breadth of participants' life experience" through long-term involvement, and the second is "to capture participant change through long-term comparative observations of their perceptions and actions". Vaus (2001) has pointed out that panel design allows researchers to track change "at both the aggregate level and the individual level".

How career decisions are developed is the question to be answered, and to do so time is needed to unfold this phenomenon. Capturing the right interval in a student's life and when this decision is being made is very important. The researcher believes that the transition phase from school to entering the world of work is the precise interval of time to best explore change in students' decision-making. The transition phase therefore will be the heart of the

research interval. Data will be collected before leaving school through the transition phase and up to the settling on a career decision.

By understanding the career decision-making processes in depth, we can make thoughtful regulations for career guidance in schools so as to minimise the stress and confusion that accompany the process of taking such an important decision.

3.3 Sampling

A sample is defined in the Chambers Dictionary as a small portion that shows the quality of the whole and is a term that has been borrowed from experimental research (Thomas, 2013). The main reason for sampling is to use known facts from the sample to try to understand unknown facts of the whole population. In other words, when sampling from a known population, a sample can go as far as making a statistical inferences from that sample to whole populations (N. Gilbert, 2012). However, researchers have to select their units of analysis – people, groups, or places – in a way that maximise their ability to answer the research question and make broader claims.

There are several kinds of sampling like probability sampling, purposive sampling, convenience sampling, and mixed methods sampling which fall under the broad umbrella of probability and non-probability sampling. Examples of probability sampling are random, stratified, and cluster sampling. Extreme case and snowball sampling are two examples of non-probability sampling.

All sampling techniques have some advantages and disadvantages. Favouring one strategy over another depends on several factors like the research question, the nature of the population, and the resources available. In order to select a fairly representative sample, the researcher has to have a detailed description of the population acquired via a sampling frame. A sampling frame is a list of all members or units of the population is needed to start the sampling process (N. Gilbert, 2012). In the sections that follow, the researcher outlines the sampling frame and the population background.

3.3.1 Population background

All governmental schools in Qatar are single-sex schools and have been called Independent Schools since the reform in 2002. Secondary schooling is three years of schooling for students aged fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen years old. Students can choose one

of three tracks: Advanced (Engineering) which focuses on mathematics and physics, Advanced (Medicine), which focuses on biology and chemistry, or Business, which focuses on literature. Subjects are divided into two levels Advanced (A) and Foundation (F). To give a clearer picture, Table 3.1 below shows the subjects that are taught in each track in the independent secondary schools in this research sample in the year of data collection.

Table 3-1 Subjects taught in study tracks

Track	Subjects	Hours/week	Total hours/week
1st (Engineering)	Physics (A)	5	32
	Mathematics (A)	5	
	English (A)	5	
	Chemistry (F)	3	
	Arabic (F)	3	
	Social Studies (F)	2	
	Islamic Studies (F)	3	
	Sport (F)	1	
	University Preparation	2	
	Computer Science (Elective)	3	
2nd (Medicine)	Chemistry (A)	5	32
	Mathematics (A)	5	
	Biology (A)	5	
	English (F)	3	
	Arabic (F)	3	

Track	Subjects	Hours/week	Total hours/week
	Social Studies (F)	2	
	Islamic Studies (F)	3	
	Sport (F)	1	
	University Preparation	2	
	Physics (Elective)	3	
3rd (Business)	English (A)	5	32
	Arabic (A)	5	
	Social Studies (A)	3	
	Mathematics (F)	4	
	Biology (F)	3	
	Chemistry (F)	3	
	Islamic Studies (F)	3	
	Sport (F)	1	
	University Preparation	2	
	Computer Science (Elective)	3	

At the end of grade twelve there is a unified national test which all twelfth graders governmental schools in Qatar take; it is the same exam taken at the same time for all. Students who score more than 50 per cent can leave school and earn the secondary school certificate. This secondary percentage or GPA that the students score is very important, and critical for a student's career path because failing to score a certain percentage can hold a person back from getting into the programme they wish to study and constrain the student's educational and occupational options. On the other hand, scoring higher than expected can

open new doors for students, which can likewise affect the career choice which they made earlier in school.

According to recent statistics for the academic year of 2014–2015, obtained from The Office of Research and Policy Analysis in The Supreme Education Council (Qatar), there are fifty-four independent secondary schools in Qatar, twenty-six of which are girls' schools, and twenty-eight boys' schools. In the year of data collection – academic year 2014–2015 – there were 7908 twelfth-grade students attending independent schools in Qatar, 4564 of whom are Qataris.

3.3.2 Research sample

For this study, the researcher sampled one girls' school and one boys' school that had the highest number of Qatari students attending twelfth grade in the academic year (2014–2015) in which the data was collected. The researcher has decided that if there were any difficulties with gatekeepers of the chosen schools, a second school, with the second highest number of Qatari students attending twelfth graded would be picked, but the researcher had the supportive letter obtained from the Office of Research and Policy Analysis in The Supreme Education Council in Qatar addressed to the head teachers and found the head teachers of the selective schools to be very collaborative and supportive.

All Qatari students from the two chosen schools were asked to answer a questionnaire prepared by the researcher especially for this research. This questionnaire was conducted in the schools with the researcher present and with the help of school administrators. The administrators in the girls' school suggested that it would be best to collect several classes together in the school theatre to answer the questionnaire. The boys' school, on the other hand, did not have such big space to gather the students, so the school administrators suggested conducting the questionnaire class by class.

At the end of the questionnaire, there is an item that asks students if they would like to volunteer to take part in the research by being interviewed. If so, the student is asked to give their contact details. The researcher aimed to have between ten to twenty participants from each school, to protect against losing participants over time. If there were fewer than ten volunteers in each school, the researcher intended to set up a poster table during students' breaks to recruit participants by advertising the importance of the research, but the volunteer

list was sufficiently long and from that, the researcher selected participants on the following ordinal criteria:

1. Fairly represent the three tracks of study: There are three tracks of study in the twelfth grade, which are: Advance (Engineering), Advance (Medicine), and Business. Participants have been chosen to embody all three tracks.
2. Include confirming and disconfirming cases: participants who are positive and clear about their educational and occupational choice are considered to be confirming cases. On the other hand, students who are not clear about what they will do after leaving school or change their choice several times have been selected to represent the disconfirming cases.

There was a good volunteer response to the questionnaire; one hundred and sixteen girls and ninety-three boys agreed to volunteer. This gave the researcher the ability to apply the above selection criteria. The researcher managed to interview twenty-one participants (eleven girls and ten boys) twice.

3.3.3 Research sampling design

The research was planned to represent both Qatari boys and girls equally, and represent the study tracks, and the Know and Don't Know students drawn from the students who volunteered in questionnaire. Figure 3-1 illustrates the initial plan; K represents the "Know" students, who had decided on a future education and occupation, and D represents the "Don't Know" students who were not sure and had not yet settled on a decision related to their future education and occupation.

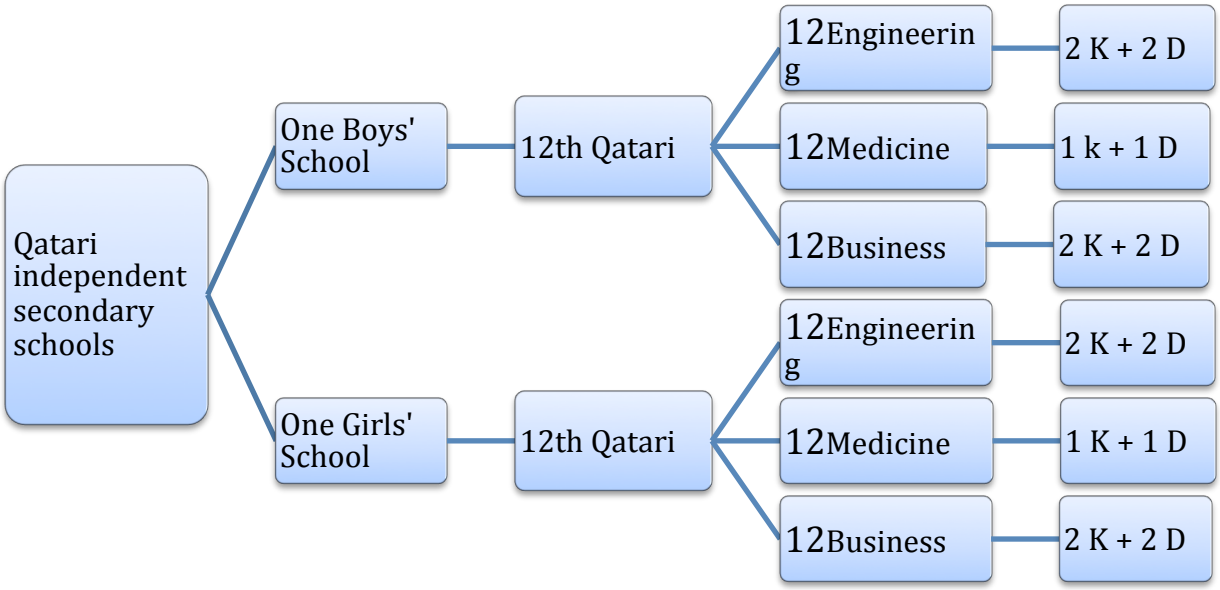


Figure 3-1 The research sampling design

By the time the first round of interviews launched, two students – one boy and one girl from the Don't Know students who answered that they had not yet decided on a future plan relating their future education and occupations – had decided on a future education and occupation, so the researcher contacted one more female volunteer, but could not do the same with the boys because of shortage of time. Table 3-2 below shows the total number of students interviewed regarding their study track and their position with regard to future career decision-making, divided into Know and Don't Know students. G stands for "girl" and B for "boy".

Table 3-2 The interviewed sample

Study Track / Know /Don't Know	Medicine	Engineering	Foundation	Total
Know	1G + 1B	3G + 2B	2G + 3B	6G + 6B
Don't Know	1G + 1B	2G + 2B	2G + 1B	5G + 4B
Total	2G + 2B	5G + 4B	4G + 4B	11G + 10B

G: Girl – B: Boy

3.4 Methods of data collection

3.4.1 Self-completion questionnaire

A questionnaire is a set of open or closed ended questions that participants answer to obtain information related to attitudes, beliefs, and feelings toward a certain topic (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). There are several advantages of using a self-completion questionnaire: it can cover a large population, it is cheaper, data produced can be analysed easily, and participants can answer it at time convenient to them. Some considerations that a researcher has to put in mind when using questionnaires are response rate and incomplete answers. In order to produce a good questionnaire, the researcher has to be familiar with the targeted population. Questions have to be clearly and sensitively written and relevant to participants. Questions like double-barrelled questions and hypothetical questions or questions asking for secondary information have to be avoided (N. Gilbert, 2012).

The researcher developed the questionnaire items based on information from relevant literature and on her own experience with students and the Qatari schools and society. A pilot study was carried out prior to this to make sure that the questionnaire items read well and were clear, and to calculate the time needed to answer the questionnaire. Twelve volunteer students aged between 17 and 20 years old took part in the pilot study. The researcher used convenient sampling procedures to select these volunteer students to help develop the questionnaire items. After they answered the questionnaire, the students were asked whether

they would change or add to the questionnaire items. Their opinions were taken into consideration in developing the final questionnaire items.

Providing the questionnaire to all of the Qatari students in the chosen schools gives a snapshot of the picture of twelfth-graders' attitudes and feelings towards making a career choice, and creates a valuable quantitative data source to make comparisons within the whole sample of girls' and boys' choices. Furthermore, the questionnaire data will provide the researcher with an overall view of the participants' backgrounds, decisions, and feelings towards the subject. This overview will help the researcher in taking decisions about the qualitative strand of the research. The questionnaire was produced in Arabic by the researcher and was later translated into English. To ensure the quality of translation, a bilingual translator was asked to double-check the translation of the questionnaire items. A copy of the English version of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix (B). Before answering the questionnaire all students were given an overview about the research and the ethical procedures taken by the university, the researcher, and the advisors to ensure confidentiality and the use of data for research purposes only. All students had to read and sign to consent before answering the questionnaire.

3.4.2 Interviews

An interview is a conversation between two or more people where the interviewer is trying to obtain information from the interviewee. This information can be facts, opinions, attitudes, or any combination of these. The interview can be face to face, over a telephone, or any type of internet communication (Thomas, 2013). Interviews are a very powerful tool for data gathering because the researcher can obtain information that cannot be obtained otherwise, like body language, attitude, and feelings. Moreover, the researcher can ask for clarification, which can be very enlightening and provide a new piece of information that the researcher had not considered. There are several classifications for interviews, but the most popular one is the one that classifies the interviews based on their structure: structured interviews, unstructured interviews, and semi-structured interviews. Structured interviews are interviews with a fixed set of questions, either open ended or closed. Structured interviews have a strength in that they can be done quickly and they can be easily coded. The unstructured interviews are like a conversation with no format. Researchers use unstructured interviews when they want participants to tell them what the issues are, and allow them to talk about the issues without boundaries. In semi-structured interviews, the researcher will have a

list of issues to cover. The researcher in a semi-structured interview would combine the structure of a list of issues with the freedom to follow up (Thomas, 2013).

Telephone interviewing is an option for the researcher, especially if a face-to-face interview is not possible or safety is a consideration. The interviewee may feel comfortable answering some kinds of questions over the phone rather than in person (Bryman, 2004) .

For this study, several one-to-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelfth-grade Qatari students who volunteered to take part and these have been used to provide an in-depth understanding of how students choose their career paths, how the decision is made, and what factors play a role in making it (see Appendix F for interview schedule). The one-to-one interviews allowed the researcher to read between the lines and have a better understanding of the students' feelings, struggle, journey, dreams and hopes. The semi-structured interviews allowed some structure as well as scope for the interview to follow up on areas of interest with other questions, so providing freedom to accommodate the student's experiences, explanations, and other reasons that might be important to the students from their point of view. The first interviews vary from forty-five minutes to twenty minutes and took place in school in a private room that ensured confidentiality and that was assigned to the researcher to conduct the interviews by the school administrators. After the students had left school, the second wave of semi-structured interviews were conducted; some were one–to-one interviews in a place agreed by the researcher and the interviewee; if this wasn't possible telephone interviews were conducted. Three participants (two girls and one boy), did have the time to do either a face-to-face or a telephone interview, but suggested that they could answer the questions by "chatting" via the "WhatsApp" app, which is very popular mode of communication in Qatar. The researcher, after consulting with her advisors, did not believe that it would interfere with ethical procedures; and a positive aspect in the researcher's opinion was that it was easier for people to express themselves freely via apps than face to face or in telephone interviews.

In the first wave of interviews, researcher asked participants about their future plans after leaving school, their ideas about work and labour market, their source of information regarding occupation and higher education, their feelings, and their preparation, fears and ambitions. By doing so, the researcher is able to explore participants' feelings and future plans regarding occupational and educational decisions and the factors that help formulate this decision.

In the second wave of interviews, the researcher asked participants about their current occupational and educational circumstances and if their plans had changed and why. The researcher believes that there are leading factors that come into play after leaving school that affect students' occupational and educational decisions, like the final grades and availability of scholarships. These waves of interviews are very important to track the decision-making process and reveal any new factors that students did not think of when they were at school.

3.5 Time design

The academic year in Qatar starts at the beginning of September and finishes by the end of June. There are two semesters with a two-week spring break in between at the end of February.

The data collection for the research was conducted in four timed stages as follows:

First stage: preparatory stage

- Do the necessary paper work needed to go into schools.
- Find all the statistics needed for the study – like how many students there are in grade twelve in total and how many are Qataris; the sub-division of classes; and the academic background of the school and students.
- Decide on schools that would be the sample schools in the light of the regarding the number of Qatari students attending grade twelve.

Second Stage: October 2014 – November 2014

- Contact the schools' Head Teachers, and inform them about the research and hand in the Head Teacher information sheet. In the case of approval, the head teacher is asked to sign the consent form.
- Agree with the Head Teacher on the best way to distribute the questionnaire and conduct the first wave of interviews.
- Collect the quantitative data from both the girls' and the boys' schools.
- Analyse the questionnaire.
- Decide on participants.

Third Stage: March 2015 – April 2015

- Contact the candidate participants and agree on time to meet them in the school.
- Conduct the first round of interviews.

Fourth Stage: August 2015 – September 2015

- Contact participants and agree on a suitable time and place to conduct the second interview.
- Conduct the second round of interviews.

3.6 Methods of data analysis

After collecting data from the questionnaire and interviews, the researcher has to make sense of this raw material and try to break it up to answer the research question. In this section, the researcher provides an indication about how the data was analysed. First, quantitative data gathered from the questionnaire will be discussed. Qualitative data, which is gathered from the interviews, will then be discussed.

3.6.1 Analysing quantitative data

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program has been used to analyse the questionnaire data. Both descriptive and inferential statistics have been utilised. Cross-tab comparison between the girls and the boys, and between the students who have future educational and occupational plans and those who were not sure about what they wanted to do after school by the time the questionnaire was distributed, has been used frequently in analysing the questionnaire data (some examples of cross-tabs are provided in Appendix G). This comparison gives insightful information for the whole sample that the participants were drawn from. The researcher compared four groups: girls with boys, 'know' with 'don't know' students, 'girls who know' with 'girls who do not know', and boys 'who know' with those who 'do not know'. In comparing girls with boys for example, gender issues were considered, and in comparing girls 'who know' with those 'who don't know' gender issues are eliminated and the researcher was able to consider other factors that might differentiate these groups. The analysis of quantitative data was useful to familiarise the researcher with the data and to allow her to see a picture of the whole sample before conducting the interviews. Analysing the quantitative data also guided the researcher in selecting the interview participants (as mentioned in section 3.3.3), which helped improve the validity level of the research.

3.6.2 Analysing qualitative data

First of all, the researcher transcribed the recorded interviews. Transcripts include spoken and non-spoken aspects of the interview like setting, context, body language, and the interviewee's and interviewer's feelings. Constant comparative method is then used to analyse qualitative data. In a constant comparative method, the researcher will go over the data again and again. By comparing the data and dividing it in to codes or units of information and then rereading the raw material with codes, themes will emerge. Mapping these themes together will show relationships between themes and will draw a picture of findings (Thomas, 2013). Coding not only enables researchers to organise and manage data; it also allows them to examine relationships between codes (Gibbs, 2007). A list of real names and places and their substitute names is kept in a safe place to protect the rights of schools and participants to be anonymous. A list of symbolic names has been assigned to participants, which will protect their identities and align with the ethical framework of this research. This list has been helpful during the writing up when the researcher needed to quote people. An archive of all the qualitative data has also been created to better organise data to easily spot information. The researcher has done this twice in analysing the first wave and the second wave of interviews. Combining the analysis emerging from both waves of interviews has given the longitudinal insight into the students' career decision-making journeys. Furthermore, comparing the analyses emerging from both interviews with the information emerging from the questionnaire draws a general picture of the whole sample and a more precise one for those who have been interviewed, and allows triangulation of the data.

Thematic coding was used to analyse the qualitative data. Thematic coding allows the researcher to classify, dig deeper into the data, and compare the responses of different participants, helping to pick out factors that are present in one participant's life and absent in another's. On analysing the qualitative data that have emerged from the two sets of interviews, it was possible to divide the interviews into main themes drawn from the literature, such as family, school, and friends. The main themes were divided into sub-themes. For example, family was divided into mother, father, siblings and extended family. Sub-sub codes then emerged from reading into the interviews (see Appendix H for thematic codes tree). After analysing the qualitative data, another researcher was given several of the interviews – ensuring the anonymity of the participants – to compare codes. Going back and forth between the quantitative and qualitative data helped the researcher see patterns and also allowed triangulation.

3.7 Reliability, validity and generalisability

Reliability, validity, and generalisability are subjects that have been covered extensively in the literature concerning research quality. There are several kinds of reliability and validity tests for both quantitative and qualitative research. Moreover, quantitative and qualitative theorists are not fully agreed on the procedures and terms used in these two areas, but they do agree that researchers have to follow procedures to ensure that the research is valid and reliable.

Validity simply means that what is being measured is what was intended to be measured, and this is a challenge in social sciences where concepts are abstract and can mean different things to different people (Vaus, 2002). Researchers can reach a good level of validity through careful sampling, appropriate instruments, and appropriate treatments of the data (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). There are different types of validity, such as catalytic validity, concurrent validity, consequential validity, construct validity, content validity, criterion-related validity, convergent and discriminant validity, cross-cultural validity, cultural validity, descriptive validity, ecological validity, evaluative validity, external validity, face validity, internal validity, interpretive validity, jury validity, predictive validity, systemic validity, and theoretical validity (Cohen et al., 2011).

Reliability, on the other hand, is the degree of "consistency and replicability over time, over instruments and over groups of respondents" (Cohen et al., 2011). There are different types of reliability such as: test-retest reliability, parallel forms reliability, inter-rater reliability, and internal consistency reliability. In qualitative research, other terms are used to refer to reliability, such as conformability and trustworthiness.

The reliability and validity of the tools used in this research can be assessed as follows: first, the questionnaire items were developed using many of the standardised tests and surveys found in the literature, for example, The Strong Interest Inventory (SII) and Career Scope, also taking into consideration the cultural aspects related to Qatari society drawn from the researcher's own experience. Secondly, careful piloting of both the survey and interview questions enabled the researcher to establish whether the data collection tools were capturing what was needed and whether participants could understand what was being asked of them. Thirdly careful sampling of schools and participants ensured a good level of validity. Lastly, triangulation of the quantitative data and the qualitative data allowed the researcher to validate some responses through the constant comparative method. To compare similarity and

difference within coding, transcripts were explored and compared by two coders. Moreover, the process of ensuring that the themes and categories within the coding have been developed "with all conceivable precautions in place against distortions and bias, intentional or accidental, and mean the same thing for everyone else who uses them" establishes credibility and confidence in the data analysis (Krippendorff, 2004, p 211). Lincoln and Guba (1985) have mentioned this process as a practice to establish the trustworthiness of qualitative data analysis.

Generalisability is a term which means that results obtained from research carried out on a sample can be applied to the whole population (Vaus, 2002). It is a term that is used in quantitative research, whereas qualitative researchers use the term "transferability" to describe the degree to which results can be generalised to similar populations under similar circumstances (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). This research is intended to be an exploratory study, and makes no claims for generalisability except to those situations similar to the groups and context in which the research was carried out. However, it is nevertheless useful research, as it can help in developing our understanding of the subject and pave the way for further work.

3.8 Ethics

Social research deals with people and being sensitive to the rights of others is basis of ethics. "Ethics say that while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better" (N. Gilbert, 2012, p. 146). Ethics in the context of research comprise a plan to make sure that the researcher treats the subjects of the research appropriately or those who are affected by it (D. E. Gray, 2004). Researchers have to make sure that they protect their participants from any possible harm, gain their trust and promote research integrity. Different fields of study have different sets of ethical guidelines or codes of ethics that determine suitable and acceptable ethical practice for professionals in their field. Ethical issues arise during any stage of the research and some are very obvious and others are not as clear.

Creswell (2014) has classified these issues based on the time they occur – prior to conducting the study, beginning the study, during collecting data, during analysing data, or at the time of reporting, sharing, and storing data. Some examples of ethical issues that should be considered prior to conducting a study are: aligning the research with institutional codes of ethics, applying to an institutional review board, signing consent forms, obtaining necessary permissions, selecting a site, and agreeing on publication. By the beginning of the study a researcher has to: select a beneficial research for humanity, state the purpose of the study and

the sponsorship, allow participants to withdraw, and respect cultures. Respecting the site and minimising any disruption, avoiding deceiving or exploiting participants, and avoiding collecting harmful information are some ethical issues that have to be considered during data collection. By reaching the data analysis phase a researcher has to think of the participants' privacy and has to equally report all findings without any disclosure of personal detail. Falsifying, plagiarising, and duplicating the findings are examples of some ethical issues that need to be thought of during the reporting phase (Creswell, 2014).

The Research Ethics Framework (ESRC2005) was first published in the United Kingdom in 2006. It states six ethical guidelines for social research which are: the insurances of integrity and quality of the research, the stating of the purpose, methods, and possible harm of the study for research staff and participants, the confidentiality of information, the guarantee of voluntary way, the avoidance of harm, and the clearance of the research independence. The University of Reading has its own Procedures for Research Ethics. All research has to be approved by the institute ethics committee. The research design, questionnaires, Head Teacher information sheet, student information sheet, and consents all had to be reviewed prior to conducting the research. The researcher had to apply and obtain the ethical approval before starting the research. The information sheet was given to the Head Teachers of the two sample schools. Consents were signed by the two Head Teachers prior to starting to collect the data. Adequate information about the research and the confidentiality of the data was given to students prior to them answering the questionnaire and students were asked to sign a consent form before answering the questionnaire. Another information sheet that was reviewed by the institute ethics committee of the University of Reading was given to the study participants that were interviewed. After going over the information sheet, the students were asked to sign to indicate consent.

The researcher was confronted with a few ethical issues during the data collection, but was able to deal with them according to established ethical procedures. The first ethical situation was the withdrawal of BK2 after the first interview. He did not want to participate in the second round of interviews, though the researcher asked for his permission to use the first interview data and he agreed. A second situation related to one of the GD girls, where she was talking about applying to overseas universities. From the researcher's experience, she lacked the fundamental skills to fill in an international application. The researcher felt inclined to help her with the applications and so did offer but this was declined.. A final situation that the researcher faced was the constant cancellation of appointments for the second interview by

GK3. The researcher noticed that despite GK3's enthusiasm for taking part in the research, she kept rescheduling the second interview. Being an insider – a Qatari female living in Qatar – the researcher thought that she might be under pressure from a family member not to meet for the interview. GK3 was planning to study in the United Kingdom against her father's wishes; it is possible that her family felt that meeting the researcher in person, someone who is seen in Qatar as a female studying in England, might open doors for their daughter and empower her. The researcher therefore suggested a telephone interview instead, which GK3 agreed to.

To summarise this chapter, a longitudinal mixed methods research was conducted to find out how Qatari young take decisions relating their future educational and occupational plans. A sample of two independent secondary schools, one girls' and one boys', was chosen based on the fact they had the highest number of attending Qatari students in the academic year that the data was collected (2014–2015). The ethical practice of the research has been accounted for. A questionnaire developed by the researcher was distributed to Qatari students in both schools with the supervision of the researcher and the help of school administrators. Students were asked at the end of the questionnaire to volunteer to take part in interviews. Students were contacted who were identified and selected to fairly represent the study tracks and to include those who had clear plans of their future educational and occupational plans and those who were not yet sure. Participants were interviewed twice; once when they were in school and the second time after they had left school. Quantitative data conducted from the questionnaire was analysed using The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program. Qualitative data was thematically coded and then sub-coded, allowing insightful analyses.

Chapter 4 Girls' Results

In this chapter, data from the girls is presented, first with a general overview and then more specifically for those girls with clear future choices, and those who are still unsure. This chapter will be divided into four sections: general career ambitions, family, the role of friends, and the role of school in decision-making. The chapter concludes with a summary.

4.1 Introduction

A total of 185 Qatari girls from one secondary girls' school completed the questionnaire. These girls are distributed over three study tracks – foundation, advanced (Engineering), and advanced (Medicine) – half of whom are in the foundation track, 33 per cent are in advanced (Engineering) and the rest –17 per cent – are in advanced (Medicine). Of these girls, 70 per cent have chosen their study track because of job requirements, and almost all of these believe that they have chosen the right track, also believing that their study track will best qualify them for their future profession. Whilst two thirds of the girls know what they want to do in their professional future, one third still did not know. When the girls were asked about when they had started thinking about a future career, 12 per cent of them stated from childhood; the vast majority, however – 67 per cent – stated that they started thinking about future careers in secondary school, and of these, 19 per cent had only started thinking about future careers that year – twelfth grade – which agrees with Croll's research (Croll, 2008). By the time the girls answered the questionnaire – in the first semester of the twelfth year – a small percentage had still not started thinking about what they wanted to do after leaving school.

4.2 General career ambitions

When the girls were asked to pick the three factors that have most influenced their career decisions, 58 per cent picked academic performance, 49 per cent picked job requirements and 34 per cent picked "other". The researcher explored this latter category and found that the most frequent answer for "other" was personal wish, passion and dream. Furthermore, when the girls were asked to list three reasons that affect a person's job choice, most girls named salary (57%) and job title (51%).

Of the girls questioned, 99 per cent aimed to join higher education after school. Only one girl out of 181 girls who answered this question stated that she would not consider higher education. This high percentage is likely to reflect the girls' school environment, which

encourages students through this route. Jacobson (2015), in her study of highly motivated Qatari females, stated that Qatari girls do not have so many occupational choices after leaving school and pursue higher education to have more occupational choice. Jacobson (2015) claimed that Qatari women pursue higher education to overcome cultural barriers and prove themselves worthy. By the time of this study, around half of the girls had achieved the universities' requirements and around one quarter of them had applied to a university. How well the aspiration for university maps with actually going for those who have not yet applied is unclear. Regarding scholarships, 41 per cent of the girls get the information about scholarships from their relatives and only 19 per cent said that it was not important to have a scholarship.

Eleven girls were selected from those who volunteered to be interviewed through the questionnaire. They were chosen to proportionally represent the different study tracks – Foundation, Advanced (Engineering), Advanced (Medicine) – and were divided into two groups: girls who knew what they want to do after school and girls who did not know what they wanted to do after school at the time they answered the questionnaire. These girls have been interviewed twice; once in school in the second semester of their twelfth year and the second time after graduating from school.

Six girls of the eleven interviewed knew what they wanted to do after school; these girls will be called the *Girls Who Know* and will be labelled as GK1, GK2, GK3, GK4, GK5, and GK6. Five girls did not know what they wanted to do after school; these girls will be called the *Girls Who Do Not Know* and will be labelled GD1, GD2, GD3, GD4, and GD5.

4.2.1 General career ambitions: Girls Who Know

GK1 wanted to be a paediatrician, GK2 an ambassador; GK3 wanted to study bio-engineering, GK4 wanted to be a lawyer, GK5 a psychological counsellor, and GK6 wanted to study finance. Most of these girls decided on their future occupation in preparatory school, one of them decided in the sixth grade and GK5 decided in the tenth grade. All of the Know Girls described an incident that was influential and helped them decide on their future occupation. For example, GK1 decided to be a paediatrician while visiting her cousin who had been diagnosed with cancer. She said:

"It took me ten minutes to decide, when I entered the intensive care unit and saw all the children around me, my cousin, and all the medical devices; I have decided to study something that will allow me to give children a second chance."

Similarly, GK2 decided to be an ambassador while visiting the Japanese embassy on a school trip; she said:

"I saw the embassy and saw the ambassador and how he represents his country, and I liked the idea and thought about how I would represent my country."

All of the GKs had clear plans for what they needed to do in order to attain their planned occupation, such as what they needed to study, which universities were best, university requirements, and so on. Indeed, some of the Know Girls had plan A and plan B, just in case something should go wrong with plan A.

Only one of the Know Girls said that making future educational and occupational decisions was easy; as mentioned above it took GK1 ten minutes to decide. GK2 and GK6 said:

"It's not easy at all."

Some appreciated the difficulty of it because it could affect their future life, and they worried that they may not like the study or the work, or find the work very tiring. GK3 said:

"I go into inner conflict a lot, where I tell myself that I can't do it, and I always think to the extent that I forget to eat."

By the second interview, GK1, GK2, GK4, and GK6 had achieved excellent grades that would allow them to pursue their dreams. Although some of the GKs aspired at a younger age, their stories agreed with Croll (2008) research that people are more likely to pursue their dreams if they have good grades and clear aspiration at 15 years old. GK5 had also received excellent final grades, but she had changed her mind from being a psychological counsellor to studying law at Qatar University. She was applying and had decided to take a final tour around the colleges, and met with a Qatari female who worked at the College of Law at Qatar University who was able to convince GK5 to change her plans and study law.

GK3 is the only one of the GKs who did not achieve the grades she was aiming for. She got 75 per cent, which was not enough for her to go into engineering. She went into

journalism and studied in Qatar instead of studying abroad. GK3 is a living example of the research claim that girls in Qatar need a father's support to pursue their dreams. Although GK3 seems to have supportive brothers, who all happened to be engineers, her father was against the idea of her studying engineering and she was under considerable pressure, which might be the reason for her getting lower grades than expected. Her grades in eleventh grade were 90 per cent, so in achieving only 75 per cent, her grades dropped significantly. It is the researcher's interpretation that the lack of her father's support for her future aspiration affected her grades and constrained her future plans.

4.2.2 General career ambitions: Girls Who Do Not Know

Five girls who were interviewed twice did not know what they wanted to do after leaving school. The first interviews with the GDs took place in February 2015, when most international universities' admission deadlines in Qatar would have been days away. Therefore, these girls would be graduating from school four months later. When the researcher interviewed the GDs, their responses varied considerably. Three girls had not yet decided on what they wanted to do after school; one girl had unrealistic plans, in that she underestimated the process of university admissions and the time needed to prepare; another girl had achieved the requirements for all the international universities and indeed had applied for two universities in two different subjects and was thinking about a third subject, with no clear idea of which one was the one that she really wanted. Only GD2, who had the unrealistic plans, did not feel the pressure of time; the others felt pressurised. They admitted that they were hesitant and changed their minds often. GD1 said:

> *"Every time I change my mind, for example last year I felt that I want biology but this year I'm thinking about engineering and political science and these days I read about architecture."*

GD5 said:

> *"I hesitate too much, and even if I decide I hesitate after a few minutes."*

Some of the GDs felt overwhelmed, with too many options available. GD3 said resentfully:

> *"Every day there is something new."*

GD2 said:

"There are a lot of specialities in the world.

All the GDs agreed that making a decision about what they would do after leaving school in terms of future education and occupation was difficult. As mentioned above, GD1 felt that there were too many options so the decision was not easy, whereas GD2, GD4 and GD5 thought that because such a decision would affect their future life, once they made it they would feel trapped; this very simple explanation of uncertainty that these three young Qataris gave aligned with a lot of research that has highlighted the uncertainty that young people these days face and that hinders them from making "risky decisions" that they are not sure of and they might regret (Beck, 1992; Miles, 2003). GD3, on the other hand, explained her difficulty in making the decision was down to her wanting *"an easy job, good place, and nice manager"* and she thought she might end up working in a different field than that of her studies; this idea made it hard for her to decide. Some of the GDs had several interests and could not decide between them, and others had no interest or tendency towards any field of study or occupation. GD3 and GD4 wanted to do something "easy". When the researcher asked the GD girls about their feelings they answered respectively: worried, different, nervous, sorry, and upset. This anxiety is similar to that reported in research (Schwartz, 2004) in other countries, which explores how overwhelming career and educational decision-making is for some young people, confronted as they are with so much choice.

An interesting point that came up through the interviews with the GDs was their negative view of others. GD2 appeared judgemental of other girls. She made two negative judgements of other girls:

"I don't want to join Qatar University because girls in QU have a bad reputation"

and

"A lot of girls don't know what they want to be but in the questionnaire they either write anything or they write what they are dreaming of".

GD3 also had a negative view about society and says:

"work is WASTA"

which means that there is nepotism or favouritism in getting jobs, and she provided many examples of friends who changed their decisions very frequently. In this respect, GD3 demonstrated a sense that there was no choice really, that in the end society would determine

where you ended up, and so effort is wasted. It is amazing from the researcher's point of view that these young girls are aware of such complications in the workforce in Qatar and the existence of the notion of *Wasta* in recruitment decisions even though they have no work experience. Several studies done in the Arab world have admitted that *Wasta* influences organisations' recruitment decisions (Mohamed & Mohamad, 2011; Ramady, 2016).

Another interesting point is the presence of contradictions in the GDs' statements. For example, GD4 said:

"I have to make the right decision for four years."

and gave the impression that that was a long time, yet afterwards said:

"It's only four years."

GD5 also made similar contradictory remarks; at one point she stated:

"There is no time."

and later said:

"Yes there is time, God willing."

It might be these GD girls felt confused and anxious and this anxiety made them contradict their own statements.

By the time the second interviews took place, GD1, GD3, and GD4 had decided on a career stream. GD1 scored 94 per cent in her final grades, a good grade. She had made a list of interests and started crossing out the least interesting options to help her reach a decision. GD1 had also subscribed to an online economics magazine and decided to study economics at Qatar University; this shows how GD1 mastered the decision-making process and that has helped her anchor a decision that she seemed satisfied with. This process that GD1 has gone through also highlights the richness of cultural capital she has around her, such as the knowledge to subscribe to an international English online magazine and being able to read and understand the articles included. It is worth stating in GD1's case that she has very supportive parents; she had mentioned her mother in her interviews, but she mentioned her father more. GD1 noted that even though her father was not at home most of the time because of his work conditions, he would call her on the phone very often and ask her about her future career decision. From the interview, the researcher has concluded that GD1 has a supportive

father. GD3 had decided to study industrial engineering because her grades – 92 per cent – allowed her to do so. GD4 had decided to apply to the education department in QU to be a teacher after a Qatari teacher had talked to their class about how important being a teacher was. GD4 said:

> *"Three quarters of the girls were convinced by the time she* – the teacher – *left the class"; "She is a Qatari and with all respect to all teachers I feel she cares for us more."*

This highlights the importance of role models in a student's life and how real-life role models can help students understand the importance of the work they will be doing for their society, which will give students insight and encouragement. GD2 and GD5 both got 77 per cent in their final grades. They were still in the process of applications, burdened with what are considered to be low grades in terms of the study tracks they were talking about, such as computer information systems and management. Not knowing what this percentage will be after studying for twelve years makes students dependent on it to the point that their future educational and occupational decision cannot be taken or cannot be ensured. This dependence on this one final percentage after studying for twelve years is very obvious in the male participants' cases.

4.3 Family

From the large percentages recorded, family appears to be a strong factor influencing girls' future career decisions; 93 per cent of girls stated that family wishes were important or very important. Over a third of the girls would consider a profession just to make their family happy. The girls were asked to pick three factors that influenced their career decisions; family came fourth with 31 per cent of girls picking family as a factor; academic performance, job requirements and their own personal wish came first, second and third respectively. In addition, when the girls were asked about how they had chosen their future career, 35 per cent said that they took the decision and consulted their family for their feedback and opinion; this agrees with research from all over the world that parents do contribute to their children's aspirations and help them plan their future career plans (Cheng & 鄭敏儀., 2012).

A total of 92 per cent of the girls stated that they discussed future career plans with family; around half of the girls said they would discuss this primarily with their mother and slightly over one quarter said they would talk mostly to their father; these results agree with

Kniveton (2004) in that the same-sex parent is the more influential when it comes to future career decisions. The vast majority (84%) of girls agreed that their families helped them select their future occupations. Interestingly, 77 per cent of the girls' mothers and fathers were university graduates or higher qualifications; 6 per cent of the girls did not know their father's educational qualifications and 4 per cent did not know their mother's educational qualifications. The girls were also asked about their sources of information regarding scholarships (an important factor in Qatari higher education decision making); almost half answered that relatives provided this information.

4.3.1 Family and Girls Who Know

It is worth restating here that whenever the term "family" is used in this research it means the extended family; if it is the role of parents that is being discussed, it will state this clearly as parents or father and mother. This is because, as mentioned in the introduction, people in Qatar maintain kinship relations and when a person in Qatar uses the word "family" it is most probable that he or she means the not only nuclear family but also the extended family as well. A look at the GKs' parents revealed that they were all were university graduates, except for GK5's mother who was a secondary graduate. Table 4-1 below shows the GKs' parents' level of education .

Table 4-1 Level of education of the GKs' parents

Student ID	Mother's Education	Father's Education
GK1	Undergraduate degree	Undergraduate degree
GK2	Undergraduate degree	Undergraduate degree
GK3	Master's degree	Master's degree
GK4	Undergraduate degree	Undergraduate degree
GK5	Secondary	Undergraduate degree
GK6	Undergraduate degree	Undergraduate degree

To clarify the picture, Table 4-2 below shows parents' occupations compared to the girls' desired future occupations.

Table 4-2 GKs' occupational aspiration in relation to their parents' occupations

Student ID	Future Occupation	Father's Occupation	Mother's Occupation
GK1	Paediatrician	Bank Manager	Head Teacher
GK2	Ambassador	Director in the Police Force	Social Counsellor
GK3	Bio-Engineer	Businessman	Retired Teacher
GK4	Lawyer	Know where, don't know what	Teacher
GK5	Psychological Counsellor	Football Coach	Storekeeper
GK6	Finance	Civil Engineer	Laboratory Technician

All GKs talked to their parents about what they wanted to do in the future and most of them felt that their parents' opinion was important to some extent; for one it was not important and for another it was very important. The Girls Who Know also consulted other members of their extended family, such as an older cousin and an uncle. When the GKs were asked about whom they discussed their future career with the most, three girls said their mother, one said her father and two said their cousins – a female cousin.

Some of the Girls Who Know experienced family pressure and concerns because of the conflict between their career choice and gender socialisation. For example, GK3 wanted to study bio-engineering abroad and had applied to several UK universities, but she avoided talking to her father because she knew that he opposed both the ideas of studying engineering and studying abroad. She said:

> *"My father said it's a masculine occupation…Engineering is not suitable for girls…I face a lot of difficulties – socially – and my family's opinion concerns me."*

It is worth stating here that GK3's plans were constrained by her father's approval, and because of her father's disagreement, she felt frustrated. It is also worth mentioning that she had a 90% score in her eleventh grade and got only 75% in her final grades, which is considered a big drop. She had to change her plans and study journalism in Doha according to her father's wish. While not as controlling as GK3's father; GK2's father had also has raised concerns like:

> *"You are a girl…It is not suitable for girls."*

It seems that some GK girls also experienced lack of parental support and encouragement to some extent. GK4 said that her parents said:

> *"Do anything you want but don't tire and overload yourself",*

which is an indication that GK4's parents thought that their daughter was working harder than she should. GK5 also said:

> *"My family said take any decision you want, but I feel my mother doesn't like psychology! She wants me to study Islamic studies but I don't want to be a teacher."*

Family cultural resources are also something that has a strong influence. GK1's mother was a biology teacher in a secondary school by the time GK1 decided to be a

paediatrician, so she took her eighth-grade daughter to her advanced biology classes. GK3's brothers were all engineers and she sat with them when they studied and looked into and read their books. GK1 spoke intensely and interestedly about her father volunteering in a major international event that occurred when he was a student, and how he always encouraged her to volunteer. Indeed, GK1 has volunteered in many places in Qatar, such as a nursing home and an orphanage. Listening to the GK girls talking, it is obvious that their environment is rich culturally. The way they speak, the vocabulary they use, and the kind of activities they take part in at school and outside the school are evidence that they have grown up in environments that are rich in cultural capital.

Relatives, young or old, were mentioned in almost every GK interview. They were mentioned as a valuable source of information; GK4 said:

> *"I have members of my relatives working in so many places, so I ask them about it, for example those in QF and other ministries and corporations."*

GK6 also consulted her relatives about occupations. She mentioned her uncle and aunt and how she asked them about their work, the study needed, and the labour market demand. Cousins, either the same age or older, have also been mentioned as a source of occupational and educational information. Older brothers are strongly represented, affecting GK1's and GK3's educational decisions and providing a rich source of information. In this section it is clear that, as suggested by the literature, family is important, not just as a source of practical knowledge and experience but also with respect to their expectations of their daughters, where for some, gender matters a great deal and will constrain and limit the choices a girl feels that she has.

Family and Girls Who Do Not Know

All the GD parents were university graduates or held a higher educational degree, except the mothers of GD2 and GD5, who were secondary graduates. Table 4-3 illustrates the GDs' parents' educational degrees.

Table 4-3 Level of educational of the GDs' parents

Student ID	Mother's Education	Father's Education

GD1	PhD	Undergraduate degree
GD2	Secondary	Undergraduate degree
GD3	Undergraduate degree	Undergraduate degree
GD4	Undergraduate degree	Undergraduate degree
GD5	Secondary	Master's degree

The GDs' parents' occupations vary. Table 4-4 below shows their occupations.

Table 4-4 GDs' parents' occupations

Student ID	Father's Occupation	Mother's Occupation
GD1	Diplomat	Professor
GD2	Retired Head of Department	Clerk
GD3	Colonel	Employee
GD4	Retired Officer	Head of Department
GD5	Legal Researcher	School Administrator

All GK girls discussed future educational and occupational plans with their families; two of them thought that their family's opinion was very important to them; three of them thought that their family's opinion was important to a certain extent and GK6 did not think that her family's opinion was important. All six GK girls would not choose a profession just to satisfy family wish. When asked about the person in the family they were most likely to discuss future plans with, GD1 said her father. Although GD1's mother was a professor at the university and her father held a lower educational degree, she discussed her future educational

and occupational plans with her father more than her mother. This raises the important issue that will be examined in the discussion chapter, that Qatari girls need approval from their fathers to aspire and achieve their dreams. GD2 said:

"Nobody, maybe Mum."

GD3 and GD5 said their mothers, and GD4 mentioned an older female cousin. As a main source of information, only GD1 said her older sister and GD2 said her older brothers.

Apart from GD1, who had very supportive parents, in talking with the GDs slight inferences suggesting slightly negative viewpoints from some of the girls about their parents were apparent. For example, they felt that their parents' information was out-dated. GD3 said:

"I don't feel they – her parents *– know what is in demand in Qatar."*

The same feeling was shared by GD4; she said:

"My mother graduated in 1994 and there have been a lot of changes since then."

GD2 and GD4 considered that their parents did not give them advice or direction because they did not want their daughters to blame them if anything were to go wrong. But, arguably, it might also be that parents feel they lack the knowledge or the strategies to best guide their daughters (Sutherland, 2013).

However, an extreme case is GD5's father, who she described as an authoritarian. GD5 had mentioned her father on several occasions throughout the first and second interviews and some of her statements were revealing:

"Father is restraining me and says study the same way our people have studied, but I want to study abroad, something new… I wonder why my father's mentality is not like my friends' fathers?... I'll apply abroad and it's up to him if he doesn't agree."

GD3 also experienced pressure from her mother but of another kind, by comparing her to her older brother who disappointed his mother. GD3 said:

"My mother wants me to be an engineer and because my brother is not smart enough and I want to make her happy."

GD4 raised the conflict of gender socialisation; she said:

"I don't know; for example, if I got married my study will be affected, or if I got pregnant what would I do? I may drop a semester or miss a year."

GD3 also raised concerns about being a girl on several occasions; for example, she said:

"This speciality is for boys even though this study track is for girls only… When I apply for sponsorship they say that this speciality is for boys only."

This suggests that whilst gender may not limit choices for some girls, it certainly does for others, and both inside and outside of the family.

To summarise the role of the family in the Qatari girls' career decisions, it is the father who can either remove the glass ceiling for or limit his daughter's aspirations. Even though girls consult their mothers, it looks like it is the father who plays a critical role in his daughter's future educational and occupational decision. It does not seem that the educational level of qualification of the parents is a factor that affects student's occupational aspirations. Furthermore, the GKs' future desired occupations are not related to their parents' occupations. An authoritarian father constrains his daughter's aspiration through cultural and gendered beliefs. Authoritarian fathers, in the case of girls, apply a downward pressure on their girls, which is a different direction to the one applied to Qatari boys, as shall be seen in the boys' results chapter. Relatives are an undeniable source of information about occupations and educational scholarships.

4.4 The role of friends

Even though 87 per cent of girls discussed future career plans with friends, friendship does not appear to influence Qatari girls' future educational and occupational decisions as strongly as family does. Only 3 per cent of girls would go into a study track in the secondary school simply to be with friends; only 17 per cent picked friends when they were asked to name three factors that influenced their future educational and occupational decision. Girls were almost equally split over whether friends' opinions regarding future career plans were important or not. The vast majority of girls would not consider a profession just to be with friends.

4.4.1 Friends and Girls Who Know

The most important group when talking about friends was older same-sex friends. Most of the Girls Who Know had older friends who appeared to provide the main source of reliable information about universities' admission and study subjects. GK1 said:

> *"I have friends* – older friends – *and they inform me if anything new comes up about the admission."*

GK4 said:

> *"They say* – older friends – *Law is hard in QU and they keep dropping off."*

But when talking about the influence of friends on girls' future educational and occupational decisions, the Girls Who Know varied in their responses. Most of the GKs agreed that they discussed future plans with friends and considered friends a source of valuable information, but they did not think that their friends' opinions mattered in their final decision. However, for some, friends were very encouraging, such as for GK1:

> *"My friends' and classmates' encouragement helps me stick to my decision."*

For others, the opposite was true, with some considering their friends' opinions to be not very supportive, such as GK3, who said:

> *"When I asked my friend she frightened me and said you can't do it."*

She added:

> *"My friends are not very encouraging."*

GK5 was the oldest child in her family and she said that she discussed future plans with her friends more than her parents. For GK5, her friends' opinions were very important in shaping her future, although she was unable to say why. Most of the GKs answered no when the researcher asked the GK girls if they would study a subject or choose an occupation just to be with friends.

4.4.2 Friends and Girls Who Do Not Know

All GDs discussed future educational and occupational plans with their friends. Friends, especially older friends, formed the main source of information for GDs. GD3 answered when asked about the main source of information:

"Older friends."

GD4 also said that her older female cousin's friends formed the main source of her information about universities, subjects, and work. GD5 replied when asked about her source of information about schools and occupations:

"I hear my friends talking."

When asked about how influential their friends' opinions were on their final future career decision, the GDs' responses varied. GD1 and GD2 said that their friends' opinions did not influence their future career decision; GD3 and GD4 said that their friends influenced their future educational and occupational plans a little, whereas GD5 said that her friends influenced her future plans *"by 75 per cent"*. She said:

"They – her friends – *tell me their opinion about specialties and they know me and know my personality and they say this specialty suits me."*

In short, same-sex older friends were found to play a role in supplying the female participants with recent reliable information about scholarships and universities' admissions, requirements, and programmes. The relevance of older friends has been highlighted by Helve and Bynner (2007). If a girl had older friends she would be the best informed about different university programmes in Qatar. Same-age friends do not seem to matter much in Qatari girls' future educational and occupational decision-making process. This presence of older friends is apparent for both GKs and GDs, though they differ in the density and quality of older friends. The GKs have more well-placed older friends with whom they keep touch very often. This is very much demonstrating Bourdieu's notion of social capital and how these connections are an advantage for the person.

4.5 The role of school in decision making

One secondary girls' school was picked based on it having the highest number of Qatari girls attending twelfth grade in the academic year of 2014–2015. This girls' school has a "Very Good" in the periodic report that was issued by the Evaluation Institute in Qatar in 2010. The Evaluation Institute ranks schools according to a four-level ranking: very good, good, satisfactory, and weak, which means that the chosen girls' school is among the best secondary schools in Qatar. In the academic year of the data collected, a total of 717 students and 63 teachers were attending the chosen girls' school with a ratio of 1:11 teacher: student.

According to the school report that was issued by the School Evaluation Office in Qatar in 2014–2015, 81 per cent of the parents were satisfied with the school, 68 per cent of them were satisfied with the school curriculum and 57 per cent were satisfied with the school's communication with them. Also, in the same academic year, 96 per cent of teachers reported that they were satisfied with their work place. On the other hand, only 68 per cent of girls were happy with their school; and 38 percent of the girls reported liking their school. From the chosen girls' school, 185 twelfth-grade Qatari girls answered the questionnaire in October 2014. Girls were asked to pick three factors that influenced their career decisions – 58 per cent of the girls picked academic performance; and 8 per cent picked their teacher. Indeed, 83 per cent of the girls believed that their grades in secondary schooling had the greatest effect on their career choice. The vast majority of girls felt happy to be leaving school. By the time the girls answered the questionnaire, 54 per cent of girls had clear plans after leaving school, whereas 46 per cent did not know.

In considering the influence of schools, three fifths of the girls disagreed that their school offered school trips to various organisations to help provide information for them about labour market needs. A quarter of the girls did not know that there was a school academic advisor and 29 per cent of those who did know had not had a chance to meet her. When considering why, 39 per cent of the girls thought there was not enough time to meet the advisor or believed that the advisor was too busy to meet them. Of those who were aware of the academic advisor and had had the chance to meet her, just under three-quarters reported benefiting from the meeting. However, only one girl stated that she had chosen her study track because of the influence of the academic advisor. Less than one fifth of the girls ticked "academic advisor" when asked to pick three factors influencing their career decision, which is interesting.

In the questionnaire, students were asked to answer yes or no for some of the initial information that academic advisors in Qatari schools are supposed to provide students with. Table 4-5 below indicates the information expected to be given and the girls' answers regarding whether or not the academic advisor provided it. The areas relate to International tests (IELTS, SAT, ACT), recommendation letters, Qatari official universities list, colleges in Qatar, organisations that offer scholarships, and jobs in demand by the labour market. The numbers indicate that a large number of students are not provided with the basic information necessary to make formative future educational and occupational plans.

Table 4-5 Information provided by academic advisor

	Yes	No
International Tests	75%	25%
Recommendation letters	46%	54%
Universities Official list	66%	34%
Colleges in Qatar	80%	20%
Organisations that offer scholarships	50%	50%
Labour market demand	19%	81%

4.5.1 School and Girls Who Know

The Qatari girls who participated in these research interviews have been drawn from all three study tracks proportionally to ensure the distribution of girls' academic achievement and interests. Table 4-6 below shows the Qatari female participants' final grades in the twelfth grade.

Table 4-6 Girls' final grades

ID	Final GPA
GK1	86%
GK2	85%
GK3	75%
GK4	90%
GK5	91%
GK6	93%
GD1	94%
GD2	77%
GD3	92%
GD4	88%
GD5	77%

From Table 4-6 it is clear that on average the GK students performed slightly better than the GD students.

The girls' school involved in this study offered school trips to Qatar Foundation Universities, other places that provided scholarships, and invited speakers to the school to talk about scholarships and jobs. For GK5, who was the oldest child in her family and whose mother had not attended university, school was a main source of information and support for her in making her future career decision; indeed, GK5 decided on being a psychological counsellor after talking to the psychological counsellor in the school. However, GK5 later changed her mind after leaving school and decided to study law after talking to the advisor in the college of law.

The school had a great influence on GK3. She had been offered two scholarships from two prestigious corporations in Qatar after presenting a project in Qatar University that the school had participated in. Similar to the BKs, some of the GK girls raised concerns that the school did not give fair coverage of all educational establishments in Qatar and some of the GKs said that they felt their school was biased towards Qatar Foundation Universities. For example, GK5, who studied in the foundation track, said:

> *"They took us to universities like Texas that is not our speciality and they didn't take us to Qatar University even though we asked."*

GK3 said:

> *"They took us to QF only; I mean enough we have memorised QF by heart… but there are other universities and colleges."*

GK2 said:

> *"They are very biased towards QF and they took us there, but if we ask about QU they answer us but they do not take us there."*

This bias towards QF's programmes might be down to the richness of information flow into this particular school, because of its high academic performance. Another reason might be that QF's recruitment teams were trying hard to recruit students and so a lack of competition and school advising weakened the variety of what was filtered through to the girls. This richness of information flow into the girls school is a sign of "the power of field", which will be examined in the discussion chapter (Grenfell, 2012, p. 68).

4.5.2 The role of the academic advisors and Girls Who Know

All the GKs knew the academic advisor but were divided on the effectiveness of the career advice provided in school. GK4, for example, was one student who found the academic advisor very helpful:

> *"This year* – twelfth grade – *I found her very helpful; she helps girls a lot and took us to Texas and CMU and helps girls with recommendation letters."*

GK3 also found the academic advisor very helpful, informative, and easy to get hold of. So too for GK2, who also described the academic advisor as helpful:

"She guides us, tell us about the requirements, organises trips ... writes recommendation letters and tell us how to communicate with universities."

Despite finding the support helpful, all agreed that the career advice that was offered at school was not sufficient. GK6 said:

"They don't offer anything without us asking; I know what to ask about but other girls don't know and the school do not initiate help. The student has to ask for it and we are young and have no experience."

GK4 described the academic advisor thus:

"When I ask her about Qatar University, she doesn't know… She is new."

Regarding other career advising resources available for students in Qatar, most of the GK students had not benefited from them. For example, When the GKs were asked about the Advising Career Development Centre in the Higher Education Institute, four out of the six girls had not heard about it, and of the other two who had, one replied carelessly:

"Not once have I contacted them."

GK4 talked negatively about the advisor that had visited their school:

"One has turned up…. At first she said, what do you want to be in the future, and then talked intensively about salaries like we work only for salary, and we didn't like her."

4.5.3 The role of school and Girls Who Do not Know

Table 4-6 shows the Qatari Don't Know Girls' final grades. It seems that even the high-achieving girls struggle with future career decisions. Even though the GK students collectively achieved slightly higher grades than the GD students did, the difference in academic performance is too tiny to differentiate between the Qatari girls who are sure of their future educational and occupational plans and those who are not sure. The GDs admitted that school was the main source of information regarding educational programmes and scholarships, and they included friends as a part of school in their discussion.

GD3 said:

"I have no information other than what I hear in school."

GD4 said:

"Girls talk in the class"

when referring to information about scholarships.

Listening to the GDs' interviews, a person can hear those girls cry for more information and they hold the school responsible for that. For example, GD2 said:

"I feel we need more information; they – the school – *need to help us more."*

4.5.4 The role of the academic advisor and Girls Who Do Not Know

All the GDs knew the academic advisor except for GD5, who did not know her. GD1, GD2 and GD4 thought the career advice in school was effective but not sufficient. They thought they needed more information and more help in decision making. GD4 felt sorry for the academic advisor; she said:

"I feel Miss A.A. is a "poor fellow", she is trying too hard…. She can't help every student."

GD3 said:

"I have no information other than what I hear at school."

GD4 decided on being a teacher after listening to a Qatari teacher talking to girls about how important to Qatar it was to be a teacher.

Regarding other places that offer career advice, such as the Higher Education Institute, none of the GD girls knew that the Higher Education Institute offered career guidance, and as one might expect, none of them knew about other places in Qatar that could offer career and educational advice.

To conclude, the girls' school has a prime location in the field of education in Qatar. This notion of location is referred to by Pierre Bourdieu as "the power of the field". The flow of information from international universities is intense to the degree that some students felt overwhelmed and wanted to know other information, for example about Qatar University, which was not as intensively featured. The academic advisor works only as facilitator for the flow of the information from outside the school into it. Most of the girls have not benefited genuinely from the role of academic advisor in the school; some of them did not even know

that there was such a person in the school. It seems that the girls who know what they want to do in the future and those who are achieving highly are the ones who have benefited the most.

Chapter 5 Boys' Results

In this chapter data from the boys' school and data from the Qatari boys' interviews will be presented. The chapter is divided into four sections: general career ambitions, family, friends, and school. Each section starts with a general overview of the overall boys' sample that the researcher has drawn from the questionnaire data and then more specifically for those boys with clear future plans, and those who are still unsure. The chapter concludes with a summary.

5.1 Introduction

One hundred and twenty-three Qatari boys from one secondary boys' school in Qatar completed the questionnaire. These boys were in the twelfth grade in the academic year of 2014–2015 when this questionnaire was distributed. These boys are distributed over three study tracks; 60 per cent study in the Foundation track, 36 per cent in Advanced (Engineering) and 4 per cent in Advanced (Medicine). Of these boys, 60 per cent chose the study track because of job requirements, and of these 88 per cent felt that they had chosen the right track, and most thought that their study track qualified them for their future profession. By the time they answered the questionnaire – October 2014 – nearly two thirds of the boys knew what they wanted to do in their professional future, whilst the remainder did not know. Even though some research, for example that by (Hirschi, 2010), has indicated that grade or chronological age is not a predictor in aspiration development, the researcher wanted to shed light on this area and found that 59 per cent of the Qatari boys surveyed started thinking about future careers in secondary school, 19.5 per cent of whom started thinking about future careers in their twelfth grade – the last year of schooling in Qatar. By the time the boys answered the questionnaire – the first semester of year twelve – only 5 per cent of them had not started thinking about what they wanted to do after leaving school.

Ten boys were selected from the boys who stated in the questionnaire that they would be willing to take part in this study. These ten boys were selected to represent the three study tracks – Foundation, Advanced (Engineering), and Advanced (Medicine) – and were divided into two groups: boys who knew what they wanted to do after leaving school and those who did not have any plans after leaving school. Ten boys were interviewed in the second semester of their final year at school – only three to four months away from leaving school for good. One boy did not participate in the second interview, which is a situation that can often occur

in longitudinal research (Bolger & Laurenceau, 2013), meaning that nine boys were interviewed after leaving school.

The researcher interviewed twelve students who knew what they wanted to do after leaving school; six of these were girls – (the GKs – who were mentioned in the previous chapter) and six were boys. These boys had clear plans for their future career and will be called the *Boys Who Know* (BK); they will be labelled as BK1, BK2, BK3, BK4, BK5 and BK6. Four who did not know what they wanted to do after leaving school at the time they answered the questionnaire were also interviewed – these were the *Boys Who Do Not Know* (BD). These boys will be labelled BD1, BD2, BD3 and BD4. So including the five girls – GDs – the researcher has interviewed nine students who had unclear future educational and occupational plans.

5.2 General career ambitions and factors influencing decision

When the boys were asked to pick the three factors that had influenced their career decisions, family came first with 48 per cent of the boys picking it as a main factor influencing their career decision; this finding for Qatari boys aligns with French boys in the research by Vignoli et al. (2005), where the fear of disappointing parents – family – was the motivation for career exploration; something which is not the case for girls! Job requirements and educational grants came second and third with around 40 per cent each of the male sample. Job requirements and educational grants represent income for Qatari students, which might be interpreted as a part of the fulfilment of family and gender obligations. Interestingly – unlike girls – academic performance came fourth with around only a third of boys recognising it as a factor influencing their future career decision-making process.

Moreover, unlike the girls, whilst 70 per cent of boys aimed to join higher education after school, a much larger percentage, 30 per cent, said that they would not. This result aligns with the fact that internationally there are more girls at universities than boys. This result is also supported by a study by (Ojeda & Flores, 2008), where Mexican American female students were found to have higher educational aspirations than Mexican American males did. However, of those 84 male Qatari students who aimed to join higher education, only 21 of them achieved the relevant university entry requirements and only 12 boys had applied to a university. Nearly all boys surveyed said that it was important to have a scholarship, which is an indication that these boys felt the need to earn money and to be independent just after

leaving school. Sixty per cent of the male Qatari students surveyed got their scholarship information from their relatives.

5.2.1 General career ambitions and Boys Who Know

BK1 wanted to be an orthopaedic doctor; BK2 and BK5 wanted to be army officers, BK3 an aviation engineer, BK4 a naval officer and BK6 a police officer. Only one boy started thinking about his future occupation in the seventh grade; the rest of the BKs started thinking about their future careers in secondary school – three of them in tenth grade, one boy in eleventh grade and BK5 started thinking in the year of this study, twelfth grade. Unlike the GKs, the BKs did not recall a major event that shaped their decisions on future careers. Rather, the BKs seemed to decide on a future occupation by talking to people. Archer, DeWitt, and Willis (2014) have noted that young people aspire to a career that they have been exposed to, either by the family, or by friends and other people they know. For example, BK1 decided on being a doctor after talking to his biology teacher in his tenth grade. He stated:

> *"The biology teacher in tenth grade has recognised that I have good grades and encouraged me to study medicine, and I really want to be a doctor."*

Unsurprisingly, family influences are important, as with BK3 who decided on being an aviation engineer because his uncle was an aviation engineer in the army and had recommended this occupation for the student. BK6 also mentioned his relatives when asked how he came to the decision of being a police officer. He said:

> *"All people older than me, my relatives, my uncles, have been officers."*

BK5 wanted to be an army officer for no particular reason, making the decision after a relaxed time with his friends. He said:

"I sat with my friends in the living room and thought about it, and I felt it's [being an army officer] *ok."*

BK3 had an interest in being a football player. He practised football every day at a football club, but he was anxious because of a fear of a future physical injury, so did not see this as a viable a future career. He felt that his future would be safer being an aviation engineer. This sense of making pragmatic choices, as opposed to following routes that are seen as riskier, is interesting and a similar example with one of the BD boys will be discussed later.

When the BKs got their final grades, most of them had to change their plans because of their lower-than-expected grades. Table 5-1 shows the final grades that BKs obtained in their twelfth year.

Table 5-1 BKs' final grades

ID	Final GPA
BK1	78%
BK2	-
BK3	66%
BK4	62%
BK5	59%-F
BK6	F

BK2 did not participate in the second interview, so the researcher was not able to get access to his final grade. BK5 and BK6 did not pass the examinations and so would have to re-sit some of the subjects before they could proceed. This outcome is generally not expected by schools, parents and students in Qatar. The research participants said that final exams were not hard but they claimed that the marking was not fair. Because of the large number of complaints about the grading, The Ministry of Education responded in the media that schools and students had to work harder to ensure that they met the Ministry's academic standards (SEC, 2015b). It is worth mentioning that the Ministry have postponed announcing the final grades several times, which made most people in Qatar worried. The fact that the Qatari girls interviewed in this research surpassed their male peers academically is not surprising considering the international statistics (DiPrete & Buchmann, 2013).

Only BK4's plan went as he had hoped, despite his lower grades, but this was only because the academy he hoped to attend had lowered their requirements; they had done this

because of the poorer results overall of students nationally that year, which was widely reported in the Qatari media at that time (Al-Malah, 2015). BK1, who wanted to be a doctor, planned to continue his ambition to pursue medicine but not with the two medical corporations in Qatar, as he had originally planned, but with the army, because of his low grades in English and low IELTS score. BK3, BK5, and BK6 all had to change their future career plans because of not achieving the academic requirements that they needed. For BK6, a significant life incident affected his criminal record, which meant he could no longer pursue a career in the police force, as he had wanted. Research by Croll (2008) concluded that people could accomplish their future careers if: 1) they aspire to them at age 15, 2) have good grades, and 3) the career is similar to a parent's occupation; it is clear from the participants' stories in this research that the three boys who could not pursue their dreams lacked component number 2 – good grades. Academic performance was a serious barrier for the Qatari male students interviewed.

5.2.2 General career ambitions and Boys Who Do Not Know

Four boys who were undecided about what they wanted to do after leaving school were interviewed twice – once in the second semester of their twelfth grade and again after receiving their final grades. BD1's father was pressuring him to be a doctor like his brother and sister but he wanted to study law. This resulted in him feeling confused and undecided. BD2's father was also pressurising him, but in this case to study abroad. Despite the pressure, there was no clear plan about where and what to study. To further add to his confusion his friends were advising him to join the army – meaning he felt unsure and unable to decide. Likewise, BD3's father was pressurising him in the same way, i.e. to study abroad, but again with no clear advice about what and where. It might be that the fathers of both BD2 and BD3 wanted them to gain life experience, become fluent in English, and gain an international degree with the aim of boosting their future careers. BD4 had not yet thought about what he wanted to do after leaving school. When asked about why the boys found it so hard to decide, they had different reasons. For BD1 it was clear – his reply was:

> *"Maybe family pressure makes me uncertain."*

BD2 said:

> *"I have compared between two things I have in mind but the negatives and positives came out to be similar."*

And BD4 said:

> *"I don't know what is out there; I want to be a pilot but I don't know any pilots to ask them what it is like and what the requirements are."*

Clearly for these students, there was a great deal of competing advice leaving them feeling confused and uncertain.

Some of the BD students felt the time pressure but some did not. On the other hand, all BD students admitted that they changed their minds very frequently. They all also felt that taking a decision about future education or a future occupation was very difficult, even though they had different reasons for why it was hard. BD1 explained the difficulty thus:

> *"You will devote your life to this thing, so you may lose your whole life if you fail to make the right decision."*

BD2 agreed with BD1 that this one decision would shape his future. BD3 had difficulty in committing to a decision and said:

> *"I found it is difficult because if I want to go somewhere I hesitate and fear it will be hard, so I go back and take another decision; and then I fear it will be a wrong decision; if I take that decision I worry I'll have to stick with it and I also fear I'll then face problems and have to start again."*

BD4 found the difficulty in making a decision related to the distraction of people offering him advice. He said:

> *"You keep something in your mind and then hear other people and they affect you, so you change your mind."*

The BD students felt bad that they were approaching the end of the school year and yet found themselves unable to make a decision about what they wanted to do after school regarding their future education and occupation. BD1 described his feeling as "*puzzled*" and he wished that his father would support him in his decision to study law instead of forcing him into medicine. BD2, on top of feeling angry and annoyed, felt different. He said:

> *"I see everyone has decided and I've not."*

BD4 felt *"lost, confused, and stuck*"; he said:

"I don't know; I'm stuck; I have nobody to guide me."

An interesting point with BD1 is that he played handball and practised the sport every day. But as with BK3, he was averse to pursuing sport as a career. BD1 raised more reasons than BK3 regarding not wanting to be a player. He also mentioned income as a national Qatari player, and said:

> *"They* – the national team administrators – *bring players from all over the world and pay them a fortune and we, the sons of Qatar, can't join the national team!"*

5.3 Family

Looking at numbers, like the girls, the boys were influenced by family. Indeed, 11 per cent were in the track they were studying in secondary school primarily because of family wishes. Ninety-three per cent of boys stated that their families' wishes were important when considering future careers. Eighty-four per cent reported that they discussed future educational and occupational plans with family; around 40 per cent of boys chose their father as the person in the family they would most likely discuss future occupational plans with; a quarter said they would discuss with their mother. This result agrees with both Kniveton and Agarwala's research, where for boys, the father is the one to influence career decisions. Sisters and brothers were found to be influential as well in this study; one fifth of the Qatari boys surveyed said they would discuss their future plans with a sister or a brother. Moreover, 45 per cent of the boys surveyed would choose a profession just to satisfy a family wish. To add this result to the result that family came first, with 48 per cent of the boys picking family as a main factor influencing their career decision, a person can discern how much concern and worry these Qatari boys have about their families' opinions. The vast majority of boys (86%) agreed that their families helped them with selecting a future occupation. After family, practical factors came second and third, such as recruitment packages (40%) and availability of scholarships (38.5%), both of which represent income and money for Qatari young people.

Half of the boys' mothers held undergraduate degrees or higher and 45 per cent of the boys' fathers held undergraduate degrees or higher. Thirty-seven per cent of the boys' mothers and 17 per cent of the boys' fathers held a secondary-level qualification or lower. Interestingly, the statistics suggest that some of the male students are unaware of their parents' education. On the questionnaire, 13 per cent of the boys did not know their mother's

educational qualifications and 11 per cent did not know their father's educational qualifications.

The occupations of the Qatari boys' fathers varied. Around 39 per cent of the boys' fathers worked either in army- or police-related occupations and slightly over a quarter worked in professional jobs such as engineering or managerial governmental jobs. Interestingly, around 23 per cent of the male Qatari students who were surveyed did not know where their fathers worked, or stated the place or the company their father worked for instead of what type of work their fathers did. Some explanations of why those boys stated where their father worked instead of what they did could be: 1) they might not know exactly what their fathers' jobs were, 2) they might use the reputation of the place to show that their fathers worked in a very well-known place, 3) or simply they have not understood the question properly. Statistics show that of those Qatari boys who knew what they wanted to be in the future, around 42 per cent of them had chosen a future career related to their fathers' occupations; this agrees with the findings of (Archer et al., 2014) that young people aspire to occupations that they have been exposed to.

The occupations of Qatari boys surveyed also varied, but none of the boys' mothers worked in army- or police-related occupations. More than half of the boys' mothers did not work at the time the boys answered the survey; they were either dead, retired, or did not work. Unlike the relation with the father's occupation, only one boy's future career was related to his mother's occupation.

Relatives and extended family also play role in a student's career decision. Sixty per cent of the male students surveyed stated that their relatives were the main source of information regarding scholarships and the institutes that offered them. Several researchers, such as Cavenagh et al. (2000) and Eman et al. (2012), have found that students go down a certain career path because they have been exposed to that career in their extended family. What this research is showing is that because of the generous flow of information about a particular career from extended family members, students have a living example of what is it like for them to be in a certain profession, which makes the decision-making process clearer and easer.

5.3.1 Family and Boys Who Know

The BK parents' level of educational qualification varied and is shown in Table 5-2:

Table 5-2 Level of education of the BKs' parents

Student ID	Mother's Education	Father's Education
BK1	Secondary	Master's degree
BK2	Preparatory or Less	Secondary
BK3	Preparatory or Less	Master's degree
BK4	Preparatory or Less	Undergraduate degree
BK5	Secondary	Undergraduate degree
BK6	Master's degree	Preparatory or Less

Table 5-3 below shows parents' occupations compared to the BKs' desired future occupations:

Table 5-3 BKs' occupational aspiration in relation to their parents' occupations

Student ID	Future Occupation	Mother's Occupation	Father's Occupation
BK1	Orthopaedic Doctor	Does not work	Retired Librarian

BK2	Army Officer	Does not Work	Army Officer
BK3	Aviation Engineer	Does not Work	Senior Marine Officer
BK4	Naval Officer	Does not Work	Naval Officer
BK5	Army Officer	Died	Director of Public Relations
BK6	Police Officer	Head of a department in the Municipality	Head of a department in the Municipality

All the BK students discussed their future educational and occupational plans with their parents and their views ranged between thinking that family opinion was important and very important. When Boys Who Know were asked about the person in the family that they would be most likely to discuss their future occupational plans with, most of them said their father, but some mentioned others such as their mother, relatives, an older cousin, and an older sister.

BK1 and BK4 had considerable support from their fathers. BK1's father had been calling him *"Doctor"* ever since he decided in the tenth grade to be a doctor. BK4 wanted to be a naval officer like his father, and because his father took him to his work, BK4 had experienced what it was like to be a naval officer in practice. BK3 and BK6 talked about how influential their uncles were; they overshadowed the fathers of BK3 and BK6 when it came to occupational decisions. BK3's uncle was an aviation engineer and had talked to his nephew about what it was like being a aviation engineer and the advantages that he would gain if he became one. And even though BK6's father was formerly a police officer, BK6 talked about how influential his uncles were in his decision to be a police officer. BK2 also admitted that he wanted to be an army officer because his father, his uncle and his older male cousin were all army officers. BK5 is a different story. His mother had passed away and he was the only male child in the family. He was burdened by the fact that he had to take care of his sisters. He wanted to study abroad but changed his mind after speaking to a friend about being close to his sisters. Even though BK5's father was only fifty-eight years old, BK5 thought he was *"an old man, and I'm the man of the house"*. He talked mostly about his future educational and occupational plans with his older sister. This constraint of caring for siblings has been highlighted by Schultheiss et al. (2002), even though they specified it as caring for younger siblings, and BK5 had both older and younger sisters. It is nevertheless still the same concept

of being constrained by caring for siblings, because in the Arabic world it is an obligation for a man to take care of his unmarried sisters.

From the above information a person can see how masculine the BKs' social environment is. A possible contributing factor is that most of the BKs' mothers lack work experience, so their role and input in terms of occupation is largely absent, strengthening the male social structures the boys are situated in. Male occupations create an important sense of self but also, clearly, occupations are very much bounded by the spheres of experience, i.e. aspirations are very much limited to what is known. These boys seem to be very attached to their families and BK6 expressed this clearly:

"If my family say something I will do it."

5.3.2 Family and Boys Who Do Not Know

The levels of education of the BDs' parents varied, as shown in Table 5-4 below:

Table 5-4 Level of education of the BDs' parents

Student ID	Mother's Education	Father's Education
BD1	Secondary	PhD
BD2	Undergraduate degree	Preparatory or Less
BD3	Undergraduate degree	Master's degree
BD4	Secondary	Secondary

Table 5-5 below shows the occupations of the BDs' parents. All four of the BDs were not fully aware of what their fathers did; two of them were able to describe what their fathers did but did not know their job titles. BD3 said when asked about his father's occupation:

"So many things; one time he worked in the army and another in the Ministry of Education – yes, that's the last work I remember he did."

Table 5-5 BDs' parents' occupations

Student ID	Mother's Occupation	Father's Occupation
BD1	Housewife	Resigned from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
BD2	Employee in Ministry of Culture	Employee in KAHRAMAA
BD3	Housewife	Retired (Don't Know)
BD4	Retired Employee in the Mail Main Office	Don't Know Exactly

BD1 and BD3 had what could be considered authoritarian fathers. BD1's father had asked his son to study in the medicine track in school, in order to become a doctor like his brother and sister. BD1 experienced a great deal of pressure from his father to be a doctor. Some of BD1's statements about his father's wish were:

> *"Because my sister and brother are doctors, my father says 'I want you to be a doctor'"; "I like law but father wants me to be a doctor"; "family expectation; I mean if they say to me go into the thing you like I might study medicine… it's different if it is a family wish* [father only]*, study this and don't study that"; "Father said this university and that one is good"; "Father says 'check this university and find information'"; "a lot of pressure from family."*

BD3's father was also the one who chose the study track in secondary school for his son and BD3 stated it was his father who had the most influence on his future educational and occupational plans. Some of BD3's statements about pressure from his father are reported below:

> *"He* [his father] *said so"; "Father said the most important thing is that you go abroad to study; do not study in Doha … he wants me to be better than my brothers."*

When asked about what his father did, BD3 made an interesting comment:

"I don't know… it is none of my business!"

BD2's father, even though he did not agree with the idea of his son entering military life, said:

"If you want to join the army, I will talk to my friend for you."

It is clear from this that he was supportive of his son's decision. BD4 replied, when asked about his parents' role in his decision:

"I haven't talked to my father yet… nor my Mum."

Mothers were rarely mentioned in the BDs' interviews; it was the fathers who were the focus of the BD students. In the few statements about their mothers' role, BD2 said:

"*Sometimes my mother broaches the subject* [his future plans] *and says 'do whatever you want.'*"

And BD1 said:

"My Mum does not pressurise me, she says 'do anything you want, anything you like', but father, no, he says 'study medicine and be an orthopaedic doctor in ASPIRE'."

Brothers and sisters were mentioned throughout the BDs' interviews except for BD2, who was the oldest child in his family. BD1's brother, who studied medicine because his father wished it, warned his brother against studying medicine. In BD1's words:

"Even though my brother X is a doctor, he says 'don't go into medicine – live your life; a brother's advice – don't go into medicine'."

Yet interestingly, BD3's father portrayed his older brothers as bad role models in order to encourage him to do better in life. Family members, especially boys, in the Arab world participate in adding to the family's honour and pride, which might explain BD3's father's pressure on his son and the use of his older brothers as an example. It might also be because of the father feeling the pressure from society and passing this pressure on to his son.

Other relatives were mentioned as a source of information only in BD3's interview. BD3 mentioned his uncles and his male cousins as the main source of information about scholarships and the nature of different jobs. The pressures from BD1's immediate family meant everybody else was overshadowed. BD4 did not mention relatives at all. BD2 said:

"My relatives rarely talk to me."

Some BD students raised social role conflicts. For example, BD1 said:

"Ten years will be lost from my life… at the end it is an occupation that you earn money from and can open a house because of it."

BD1 also added:

"I can't be a player because I can't open a house."

By *"opening a house"* BD1 meant marrying and being able to take care of his family financially. BD3 also raised future social concerns, saying:

> *"I thought once to be a pilot like my uncle, but then thought that I'd have problems when I got married… he* [his uncle] *travels a lot and that affects his presence at home and his wife and children."*

In conclusion, family is found to be an influential factor in Qatari students' educational and occupational decisions. They rely on their extended family network for information. Family pressure and load is apparent in the boys' interviews, where they want to be successful to satisfy their family and not let them down. The father's support and pressure made a big difference in the interviewed Qatari boys' occupational decisions. The BK students generally had supportive fathers and the BD students generally had authoritarian fathers.

5.4 The role of friends

Nine per cent of the 123 boys surveyed were in their particular study track just to be with their friends. Eighty-two per cent of the Qatari male students surveyed discussed future career plans with friends and 70 per cent of them admitted that their friends' opinions regarding their future career plans were important to them. When the boys were asked if they might consider a profession just to be with friends, 21 of them answered yes. Moreover, friends were among the three factors that influenced their career decisions, with 34 per cent of them picking friends as a factor.

5.4.1 Friends and Boys Who Know

All BK students discussed future educational and occupational plans with their friends. But when asked about how important their friends' opinions were, four out of six students

thought that their friends' opinions were only important to some extent. BK1's friendships are characterised by mutual support; he said:

> *"They* [his friends] *affect me positively… I also encourage them and give them advice."*

BK2 and BK5 had a more subordinate relationship with their friends. Indeed, BK2 was studying in his particular study track just to be with his friends. He said:

> *"My friends went into the engineering track so I went with them."*

BK2 added:

> *"What happens to them* [his friends] *happens to me."*

BK5 also had a similar relationship with his friends, as revealed in his quotes:

> *"I sat with my friends in the living room and though about it* [being an Army Officer] *and felt it's ok"; "My friends know, and I will go with them"; "We are all together."*

It is worth stating in here that BK2 and BK5 aspired to a masculine occupation, and in this context it is interesting to note that Sinclair et al. (2014) have indicated that friendships could be a serious barrier for a non-traditional occupational choice. In fact, BK5, who was the only son, changed his future plans after listening to the advice of a friend. He said:

> *"One of my friends has suggested that I need to stay with my sisters since I'm the man of the house – my dad is old; he is 58… this friend is older than me but in the same class because he has to redo a year after his father passed away."*

BK3 and BK4 did not seem to trust their friends' opinions. BK3 said about his friend:

> *"He is trying to convince me about his opinion but I'm not convinced… it's my future, not theirs."*

Indeed, BK4 criticised students who followed their friends:

> *"If they said let's go and jump off a cliff, they would follow them."*

Older friends were mentioned throughout the interviews with BK students. They brought up older friends as a reliable source of information and a backup for advice. Friends' recommendations – which might imply that they were older friends – were found to be an influential factor in students' choice of higher education in a study by (Sojkin, Bartkowiak, &

Skuza, 2012). In the present research, the following quotes demonstrate the participants' opinions:

> *"Everybody* [older friends] *who has joined the college recommends it." "My cousin; one year older, in the thirteenth grade."* (BK2)
>
> *"My older two cousins are in Aviation College."* (BK3)
>
> *"I'll ask the people* [older friends] *who went before me"; "I have older cousins who study overseas; I'll ask them."* (BK4)
>
> *"I know someone* [older friend] *and I will ask him"; "I know a friend* [older friend] *whom I will ask."* (BK6)

5.4.2 Friends and Boys Who Do Not Know

In the questionnaire all the BD students said that they discussed their future educational and occupational plans with their friends, except for BD4, who said that his friends' opinions were not important. However, in the interview, BD4 had older friends who seemed to be the main source of information when it came to future educational and occupational decisions; some of his statements were:

> *"I have friends who know, I'll ask them"; "My friend studies in the USA and he told me about higher education… I'll contact him and see what the procedure is"; "My brother and my friend are my sources of information"; "Not all my friends, only a few"; "I might listen to some of my friends."*

He seemed to not trust the friends who were in the same age group as him. He said about these friends:

> *"Every time I ask them they say that they want to join the army and it's rare that someone wants to finish school or study abroad."*

The friends of BD1, BD3, and BD2 acted as a channel of information about schools, subjects, deadlines, occupations, and scholarships. For example, BD2 had mentioned his older friends a great deal throughout his interviews. He said:

"People [older friends] who went into the academy before me advised me not to go into the army; they say joining the academy is tiring and we regret it"; "I hear from my friends"; "I know somebody who has finished school last year who went… etc."; "Some students [older friends who study abroad] *say that their allowance is very poor"; "…from people* [older friends] *who study abroad and those who went through the admissions process".*

To summarise the role of friends in the decision-making process of the Qatari boys interviewed, it seems that these boys did not trust their same-age friends' advice, but they valued the advice they got from older same-sex friends. Most of the interviewed boys had older same-sex friends who they thought gave them valuable advice. To conclude, it also seems that the more supportive the family is of the student's choice, the less dependent that student is on the advice of his older friends.

5.5 The role of school in decision-making

The secondary boys' school was chosen as it accommodated the highest attendance of male Qatari students in the twelfth grade. One hundred and twenty-three male Qatari students in their final year at school were surveyed. On a scale of four (Very Good, Good, Satisfactory, Weak), the boys' school in this study had an overall satisfactory level in the 2015 Qatari Evaluation Institute report, suggesting that it was not a particularly good school.

Sixty-eight per cent of the boys had clear plans after leaving school, but 32 per cent did not. When students were asked to pick three factors that influenced their career decisions, over a third of them picked academic performance and 13 per cent a teacher. Indeed, 87 per cent of the boys believed that their academic performance in the twelfth grade would have a great impact on their career decisions. Sixty per cent of the boys did not know that the school offered school trips to various organisations to help provide information about labour market needs.

Forty-three per cent of the boys surveyed did not know that there was an academic advisor at the school to help them with making a career decision. Two boys out of the 123 students stated that they chose their study track because of the influence of the academic advisor. When students were asked about their source of information about scholarship providers in Qatar, only one fifth of the boys stated that it was the academic advisor. Around 11 per cent of the boys surveyed agreed that the academic advisor influenced their future educational and

occupational plans. This clearly suggests that for the boys in this school, the role of the academic advisor was minimal at best in relation to offering advice and guidance.

5.5.1 School and Boys Who Know

BK1 decided to study medicine after advice from his biology teacher, which is a living example to support research by Archer et al. (2014) that some students develop aspirations through their lessons and learning at school. However, BK1 faced rejection by two potential sponsors in Qatar after leaving school because of his low English grades and not having an IELTS score. This disappointment could have been avoided, as he should have received advice about this requirement in school. He said:

"I want to concentrate on studying this year and will apply for IELTS later, after school."

Two of the BK students mentioned not depending on the school as a source of information to make future educational and occupational decisions. BK2 said:

"If I want to know anything I go and surf the Internet."

BK3 mentioned his smart phone as a source of information and when asked him how he used it, he mentioned Instagram (an app), saying:

"Instagram has loads of information."

All BK students were upset after receiving their final grades, with none of the BKs getting the final grades they expected. All of them were well below their expectations and two of them needed to redo some subjects in the summer before they could leave school, otherwise they would have had to redo their entire twelfth grade. The BKs' results are shown in Table 5-1 above. Indeed, before I lost contact with BK2, his last words were:

"I have not gained my certificate!"

Some of the words the BKs used to describe their feelings were: crushed, betrayal, betrayed myself and my family, fallen short, shambles. The BKs believed that their final grades held sway over their dreams, and once their final grades were released they had to deal with the situation as it was and amend their future educational and occupational plans according to their grades.

5.5.2 The role of the academic advisor and Boys Who Know

Two of the six BK students did not know that there was an academic advisor in the school to help them with future educational and occupational plans. BK5 knew that there was an academic advisor, but said:

"I don't go to him."

BK1 acknowledged that the academic advisor took his class to the Hamad Medical Fair, where they could gain a great deal of information about the sponsorship of Hamad Medical Office. BK2 knew the academic advisor but was not very happy with the service that the advisor had given. He said:

"He took us to places and universities that I'm not interested in."

BK4 said, when asked about the role of the school in shaping students' futures:

"There are some boys whose families are not paying attention to them, and they end up listening to their friends"

saying that in the absence of family guidance, the role of school is magnified in importance.

When the BK students were asked about other places in Qatar that offered educational and occupational advice, such as the Higher Education Institute, none of the BK students knew about the advice centre in the Higher Education Institute. BK1 replied after the researcher explained it to him:

"This is the first time I have heard about this."

BK5 answered the same.

5.5.3 School and Boys Who Do Not Know

All the BD students acknowledged that the school offered trips to universities and scholarship providers and they appreciated the information that they acquired through school, but they raised some concerns. For example, BD2 said:

"I can't hear"

when describing one of the lectures that the school held, pointing out that the room was crowded and noisy, so he couldn't hear all the information that was provided. Another point of view on the subject was also raised by BK4, who said:

> *"They* [the school personnel] *talk to boys but they don't listen, boys don't hear the school and teachers, but when their fathers speak to them, they listen."*

BD4 raised a different point. He said:

> *"They* [the school personnel] *haven't asked us what we want; they provide information that I don't want. And the things in my mind, they haven't talked about."*

These boys felt that advice was given, but in a very perfunctory way and without any sense of individualised provision.

Like the BK students, the BDs were very upset and frustrated after receiving their final grades. Table 5-6 below shows the BD students' final grades.

Table 5-6 BDs' final grades

ID	Final GPA
BD1	75%
BD2	71%
BD3	64%
BD4	78%

It is interesting that the BD students achieved higher grades than the BK students. Even though all four BD students passed secondary schooling, they all received grades much lower than the ones they expected. They made harsh statements about the education system. For

example, BD1 talked explicitly about the Supreme Education Council and the evaluation system and the scholarships:

> *"It is the strategy of the Supreme Education Council that is to blame; it doesn't make sense that out of 10,000 students, 5,000 have not passed* [these are not the real numbers but this represents what BD1 said] ... *their scholarship procedure is ridiculous ... the failure of one student represents a failure of the whole institution."*

They all felt disappointed, angry, and upset. These following quotes describe the BDs' feelings after receiving their final grades:

"I'm angry at the Supreme Education Council." (BD1)

"This is not me… I was shocked… 12 years' effort gone for nothing." (BD2)

"It was a shock; I swear… I feared telling my father… I was speechless." (BD3)

"I wasn't expecting this… I was puzzled." (BD4)

All BDs described how hard they had studied, but BD3's story is heart-rending. He was sick during the examination period. He was running a very high fever and was examined on three subjects while in that condition. He said:

> *"I was sick, I could not write and I took medicine, so I forgot things. I stayed in the examination room until the last minute, but I couldn't remember the answers."*

5.5.4 The role of the academic advisor and Boys Who Do Not Know

Only BD1 did not know that there was an academic advisor in the school. BD2 knew the academic advisor and had benefited from his advice, but said:

"Sometimes I go to him but I can't find him."

BD3 stated that he had benefited from the academic advisor, but when the researcher asked him about university deadlines and the Qatar Official University List, he did not know about either, yet these are two fundamentally important things for a student who wants to study abroad and who is four months away from graduating from school. BD4 seemed to be suspicious of the academic advisor's knowledge. He said:

"I don't think the academic advisor will help me with things he doesn't know about."

This point made by BD4 might be the result of the use of "in-house staff" who might not have enough knowledge about career guidance (Haynes, McCrone, & Wade, 2013, p. 478). However, BD4 admitted that he had not asked the academic advisor:

"I have not asked him personally, but I hear from other students."

None of the BD students knew about other places in Qatar that offered advice regarding educational and occupational plans, such as the Higher Education Institute.

To conclude, it is clear that career guidance in the boys' school is not supporting students regarding their future education and occupations. It is a case of throwing some information at students, regardless of its relevance to the students' needs and aspirations. Academic performance is also considered a barrier for the Qatari boys interviewed.

Chapter 6 Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This thesis set out to explore young Qataris' future educational and occupational decision-making processes by considering the following research questions: How do Qatari twelfth-grade students make occupational and higher educational decisions? What is the role of family, friends and school in student decision-making? Does gender matter? And what are the differences between twelfth-grade Qatari girls and boys regarding occupational and educational decisions? To answer these research questions, the researcher has chosen to use mixed methods to collect data from two independent schools; one boys' and the other a girls' school, both with the highest number of Qatari students attending twelfth grade in the academic year the data was collected. A survey questionnaire was answered by all of the Qatari students in twelfth grade at both schools to draw a picture of the overall sample and ask students to participate in the interviews. This chapter discusses the key findings from the research in relation to the key areas and these are discussed in relation to the research questions. As such, it is organised by first considering the role of family, then school and finally, the role of friends in career decision-making. A general summary of the key ideas is then offered and considered in relation to the research questions.

6.2 Family

Family was found in this research to play a significant role in young Qataris' future educational and occupational decision making, both in terms of the advice they give and the knowledge they have. Family in this case does not mean parents and siblings only; it includes extended family members such as uncles, aunts and cousins. In Qatar, these extended family members, even though they do not share the same house most of time, usually live close to each other and gather often. Even though parents and family members have not been interviewed, the students' questionnaires and interviews reflect their families' role from their perspective, which aligns with other research done in this area (Levine & Sutherland, 2013; Vignoli et al., 2005; Kniveton, 2004; Li & Kerpelman, 2007). This section will be divided into four areas of discussion: Boys, Girls, The Know students and The Don't Know students.

6.2.1 Family and boys

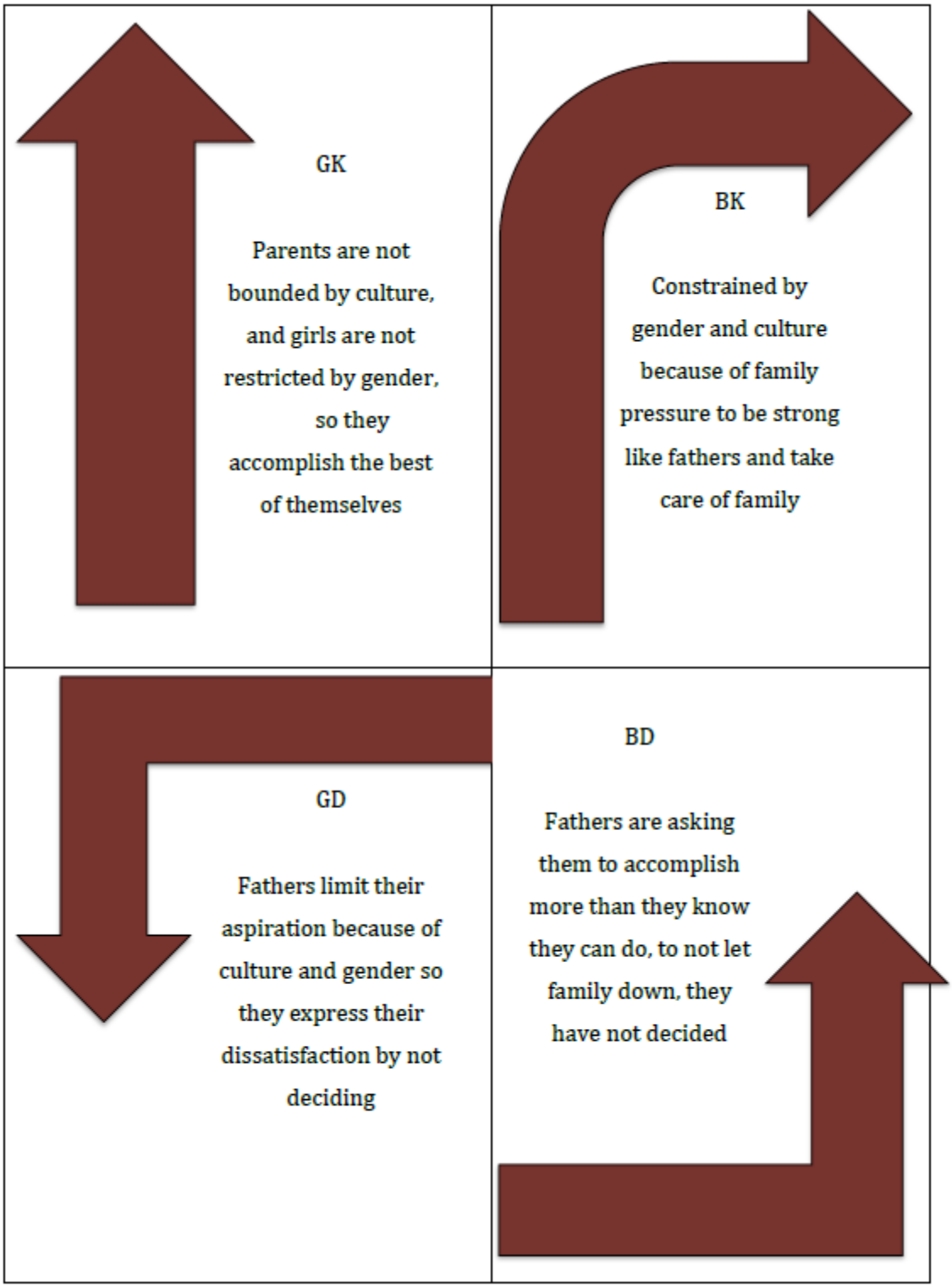
Reading into the Qatari boys' questionnaire results, it can be seen how important family is to these boys. Family appeared as the first factor to influence career decisions for Qatari boys and most of them would consider a career to satisfy their family's wish. Indeed, the interviews have clearly shown this as well. All the boys who participated had consulted at least one family member about their future educational and occupational decisions. The ten interviews with Qatari boys indicated that they had grown up in a masculine environment; they talked about their fathers, their uncles and their male cousins very often. Some of the Know Boys talked extensively about numerous male family members, which indicates how extensive these masculine connections are. They mentioned places such as "*Al-Majlis*", which is an Arabic word that simply means a living place as mentioned in the introduction chapter – which can be a room or a whole building – where people gather. In this particular cultural context, it means where the male family members gather (Sobh & Belk, 2011a). The cultural gender segregation in such places fosters the need for these Qatari boys to be masculine and extend their masculinity to almost every aspect of their lives.

Considering the above environment and the importance of the men in the students' lives, it is unsurprising that the twelve male Qatari participants interviewed have experienced family pressure, especially from their fathers, to fulfil family and gender-related obligations. They have grown up in a conservative Islamic Arab society, where the man is considered to be the head of the house, and where they know that family responsibilities lie on his shoulders. It is highly likely that they will feel this social pressure to be strong and to 'be a man'. They are constantly reminded of who they are and how they should behave in order to carry the family responsibility. The pressure from fathers was noted from the interviews for both sets of boys, the BKs and BDs. This agrees with research by Sikora and Pokropek (2011) in that gender identity is culturally constructed and by the age of fifteen career plans are already gendered-typed.

This social pressure is, however, expressed differently by BKs and BDs. Although BKs have supportive families, they do make what could be considered as very gendered occupational selections, with five out of six BKs wanting to pursue a career in the army, navy, or police force; the sixth wanted to pursue a career in medicine but chose to do this through an army scholarship. Bearing in mind three factors – the father's occupation, the mother's level

of education, and the masculine environment that is part of the BKs' culture, it is no surprise that gender features heavily in their career selections. Figure 6-1 illustrates the direction of parents and social pressure on BK students.

Figure 6-1 The direction of paternal pressure on GKs, GDs, BKs and BDs



Three of the four BD students experienced what appears to be tremendous pressure from their authoritarian fathers to be better and to aspire higher than they might have done otherwise. This desire for upward social mobility meant that some of the BDs felt pushed to achieve more than they felt they could actually accomplish. The BDs were aware of what they could and could not accomplish, but they did not want to let their fathers down. And as a "man" they – the BD boys – cannot express weakness by saying they cannot do it. In part, a resistance to the pressure might be a way of understanding some of their indecision about future plans. It is the researcher's opinion that these boys stay in limbo by not deciding on future plans as a way of expressing their dissatisfaction and discomfort with the societal pressure they are experiencing. In a society that places high expectations on its sons, it is no wonder that some students can feel overwhelmed by the choices they must make. This social pressure on boys has been linked with being indecisive about their future career in a previous piece of research, where Vignoli et al. (2005) found that it was the fear of disappointing parents that was the main reason behind male students' career indecisiveness.

Arguably, this pressure is shared by the fathers and is a pressure that is passed on from fathers to their sons. In Arabic societies, parents take both the credit for their offspring's successes and the blame for their offspring's failures (Nydell, 2012). And since the father is the head of the house, he carries most of this responsibility. This *upward* pressure to succeed that BDs' fathers apply to their sons is a result of the social pressure applied to them as fathers. Thus, in societies where gender plays an important role, it is evident that there are going to be social pressures that are applied to the choices and decision making of boys, which can both steer and constrain the choices that are available for boys to make. Boys need to fulfil gender and family obligations and if not, they would be considered as failing in their family role. The *downward* pressure on girls, as explained in the next section, serves to highlight further the upward pressure that is applied to boys. Even though the researcher did not interview the participants' fathers, the social pressure applied to them is very clear in the statements that they make to their sons, according to the perspectives of these boys. For example, BD3's father said to his son: *"I want you to be better than your brothers",* which indicates that BD3's father experienced the social pressure of his older sons failing, and so reapplied this pressure to his younger son, leaving the son feeling that he was virtually powerless to make his own decision about his future, if it was to be in opposition to his father's wishes. It would be worth exploring the age of fathers as well as their cultural beliefs to truly understand whether such social pressure applied on men in Qatar is related to older

generations or is a constant that is always passed on to younger male generations. However, this was not part of this study.

6.2.2 Family and girls

Although most of the Qataris girls surveyed stated that their family's opinion regarding their future career was important to them, family was not one of the three main factors that the girls indicated as influencing their educational and occupational decisions the most significantly. This was surprising. Academic performance, job recruitment packages and personal wishes were the three main factors that influenced the Qatari girls' future educational and educational decisions. Family came fourth in terms of importance. The surveyed Qatari girls exhibited practical thinking when it came to their future education and occupational choices and they expressed considerable autonomy in their decision making. In Arab countries, and especially the Gulf countries, young females need to have permission from their father or a male guardian to travel, study, and work – sometimes even written legal permission is needed, as in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. For these young Qatari females, could not having family as a main factor influencing their future career decision be evident of some sign of social change?

On the other hand, the eleven interviews with Qatari girls revealed that family was not excluded from girls' future career decision-making. On the contrary, it is because of parental support, especially from their fathers, that these girls express more autonomy in their decision-making. This result aligns with research by Li and Kerpelman (2007) that indicated that girls need permission to pursue their dreams. The statistics drawn from the Qatari girls' questionnaires show that they discussed their future career plans with their mothers more than their fathers, which aligns with Kniveton (2004) research indicating that the parent of the same sex as the child is the more influential. But again, the interviews revealed that it is still the father who has the ultimate authority. With his permission, GK girls are free to aspire, with less concern about gender roles, finances and cultural norms. Interestingly, it is their fathers' cultural and gender beliefs that also restrict the GD girls in their aspirations. This result corresponds with that of the research by Marmenout and Lirio (2013) that was conducted in the United Arab Emirates, a Gulf country very similar to Qatar. Although Marmenout and Lirio focused their research specifically on Emirati girls' employment, employment is a part of career aspiration. They found that the Emirati girls needed the

support of a male figure to be able to achieve their career dreams. In the Gulf countries girls are raised to listen to and obey their fathers, brothers, and future husband; females always have a male – a father, a brother or a husband – guardian, both socially and economically. Having a supportive guardian is therefore essential to free these girls to have aspirations, and this has made all the difference when comparing the Qatari girls in this research who were sure and confident about their future career plans and those Qatari girls interviewed who were not sure yet what they wanted to be or do in the future. However, whilst these girls are free to choose, this is still only with the authority and permission of the significant male in their lives, in this case their fathers.

When comparing Qatari boys' and Qatari girls' career aspirations, two very different pictures emerge, interestingly similar to those presented by Vignoli et al. (2005). With Qatari boys, it is apparent that they carry a social load, a load that is placed on males to succeed and carry the family; this social pressure is shared by both fathers and sons and by both the Know Boys and the Don't Know Boys. The effect of this pressure is evident in the choices these students make and might explain why Qatari boys in this study aspire to masculine occupations such as the army and police.

The picture is different for Qatari girls. Qatari girls who happen to have an understanding male guardian – a father, uncle, or older brother – are free to aspire to careers even outside the acceptable range of female occupations that typically include teaching and nursing. For instance, GK2 wanted to be an ambassador, and GK4 wanted to be a lawyer. This is very much the case for the Know Girls, who have the emotional, social and financial support of their fathers, enabling them to worry less about gender roles, finances, or social pressure. On the other hand, the Don't Know girls and their career aspirations suffered because of an apparent lack of paternal support. No matter how supportive their mothers are, if the fathers or other male guardians do not give the girls permission to aspire to a future of their choice, they will struggle to make future educational and occupational decisions alone. This research firmly suggests that the GD participants make occupational decisions based on their fathers' cultural and gender beliefs, and these, therefore, have limited and constrained the range of their aspirations, at least from their perspectives.

6.2.3 Family and the Know students

Family, especially fathers, were highlighted as key for promoting these students' confidence and so enabling them to assess their options and make their future career decision

fairly straightforwardly. The Know Boys and the Know Girls share in common the fact that they have family support. This family support is found to be positively linked to adolescent's career maturity (Dietrich & Kracke, 2009). Furthermore, the Know students come from families that are rich, both culturally and socially. They enjoy richness in cultural capital and this can be heard in their use of language, the social activities they take part in, such as volunteering, and their confidence when talking about the future. The Know students also enjoy a wide array of social connections. The Know students' interviews are full of examples of people that they know either through family or outside their families via their connections. Their social networks are widespread and these networks provide information channels that are rich with the information, knowledge and experiences that are essential for making good future career decisions, especially in a fast-changing world and specifically in a rapidly developing country. This was evident in the ways that some of these Know students were able to visit the work places of their relatives, places that are usually considered as restricted areas that one cannot enter without permission. Their relatives gave them such opportunities to allow them to compare certain occupations and allow them to experience them before deciding on a future career and making choices. Thus, the social connections that Bourdieu notes as important are certainly evident in this research. Social capital is very present in the Qatari Know students' interviews, and might be argued as giving some of these students advantages over some of their peers' privileges.

It appears that the Qatari Know Girls had somewhat more family support than the Qatari Know Boys. The GKs talked intensively about their nuclear family members, especially their fathers; the GKs' fathers had effectively removed the social "glass ceiling" from their daughters' aspirations and allowed them to aspire freely regardless of cultural, gender and financial constraints. This notion of the supportive father has been highlighted in several pieces of research in the West and in the Middle East; where a father's level of education – cultural capital – is positively correlated with his daughter's career wellbeing (Li & Kerpelman, 2007; Nasser & Abouchedid, 2003). This sense of removal of the glass ceiling unblocked the Qatari girls' aspirations and presented them with open skies in terms of their aspirations. This has opened new doors for them, to things that they would not have dared aspire to two decades ago, such as engineering. While certainly the Qatari girls surveyed have not aspired to any obviously masculine careers such as army or police occupations or similar, they are still without doubt pushing the borders. Although the BK students also had family

support, they talked only moderately about their family support, although in contrast mentioned extensively their wider male extended family connections.

In conclusion, although the Qatari GK and BK twelfth-grade students had family involvement and support in making future educational and occupational decisions, it appears that girls have fewer boundaries and expectations to their aspirations if they have supportive male guardians. On the other hand, the equivalent male students are constrained by cultural and gendered values revolving around caring for the family and being the man of the family, which limits the boys' range of aspirations and hitches them to family expectations. An important difference between the Qatari GK and BK students is that girls tend to talk more about nuclear family and boys tend to talk more about the extended family; this highlights the burden that the Qatari boys are carrying in regard to family ownership, obligations, and responsibilities.

6.2.4 Family and the Don't Know students

The first observational note when listening to the Don't Know students' interviews is that they did not talk about their extended family as much as the Know students. This might be a sign of limited social capital. Both GD and BD students mentioned their parents, especially their fathers, negatively. The negativity varied from describing their parents' knowledge about careers as being out-dated, to a lack of guidance so as to not blame them [the parents] in the future for the decision, to controlling their potential futures by maintaining old cultural and gendered values. This lack of involvement and guidance of parents in their children's education was found to influence the children's ability to take future educational and occupational decisions (Levine & Sutherland, 2013; Dietrich & Kracke, 2009). A key feature that was shared across the Don't Know Qatari girls and boys is that of authoritarian fathers. Both GDs and BDs appeared to experience pressure from authoritarian fathers who constrained their career decisions. According to Dietrich and Kracke (2009), students experience decision-making difficulties when parent interfere in the process. In the researcher's opinion, indecisiveness in these young Qataris, despite all the available options, could perhaps be considered as a form of resistance to the pressure from their fathers. Whilst it is unclear that this indecisiveness by the student is a form of resistance to their father's pressure, the data appears to suggest this may be the case.

The GDs and BDs both discussed a sense of constraining pressure from their fathers, but this paternal pressure is directed differently. The BDs' fathers pushed them upwards, which meant that their fathers pressured them to do better than some felt they might be able to do. The BDs' fathers told them what they should do. For example, BD1's father pushed him to go into medicine like his older sister and brother. BD1's academic performance will not allow him to go into medicine and his brother has advised him not to go into it, which is an indication that the older brother may have also been pushed by the father to go into medicine as well. Boys in Qatar, as mentioned before, carry the family names and their career success adds to the family pride. Moreover, the children's success or failure is credited to their parents. These two facts make fathers pressurise their sons upwards, to jobs that are perceived to have high social status – such a medicine. Family aspirations, when not aligned with capability, can create considerable pressure and tension. Some of the BD boys were well aware that they could not meet such high levels of expectation, and yet they carried a strong desire not to let their family down; they could not express their weakness, so as not to compromise their masculinity. This results in them appearing to feel stuck in a 'grey area' of indecisiveness that limits their thinking and aspirations.

In contrast to the boys, the paternal pressure on Qatari Don't Know girls interviewed is directed downwards. Figure 6-1 illustrates the direction of paternal pressure on Qatari GD girls. In this study sample, the pressure is applied by an authoritarian father on his daughter, restricting and pushing her career aspirations downwards – that is, towards occupations that are associated with lower status and gendered career paths. A father's cultural and gendered values could be considered as influencing and constraining their daughters' educational and occupational decisions. For example, GD5's father asked her to study in the same way his ancestors had studied, despite all the social change that Qatari society has gone through since his ancestors' time, the vast educational developments, and the choices available. Without the support of a father or a male guardian, a girl is also limited in her freedom to aspire to a future of her choice. These unsure Qatari girls feel frustrated at their fathers and do not feel they have the support they need from their parents; some of them pass on their frustrations to society by being negatively judgmental of others – a trait shared by both BDs and GDs. It might be because they feel frustrated at the cultural values that constrain them and hold them back from what they want to do. The indecisiveness of these girls might be a way to express frustration at the social norms that constrain them through gender and cultural values.

To summarise the role of the family on Qatari young people's future educational and occupational decisions, this research found that parents, especially fathers, play an essential role in allowing or constraining students' occupational choices. Constrained by culture, fathers are the people found to influence Qatari young people's future decisions the most. Freeing their children from social, gender and financial pressures, fathers can help their children aspire highly and decide freely. Equally, a fathers can adversely influence his children's future careers by reapplying the social pressure applied by society to him to his children, constraining some (girls) and pushing others (boys) against their will and regardless of their abilities. Even though Qatari girls need permission from their fathers to aspire freely, they do not seem to carry such a heavy social load as the boys. It seems that the Qatari boys carry a social load that constrains their occupational choice and forces them to choose masculine occupations even though they are notionally free to choose whatever they wish. The role of gender and fathers would be an interesting area for further study, since most of the gender studies in the Middle East focus on female inequality and tend to ignore the fact that males can experience inequality as well.

6.3 Friends

When discussing how friends influence and support young Qataris' future career decisions, it is worth differentiating between friends of the same age and older friends, as all participants in this research had both. Friends of the same age are those who are usually at the same school or in the same class, and older friends are those who have already left school and who vary from one year to three years older than the student participants. From the data it appears that older friends are the ones who have the most impact on a student's future career plans. Both boys and girls consulted their older friends and believed that the information that those friends provided them with was very reliable and up to date, as they had most recently gone through the system themselves. They therefore valued the advice given by their older friends highly. The participants in this study did not, however, appear to be as confident in the advice given by their friends of the same age. It might be because they felt that their same-age friends were in the same position as they were themselves and were therefore less informed, and in some cases, as unsure; their advice was not always considered reliable advice. There are therefore several elements to consider when looking into the influence of friends on young Qataris' future educational and occupational plans.

The first element is older friends. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, Qatar's labour market and educational system has grown rapidly (Donn & AlManthri, 2010). For this reason, information about the labour market, higher education and scholarships changes very frequently, and those who have experienced it themselves and who have gone through the process recently are the ones most likely to have the most reliable information. Most of the participants in this study had older same-sex friends who were between one to three years older than them, on whom they relied for an up-to-date, reliable stream of information about higher education institutions, admission processes, work and scholarships. This notion of older same-sex friends as an information source is equally present in both the boys' and the girls' sample, but it varies in concentration between the Know students and the Don't Know students. The idea that Qatari young people consider older friends' knowledge of higher education, available scholarships and occupations as the most accurate and reliable because they have gone though it themselves recently is similar to the notion of what Bourdieu has called the *field*; where to be able to play the game a person has to know the rules of the game (Grenfell, 2012). In this case, older friends represent players with expertise in the field – future educational and occupational plans – who have been and are playing the game and know its rules. This expertise of older friends in the field of building their future career is what encourages students to listen to their older friends' advice and see them as having more authority than their same-age friends.

The role of friends suggests another notion from Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction, that where education can be considered as making use of social capital. To clarify further, students with well-placed older friends have more access to information that other students might have who do not have these connections, which reinforces the idea of reproduction of the field via social capital, which could be considered as fostering inequality. Unlike the Don't Knows, the Know students had a large number of older friends who had taken different educational routes, and so therefore those students had a network of support that might in part explain the confidence of their choices. These older friends also created an advantage for their younger peers by paving the way for their friends by being able to offer small tips about admissions, interviews, and people they need to go to; this highlights the reproduction of the educational system as a field of enabling people who know how to play the game to best access the field benefits (Ramady, 2016).

Developing the idea of social reproduction and inequality further, note that the participants in this research were drawn from Qatari governmental single-sex schools. In

Qatar – except for those in private co-educational schools – having a friend from the opposite sex at our participants' age – 16–18 years old – is considered culturally inappropriate. So when talking about older friends, a participant's older friend would therefore share his or her gender. This could be considered as fostering not only a gendered career selection but also feeding the reproduction of the gendered labour market. This is in line with a study that was carried out in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that concluded that segregation in the educational system reproduces itself in the labour market (Baki, 2004). Although Baki (2004) research concentrated on segregation in higher education and in the educational system more broadly, the same reasoning could arguably be considered as applying to the decision-making process of the participants in this research. These young participants listened to and considered their older same-sex friends' advice and as a result it is likely that they made gendered career selections just because of the availability of information. For example, in an unofficial conversation with the boys' school principal, the question of why most of his pupils wanted to be in the army or the police force puzzled him. He said that Qatar was a civilised country and educators were trying to direct students to go into professional jobs like engineering and medicine, but it seemed that all the male students wanted was to join the army and the police force. It is interesting to note that whilst this clear gender preference for occupations is noted, it is deemed puzzling and strange. So when combining the pressure on Qatari boys to be the man of the family, the generosity of the scholarships in these streams, and the availability of older friends' advice, there is no wonder that most of these Qatari boys make gendered occupational selections. This is, of course, also true for the girls.

There are two noticeable differences between the Know students and the Don't Know students, both for boys and girls, in relation to their friends. The first difference between the Know and the Don't Know students is that the former did not rely on their friends – either same-age or older – in terms of emotional support. The Know students tended to benefit from their older friends' knowledge and information to plan or adjust their future plans, but they did not depend on advice from these friends. There may be two reasons for this. One explanation is that the Know students had supportive parents and they did not feel the need for emotional support from friends. Another reason might be that these Know students were confident in themselves, their abilities, achievements and judgment and did not need their friends' endorsements to go on with their future educational and occupational plans. Indeed, the Don't Know boys achieved more academically than their peers who Know, but it might be that they were not confident enough in their own ability. In contrast, the Don't Know students,

both boys and girls, tended to appear to depend much more on their friendships emotionally. The withdrawal of GD3 from a very prestigious programme that she was nominated for because she knew no one is an indication of such emotional dependence. Indeed, she had said that she would stay in the programme if her friend was with her. This dependence on friends might be because of the absence of even moderate guidance and support from parents; to compensate, students turn to their friends regarding their future plans.

Another noticeable difference between the Know students and the Don't Know students – girls and boys alike – relates to the quantity and closeness of the older friends that they describe. The Know students had many older same-sex friends who took various educational and career paths. Most of the Know students mentioned in the interviews that they maintained their relationships with older friends and were in touch very often. The Don't Know students, on the other hand, had few or no older friends. Most of them did not appear to trust their friends' opinions when it came to future plans, but relied on them more – in the researcher's opinion – for emotional support, likely because of what appeared to be pressure from parents at home, either as result of too much advice and direction about what they needed to do after school, or too little guidance because parents were concerned about being blamed in case anything went wrong.

Although not measured, it could be argued that this apparent difference in the "density" of older friends represents the amount of social capital that the Know students appeared to have and the Don't Know students appeared to lack. In a rapidly changing world, having access to new information in the field is essential. The Don't Know students understood that they lacked this social network, as those ideas were present in their interviews when several of them have raised the idea of "*Wasta*". Wasta is a form of social capital with negative connotations, as mentioned in the review of the literature (Ramady, 2016). That young people – in this case the Don't Know students – are able to recognise that they are missing social capital is significant and suggests a need for help and support. Perhaps this is where schools can help and do more? For example, if schools had programmes to help students gain the necessary tools to build and benefit from networking this could help – either via alumni networks or via business and higher education students. Social connection is an essential factor in the Arab world when it comes to educational admissions, scholarships and jobs (Ramady, 2016) and is embedded in its culture. Older friends are a therefore an important form of social capital that is needed in today's fast-moving labour market. They offer vital insight and advice as well as more particular advantages.

In summary, in the uncertain, rapidly changing world that our young people are living in, making an educational and occupational choice for the future needs support and insightful guidance. Older friends represent something like a lighthouse that can help, support and direct their younger friends' future plans. Schools can do more to make use of this finding by using older pupils as role models. Opening up sources of connections via online social media between girls and boys, for example, allows for interactions that would not interfere with social norms around gender. This would then also help with the inequality in gender selections.

6.4 School

As noted in the methods chapter, the research data collected in the academic year of 2014–2015 came from two independent schools in Qatar – one girls' school and the other a boys' school, both with the highest attendance of Qatari students in the twelfth grade that year. The research sample schools are similar in that they are both public, single-sex schools, although they differ in their seniority and overall academic performance. It is crucial that we acknowledge the similarities and differences in the two sample schools in this study in order to have a deeper understanding of the schools' environment. However, it will not be possible to discuss some more detailed information in order to adhere to ethical guidelines.

The first difference worth noting is that the girls' school is older, having been established earlier in the system of independent schooling in Qatar. It is considered to be one of the best schools in Qatar and it is likely that most of the female students attending this school are thought of as high achievers and are drawn from families that can support such achievement. Whilst such demographic information was provided by the students, the data also suggests that the girls are drawn from higher social groups. The boys' school, on the other hand, is a public school that transformed into an independent school during a later phase of the educational reform than the girls' school did. Regarding location, both schools share the same geographical space and to the researcher's knowledge there is no great difference between the two schools in terms of geographical situation. During selection, geographical location was not intended to be a criterion; it was random because schools were selected according to the criterion of the highest number of Qatari pupils attending twelfth grade during the academic year that the data was collected.

The sample girls' school ranked "Very Good" in the latest Periodic Assessments issued by The Evaluation Institute in Qatar. "Very Good" is defined in the Periodic

Assessments report as “the work is well developed and effective”. The boys’ school, in contrast, had “Satisfactory” in its latest Periodic Assessments, “Satisfactory” being defined as “the work is in the early stages of development”. So if we rank the schools using a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the best and 4 being the worst, the girls’ school would be a 1 and the boys’ school would be a 3. It is important to take into account that the assessment teams visiting the girls’ school are female and those visiting the boys’ school are male; this issue will be highlighted later in this section. However, it is still a significant difference even when accounting for this and is worth bearing in mind. A further source of information providing a deeper understanding of the school environments of our sample of participants is the School Report Card. The School Report Card for the academic year 2014–2015 that was issued by The School Evaluation Office in The Evaluation Institute in Qatar reported that girls were slightly more satisfied with their school than the boys were with theirs.

Bourdieu’s theoretical ideas around the education system and how it is used as a tool of social reproduction might be considered as evident in this research, when considering the two sample schools. The girls’ school represents an old player in the field of education; it has positioned itself among the best and has acquired the necessary rules to play the game of educational success. Being in this excellent position in the field of education acts as a magnet for other advantages that are associated with this position, such as scholarship offers and university programmes. The density of information flow from the international universities in Qatar into the girls school is an indicator of “the power of the field” (Grenfell, 2012, p. 68). The girls themselves complained that there was too much information about the international universities in Qatar; indeed, most of the girls interviewed felt overwhelmed by the amount of information these international universities were pouring in their school to persuade them to apply. The girls felt this interfered with their ability to make a calm, rational decision. Being in the girls’ school, a person can clearly experience a sense of belonging and the “us and them” factor. The school administrative personnel, academic staff and students felt very proud that they were part of this particular school and from anecdotal comments that were not part of the research, it was clear that they felt superior to the other schools. The environment of the girls’ school promotes high academic achievement and high aspirations and rewards those girls who achieve by enrolling them in university programmes or those offered by big corporations and scholarship providers.

The boys’ school, on the other hand, as an average school with no such history and sense of superiority in terms of academic positioning, compared to the girls’ school had a

school environment that appeared much more functional; a space where pupils come every day to study. The feeling of belonging was less evident to me in the comments made by staff and students in the boys' school. The density of information flow from the international universities and scholarship providers was also much lower, if not absent in some cases. The administrators at the boys' school were trying hard to encourage the students to study harder and achieve higher grades, but the boys' level of academic achievement was not as high as the school administrators were hoping for. The international universities' admission teams in Qatar concentrate their recruitment efforts on schools demonstrating high academic performance, and the boys' school that is part of this research was not one of them. This serves to highlight Bourdieu's ideas about educational reproduction, where those with a good position in the field are the most likely to reap the benefits (Grenfell, 2012).

However, it is worth pointing out that in this research, school and gender are interrelated and separating the two is problematic. Since the sample schools are single-sex schools, it is wise not to project the discussion onto the school culture and environment; gender is also of importance and significance. It is true that in this sample the girls' school has performed better than the boys' school, but it might be because of gender differences and not social advantage, in that girls in Qatar perform better than boys, as they do elsewhere in the world (DiPrete & Buchmann, 2013; Lam et al., 2012). To further illustrate this, Baker and Kanan (2005), in their study of international-mindedness, compared students in Qatar from three different types of school: public, magnet, and international. The sample schools in Baker and Kanan's research were a mix of single-sex schools and co-ed schools. Baker and Kanan (2005) found no significant difference between the types of school in terms of international-mindedness. The significant difference Baker and Kanan found was between girls and boys in Qatar; girls in Qatar scored significantly higher than boys in all three domains that the researchers tested: awareness of other cultures, universal affiliation, and cultural tolerance. To support this research, an older study conducted by (Al-Misnad, 1998) concluded that girls in Qatar appeared to have more ambition and a more modern attitude towards education and careers. These studies conducted in Qatar generally align with wider international studies, which argue that girls tend to be more ambitious educationally (Li & Kerpelman, 2007). In this way, it might actually be the case that girls help their school environment flourish rather than vice versa. Taking this line of thought further, it might be because of young males' lack of educational ambitions that the boys' school in this study is struggling academically?

In terms of academic performance, Qatari girls have achieved more than Qatari boys. But comparing GK girls with GD girls and BK boys with BD boys, it does not seem that academic achievement by itself is enough to influence taking such an important decision that would affect their future. It is the confidence in their ability, whatever their ability might be, that would lift the student out of the grey area of being unsure about the future to a place where they take control, plan, and be decisive about a future educational and occupational path. To illustrate this, we can return to the comparison between the BKs' and BDs' final grades that was presented in the results chapter for boys – see Table 5-1 and Table 5-6 – where it is obvious that the BD students have achieved more than the BK students.

6.4.1 The role of academic advisors in schools

The intention of this research was also to shed light on the role of the academic advisors in Qatari independent secondary schools – as he or she represents the career guidance offered to students in schools – in order to consider the institutional factors that may help and support young peoples' decision making. The academic advisors in both schools at the time the research was carried out worked as facilitators of the information supplied by the wider circle that the school had located itself in. They facilitated the information flow from the outer circle to the inner circle – the school. The high density of information about international universities' programmes and admissions in Qatar and the absence of information about other universities and programmes is an indicator of the location of the school within the field of education. Academic advisors in both schools had no or only a limited role in advising students regarding their future education and occupations on a more personal and individualised level. As we saw in the results for both the boys and girls, the academic advisor was only useful when students already had a clear idea of what they wanted to do, and sometimes the advisors themselves lacked relevant information.

The data that is more broadly about school career guidance in Qatar suggested that academic advisors are simply throwing what is filtered to them by the surrounding educational establishments at students, rather than really helping them individually regarding their future educational and occupational plans. For example, school trips to educational institutions are not aimed at the specific students that may be interested in them, rather they are provided for all students in certain classes. The same can be said for school lectures about scholarships and occupations. In an informal talk with the boys' academic advisor, he complained that the school invited outside speakers to talk about subjects such as scholarships,

but the boys did not even listen; some of the boys participating said that they were not interested in the subject and that the school administrators made them attend. Therefore, the school guidance is targeting the student body as a whole, whereas career guidance was considered more valuable when it was an individualised service. Moreover, academic advisors tended to work with the achieving students, since they were the targeted clients of the international educational institutions and scholarship providers, and they tended to neglect or not have time for the disadvantaged or struggling students who needed guidance the most.

The career guidance provided in Qatari independent schools is an area that needs rethinking. Despite the fact that the Qatari government has invested generously in education – as highlighted in the introduction chapter – including creating the role of academic advisors to help students with their future career decisions individually, some students were not even aware that their school had such an advisor. And, even in the cases where students were aware of the existence of an advisor in the school, trust was an issue. Students need to trust that the academic advisor's knowledge about higher education programmes and occupations needed by the labour market is reliable and up to date, which in this rapidly changing world is hard to guarantee. Handing the responsibility of helping around six hundred Qatari young people plan for the future to one person – who happens in this research to be a non-Qatari – needs to be reconsidered.

It is critical for schools to position themselves in or around successful educational fields for their pupils' best interests. It is not in the best interest of anyone to blame one person – an academic advisor – for influencing the future of these young people; instead, guiding students is a collective work, which pays back in the future. Furthermore, it is crucial for all those concerned about young Qataris and young people more generally to understand that they reinforce inequality in the educational system and in society more widely by concentrating only on high-achieving schools and pupils. Universities and scholarship providers have to play a part in motivating young Qataris to aspire highly in all schools equally.

In summary, the fact that only one Qatari girl from the whole twelfth grade surveyed did not want to proceed to higher education appears to indicate that the girls' school environment does promote continuing education, and the fact that 30 per cent of the boys surveyed did not want to study any further may be an indication of a less aspirational atmosphere in the boys' school, or a belief that higher education is less relevant or necessary?

Gender is an active player in this matter, but Bourdieu's idea that education is being used as a tool to reproduce an elite status quo also appears to be very present in this research. Thus, while gender might be an important factor we cannot dismiss, the likelihood is that social advantage is also a factor, in relation to student background. The two are explicitly interconnected and it would be difficult to consider these in isolation of one another. That said, the girls' school was positioned in a prime location in the Qatari educational system, and this location has allowed the fruitful advantages from the surrounding fields to flow easily and plentifully into the school, in turn promoting more success. This appeared to be less obvious in the boys' school, since the boys' school has not acquired the same social position as the girls' school.

6.5 Summary of key findings

- Supportive and balanced parental guidance, especially from fathers, allows Qatari twelfth-grade students (both boys and girls) to aspire freely.
- Authoritarian fathers apply pressure on their sons and daughters in different directions because of cultural and gender beliefs. They apply upward pressure on their sons, demanding success; they apply downward pressure on daughters, constraining their aspirations through gendered and cultural values.
- It seems that both the Don't Know boys and the Don't Know girls resist their fathers' authority by not deciding on a future plan, as a way of showing polite resistance to pressure.
- Qatari boys carry a considerable load of social pressure to succeed as a man and carry the family pride, which applies constraints to their aspirations and funnels them into masculine occupational domains; this is a form of inequality.
- Qatari girls who enjoy a supportive father or a male guardian aspire to occupations that are not traditionally tackled by Qatari women.
- The main source of information about occupations and educational grants for Qatari young people is from their social network; having access to social capital is essential in taking a formative career decision.
- Academic advisors in this research only provide the information that is filtered from the educational establishments surrounding their school, with no clear sign of planned or individualised guidance.

- Older same-sex friends act as a valuable source of recent and up-to-date information about scholarships and educational programmes, and Qatari young people see the facts provided by their older friends as valid information.
- Segregation in schools and having same-sex older friends both foster gendered occupational and educational decision-making.

This research set out to answer the following research questions:

- How do Qatari twelfth-grade students make future choices relating to education and occupations and what factors influence these decisions?

Sub-questions

1. What is the role of family, friends and school in student decision-making?
2. Does gender matter?

In order to answer the main question, it will be beneficial to answer the sub-questions first, and in light of the answers to these, the answer to the main research question is then easier to elucidate. The first sub-question can be sub-divided into five questions. First, does family play a role in Qatari student educational and occupational decision-making? The answer to this question is undoubtedly yes; indeed, the quantitative and qualitative data have shown that their families are the main factor affecting young Qataris' future decisions. Both Qatari boys and girls need the blessing of their parents, especially their fathers, to aspire freely. Qatari boys are more burdened by the cultural ideology of being the man of the family and the associated responsibility, which constrains their choices and funnels them into masculine occupations. The research has highlighted the fundamental role of the father – or the male guardian in the absence of a father – both for boys and girls in removing the glass ceiling for their children's aspirations. A father's pressure applied to their children, either by being authoritarian, comparing them to others, or by not guiding them in order to not take the blame for decisions, has been found to be the reason behind Qatari young people not making a decision about their future occupational choice. It seems that, according to this research, Don't Know participants are saying a polite "No" to their fathers by not deciding; the researcher thinks that they are resisting their father's pressure by staying in the grey area of

indecision. This research has also revealed that the pressure applied to boys by their fathers is different in type to the pressure fathers applied to girls. Qatari fathers applied upward pressure to their sons, urging them to aspire higher than they were able most of the time. This upward pressure applied to Qatari boys is a result of men carrying family names and therefore being responsible for the collective family honour. Even though interviewing fathers was not a part of this study, the researcher thinks that the social pressure applied to Qatari males to succeed is passed on from fathers to their sons. On the other hand, the pressure applied to girls is a downward pressure, meaning that authoritarian fathers push their daughters' educational and occupational dreams and aspirations downwards. These authoritarian fathers constrain their daughters according to cultural and gender values. Again, the researcher thinks that the Don't Know girls are saying a polite "No" to their fathers by not deciding. Qatari girls who are blessed with understanding and supportive parents, especially fathers, are the group in this research that seems to represent the rubric for success in taking an occupational decision and working towards achieving career goals. By freeing his daughter from cultural, financial, and gender roles, a Qatari father is the main element in a Qatari girl's future occupational success. These research findings underline that fathers are the main influence when it comes to young Qatari boys and girls taking future educational and occupational decisions. Young Qataris need to think about and concentrate on their individual futures, worrying less about cultural and gender norms, and it is evident that a father is the key person who can apply or remove such pressure from Qatari young people. Without disregarding the role of mothers in young Qataris' occupational decision making, it seems that in a Qatari family the father's role is more critical.

Family – extended family – is also the main source of information and forms the network that Qatari students turn to in order to help them take the decisions related to their future education and occupation. The capacity and density of these networks determine how much access to information Qatari young people have. The more social capital a student attains, the better informed he or she will be about occupations and educational programmes and grants.

Second, do friends play a role in Qatari student educational and occupational decision-making? The answer to this question is also yes, to a certain extent. Not as significant as the role played by family and parents, but older same-sex friends do play a part in their younger friends' decision making. In these times of uncertainty that globalisation has brought for all of us and the rapid development that the state of Qatar is going through, it seems that young Qataris who have been through the process of leaving school and applying for universities

and scholarships recently are the ones who have the most up-to-date and reliable information. Young Qataris, both boys and girls, ask their older same-sex friends about their journey, benefit from the information they are getting, and build on it. This research has noted that Qatari boys are listening more to their older friends' advice than Qatari girls are. It seems that Qatari girls take the bold information to make a more informed decision, but boys seem to listen to the advice that their male older friends are offering.

Third, does school play a role in Qatari students' educational and occupational decision-making? The answer to this question is that it plays a very limited role. Despite all the investments that the Qatari government has made in career guidance in secondary independent schools, the quantitative and qualitative data from this research shows that school career guidance, represented by the role of the academic advisor, plays a very limited and unsatisfactory role in guiding young Qataris' educational and occupational plans. The position of each independent secondary school in the field of education determines how much the international universities and scholarship providers approach their students. It is an active role played by international universities and big corporations to fish for talented Qatari students and to try to recruit them, and is a mutually beneficial situation for talented students and the international universities and scholarship providers. The better positioned the school is in the educational field, the more intense the information flow about international universities is. International universities and big corporations in Qatar use the weak or absent career guidance framework for students to their own benefit and the role of the academic advisor has become a facilitator for this information with no real input added. This is unfair for the vulnerable students who need this career guidance service the most. There is neglect and an absence of genuine educational and occupational guidance for low-achieving students and those who are undecided about their future educational and occupational plans. Some Qatari students are not even aware of the role of the academic advisor as someone who they can turn to in order to seek advice about future educational plans, and among those who happen to know, many have not benefited from the guidance provided by the academic advisors in both the girls' and the boys' schools sampled in the research.

Fourth, does gender matter? The answer is that gender runs indisputably throughout life in Qatar – family, same-sex friends, and single-sex schools. The Qatari students forming the sample in this research live in a very gendered social environment, something which was abundantly clear in the interviews. To some extent, it is understandable given that this research has taken place in an Arab Gulf country, which, despite all the social developments

that have happened in the last two decades, can still be described as a conservative society that holds on to traditional cultural values. This research noted that these cultural values not only constrained girls but also constrained boys as well. Holding a young boy responsible for the honour of an entire extended family burdens him and contradicts the notional freedom of males to aspire as they wish. Young Qatari boys interviewed in this research have been raised to be the man of the family, and their social world – with the exception of their mothers, sisters, and aunts – is almost exclusively limited to male friends and family members. This gendered environment and gendered cultural values constrain young Qatari boys' choices and induce them to make a masculine occupational choice. The same can be said for the Qatari girls; their social environments consist mostly of females: single-sex school, female friends and female family members. Those Qatari girls who are lucky enough to have an understanding father can aspire freely, while those who have fathers with traditional gendered cultural values find that their options are limited and constrained. The same can be said about older same-sex friends, who offer by nature a gendered advice; the availability of information about certain occupations that older same-sex friends offer makes students follow in each other's footsteps, which is very obvious in the Qatari boys funnelling into army and police occupations. So yes, gender matters and it will take some time for traditional societies like that of Qatar to break down the gendered borders of higher education and occupations. Qatari girls who have supportive male guardians are pushing the borders of occupational choice, aspiring to occupations that were not on the Qatari female spectrum ten years ago.

In the light of the above answers to the sub-questions, we return to the main question: How do Qatari twelfth-grade students make future choices relating to education and occupations and what factors influence these decisions?

This longitudinal mixed method research has revealed that Qatari-twelfth grade students, both girls and boys, make their future educational and occupational decisions through their social networks. The more social capital they have, the better informed they are and the easier it is for them to take an important decision that will affect their future lives in particular and their country as a whole. It is sad to say that despite all the investment in career guidance for students in Qatar in schools and other centres around the country, these measures fail to reach out to those students who are most in need of career guidance. Secondary schools seem to play a limited role in advising students, especially those who are in need of such advice and guidance.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

In an attempt to find out how young Qataris take decisions relating to their future education and occupations, the researcher designed this research using a mixed method longitudinal study. Two sample schools (one girls' school and one boys' school), both independent secondary schools, were chosen and twenty-one participants (eleven girls and ten boys) who had volunteered were interviewed. The participants were interviewed twice: the first interview took place in school while the participants were in their twelfth grade – the last year of schooling in Qatar – and the second interview took place after students had received their final grades and left school. The research design was centred around the critical time of leaving school, because the researcher thought at that time that final grades – the key indicator of academic achievement – were a leading factor in Qatari students' educational and occupational decision-making and was keen to shed light on this transition period. The main research question is: How do Qatari twelfth-grade students make decisions about their higher education and future occupations? The simple answer is that they depend on informal social connections in making these decisions. Extended family, parents and older friends play a critical role in providing young Qataris with information and advice that is crucial for making decisions about future careers. The wider, more intensive and supportive their social connections are, the better informed the student. Fathers were found to influence young Qataris' (both girls and boys) future educational and occupational plans the most. Guidance obtained from school was found to be neither effective nor beneficial for students, especially for those who were low achievers. This chapter will draw conclusions about the role of family, friends and school in answering the research question. Some proposed recommendations will also be presented and then the chapter will conclude with limitations of the study and suggestions for future research. To re-cap, the key findings of this study are as follows:

7.1 The role of family

Although anecdotal, many would agree that living in Qatar is like living in a pressure cooker – the pressure to accomplish and succeed is very high. A person has to work hard to prove him/herself. Such pressure can work for some but not for others. This research suggests that this pressure works well for ambitious girls who enjoy the support of a male guardian. On the other hand, it seems that Qatari boys are unintentionally being pushed into making gendered occupational decisions because of the social pressure to be the man of the family. The fast-paced rate of change of modern life that has affected Qatari society in the last two

decades has made young girls more ambitious and made them more determined to hold on firmly to the rights and opportunities that they have been given. They work hard and feel the need to have higher aspirations so they can take those opportunities and prove that they deserve them. Furthermore, in Qatar, girls tend to use education as their trump card to negotiate around the existing gender norms. On the other hand, it seems that this relatively quick and far-reaching modernisation in Qatar has inclined boys to hold on to the masculine values of Arab society, fearful of losing or loosening the hold on the power they have always enjoyed. It might be that Qatari boys or males in general are fearful for the future of their hierarchical masculine society, and worry that the fast modernisation of Qatar threatens their authority in the family.

By comparing the BKs' and the BDs' final grades, the position of the boys' school in the education system, and their fathers, it can be said that these Qatari boys – both the BKs and BDs – are struggling to make a future occupational choice outside of the traditional masculine career domain. It can be said that it is easier for a young Qatari boy to decide on occupations related to the army or the police force than to try to find other career paths. In a hierarchical society that promotes masculinity, the generous amount of information about occupations related to the army and the police force that is provided to young Qatari boys by their fathers, uncles, and older friends makes it easier for those boys to simply follow the guidance of older males in their social circle. Daring to find a path outside the traditional masculine domains comes with a cost – the effort of finding new paths that are unpaved, undiscovered by other male friends and family members, and the difficulties associated with paths that might be unacceptable for a man in the culture of Arab society. In these days of global uncertainty it might be easier for men to stick together (Kimmel, 2000). Role models in non-masculine occupations are needed for young Qatari boys, to help them see that it is possible to succeed outside the domain of the usual masculine occupations. This study has noted that paternal pressure on Qatari boys to succeed is massive and it interferes with their ability to think, plan and decide freely.

Qatari BKs did not achieve more than the BDs in their final grades, in fact just the opposite. The BDs' academic achievements were slightly higher than the BKs' and none of them failed their final exams, so it is clear that academic achievement is not a distinctive factor in differentiating Qatari male students who are decided about their future occupation from those who struggle in making such decision. It is true that the Qatari boys participating in this research achieved less than the Qatari girls – a pattern that is visible internationally

(DiPrete & Buchmann, 2013) – but thinking beyond gender differences, it is clear that BKs and BDs are two groups of Qataris who do not differ in gender or significantly in academic achievement, but yet they differ in their ability to decide clearly on future careers. The researcher argues that it is the father's role in his son's educational and occupational decision that makes the difference.

A father's pressure on his son to succeed and not let the family down has the effect of loading the son emotionally and socially and interfering with his ability to decide on his future. If we think of this in visual terms, Qatari boys need to overcome three layers of values to prevail over the gendered selection of occupation; the first layer is overcoming the closed circle of "being THE man of THE family". Any occupational choice that would make Qatari boys feels less than the idealised value of "THE man" would be dropped from their consideration. So to overcome this obstacle a picture of a "new man" needs to be drawn. Boys do not need to be "THE man"; they need to be "A man" – a man of morals, a caring man, a man who is honest and a brick building part of his country's future edifice. The emotional pressure of carrying the whole house and being responsible for the whole family – and tribal honour – needs to be lifted off the shoulders of young Qatari boys. Putting the value of Qatar over the value of tribal family names is fundamental to freeing Qatari boys from the emotional and social pressure of family honour. Every brick in the building of Qatar needs to be appreciated, regardless of how big or small that brick is. By being themselves, Qatari boys can build themselves a better and happier future and serve their country better.

The second layer of obstacles, (which might be harder to overcome, in the researcher's opinion), is the giving up of power by Arabic men. In accepting the sharing of responsibilities by both men and women in modern Qatar, Qatari men will need to reconsider the value of "power" and "control". By removing the glass ceiling for women in the workplace and allowing Qatari women to hold important higher governmental positions, two targets will be hit by one stone. The pressure on Qatari boys will ease and a more balanced socialisation for girls will be accomplished at the same time. In the researcher's opinion, what this research has shown in terms of Qatari girls aspiring to new occupations, having confidence in their abilities and believing that they can accomplish things. Positive role models such as the movement that His Highness Shaykh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, The Father Amir of Qatar, set in motion in Qatar when he took control; thus His Highness accepted the sharing of responsibilities by both men and women in building modern Qatar, and this was something that he also actively promoted. Women have been given the chance to serve their country; His

Highness empowered Qatari women in general and presented a real-life example by empowering and including his own wife Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser in the decision making and the development of Qatar. The researcher argues that a balanced distribution of power between men and women in Qatar would help Qatari boys to make gender-free occupational choices and would allow ambitious Qatari girls to play their role without restriction.

The third layer to overcome is an international one, and it might require a pioneering thinker to conquer it. As Kimmel (2000) argues, women have found a way out of the house, but men do not seem to have found a way back into the family from the lofty position of "THE man". Finding an honourable, acceptable way back for men to the family roles will, in the researcher's opinion, ease the social pressure on boys and men and therefore will free their occupational choices of gendered obligations.

On the other hand, ambitious Qatari girls who have supportive fathers can decide on their future occupations freely. In this research, the GKs' fathers have succeeded in freeing their daughters from cultural and gendered values that might otherwise constrain their occupational aspirations. They – the GKs' fathers – have protected their daughters from cultural and gender norms and removed the glass ceiling that constrained their daughters' ambitions, so allowing them to aspire freely. Achieving academically and feeling protected socially, Qatari girls are pushing the borders of gendered occupational norms.

As seen in Qatari boys, GK and GD students do not differ much in terms of academic achievement, but they do differ in the support that they have received from their parents, especially their fathers. Authoritarian fathers who held their daughters back by constraining them with cultured and gendered values were found in this research to be a leading factor negatively influencing future educational and occupational plans for Qatari girls. Qatari girls need to feel supported and protected from cultural and gender norms in order to aspire freely. Only a father or a male guardian can do this. Regardless of the support a Qatari girl's mother provides, Qatari girls need the seal of approval from a father or a male guardian to go on with their future educational and occupational plans; in the absence of this, a Qatari girl would feel confused and puzzled when making future educational and occupational decisions.

7.2 The role of older friends

This longitudinal mixed methods research has revealed that older friends play a role in young Qataris' educational and occupational decision-making. As these friends are providing reliable and up-to-date information from the field, younger friends take their older friends' advice about educational programmes, universities, scholarships and occupations very seriously. The more older friends a student has, and the better placed those friends are, the better informed the student will be. The value of older friends is understandable in the context of the rapidly changing development that Qatar is experiencing.

The only downside of advice from older friends is that the advice comes from same-sex friends, which fosters and reinforces gendered occupational selections. Because of the availability of information, students follow their older friends' advice, ending up following the same gendered selection of occupations. This notion of funnelling into gendered selections is obvious in the case of the Qatari boys interviewed. Older friends can be used by schools as role models for students to overcome gendered selections, help encourage students to achieve academically, and promote school agendas. Students can relate to their older friends far more than they can to a foreign speaker, for example.

7.3 The role of school

This research has shown clearly that the career guidance provided in the Qatari secondary independent schools studied does not seem to guide students regarding their future educational and educational plans in a way that is sincere or helpful to the individual. The information presented to some students is a result of the power position of the school in the field of education. Schools with a good position in the educational field attract higher education and scholarship providers who want to fish for Qatar's high achievers, which raises an ethical issue. Low achievers and students who cannot decide on a future educational plan – that is, those who need this service the most – do not appear on the schools' career guidance radar. The number of students, both girls and boys, who did not even know that there was an academic advisor in the school is clear evidence of the inefficiency of the career guidance service in the schools. An adaptable framework for career guidance in Qatar that is inclusive, culturally sensitive and contemporary is needed. In the meantime, schools need to play a social role in educating fathers that pressuring their sons to succeed and constraining their daughters is not the key to their children's success; on the contrary, this research has shown

that a father's support is essential in allowing Qatari young people to aspire free of social burdens.

7.4 Key Recommendations for policy and practice

Recommendations emerging from these findings

- Fathers need to be educated about their critical role in their children's (both girls and boys) future educational and occupational aspirations.
- For the good of their children's future, fathers need to be supportive of their children's decisions regardless of family obligations. Their fundamental role lay in the removal of the glass ceiling of cultural and gender beliefs that constrain their daughters and sons' aspirations.
- Some Qatari fathers also need to stop pushing their sons upwards, by requiring them to be the man of the family. They also need to stop pushing their daughters downwards, constraining them through adherence to cultural and gender norms. Both directions of pressure interfere with their children's career decision-making process.
- Launching public lectures that speak to boys' fathers and other lectures to speak to girls' fathers, since the message and the content is different; schools can be good places to do this.
- Qatari boys – and men in general – need to be freed from tribal honour obligations. A proposed "road map" for this is replacing the tribal identity with a national one as the first step to reach individualisation.
- Role models outside of the traditional gendered occupations need to be presented for both Qatari boys and girls.
- Students need to receive training workshops in acquiring and keeping social connections, decision-making processes, and building self-esteem.
- Instead of concentrating just on high achievers who have supportive families, schools need to play a role in guiding and reaching the disadvantaged students such as the low achievers, the oldest child of a family, and students lacking in confidence.
- The delivery of career guidance for students in Qatari independent schools needs to be reconsidered.
- Take advantage of social media applications that most students and their parents use to facilitate the sharing of information about educational scholarships, occupations, and labour market needs.

7.5 Strengths and potential limitations of the study

This study shows what is happening on the ground regarding the occupational choices of a group of male and female Qatari students; whilst not generalisable, the study should still be of great value to policy makers, labour market providers, scholarship providers, institutes of education, institutes of higher education in Qatar and similar societies, and researchers in the areas of young people, decision-making, higher education, occupational choice, gender, culture, the Middle East, and family. The main strength of this study is that it is a longitudinal study. It provides in-depth information about how real Qatari students choose their occupational path and the factors that affect their choice. It also shows some of the obstacles that students face and how they overcome them.

There are several limitations to be considered:

1. The Hawthorne effect of the researcher being present in the school. Despite ensuring anonymity of the school and the participants, the principal and the academic advisor may ask students to react positively to all the researcher's questions, or may put more effort in to the career guidance programme, which will interfere with the research findings. The researcher has ensured participants of their anonymity and that of the school and the importance of being sincere, for this research is all about exploring their occupational decision-making journey.
2. The Hawthorne effect may also exist in the researcher being a Qatari herself. In my opinion, being an insider has worked for the research in many cases. Being aware of the culture and customs and understanding how people think and behave in certain circumstances helped the researcher deal with some situations or conversations. For example, one of the girls kept postponing the second interview meeting; after several instances of this the researcher, being an insider, thought she might be under social pressure not to do the second interview. The researcher made sure that she wanted to go on with the second interview and after her agreement the researcher suggested a telephone interview, which worked very well. Being culturally sensitive is very important when studying social factors.
3. A major limitation is losing participants over time; the researcher experienced this with one of the Know boys.

4. Being a female researcher, gender could have been a limitation, especially in a secondary school for boys; it can work for or against the researcher. But to the researcher's surprise it worked to the benefit of the research. Being close to their mothers' age, the boys opened up and talked freely with no gender boundaries.
5. Twelfth-grade students' tight academic schedules and quantity of homework would work against them volunteering for the research; however, this was not an issue for this research and participants were found who were willing to spend time being interviewed.
6. The initial plan was to interview participants three times, but because of time limitations the participants were interviewed only twice; this was still enlightening but time available has certainly played a role in constraining this study.
7. Even though the selection of the two schools was based on the fact that they had the highest numbers of students in the twelfth grade in the year of data collection, generalisation is limited to similar schools in societies with a similar culture.
8. The sample schools were selected on the basis of having the highest number of Qatari students attending twelfth grade in the year of data collection. It happened that these schools are geographically close to each other. Being geographically close to each other may indicate that both boys and girls attending these two schools came from the same social backgrounds, which would help with equitable comparison. On the other hand, being close geographically, the sample may unintentionally have concentrated on one sector of the Qatari society, but with no intention of generalizing the findings of this research it still gives an insightful picture of the Qatari students occupational decision-making process.

7.6 Areas for further research

The researcher suggests that further research is needed in areas that have become apparent from the results of the study. Some of the suggested areas are:

- Since fathers were found to be the most influential on the educational and occupational decision-making of young Qataris (both boys and girls), it is worth examining whether or not the age of the father makes a difference, or whether the cultural beliefs of the father would soften when exposed to an international education rather than a local one.

- Students could be asked to write a daily or weekly diary; this would help to identify other hidden reasons behind their occupational decision-making.
- A more courageous suggestion is to find out whether young Qataris in single-sex schools have friends from the opposite sex that they consult in their educational and occupational decision-making; such research would be enlightening if young people felt they could talk frankly about their other-sex friendships.
- Studying the network of a student or students, both male and female, to show the intensity and the spread of a student's social network in Qatar.

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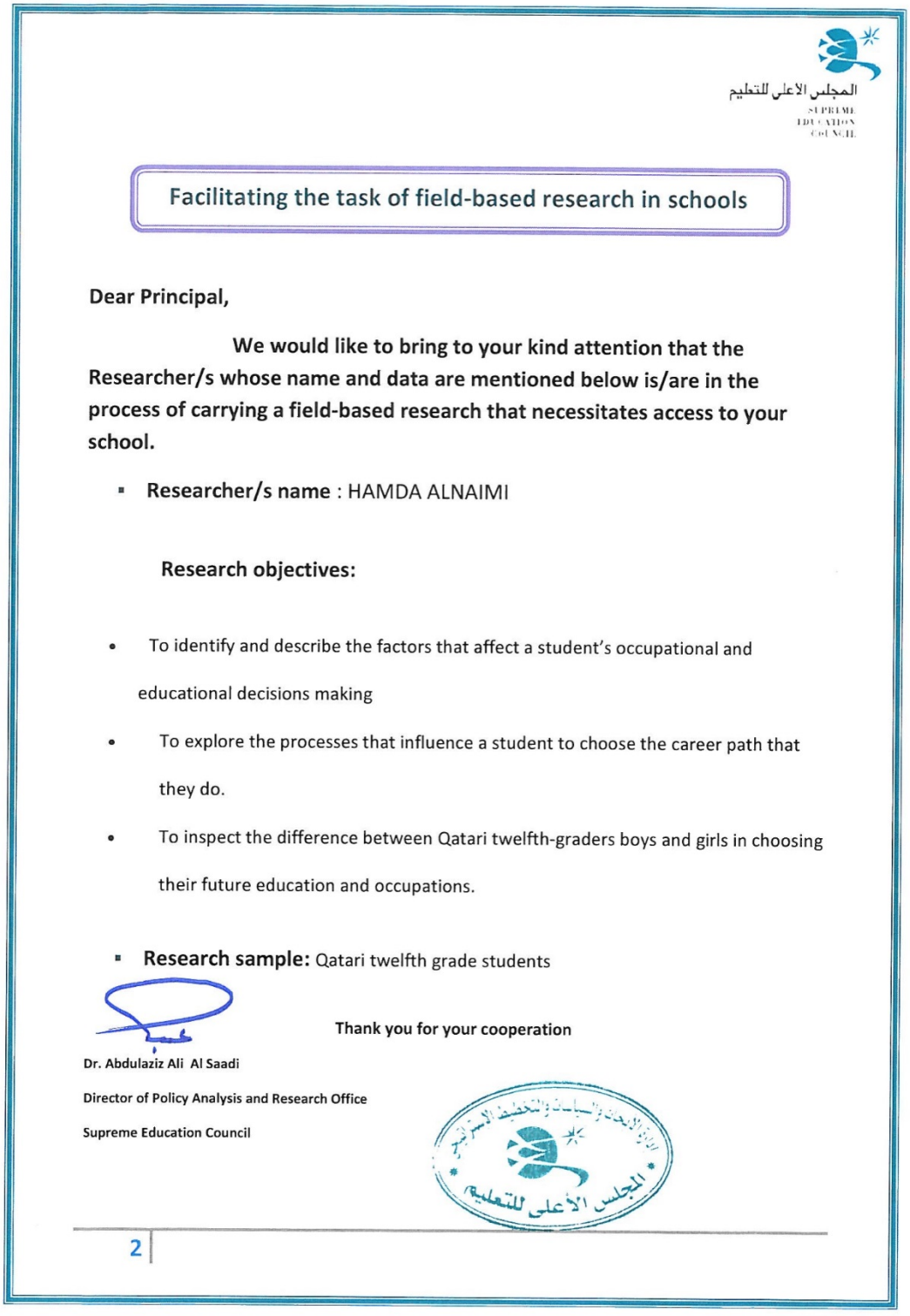
Appendices

Appendix A: The official letter asking for access to the Qatari schools



المجلس الأعلى للتعليم
SUPREME EDUCATION COUNCIL

Facilitating the task of field-based research in schools

Dear Principal,

We would like to bring to your kind attention that the Researcher/s whose name and data are mentioned below is/are in the process of carrying a field-based research that necessitates access to your school.

- **Researcher/s name** : HAMDA ALNAIMI

Research objectives:

- To identify and describe the factors that affect a student's occupational and educational decisions making
- To explore the processes that influence a student to choose the career path that they do.
- To inspect the difference between Qatari twelfth-graders boys and girls in choosing their future education and occupations.

- **Research sample:** Qatari twelfth grade students

Thank you for your cooperation

Dr. Abdulaziz Ali Al Saadi

Director of Policy Analysis and Research Office

Supreme Education Council

2

Appendix B: The English version of the questionnaire

University of Reading

How twelfth-grade Qatari students select their professional career and the factors affecting their choice

Hamda Al Naimi

NB. **By completing this survey, you are giving consent for the provided information to be used in the research. These survey data are confidential and will be used for research purposes only**

October 2014

Introduction:

Dear student,

My name is Hamda Alnaimi from The Higher Education Institute. I am conducting research about Qatari twelfth-grade students' occupational and educational decisions and what they want to do after leaving school. I am conducting this research as apart of my doctoral studies at The University of Reading in The United Kingdom. It is important to study this subject from the students' perspective in order to provide the service they need.

I'm very excited to know your aspirations and your plans for after school. Your opinions and suggestions are significantly important for me.

I hope that you answer the following questions honestly and transparently. Your answers will be seen only by the research team. There are no wrong answers, and this is not a test.

Some questions need to be marked or circled, and other questions need you to write what you think or feel. Do not worry about the quality of the writing or diction. Just try to be as clear as you can so that we can understand your thoughts.

Please circle as appropriate:

I consent to being surveyed: yes no

Name: ----------

Signed:----------

Date: ----------

'This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct.'

School Name: ……..
Class: ……..

Please circle the option applicable to you:

Part I: scientific tracks

1. What level of subject (track) are you currently studying?

1. Foundation
2. Advanced (Engineering)
2. Advanced (Medicine)

2. Why did you choose this subject (track)?

1. I want to work in a job that requires study of this subject.
2. The wishes of my family.
3. I want to be with my friends.
4. The influence of the academic advisor and their advice.
5. My teachers' advice.
6. Other reasons (specify) .....

3. Do you feel that you have chosen the right path for you?

1 – Yes
2 – No (go to question 5)
2 – Not sure (go to question 5)

4. Why yes?

1. This track suits my academic ability.
2. I like the taught courses.
3. My grades are high in this subject.
4. I need this subject for my future career.
5. Other (specify). .....

5. Why not?

1. The subjects are very hard.
2. It was not my favourite choice from the beginning.
3. I do not find pleasure in the study of this subject.
4. This track does not qualify me for the career I want.
5. Other reasons (specify) .....

6. In the future, what profession you want to have? ……..

7. Do you think that the track you are studying qualifies you for the profession you want?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

8. Why do you think so?

……

……..

……

……..

Part II: Different factors influencing your career decision

9. When did you start thinking about the profession that you want to work in in the future?

1. Since childhood.
2. In the preparatory stage. Please choose (seventh grade, eighth grade, ninth grade).
3. In the tenth grade.
4. In the eleventh grade.
5. I started thinking this year.
6. I have not thought about it yet.

10. What are the factors that influenced your career decision? Please choose the 3 most important ones

(....) The wishes of my family.

(....) My colleagues and my friends.

(....) The job remuneration package.

(....) Educational missions (grants/sponsorships).

(....) Academic/careers advising.

(....) My teachers' advice.

(....) My academic performance (GPA).

(....) Other (specify) .....

11. I will list some factors and reasons that affect a person's job choice. Please choose the 3 most important ones

(....) Salary.

(....) Job Title.

(....) Allowances and incentives.

(....) The reputation of the institution.

(....) Job security.

(....) Educational missions (grants/sponsorships).

(....) Geographical place of work (close to your house).

Now, we will discuss some of the above factors:

A - Family:

12. Do you discuss your career path with your family?

1. Yes
2. No
2. Not sure

13. How important are your family's wishes to your future career?

1. Not important
2. Important to some extent
3. Very important

14. Would you choose a profession or career that you don't like just to make your family happy?

1. Definitely not
2. To some extent
3. Yes, definitely

15. Who is the family member that you mostly discussed your career path with?

1. My father

2. My mother

3. My brother/my sister

4. Grandfather/grandmother

5. One of my extended family

6. Other person (specify).....

B - Friends:

16. Do you discuss your career path with your friends?

1. Yes

2. No

17. How important are your friends' opinions to your career choice?

1. Not important

2. Important to some extent

3. Very important

18. Would you choose a profession or career that you don't like just to be with your friends?

1. Definitely not

2. To some extent

3. Yes, definitely

D – Academic advising:

19. Is there a school academic advisor to assist you in planning your future career?

1. Yes

2. No

2. Don’t know

20. If you answered yes to Q19, have you had a chance to meet the academic advisor?

1. Yes

2. No

21. Did you benefit from the academic advisor at school?

1. Did not benefit.

2. Benefited to some extent.

3. I benefited a lot. (Please go to question 23)

22. Why did you not benefit?

1. There is no time to meet the advisor.

2. The advisor is too busy to meet me.

3. The advisor is not qualified enough to guide me.

4. The advisor gave incorrect and inaccurate information.

5. The advisor does not know me.

6. The advisor can’t help me because I don’t know what I want.

7. Other reasons (specify) .....

23. Why did you benefit?

1. The advisor information is very accurate.

2. The advisor is well qualified to guide me.

3. The advisor is happy to provide regular follow-up advice.

4. The advisor acts as a mentor when needed.

5. I communicate with the advisor easily.

6. The advisor has useful external contacts.

7. The advisor is my friend.

8. Other reasons (specify) .....

C - Educational missions:

24. Is the existence of companies or organisations that provide grants or scholarships an important element in making your career decision?

1. Definitely not
2. To some extent
3. Yes, definitely

25. In your opinion, which comes first?

1. First choose the career then search for the mission.
2. First choose the organisation that offers missions then choose the specialisation from their lists.

26. What are your sources of knowledge about institutions or organisations that offer missions for students in Qatar?

1. Academic advisor
2. Relatives
3. Advertisements and newspapers
4. Web sites
5. Friends
6. Other (specify) .....

27. If your sponsoring institution asked you to change your career specialisation, what would you do?

1. Dispense with the mission and stick to the profession that I love
2. Change to the required job

3. I do not know what I would do

28. Do you think about joining higher education after school?

1. Yes

2. No (Please go to question 32)

29. Have you achieved the university requirements you want to attend?

1. Yes

2. No

30. Have you applied for any university?

1. Yes

2. No

31. Did your advisor discuss the following items with you?

Statement	Yes	No
International tests, such as IELTS, TOEFL, ACT, SAT		
Endorsement letters		
List of official recognised universities		
Available colleges in Qatar		
Institutions or organisations that offer missions in Qatar		
Jobs/professions most needed in the labour market		

32. I will list a set of statements. Please answer them with Totally agree, Agree, Don't know, Disagree, or Totally disagree.

Statement	Totally agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Totally disagree
1. I have enough information about the labour market					
2. Jobs and specialisations always make me worried, so I always ask my advisor about it					
3. My family is helping me in selecting my future job					
4. Currently I don't care about a future career					
5. In the future, I'll take any available job					
6. I know a lot about the labour market from the careers fair					
7. My school is offering some visits to some organisations to give us knowledge about the labour market					
8. I don't know about the jobs that are needed by labour market					
9. I wish to do a job I love, even with little pay					
10. I wish to work in a job with a high income, even if I do not love that job.					
11. My grades in secondary school have a great effect on my career choice					
12. I'm very happy that finally I'll leave school					
13. My life after school is very clear for me and I					

know where I'm going					
14. I can see my career future clearly in front of me					
15. I have clear goals defined for my future life					
16. I feel that some of my colleagues are lost and have no defined or clear goals					
17. I have no specific idea about my future career					
18. I can't find the person who can guide and advise me with specific, clear information					

33. What is the mechanism that you choose your future career decision based on?

1. Collecting information, thinking and making the right decision.
2. Making a decision, then asking the advisor.
3. The decision is made according to the wishes of my family.
4. Making a decision then getting my family's approval.
5. Deciding initially with my colleagues then discussing with my family.
6. Visiting the career fair to find out about the best available jobs, then deciding.
7. Searching for jobs that offer sponsored educational missions.
8. Other (specify) .....

Part III: Suggestions for development

34. Do you have any suggestions to help students to reach a career decision commensurate with their academic and personal potential?

1 – Yes 2 - No

35. What are they? .....

Part IV: Personal data

• Name (optional): .....

36. Gender: 1 - Male 2 - Female

37. What is your order in the family:

1. The oldest
2. In the middle
3. The youngest
4. The only child

38. Your GPA last year was : ..... %

39. Your GPA expectation this year : ..... %

40. The job that you hope to do in the future is .....

41. The educational level of your father:

1. Preparatory or less
2. Secondary
3. University
4. Master
5. PhD
6. Don’t know

42. The educational level of your mother:

1. Preparatory or less
2. Secondary
3. University
4. Master
5. PhD
6. Don’t know

43. Father's profession: .....

44. Mother’s profession: .....

45. I will list some traits. Please choose the number that is closest to your personality.

	7	**6**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	
Taking a decision is easy	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Taking a decision is hard
I know the necessary steps for taking a decision	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	I don't know how to take a decision
I don't hesitate to take an important decision	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	I can describe myself as an indecisive person
I take decisions fast	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	I need long time to take a decision
I don't delay taking decisions	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	I delay taking decisions
I take decisions myself	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	I leave taking the decision to someone else
I don't worry about the decision after taking it	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	I can't stop thinking about the decision even after taking it

46. Is there anything you want to add with respect to choosing your university or your future career?

1 – Yes 2 - No

47. What is it?

……

……

Dear Student,

I'm looking for participants to be interviewed and to discuss some of the ideas that have been included in this questionnaire. If you want to volunteer in this research, please provide contact information:

Name: ……

Class: ……

Tel: ……

Email: …….

Best reached by: ……..…

Thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix C: Examples of Ethical Approval Forms

- University of Reading Ethical Approval Form

University of Reading

Institute of Education

Ethical Approval Form A (version September 2013)

Tick one:

Staff project: ___ PhD __√__

Name of applicant (s): Hamda Alnaimi

Title of project: Qatari Twelfth Grade Students Occupational and Higher Educational Decisions.

Name of supervisor (for student projects): Professor. Goodwyn and Dr. Fuller.

Please complete the form below including relevant sections overleaf.

	YES	N

Have you prepared an Information Sheet for participants and/or their parents/carers that:	√	
a) explains the purpose(s) of the project	√	
b) explains how they have been selected as potential participants	√	
c) gives a full, fair and clear account of what will be asked of them and how the information that they provide will be used	√	
d) makes clear that participation in the project is voluntary	√	
e) explains the arrangements to allow participants to withdraw at any stage if they wish	√	
f) explains the arrangements to ensure the confidentiality of any material collected during the project, including secure arrangements for its storage, retention and disposal	√	
g) explains the arrangements for publishing the research results and, if confidentiality might be affected, for obtaining written consent for this	√	
h) explains the arrangements for providing participants with the research results if they wish to have them	√	
i) gives the name and designation of the member of staff with responsibility for the project together with contact details, including email . If any of the project investigators are students at the IoE, then this information must be included and their name provided	√	
k) explains, where applicable, the arrangements for expenses and other payments to be made to the participants	√	
j) includes a standard statement indicating the process of ethical review at the University undergone by the project, as follows: 'This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct'.	√	

k)includes a standard statement regarding insurance: "The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request".	√	
Please answer the following questions		
1) Will you provide participants involved in your research with all the information necessary to ensure that they are fully informed and not in any way deceived or misled as to the purpose(s) and nature of the research? (Please use the subheadings used in the example information sheets on blackboard to ensure this).	√	
2) Will you seek written or other formal consent from all participants, if they are able to provide it, in addition to (1)?	√	
3) Is there any risk that participants may experience physical or psychological distress in taking part in your research?		√
4) Have you taken the online training modules in data protection and information security (which can be found here: http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/imps/Staffpages/imps-training.aspx)?	√	
5) Have you read the Health and Safety booklet (available on Blackboard) and completed a Risk Assessment Form to be included with this ethics application?	√	
6) Does your research comply with the University's Code of Good Practice in Research?	√	
	YES	N
7) If your research is taking place in a school, have you prepared an information sheet and consent form to gain the permission in writing of the head teacher or other relevant supervisory professional?	√	
8) Has the data collector obtained satisfactory DBS clearance?	√	
9) If your research involves working with children under the age of 16 (or those whose special educational needs mean they are unable to give informed consent), have you prepared an information sheet and consent form for parents/carers to seek permission in writing, or to give parents/carers the		

opportunity to decline consent?		
10) If your research involves processing sensitive personal data[2], or if it involves audio/video recordings, have you obtained the explicit consent of participants/parents?		
11) If you are using a data processor to subcontract any part of your research, have you got a written contract with that contractor which (a) specifies that the contractor is required to act only on your instructions, and (b) provides for appropriate technical and organisational security measures to protect the data?		
12a) Does your research involve data collection outside the UK?	√	
12b) If the answer to question 11a is "yes", does your research comply with the legal and ethical requirements for doing research in that country?	√	
13a. Does the proposed research involve children under the age of 5?		√
13b. If the answer to question 12a is "yes": My Head of School (or authorised Head of Department) has given details of the proposed research to the University's insurance officer, and the research will not proceed until I have confirmation that insurance cover is in place.	√	
If you have answered YES to Question 3, please complete Section B below		

PLEASE COMPLETE **EITHER SECTION A OR B** AND PROVIDE THE DETAILS REQUIRED IN

SUPPORT OF YOUR APPLICATION, THEN SIGN THE FORM (SECTION C)

A: My research goes beyond the 'accepted custom and practice of teaching' but I consider that this project has **no** significant ethical implications.	

[2] Sensitive personal data consists of information relating to the racial or ethnic origin of a data subject, their political opinions, religious beliefs, trade union membership, sexual life, physical or mental health or condition, or criminal offences or record.

Give a brief description of the aims and the methods (participants, instruments and procedures) of the project in up to 200 words. Attach any consent form, information sheet and research instruments to be used in the project (e.g. tests, questionnaires, interview schedules).

Please state how many participants will be involved in the project:

This form and any attachments should now be submitted to the Institute's Ethics Committee for consideration. Any missing information will result in the form being returned to you.

The aim of this study is to understand how Qatari twelfth grade students choose their future career and what factors affect this decision. This study target is to capture the student's critical transition phase from secondary schooling to whatever path they have chosen. This study will be a longitudinal study, following a panel of twelfth grade Qatari students for a year. One Qatari girl's secondary independent school and one Qatari boy's secondary independent school will be chosen to be the research sample. Twenty to fifty voluntarily participants will be drawn from Qatari twelfth grade students. Data will be collected through official documents, questionnaire, interviews. The pencil/paper questionnaire will be completed in schools first. In the questionnaire students who would like to volunteer to take part in the second stage of data collection –interviews - will be asked to give their contact information. The first round of interviews will take place in the schools where second and third round of interviews will be either in a convenient place for the students or by telephone.

B: I consider that this project **may** have ethical implications that should be brought before the Institute's Ethics Committee.	

Please provide all the further information listed below in a separate attachment.

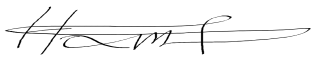
1. title of project
2. purpose of project and its academic rationale
3. brief description of methods and measurements
4. participants: recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria
5. consent and participant information arrangements, debriefing (attach forms where necessary)
6. a clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the project and how you intend to deal with then.
7. estimated start date and duration of project

This form and any attachments should now be submitted to the Institute's Ethics Committee for consideration. Any missing information will result in the form being

returned to you.

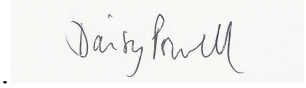
C: SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:

I have declared all relevant information regarding my proposed project and confirm that ethical good practice will be followed within the project.

Signed :  Print Name : Hamda Alnaimi Date: 5 /6/2014

STATEMENT OF ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE ETHICS COMMITTEE

This project has been considered using agreed Institute procedures and is now approved.

Signed: …  Print Name…Daisy Powell Date…1/7/2014

(IoE Research Ethics Committee representative)*

- A decision to allow a project to proceed is not an expert assessment of its content or of the possible risks involved in the investigation, nor does it detract in any way from the ultimate responsibility which students/investigators must themselves have for these matters. Approval is granted on the basis of the information declared by the applicant.

- Risk Assessment Form for Research Activities

University of Reading

Institute of Education

Risk Assessment Form for Research Activities February 2014

Select one:

Staff project: ☐ PGR project: x MA/UG project: ☐

Name of applicant (s): Hamda A lnaimi

Title of project: Qatari Twelfth Grade Students Occupational and Higher Educational Decisions.

Name of supervisor(s): Professor. Andy Goodwyn and Dr. Carol Fuller

A: Please complete the form below

Brief outline of Work/activity:	Collecting data about Qatari Twelfth Grade Students - who are seventeen years old - occupational and higher educational decisions through Interviews, official academic certificates, and a paper pen/pencil questionnaire.

Where will data be collected?	Data collecting will take place in two secondary independent Qatari schools- one girls and one boys- in Doha – Qatar

Significant hazards:	None identified. In school, The schools themselves have a duty to maintain a safe area of work within the school. MINOR UNLIKLY 1: Attack by people or verbal assault Injury, anxiety and stress.

Who might be exposed to hazards?	Researcher

Existing control measures:	• If attacked by people, the researcher is advised to be couchant and patient, focus on collecting data, and report any assault to the administrators in the school. • To deal with anxiety and stress, Researcher is advised to take some breaks and to work towards the aim in small productive steps.

Are risks adequately controlled:	Yes X No ☐

If NO, list additional	Additional controls	Action by:

controls and actions required:		

B: SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:

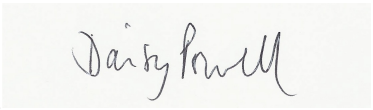
I have read the Health and Safety booklet posted on Blackboard, and the guidelines overleaf.

I have declared all relevant information regarding my proposed project and confirm risks have been adequately assessed and will be minimized as far as possible during the course of the project.

Signed: Print Name : Hamda Alnaimi Date: 5 /6/2014

STATEMENT OF APPROVAL TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISOR (FOR UG AND MA STUDENTS) **OR** BY IOE ETHICS COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE (FOR PGR AND STAFF RESEARCH).

This project has been considered using agreed Institute procedures and is now approved.

Signed: …  Print Name…Daisy Powell

Date…1/7/2014

* A decision to allow a project to proceed is not an expert assessment of its content or of the possible risks involved in the investigation, nor does it detract in any way from the ultimate responsibility which students/investigators must themselves have for these matters. Approval is granted on the basis of the information declared by the applicant.

Guidance notes for the completion of the risk assessment form

Significant hazards:

- Only list those that you could reasonably expect to cause significant injuries or affect several people
- Will the work require the use of machines and tools? How could you or anyone else be injured? Will injury be significant?
- Will the research take place in a high-risk country?
- Will the work require the use of chemicals? Check safety data sheets for harmful effects and any exposure limits?
- Will the work produce any fumes, vapours, dust or particles? Can they cause significant harm?
- Are there any significant hazards due to where the work is to be done, such as confined space, at height, poor lighting, high/low temperature?

Who might be exposed?

- Remember to include yourself, your supervisor, your participants, others working in or passing through the work area.
- Those more vulnerable or less experiences should be highlighted as they will be more at risk, such as children, people unfamiliar with the work area, disabled or with medical conditions e.g. asthma.

Existing control measures:

- List the control measures in place for each of the significant hazards, such as machine guards, ventilation system, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), generic safety method statement/procedure.
- Existing safety measures and procedures in place in the establishment
- Remember appropriate training is a control measure and should be listed.
- List any Permits to Work which may be in force.

Are risks adequately controlled?

- With all the existing control measures in place, do any of the significant hazards still have a potential to cause significant harm.
- Use your judgement as to how the work is to be done, by whom and where.

Additional controls:

- List the additional control measures, for each of the significant hazards, which are required to reduce the risk to the lowest so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Additional measures may include such things as: increased ventilation, Permit to Work, confined space entry permit, barriers/fencing, fall arrest equipment, etc.
- PPE should only be used as a last resort, if all else fails.

- Head Teacher Information Sheet

University of Reading

Principal Researcher: Hamda Alnaimi
Phone: 55562918
Email: mm802068@pgr.reading.ac.uk

Head Teacher Information Sheet

Research Project: Qatari Twelfth Grade Students Occupational and Higher Educational Decisions.

Project Team Members: Hamda Alnaimi

Dear Head teacher:

My name is Hamda Alnaimi from The University of Reading, UK. I am conducting research about Qatari twelfth grade students' occupational and educational decisions and what they want to do after leaving school. I am conducting this research as a part of my doctoral studies at The University of Reading in The United Kingdom. It is important to study this subject from the students' perspective in order to provide the service they need.

I would like to invite your school to take part in this research.

Here are some questions you may have in mind:

What is the study?

The aim of this study is to understand how Qatari twelfth grade students choose their future career and what factors affect this decision. This study target is to capture the student's critical transition phase from secondary schooling to whatever path they have chosen. This study will be a longitudinal study, following a panel of twelfth grade Qatari students for a year. One Qatari girl's secondary independent school and one Qatari boy's secondary independent school will be chosen to be the research sample. Twenty to fifty voluntarily participants will be drawn from Qatari twelfth grade students. Data will be collected through official documents, questionnaire, interviews. The pencil/paper questionnaire will be completed in schools first. In the questionnaire students who would like to volunteer to take part in the second stage of data collection –interviews - will be asked to give their contact information. The first round of interviews will take place in the schools where second and third round of interviews will be either in a convenient place for the students or by telephone.

Who is responsible for this study?

This research is conducted under the supervision The University of Reading. Hamda Alnaimi is the researcher in charge of conducting the research. She is a PhD student at The University of Reading and supervised by Professor Andy Goodwyn and Dr Carol Fuller.

Why this school has been chosen to take part?

For this study, one girl's school and one boy's school where the total number of Qatari twelfth students is sufficient will participate in the research. Schools where more than one hundred and thirty Qataris students attend twelfth grade and Qataris make up more than 70% of the total twelfth grades is chosen to participate in the research. And since your school satisfy both conditions, it is invited to take part in the research.

Does the school have to take part?

The researcher has an approval from The Supreme Education Council to conduct the research in the Qatari independent schools. It is a national obligation to make the students voices heard in a subject that will affect their lives. Recommendation of the research will help policy makers deliver better career service for students.

However, it is entirely up to you whether you give permission for the school to participate. You may also withdraw your consent to participation at any time during the project, without any repercussions to you, by contacting the Hamda Alnaimi, Tel: 55562918, email: mm802068@pgr.reading.ac.uk

What will happen if the school takes part?

At first, Qatari twelfth students will be asked to answer a survey. School will help the researcher in arranging appropriate time and date for students to complete the survey. Students will be asked to volunteer in the research. The first round of interviews will take place in the school which will last about 30 to 40 minutes per participant. Students will be leave school by the time of second and third round of interviews. The interview will be recorded after gaining students' consent. The indicative questions will be made available in advance if you wish, and they will be asked about their journey in taking an educational and occupational decision. After that, the data gathered from the interview will be transcribed and later analysed by the researcher. The findings of this study will be used for research purposes and your thoughts and experiences will be a crucial input to informing the project.

What are the risks and benefits of taking part?

The information provided will remain confidential and will only be seen by the researcher and supervisors listed. Schools will not be identifiable in any published report resulting from the study. This study is interested in students' personal experience only.

Participants in similar studies have found it interesting to make their voices heard and share their experiences and challenges. I anticipate that the findings of the study will be useful for developing better career guidance service for Qatari young's. An electronic copy of a summary of the published findings of the study can be made available to the school by contacting the researcher through the details available at the end of next page.

What will happen to the data?

Any data collected will be strictly confidential, and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking the school will be included in any sort of report that might be published. The school will be assigned an identification number (ID) in order to distinguish participants' responses from those of the other participants. Interviews will be transcribed and anonymised before data are analysed. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password-protected computer, and only the researcher Hamda Alnaimi, and supervisor's professor Andy Goodwyn and Dr Carol Fuller will have access to the records. The data will be securely destroyed after five years once the findings of the study are written up. The results of the study will be presented at national and international conferences and in written reports and articles. The researcher can also send a summary of the results of this research to you electronically if you wish to have them.

Who has reviewed the study?

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

What happens if a student change her/his mind?

A student can change his/her mind at any time without any repercussions; student's decision to participate is entirely voluntary and very much appreciated. During the research, he/she can stop the interview at any time. If a student change his/her mind after data collection has ended, we will discard his/her data. Also, a student is free to withdraw his/her consent at any time and without giving any reason by contacting either the researcher or the supervisors; professor. Goodwyn and Dr. Fuller.

What happens if something goes wrong?

In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you can contact the researcher, Hamda Alnaimi, or the supervisors, Professor Andy Goodwyn, and Dr. Carol Fuller, at the details listed at the end of this document.

Where can I get more information?

If you would like more information, please contact either the researcher Hamda Alnaimi, Tel: 55562918, email: mm802068@pgr.reading.ac.uk or the Supervisors: professor Andy Goodwyn Tel: +44 (0) 118 378 2602 , Email: a.c.goodwyn@reading.ac.uk and Dr. Carol Fuller Tel: +44 (0) 118 378 2662 , Email: c.l.fuller@reading.ac.uk

We do hope that you will agree to participate in the study. If you do, please complete the attached consent form and return it. Thank you for your time.

Head Teacher Consent Form

I have read the Information Sheet about the project and received a copy of it.

I understand what the purpose of the project is and what is required of me. All my questions have been answered.

Name of Head Teacher: _____

Name of the school: _____

Please tick as appropriate:

I consent to the involvement of my school in the project as outlined in the Information Sheet ☐

Signed:_____

Date: _____

- Student Interview Information Sheet

Student Interview Information Sheet

Research Project: Qatari Twelfth Grade Students Occupational and Higher Educational Decisions.

Project Team Members: Hamda Alnaimi

Dear Student:

My name is Hamda Alnaimi from The University of Reading, UK. I am conducting research about Qatari twelfth grade students' occupational and educational decisions and what they want to do after leaving school. I am conducting this research as a part of my doctoral studies at The University of Reading in The United Kingdom. It is important to study this subject from the students' perspective in order to provide the service they need. Here are some questions you may have in mind:

Who is responsible for this study?

This research is conducted under the supervision The University of Reading. Hamda Alnaimi is the researcher in charge of conducting the research. She is a PhD student at The University of Reading and supervised by Professor Andy Goodwyn and Dr Carol Fuller.

Why have I been chosen to take part?

You have been asked to participate in this study because you represent a twelfth grade Qatari students. Twenty other twelfth grade Qatari students have been invited to participate in this

study and these have been chosen from those students who indicated on the questionnaire that they would like to take part.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether you choose to participate. You may also withdraw your consent to participation at any time during the project, without, without any repercussions to you, by contacting the researcher Hamda Alnaimi, Tel: 55562918, email: mm802068@pgr.reading.ac.uk , or the supervisors, Professor Andy Goodwyn, University of Reading Telephone:+44 (0) 118 378 2602 , Email: a.c.goodwyn@reading.ac.uk , and Dr. Carol Fuller, University of Reading; Tel:

+44 (0) 118 378 2662, email: c.l.fuller@reading.ac.uk

What will happen if I take part?

You will be asked to be interviewed for a series of three interviews, which will be about 30 to 40 minutes. The interview will explore your futire career and educational plans and will be recorded after gaining your consent. The indicative questions will be made available in advance if you wish. Interviews will be carried out in school or via telephone, which ever is best for you and you prefer.

The data gathered from the interview will be transcribed and later analysed by the student researcher. The findings of this study will be used for research purposes and your thoughts and experiences will be a crucial input to informing the project.

What would I gain from particapating in this study?

It is important to let policy makers understand what you and your friends go through in order to make a career decision. Helping them understand the obstacles you face will help deliver better service for students like you who need guidance. By participating you will be helping us better understand the needs of young people.

What are the risks and benefits of taking part?

The information you give will remain confidential and will only be seen by the researcher and supervisors listed. You will not be identifiable in any published report resulting from the study. This study is interested in your own personal experience. If you feel unconfortable answering a question, please stop the interview or ask the interviewer to move on to the next question, or you can always decline to answer the question.

Participants in similar studies have found it interesting to make their voices heard and share their experinces and challenges. I anticipate that the findings of the study will be useful for developing better career guidance service to you and other youngs in your situation. An electronic copy of a summary of the published findings of the study can be made available to you by contacting the researcher through the details available at the end of next page.

What will happen to the data?

Any data collected will be strictly confidential, and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you will be included in any sort of report that might be published. You will be assigned an identification number (ID) in order to distinguish your responses from those of the other participants. Interviews will be transcribed and anonymised before data are analysed. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password-protected computer, and only the researcher Hamda Alnaimi, and supervisors professor Andy Goodwyn and Dr Carol Fuller will have access to the records. The data will be securely destroyed after five years once the findings of the study are written up. The results of the study will be presented at national and international conferences and in written reports and articles. The researcher can also send a summary of the results of this research to you electronically if you wish to have them.

Who has reviewed the study?

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

What happens if I change my mind?

You can change your mind at any time without any repercussions; your decision to participate is entirely voluntary and very much appreciated. During the research, you can stop the interview at any time. If you change your mind after data collection has ended, we will discard your data. Also, you are free to withdraw your consent at any time and without giving any reason by contacting either the researcher or the supervisors professor. Goodwyn and Dr. Fuller.

What happens if something goes wrong?

In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you can contact the researcher, Hamda Alnaimi, or the supervisors,professor Andy Goodwyn, and Dr. Carol Fuller, at the details listed at the end of this document.

Where can I get more information?

If you would like more information, please contact Hamda Alnaimi:

Tel: 55562918, email: mm802068@pgr.reading.ac.uk

We do hope that you will agree to participate in the study. If you do, please complete the attached consent form and return it. Thank you for your time.

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct

Researcher:
Hamda Alnaimi
Tel: 55562918
Email: mm802068@pgr.reading.ac.uk

Supervisors:
professor Andy Goodwyn
Tel: +44 (0) 118 378 2602 , Email: a.c.goodwyn@reading.ac.uk

Dr. Carol Fuller
Tel: +44 (0) 118 378 2662 ,
Email: c.l.fuller@reading.ac.uk

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely

Hamda

Research Project: Qatari Twelfth Grade Students Occupational and Higher Educational Decisions.

Consent Form

- I have had explained to me the purposes of the project and what will be required of me, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements described in the Information Sheet in so far as they relate to my participation.
- I understand that I will be interviewed and that the interview will be recorded and transcribed with my consent.
- I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the project any time, without giving a reason and without repercussions.
- I have received a copy of this Consent Form and of the accompanying Information Sheet.

Please circle as appropriate:

I consent to being interviewed: yes no

I consent to this interview being recorded: yes no

Name: ----------

Signed:----------

Date: ----------

Appendix D: A sample template of the card of school performance report for the academic year 2014 / 2015

School name:			
Address:			
Tel.:		Fax No.:	
School type:			
Website:			
Email:			

We are pleased to submit to you the card of school performance report for the academic year 2014 / 2015 AD, which is considered an important part of the evaluation system in Qatar by which we seek to promote the methods and tools of assessment in order to achieve high-quality educational outcomes. The card of school performance report is issued in Arabic to all independent Arabic private schools, while it is issued in English to international schools.

For the eleventh year consecutively the Evaluation committee is keen to issue school performance report cards, which includes in this year new information while maintaining the same format used previously and introducing some amendments in line with the continuous development of the card. It also provides sufficient information on the characteristics and performance of schools in the academic year 2014 – 2015 AD, as well as comparison of some aspects of the performance of these schools for the previous academic year, and comparing the school's performance with all other schools of the same grade.

The data of the card provides a form of the varicosity and difference by which the schools are characterised which facilitates the process of choosing to the parents and enables the society to make sure that the schools are counted through concentration on the results of the performance of these schools and assuming the responsibility of its educational results.

This card is designed mainly for providing information to the schools and community in general and decision-makers in particular, about the different types of schools, hoping that the

school performance report card will enhance the community partnership in the educational process.

You can take a look and download the cards through the website of the Supreme Educational Council:

www.sec.gov.qa

School Evaluation Office

Evaluation Authority

School main data

	This school	All schools *
• Students' number		
• Teachers' number		
• Teachers/ students ratio:		
• The average number of students per class		
• Classrooms		
• Students gender		
• Teachers gender		
• The school has mixed grades		

* All schools in this report refer to the average of all independent and private schools at the same academic grade.

Satisfaction of parents and students about the school

Parents

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
This school	%	%
All schools	%	%

Students

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
This school	%	%
All schools	%	%

Academic achievement of the students

Performance of the school in the tests of comprehensive educational evaluation tests (grades average):

Subject	Academic grades	Comparing the school with all independent schools	all independent schools	This school in 2015 AD	This school in 2014 AD	Comparing the results of the school in 2015 with the results of the year 2014
Arabic	Tenth	-				=
	Eleventh	-				+
English	Tenth	-				-
	Eleventh	=				=
Mathematics	Tenth	-				=
	Eleventh	-				+
Science	Biology for the tenth grade	-				-
	Chemistry for the tenth grade	-				=
	Physics for the tenth grade	-				=
	Biology for the eleventh grade	=				+
	Chemistry for the eleventh grade	-				=
	Physics for the eleventh grade	-				+

Islamic education	Tenth	-				-
	Eleventh	-				+
social science	Tenth	-				=
	Eleventh	=				+

Keys: (+): More (=): Approximately equal (-): Less ( ): Comparison cannot be made

( ): Data is not available

Educational methods followed in the school

The teaching methods followed daily:

• Teachers provide information while students are listening	This school	%
	All schools	%
• The session is administrated through discussion or activities	This school	%
	All schools	%
• The students work individually and during the class	This school	%
	All schools	%
• Students work together in small groups during the class	This school	%
	All schools	%

Teaching methods applied for helping students having difficulties in learning:

	This school	All schools
• Dealing with them in the same way of dealing with other students	%	%
• Providing individual assistances to them	%	%
• Assignment of other students to help them	%	%
• Organising activities to them outside the classes	%	%
• Deliberateness in the course of the lesson	%	%
• Distributing the students as per their powers and providing private teaching for each group	%	%

Home works are assigned to the students by the teachers:

Percentage of the teachers assigning the students with home works taking at least three hours weekly.

This school (%) All schools (%)

Opinions of parents on home works assigned to the students.

Percentage of the parents' view that:

	This school	All schools
• Their children have no home works	%	%
• Their children do their home works in one hour or more daily		
• Home works are beneficial to their students		
•		

Satisfaction of parents

On the curricula of the school

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
This school	%	%
All schools	%	%

Percentage of the parents sees that the additional assistances submitted by the school to students help them in the good performance

This school (%) All schools (%)

Nationalities of students and teachers

Nationalities of students

• Qatari	This school	%
	All schools	%
• Non-Qatari Arab	This school	%
	All schools	%
• Non-Arab	This school	%
	All schools	%

Nationalities of teachers

• Qatari	This school	%
	All schools	%
• Non-Qatari Arab	This school	%
	All schools	%
• Non-Arab	This school	%
	All schools	%

Professional expertise of teachers

Professional licenses of teachers

The proportion of teachers who obtained a license:

	This school	All schools *
• Temporary teacher		
• Full time teacher in the level of junior		
• Full time teacher in the level of efficient		
• Full time teacher in the level of professional		

* Data of professional licenses office of teachers and school managers on the phrase "all schools" refer to independent schools only.

Professional experience of the teachers:

	This school	All schools *
• Teaching year average	%	%
• Average of the number of hours allocated for the programs of training teachers in the academic year 2014 – 2015 AD	%	%
• Percentage of teachers satisfied on the quality of the activities of professional development provided by the schools thereto	%	%
• Percentage of those having official qualification in teaching	%	%
• Percentage of teachers having higher certificates (After Bachelor)	%	%
• Percentage of teachers who are teaching subjects for the first time	%	%

Parent involvement and interaction with school

Parent involvement in the school:

	This school	All schools *
• Involvement on the school board of directors or school committees		%
• Assistance in collecting donations for the school		%
• Participation in indicating the method of expending the balance of the school		%

Key: (/): Involved (x): not involved (?): Non

Satisfaction of the parents on the communication of the school with them:

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
This school	%	%
All schools	%	%

Environment of learning in school

Students enjoying learning

The proportion of students who:

	This school	All schools *
• Like their school	%	%
• Enjoy learning Arabic	%	%
• Enjoy learning English	%	%
• Enjoy learning mathematics	%	%
• Enjoy learning science	%	%

Student satisfaction with the ways and methods of teachers:

This school		All schools
%	Percentage of the students who believe that the teachers and students deal well with each other	%
%	Percentage of the students who understand teachers explanation	%
%	Percentage of the students who believe that the teachers are encouraging them to do their best	%

Learning environment in school (continue)

Teaching and computer:

	This school	All schools
• Approximate number of computers for each 100 students		
• Percentage of the teachers who think that their skill in using computer is medium or high	%	%
• Percentage of teachers who are satisfied with the availability of computer and technological methods in the school	%	%
• Percentage of students who used computers in the grades in the most of the days	%	%

School environment

The conduct and discipline of students:

This school		All schools
%	Percentage of the parents who referred that their children were not absent for two weeks	%
%	Percentage of the parents who are satisfied with the treatment of the school with their children	%
%	Percentage of the parents who think that the school apply behavior controls well	%
%	Percentage of the students who think that behavior controls are just in their school	%
%	Percentage of the students who are satisfied with security in their school	%
%	Percentage of the students who have not been threatened by others within this year	%
%	Percentage of the students who have not roped in the school within this year	%

Satisfaction of the teachers on the work environment in the school:

School environment that is good for work

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
This school	%	%
All schools	%	%

Teachers and administrators working as a team

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
This school	%	%
All schools	%	%

Involvement of teachers in the school decisions

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
This school	%	%
All schools	%	%

Mutual respect between students and employees

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
This school	%	%
All schools	%	%

Comparison of the performance in some subjects chosen for the two school years 2013 – 2014 & 2014 – 2015 AD

Views of the students on the school for both years 2013 – 2014 & 2014 – 2015 AD

Student percentage:

	School results 2013 - 2014	School results 2014 - 2015	Comparison of 2014 – 2015 With 2013 - 2014
• Satisfied with their schools	%	%	=
• Enjoying learning Arabic	%	%	=
• Enjoying learning English	%	%	=
• Enjoying learning mathematics	%	%	=
• Enjoying learning science	%	%	=
• Considering behavior controls are just in their schools	%	%	=
• Feeling secure in their schools	%	%	=
• Considering that the teachers and students deal well with each other	%	%	=
• Understanding the explanation of the teachers	%	%	=
• Seeing the teachers encouraging them to exert their best	%	%	=

Views of parents around the school for two academic years 2013 – 2014 & 2014 – 2015 AD

Percentage of the parents satisfied with:

	School results 2013 - 2014	School results 2014 - 2015	Comparison of 2014 – 2015 With 2013 - 2014
• The school	%	%	=
• Quality of the school curricula			
• Extra-curricular activities			
• Communication of the school with them			

Opinions of the teachers on the school of the two academic years 2013 – 2014 & 2014 – 2015 AD

Percentage of the teachers satisfied with:

	School results 2013 - 2014	School results 2014 - 2015	Comparison of 2014 – 2015 With 2013 - 2014
• The school is a good place for working	%	%	=
• Work of the teachers and administrators as a team	%	%	=
• Their involvement in the school decisions	%	%	=
• Mutual respect between students and employees	%	%	=
• Availability of the technological	%	%	=

	School results 2013 - 2014	School results 2014 - 2015	Comparison of 2014 – 2015 With 2013 - 2014
educational methods			

Key: (+): Higher (=): Approximately equal (-): Less (?): Comparison cannot be made (?): Data not available

Appendix E: A sample template of periodic report of evaluation

The First Periodic Report of Evaluation

Evaluation Institute
Supreme Council of Education
March 2015 (A.D)

Report Contents

Article	Page
General Introduction	
Evaluation processes	
Information about the school	
Focus on Evaluating school	
Leading and managing school	
Teaching Methods	
Academic Education Outputs	
Behavior and discipline of students	
Preparation and professional development	
Conclusion and suggestions	

Evaluating Qatar School:
The evaluation process and periodic review constitute an integral part of evaluating Qatar schools so the periodic evaluation conducted (every three years) in accordance with the other basic elements to evaluate Qatar schools including the continuous supervision and self –review, the exceptional review of school to achieve proper educational accountability, at the same time the evaluation process contributes in achieving independence and diversity as one of the prominent properties of independent schools in Qatar.

Method of Review and Periodic Evaluation:
School evaluation shall be conducted every three years, during the third year starting from operating school as an independent school and evaluation shall be conducted in proper educational and fair manner without embarrassment of accountability.
Despite matters related to school, inputs and processes is very important but the maximum benefit from that is to achieve results and required outputs which evaluation and review seeks to observe and clarify.

The periodic evaluation is considered selective strategy in its focus, since it takes into account school achievements and its development level, also it is designed to detect measure and demonstrate success and failure or strength and weak aspects and issue proper scientific decisions.

Periodic evaluation defines twenty fields necessary for functions and performance of school, which cover its aspects and considered basic rules fir school to be effective. These fields were collected under six Headlines, besides they assure that it is not based on review educational sides but consider four basic principles of the initiative of education development in Qatar which is (diversity, independence, choice and accountability). Evaluate extent of principles contributions in promoting the educational process in the school.

List of twenty fields of periodic evaluation of schools

Leadership and management	- Core and message of school - Leading and managing school - Curriculums and management and academic leadership - Managing and distributing resources - Self- control processes of school
Teaching and learning	- Teaching methods - Learning quality - Evaluation practices
Measurements and performance	- Students achievement and whole improvement - Academic learning outputs

	- Behavior and discipline of students - Expectations of students and employees - Social outputs of teacher
Environment and curricula	- Curriculum data - Learning environment
Developing and distributing employees	- Observe and distribute employees - Preparation and professional development
Parents and society	- Parents participation - Society relations with school

The properties of good school and enrollment such as school management, Parents participation, teaching practices, students learning, their behaviors, diversity of sources and the school management, are important matters among review and periodic evaluation, regarding outputs achieved by these properties.
The second periodic evaluation is conducted for each school individually by focusing on the four to six main fields for performance and school work. Schools evaluation office defines these fields, and one of it is outputs of academic learning of students, and also three or four fields for the main outputs of school, in addition to one or two of other important fields related to objectives and message of evaluated school.

Each activity shall be reviewed among proper educational principles among school events and these fields evaluated by focusing on the four main principles of initiative of education for new stage: independence, accountability, diversity and choice"

Evaluation grades:
Very Good:
Work in this field is developed and effective
Good:
Work is in progress and development
Pass:
Work in the first stages of development
Weak:
No development in the work. Proces

Scope of evaluation:

The analytic framework of evaluation depends on comprehensive visualisation of evaluating institute for fields necessary for school performance; the evaluation field of specific school is the choice of strategic fields which evaluation institute considers it related directly to improving the effectiveness of this school.
Evaluation officials use in all school fields which are evaluated, fixed and specific procedures through it collect evaluation evidence then issue decisions and reach to results regarding school to be evaluated.

Sources of collecting data

Several data have been utilised to complete school evaluation through getting those data and collecting it before and during and after visits of school evaluation.

Data collected from the following main sources:

- Display records and documents of school
- Interviews with managers of schools, employees, students, parents and trustee Summer visits
- Direct remarks from evaluation officials
- School performance report card
- Qatari National Education Data System (QNEDS)
- Comprehensive Educational evaluation tests

Write report about periodic evaluation

The schools' evaluation office in the evaluation institute prepare report after completion of review and periodic evaluation process, submitted to competent authorities in the supreme council of education and education directorate, school itself, parents, community and the education directorate and school shall bear responsibility of how to deal and handle matters mentioned in the reports

Report describes in brief the main sources of evidence, and applied methods and review results as well as shows results of review and evaluation in brief and demonstrates strength points; required improving for all aspects for review then the report concludes important recommendations that shall be taken into consideration. This report deemed as public document and very important to parents and society members and decision makers in the educational process

Evaluation team
Evaluation team leader
Evaluation team member
Date of evaluation team visit

School Name:
School address:
School Manager Name:
Number of teachers:
Number of administrator:
Numbers of registered students in the school:
Telephone No.:
Email:
Website:

School message:

Focus fields of Evaluating School

Focus on Five fields of first periodic evaluation:

Management and leadership	Management and leadership of school
Teaching and Learning	Teaching Methods
Standards and Performance	Academic learning outputs Behavior and discipline of students
Development and Staff Distribution	Preparation and professional development

Number of classes that have been seen during visit.
Number of interviews with employees, officials, students, guardians and others

School Management

Level of school management" Fair"

- **Management and leadership**
- **Monitoring and follow-up**
- **Academic Leadership**
- **Resources management**
- **Safety and Security**
- **Human Resources**
- **Participation of Parents and Community**
- **Strength points**
- **Aspects that need improvement and development**

Teaching Methods

Teaching methods level "Fair"

- **Educational Plans**
- **Teaching Quality**
- **The following subjects shall be studied:**
- **Arabic Language:**
- **Religious Education:**
- **Social Sciences:**
- **English Language:**
- **Mathematics:**
- **Physics:**
- **Chemistry:**
- **Biology:**
- **Learning Quality:**
- **Availability of resources and educational sources**
- **Educational programs**
- **Scientific research**
- **Reading program**
- **Academic Guidance**
- **Electronic Education:**
- **Strength points:**
- **Aspects that need to be improved and developed**

Level of Academic Learning Outputs "Fair"

The comprehensive educational evaluation and international tests
Arabic:
English:
Mathematics:
Biology:
Chemistry:
Physics:
Islamic Education:
Social sciences:

Through comparing results of academic achievement of school to all independent schools in the evaluation educational tests of seventh, eighth and ninth grades, it was found that

Arabic:
English:
Mathematics:
Biology:
Chemistry:

Physics:
Religious Education:
Social sciences:

After reviewing student's results in the general secondary certificate of the last year 2013-2014, it was found that all students succeeded who performed these exams

Benefitting from results of students' evaluation
Execute and follow up plans
Taking care of several categories of students
Strength points:
Aspects that need to be improved and developed

avior and discipline of Students

Level of Behavior and discipline of Students "Good"

- **Policy of behavior and discipline**
- **Students behavior during the school day**
- **Students behavior inside classes**
- **Incentive and motivation of students**
- **Strength points:**
- **Aspects that need to be improved and developed**

ration and professional development

Level of Qualification and professional development "Fair"

- **Define the training requirements**
- **Develop performance of new teachers**
- **Follow up and measure training impact**
- **Strength points:**
- **Aspects that need to be improved and developed**

Conclusion and suggestions

Evaluation team reached to a conclusion that school performance is considered good in the following field:

School performance is deemed Fair in the following fields:

Suggestions:
The following suggestions are considered by the evaluation team:

Appendix F: The Interview Schedule

Qatari Twelfth Grade Students Occupational and Higher Educational Decisions

- **The first interview; semi-structured interview questions:**

1) Personal questions:
    a. Name.
    b. Academic track (medicine, engineering or business).
    c. Father's and mother's occupations.
2) What are your plans for your future?
3) What do you want to do? Why?
4) Do you have a plan in place for what you will do after graduating from school?
5) If the answers to questions 3 & 4 were positive,
    a. Talk to me about how you reached this decision.
    b. Have you visited places that helped you take a decision?
    c. Have you discussed your future plans with somebody? Who?
6) If the answers to questions 3 & 4 were negative,
    a. Why do you not know/have a plan?
    b. How do you feel about it?
7) Did anyone help you in taking your decision?
8) Do you know about scholarships? How?
9) Who is your school academic advisor? What is his/her role?
10) Do you find the career advising provided by school effective? How?
11) Do you think the supreme Education Council has to do something more to help you take a thoughtful occupational and educational decision? What do you suggest?
12) Have you sought career guidance in other places other than school?

- **The second interview; semi-structured interview questions:**

1) Have you passed?
2) What percentage have you achieved?
3) Is that what have you expected?
4) Talk to me about the examination time.
5) Will you go on with your plans? / Have you any occupational plans yet?

6) Have your plans changed? Why? / Who helped you with making the occupational decision?
7) How do you see your future?
8) How do you feel leaving the school?
9) Anything you want to add?

Appendix G: Cross-Tabs Examples

When did you start thinking about the profession that you want to work in in the future?

	Girls	Boys	Total
Since childhood	22 12.1%	23 18.7%	45 14.8%
Seventh grade	7 3.8%	6 4.9%	13 4.3%
Eighth grade	2 1.1%	2 1.6%	4 1.3%
Ninth grade	15 8.2%	14 11.4%	29 9.5%
In the tenth grade	39 21.4%	33 26.8%	72 23.6%
In the eleventh grade	49 26.9%	15 12.2%	64 21%
This year	35 19.2%	24 19.5%	59 19.3%
Not thought about it yet	13 7.1%	6 4.9%	19 6.2%

Who is the family member that you mostly discussed your career path with?

	Girls	Boys	Total
Father	45 27.1%	44 40.4%	89 32.4%
Mother	82 49.4%	27 24.8%	109 39.6%
Brother/sister	22 13.3%	22 20.2%	44 16%
Grandfather/grandmother	2 1.2%	1 0.9%	3 1.1%
Extended family	5 3%	7 6.4%	12 4.4%
Other	10 6%	8 7.3%	18 6.5%

How important are your family's wishes to your future career?

	Girls	Boys	Total
Very important	76 41.5%	56 45.5%	132 43.1%
Important to some extent	95 51.9%	58 47.2%	153 50%
Not important	12 6.6%	9 7.3%	21 6.9%

Is there a school academic advisor to assist you in planning your future career?

	Girls	Boys	Total
Yes	137 74.9%	70 57.4%	207 67.9%
No	23 12.6%	31 25.4%	54 17.7%
Don't know	23 12.6%	21 17.2%	44 14.4%

What are the factors that influenced your career decision? Please choose the three most important ones

	Girls	Boys
Family	55 30.7%	59 48.4%
Friends	30 16.8%	41 33.6%
Job Remuneration Package	88 49.2%	49 40.2%
Educational Grants	49 27.4%	47 38.5%
Academic Advising	32 17.9%	14 11.5%
Teachers' Advice	14 7.8%	16 13.1%

Academic Performance	104 58.1%	44 36.1%
Other	60 33.5%	23 18.9%
Total	179	122

Appendix H: Thematic coding

- General ambition:
    - Future plans
        - When start thinking about occupations
        - Related to an event
        - People involved in the decision
        - Main person to discuss occupational future with
        - Change of plan
    - Awareness of parental occupational history
    - Feelings
    - Information
        - Source of information
        - Lack of information
    - Scholarships
    - Personality
    - Talking the decision

- Family
    - Parents
        - Mother
            - Education
            - Occupation
            - Support
            - Pressure
        - Father
            - Education
            - Occupation
            - Support
            - Pressure
        - Parental conflict
    - Siblings
    - Extended family

- School
    - School environment
    - Career guidance
        - Know academic advisor
        - Met academic advisor
        - Benefit from career advising in school
        - Think career advising is effective
        - Think career advising is enough
    - Other places offer career guidance
    - Academic achievement

- Friends
    - Same age friends
    - Older friends

- Social network
- Cultural capital
    - Home environment
    - Volunteering
    - Feelings towards society