

Attitude of Qatari Students towards the Cultural Content of Q: Skills for Success Textbooks

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Abstract

The increasing demand of English language learning among different nations and different cultural backgrounds of learners has created the need for an appropriate English language learning textbooks with a variety of cultural contexts. One of the popular textbooks in Qatari educational institutions is the English language textbook series "Q: Skills for Success". The application of such international teaching resources in regional settings, especially concerning cultural relevance and student involvement, is a topic of intense discussion and interest. The way students look at the cultural content of these teaching materials and respond to them offers important insights about Qatar, a nation with a rich cultural legacy and a fast-changing educational environment. Considering Qatari students' attitudes towards the cultural content of these textbooks is important because this factor can immensely affect their learning process. This current study is conducted for the purpose of investigating the Qatari students' attitudes towards the cultural content of the English language textbook "Q: Skills for Success". This textbook is used to teach English language to the foundation program students at the Community College of Qatar (CCQ). The study aims to make educators and textbooks' authors more conscious of the necessity for these textbooks to accurately represent an appropriate cultural content. This cultural content is expected to facilitate learning English by attracting the attention of learners and it is expected not to conflict with their traditions. The research involves collecting data from a random representative sample of students from the English Language Center (ELC) or what is known as the Foundation program at CCQ. The study sample consisted of 50 male and female students who are enrolled in the pre intermediate level. Q: Skills for Success is used to teach the pre intermediate level which is the reason for selecting all of the participants only from this level. Due to the nature of this research, the study adopted the quantitative technique. To collect data from the sample a Likert scale questionnaire was designed. SPSS was then used to analyze the collected data. The results of the study demonstrate the intricate relationship that exists between students' local cultural identities and how they perceive the target language culture that the textbooks present. Most students expressed their desire for more

extensive integration of Qatari local cultural content, even though they appreciated other cultures and expressed their will to meet with people of diverse cultures. These results highlight a gap in the current cultural content of the educational materials between the representation of target language cultural content and the preference of the local one. The findings of the research have significant implications for educators, policymakers, and EFL textbook writers. EFL textbooks and other Instructional materials need to be monitored by more specialized representatives from the countries these textbooks are designed for. Also, they need to further represent the local cultural content. This research contributes to the broader literature of English language teaching and cultural representation in EFL textbooks, particularly in the context of Qatar and other Arab countries.

Keywords: Attitudes, Cultural Content, English Language Textbooks, Educational Materials, Cultural Representation, Local Cultural Content, Target language Cultural Content, and learning motivation

Introduction

Attitudes can influence how we perceive the world around us and how we react to various events in general. Based on the important role attitudes play, numerous longitudinal studies have been carried out to consider the facets of this subject (Belli, 2018). Attitudes help anticipate behaviors or responses to other people or things in the environment. They may also inspire acts and forecast the behavioral pattern of people (Jabeen et al., 2011).

Learning attitude can have an impact on the process of learning a language (Ahmad, 2015). In addition to developing attitudes towards the language itself, learners also develop attitudes towards the culture of the language. English language instruction has to consider students' attitudes regarding the cultural aspects of English as a foreign language. This element may have an impact on how successfully one learns the English language (Getie, 2020). Various elements might impact learners' attitudes, these elements include opportunities for employment, motivation, social and political aspects, resuming education, and cultural influences (Khalifa et al., 2016).

As English is a dominant language of nowadays (Rao, 2019), the Qatari government issued it as the language of instruction in most educational bodies in the country like the Community College of Qatar and others (Eslami et al., 2016). The Community College of Qatar accepts all Qatari applicants, which distinguish it from other academic institutions in the country. Additionally, CCQ provides an English language program, often known as the Foundation program before heading to the college level (CCQ, 2022). Q: Skills for Success is used as the English language teaching textbook in the intermediate level of the foundation program.

Graddol (1993) characterized cultural content as names, families, local organizations, geographic locations, low of the community, historical events, religions, and everyday activities that are incorporated into English language teaching textbooks. The proper cultural content to be included in English language teaching textbooks is a controversy topic (Tajeddin, 2015). According to Alotaibi (2020), students in Arabic-speaking nations may not be learning English effectively because EFL textbooks provide a target language culture that is very different from the local one in terms of many aspects and values. On the other hand, some scholars proposed that language learners should be familiar with the culture of the language they are learning even in conservative nations like Qatar or others, as this improves their language proficiency (McKay, 2000).

The topic of this study is of great importance as it might affect the learning process directly. Attitudes of learners towards the cultural content of ELT textbooks might be an important factor that affects learning the language effectively (Rohmani, 2022). According to Brown (2000), learners who form negative attitudes towards a culture may find it difficult to acquire the language of this culture and may even develop negative attitudes towards language acquisition.

There is an urgent need to investigate this subject further because some academics and learners think that target culture integration might compromise Arabic identity and culture (Pessoa & Rajakumar, 2011). It is anticipated that culture will hinder learning when it is viewed as a threat. Prejudices against a foreign language and its community, which often arise from overexposure to the target culture, might impede the learning of a language, according to Abu-Melhim (2009). Many English language textbooks give minimal consideration to diverse perspectives in education, much less to concerns relating to cultural diversity in the classroom. Rather, the target language culture is the main focus of these textbooks (Nieto, 2001).

Ignoring about investigating the attitudes of students towards the ELT textbooks and the proper cultural content to be integrated in these textbooks had previously prevented significant portions of the community from reaching academic achievement in learning languages. Linguists and educators observe common reluctance from students who represent diverse cultural backgrounds to EFL learning because most EFL textbooks demonstrate the target culture only (Reimann, 2009). Modern times require new textbooks, textbooks that value learner's identities and respect the country's commitment to educating all students from all cultural backgrounds.

The purpose of this study is to explore how Qatari students feel about the cultural content in the Q: Skills for Success textbooks. As a result, it is anticipated that this study will be beneficial for English language learners who speak Arabic and are involved in Qatari society as well as other nations. It also attempts to draw the attention of syllabus designers and authors to the significance of having adequate cultural content incorporated in EFL textbooks to support and facilitate the learning process. It is additionally expected to be useful for EFL instructors in Qatar. It can offer them insightful information on a particular issue that could impede English language acquisition. Furthermore, EFL curriculum writers may find the research to be extremely helpful. They can gain insight into the diverse perspectives of students regarding the cultural content, which could motivate them to create course materials that are not harmful to students from other cultural backgrounds.

As indicated earlier and based on the introduction, the aim of this study is to examine the attitudes of Qatari students towards the cultural content of Q: Skills for Success textbooks. This research is going to shed light on the foundation program of the Community College of Qatar because it is considered an esteemed college for teaching English in the English language department. Hence, the research question of this study will be: What is the Qatari students' attitude towards the cultural content of Q: Skills for Success textbooks

Literature Review

Introduction

Language textbooks play a crucial role in language learning, offering not only linguistic but also cultural insights. In the context of Qatar, where English is taught as a second language, it is essential to understand how Qatari students perceive and engage with the cultural content presented in textbooks like "Q: Skills for Success." This literature review

examines existing research on the attitudes of Qatari students towards the cultural content of these textbooks.

1. The Role of Culture in Language Learning

According to Byram (1997), acquiring knowledge of culture is seen crucial for language learners as it facilitates communication and engagement with the target language community. It is a dynamic and developing process that calls on learners to raise their knowledge, attitude, and skill levels in order to learn effectively (Salim, 2017). In this context, Brown (2000) states that culture and language are inseparable; it is impossible to separate them without diminishing the importance of either language or culture. So, it is impossible to separate language from culture. In Qatar, where English is widely taught for academic and professional purposes (Eslami et al., 2016) cultural understanding is vital for effective communication.

2. The Role of Students' Attitudes in Learning the Language:

For students to be successful in learning the target language, they must be psychologically prepared. For this reason, taking into account students' attitudes is crucial to the learning process. The learning process will go much more smoothly for students who approach language learning with an attitude that is positive, while students who approach the language with a negative attitude will find it hard to learn it (Bain et al. 2010). This leads to the importance of the role of teachers to encourage good attitudes in their students (Kuhlemeier, et al., 1997).

3. Cultural Sensitivity in Textbooks

Studies on cultural sensitivity in language textbooks highlight the importance of presenting culture in a respectful and unbiased manner (Byram, 1997). Not all integrated patterns of human behavior—such as those involving ideas, communications, beliefs, values, and manners—can be appropriate for students from diverse backgrounds. For example, discussing a topic about teenage parties in an English-speaking nation —where boyfriends and girlfriends dance, and drink—would not be appropriate for students in Arabic countries. Socially and spiritually, these behaviors are considered forbidden in Arab nations (Abu Jalalah, 1993). In Qatar, where cultural diversity is significant, it is crucial that textbooks like "Q: Skills for Success" present a balanced view of different cultures and avoid stereotypes.

4. Analysis of the cultural content of Q: Skills for success

The EFL textbook used to teach the foundation program students at the Community College of Qatar is called Q: Skills for Success. The goal of the series is to assist students in improving their English language proficiency, especially in the areas of speaking, listening, writing, and reading. The textbooks are meant for students whose English is at the beginner or elementary level. The majority of the content of these textbooks use a theme approach to teaching languages, arranging the material according to relevant topics. In order to engage students and provide cultural references, the series frequently incorporates authentic materials, such as articles, images, and videos (Blass, 2013). Ta'amneh (2019) notes that there are certain problems with the objectives being selected without the instructors' feedback, and that the pictures and material are not appropriate for the local culture of the students of some nations.

In order to comprehend how cultural components are portrayed in this series, the author used a model from (Yuen, 2011). The target culture, that is, the culture of the English-speaking countries, is mostly represented in the cultural content of this book. The purpose of these textbooks is to illustrate the cultural elements of the language being studied (Rodríguez, 2018). The local culture of Arab students was mentioned only on a few occasions; as a result, language learners may feel "isolated and excluded" from the process (Al Mawoda, 2011). However, according to Nurjanah (2019), this textbook made the least amount of reference to foreign cultures. The Community College of Qatar relies on EFL textbooks that, at times, may overlook the cultural background of their students in favor of the target language culture, which is referred to as the "American or British" dominant culture (Ayu, 2020). The names, attire, subjects covered, and images included in the content of these textbooks all represent the dominant target culture. These textbooks hardly ever addressed the cultural aspect of the original civilization (Ta'amneh, 2019).

5. Influence of Cultural Content on Motivation

The motivational aspect of cultural content should not be underestimated. Research by Ahmed et al (2019) suggests that culturally relevant content can enhance students' motivation to learn English. Ahmed (2015) argued that motivation has the potential to either improve or worsen students' attitudes and, in turn, the learning process. Students with high levels of motivation and aspirations in life typically exhibit a positive mentality or attitude that contributes to their success. However, when motivation is reduced, it can lead to a bad attitude and failure in the learning process. Therefore, adapting "Q: Skills for Success" to the Qatari culture may potentially boost students' enthusiasm for language learning.

6. Teacher Perceptions and Implementation

Teachers play a pivotal role in how cultural content is delivered and received by students. Studies by Dabou et al (2021) highlight the importance of teacher training and awareness of cultural issues when using textbooks like "Q: Skills for Success." Teachers' perceptions and practices regarding cultural content can significantly impact students' attitudes. These days, having "culturally sensitive teachers" is a must for English classrooms (Valdes, 1986). It's evident that a lot of English professors disregarded fundamental cultural variations. English teachers should be equipped to view English culture both from the inside out and through the perspective of a person from a different culture (Al-Khwaiter, 2001). The manner a teacher imparts knowledge can have a long-lasting effect on the students' perceptions of the positive and negative aspects of the target language's culture. Students' perceptions of that culture or civilization may be shaped for the rest of their life by the teacher's understanding and sensitivity in explaining it to them. In order to avoid deliberately biasing their students, educators must take care while introducing different cultures to their learners.

Methods

Adopting an appropriate research design has a significant impact on the overall importance and outcomes of the study. In order to better understand the nature of the research topic and generate more dependable, broadly applicable results, the researcher used the quantitative approach in the current study. According to Creswell (2017), quantitative research is a formal, objective, and deductive process. Surveys and questionnaires are used to gather data for quantitative research, which is afterward, analyzed

using statistical methods (Babbie, 2020). This approach focuses on gathering statistical data and extending it using specific groups of people in order to understand a given phenomenon. The present study's research question requires the use of a questionnaire for data collection and statistical analysis of the data collected. These techniques are indicative of a quantitative strategy that is considered appropriate for accomplishing the study's objective.

Methodology

Surveys can be used to gather quantitative data, which is necessary for this type of research. In order to gather data for this particular study, the researcher will rely on a questionnaire. By using this technique, it is possible to obtain firsthand information from students about how they feel and perceive the cultural material in their English language textbooks. In quantitative research, questionnaires are a popular tool that let researchers effectively gather data from a large number of people. Researchers can make conclusions and generalize findings about a community by using quantitative data from surveys that can be statistically analyzed (Babbie and Rubin, 2016). The data collection tool of this current study is a Likert scale questionnaire that is divided into three sections. Participants' biographical data such as age and gender were included in the first section. These biographical data can be looked at as a moderating variable that might affect student's attitude. In the second section, participants were asked for reasons of studying English. Reasons for learning the language or the motivation might also be another moderating variable that affects students' attitude towards the cultural content of their EFL textbook *Q: Skills for Success*. The items from the questionnaire required for the research's analysis and outcomes made up the third section. The researcher is acquainted with the students and the environments because he works as a lecturer at ELC at the Community College of Qatar. According to Yin (2003), having knowledge from within may be extremely valuable while conducting research since it can ensure that a case study accurately depicts any phenomenon by allowing an insider's perspective on reality. Participants may believe that because the researcher is an insider, he is more compassionate towards them and can relate to their experiences, according to Babbie and Rubin (2016). Other advantages of being an insider include reducing expenses and having easy access to the subjects (Creswell, 1999). For this study, a random sample from the English language program of the Community College of Qatar will be selected. According to Cook et al., (2002), random sampling ensures that the data you obtain will be comparable to what you would have obtained if you measured the complete population. There are 50 male and female students who are the subjects of this study. The participants are from the intermediate level as they are supposed to have been exposed to English language learning extensively. To complete the questionnaire of this study, participants need to have a sufficient level of English reading and comprehension.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the information from this questionnaire, the researcher used the descriptive statistics approach. The Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) is the suitable data analysis program that is utilized. This program was developed by Chicago, USA-based SPSS, Inc. It is considered the most commonly used software in educational research (Riazi, 2010). The social sciences employ this software program for statistical analysis. It offers an intuitive interface for carrying out complicated statistical analysis (Norušis, 2012). The researcher used strongly disagree, disagree, and partly disagree as signs of disagreement and strongly agree, agree, and partly agree as signs of agreement to the statement made during

the analysis of the findings. This process will be used in order to streamline the data analysis process.

After all participants have completed the questionnaire and the researcher has reviewed and analyzed all of their responses, data is moved to a computer. Next, data is statistically examined using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). After that, data is arranged in a way that is easily analyzed. Tables are used to illustrate the data. Subsequently, the data is compiled and variations or patterns in the students' attitudes are found using descriptive statistics. Furthermore, to find out if there are any connections between the attitudes of the students and other moderating factors, statistical inferences are employed. Additionally, a calculation is made to determine the percentage of each choice's frequency for each questionnaire item. The conclusions and impacts are explained together with the interpretation of the data analysis results. Lastly, judgments regarding how Qatari students feel about the cultural content of Q: Skills for Success are made in light of the data analysis findings.

Results

The researcher approached 50 students who were considered the sample of the population of this study. Participants were selected from the pre intermediate level of the foundation program at the Community College of Qatar. The sample varied in terms of gender and age groups as shown below:

Table 1

Gender variation of the sample of this study

	Male	Female	Total
Gender	26	24	50
Percentage	52%	48%	100

As reflected in Table 1, male and female participants were almost even in number. 52% of the participants were female, while 48% were males.

Table 2

Age groups of the sample of this study

	Below 20	Between 20- 30	Above 30
Age	12	32	6
Percentage	24%	64%	12%

In regard to age groups, participants were classified into 3 labels i.e. below 20, between 20-30, and above 30. Table 2 shows that most participants were between 20-30 years old. Participants aged below 20 years formed 24% of the sample of this study, while participants aged between 20-30 formed 64% of the sample. Moreover, participants who were aged above 30 formed only 12% of the sample.

Results related to reasons for studying English language

To investigate the motivation of the students to study English as a moderating variable that might affect students attitude about the cultural content of English language teaching textbook, the researcher proposed 7 reasons where the participants had to respond by

choosing “Yes” or “No” for each of the proposed reasons. The following tables illustrate all of the responses of the participants.

For traveling abroad

Table 3

Traveling abroad

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1. Yes	19	38.0	38.0	38.0
	2. No	31	62.0	62.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 shows that 62% of the participants of this study do not learn English for the purpose of traveling abroad. Only 19 students out of 50 stated that traveling abroad is one of the reasons that motivate them to study English. These 19 students represent 38% of the sample.

To increase my opportunity of getting a job

Table 4

To increase opportunity of getting a job

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1. Yes	40	80.0	80.0	80.0
	2. No	10	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Apparently, one of the important reasons for learning English is increasing the opportunity of getting a job. Table 4 reflects that 80% of the participants consider increasing the opportunity of getting a job as one of the valid reasons for them to learn English. On the other hand, 20% of the participant declared that they do not learn English for the sake of getting job opportunities.

To learn about the cultures of developed countries

Table 5

To learn about the cultures of developed countries

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1. Yes	37	74.0	74.0	74.0
	2. No	13	26.0	26.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Most of the participants of this study proclaimed that learning about the cultures of developed countries is one of the reasons that motivate them to learn English language. 74% considered learning about the culture of the developed countries a reason for learning English, while 26% declared that it is not a valid reason.

To be able to speak the language fluently

Table 6

To be able to speak the fluently

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1. Yes	49	98.0	98.0	98.0
	2. No	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 6 reflects very evidently that being able to speak fluently is a crucial reason for learning English. Almost all of the participants (98%) stated that one of the reasons that motivates them to learn English is being able to speak English fluently. Only 2% considered it invalid reason.

To study abroad

Table 7

To study abroad

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1. Yes	18	36.0	36.0	36.0
	2. No	32	64.0	64.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 7 indicates the participants' responses to the 5th proposed reason for learning English. Only 36% of the students participated in this study counted studying abroad as a valid reason that motivates them to learn English language. Contrariwise, 64% believed it is not a valid reason.

Because my job requires that.

Table 8

Job requirement

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1. Yes	29	58.0	58.0	58.0
	2. No	21	42.0	42.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

According to table 8, 39 out of 50 students, which represent 58% of the sample considered their job requirements a reason that motivates them to learn English language. In contrast, 42% of the participants though that it is not one of the motivators to learn English.

Because my education requires that

Table 9

Education requirement

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1. Yes	45	90.0	90.0	90.0
	2. No	5	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

It seems that one of the factors that most participants consider influential for learning English is education requirement. Most of the students, 90% said that they learn English because it is one of the requirement for their education. Only a few of the students, 10% believed this reason is not valid for them.

The descending order of the reasons according to their importance

The following table reflects the descending frequency of the reasons for learning English language as selected by the individuals of the sample of the study.

Table 10

The descending order of the reasons for learning English

Reason for studying English	Number of students	Percentage
4. To be able to speak the language fluently.	49	% 98
7. Because my education requires that	45	% 90
2. To increase my opportunity of getting a job.	40	% 80
3. To learn about the cultures of developed countries.	37	% 74
6. Because my job requires that.	29	% 58
1. For traveling abroad	19	% 38
5. To study abroad.	18	% 36

Table 10 demonstrates that the top three frequently stated reasons that motivate students to learn English language are the following: **To be able to speak the language fluently, because my education requires that, and to increase my opportunity of getting a job.** There might be an internal connection between the three reasons. Students might be motivated to speak the language fluently as it is a requirement for education, and it might help in getting better job opportunities. The other reason that most of the participants selected is: **To learn about the cultures of developed countries.** It seems that this reason is influential as learners are interested to know more about other cultures of developed countries. Learning English helps them to know more about these developed countries through the cultural content of the textbooks or through improving their language skills. Improving language skills can enable them to read from websites or other resources. More than half of the students said they are motivated to learn English because it is a requirement for their jobs. The least selected two reasons are: **For traveling abroad, and to study abroad.** This indicates that students are not motivated to learn English to use it abroad neither for traveling nor for studying.

Analysis of items of the scale

As discussed earlier, the researcher used strongly disagree, disagree, and partly disagree as signs of disagreement and strongly agree, agree, and partly agree as signs of agreement to the statement made during the analysis of the findings. This method is used in order to regulate and arrange the data analysis process.

Table 1

Familiarization with the English speaking nations' customs.

		1. Strongly agree	2. Agree	3. Partly agree	4. Partly disagree	5. Disagree	6. Strongly disagree	Total
1. I do not feel it is important to be familiar with the ideas, values, ethics, and customs of English-speaking nations.	Frequency	7	11	6	5	11	10	50.00
	Percent	14.0	22.0	12.0	10.0	22.0	20.0	100.00
	Merged percentage	48			52			100

This table shows the students' opinions regarding the first item of the questionnaire that says: **I do not feel it is important to be familiar with the ideas, values, ethics, and customs of English-speaking nations.** 48% of the participants agreed to the statement of the first item, while 52% disagreed. It seems the participants responses were almost even in regard to the first statement. That is to say, to be familiar with the ideas, values, ethics, and customs of English-speaking nations, might not be an important factor that affects students attitude about the cultural content of the textbook.

Table 2

Lack of representation of Arabic culture.

		1. Strongly agree	2. Agree	3. Partly agree	4. Partly disagree	5. Disagree	6. Strongly disagree	Total
2. There is a lack of representation of my Arabic culture in the English language textbooks.	Frequency	9	20	10	3	5	3	50.00
	Percent	18.0	40.0	20.0	6.0	10.0	6.0	100.00
	Merged percentage	78			22			

Table 2 reflects the participants' opinions regarding the second item of the questionnaire. It shows that the majority of the participants, 78%, agreed that there is a lack of representation of Arabic culture in the English language textbooks. On the other hand only 22% believed there is not a lack of representation of Arabic culture in their EFL textbook. This is to say that Arabic cultural content representation seems to be an important factor that students are missing when learning English language.

Table 3

Mentioning Arabic civilization in EFL textbooks.

		1. Strongly agree	2. Agree	3. Partly agree	4. Partly disagree	5. Disagree	6. Strongly disagree	Total
3. I wonder why the textbooks we study do not mention the Arabs and their civilization, in spite the fact that these textbooks are intended for Arab students.	Frequency	20	21	4	2	3	0	50.00
	Percent	40.0	42.0	8.0	4.0	6.0	0.0	100.0
	Merged percentage	90			10			

The responses of the learners to this item of the questionnaire clearly emphasize their responses to the previous one. Most of the students agreed to the third item of the questionnaire which is: **“I wonder why the textbooks we study do not mention the Arabs and their civilization, in spite the fact that these books are intended for Arab students”**. Precisely, 90% agreed to this statement, while only 10% disagreed. This table indicates that students prefer to have Arabic cultural content integrated in their EFL textbooks.

Table 4

The motivating effect of the inclusion of Arabic cultural content.

		1. Strongly agree	2. Agree	3. Partly agree	4. Partly disagree	5. Disagree	6. Strongly disagree	Total
4. It is motivating to have the English teaching textbooks contain some information about Arab civilization such as the customs, traditions, Arab luminaries, and the names of Arab tourist countries and so on.	Frequency	21	20	8	0	1	0	50.00
	Percent	42.0	40.0	16.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	100.0
	Merged percentage	98			2			

Table 4 demonstrates a massive agreement among the participants of this study regarding the 4th item of the questionnaire. Almost all of the students agreed that it is motivating to have the English teaching textbooks contain some information about Arab civilization such as the customs, traditions, Arab luminaries, and the names of Arab tourist countries and so on. Only 1 of the 50 participants disagreed to this statement.

Table 5

Meeting with English-speaking people to learn about English culture.

		1. Strongly agree	2. Agree	3. Partly agree	4. Partly disagree	5. Disagree	6. Strongly disagree	Total
5. I like to meet with English-speaking people not only to gain proficiency in speaking English, but also to learn about English Culture, values, ethics, habits and ways of thinking.	Frequency	15	21	11	1	0	2	50.00
	Percent	30.0	42.0	22.0	2.0	0.0	4.0	100.00
	Merged percentage	94			6			

The 5th item of questionnaire shows that students do not have any problem with English cultures or the people of the English cultures. 94% of the respondents said they like to meet with English-speaking people and they like to know about their culture. Only 6% of the participants are not interested to meet with English-speaking people. Table 5 demonstrates that student’s opinion is negative about the target language culture when it is included in English language teaching textbooks, but it is not negative when it comes to meeting English-speaking people. This table connotes that students prefer the local cultural content when they learn English language.

Table 6

The impact of the cultural content of EFL textbooks on students’ attitude

		1. Strongly agree	2. Agree	3. Partly agree	4. Partly disagree	5. Disagree	6. Strongly disagree	Total
6. I think the cultural content of English language textbooks has had an impact on my attitudes and perceptions of other cultures.	Frequency	8	24	7	4	5	2	50.00
	Percent	16.0	48.0	14.0	8.0	10.0	4.0	100.00
	Merged percentage	78			22			

Table 6. Shows students responses to the 6th item of the questionnaire. 78% of the respondents believed that the cultural content of English language textbooks has had an impact on their attitudes and perceptions of other cultures. On the other hand, 22% believed that the cultural content of English language textbooks has had no impact on their attitudes of other cultures. This factor might affect students attitude towards learning the language, especially when the cultural content of EFL textbook impact them negatively.

Table 7

Reservations about ideas presented in the English language textbooks

		1. Strongly agree	2. Agree	3. Partly agree	4. Partly disagree	5. Disagree	6. Strongly disagree	Total
7. I have many reservations about some of the ideas that are presented in the English language textbooks that do not align with my Arabic culture	Frequency	8	13	12	8	6	3	50.00
	Percent	16.0	26.0	24.0	16.0	12.0	6.0	100.0
	Merged percentage	66			34			

Table 7 represents the responses of students to item 7 of the questionnaire that is: “I have many reservations about some of the ideas that are presented in the English language textbooks that do not align with my Arabic culture” 66% of the students agreed with this statement, while 34% disagreed with it. Approximately, two thirds of the participants said that they have reservations about ideas included in EFL textbooks that contradict with their local Arabic culture. Actually, this table might show reasons of the rejection of the English language content.

Table 8

Offensive materials of the cultural content of EFL textbooks

		1. Strongly agree	2. Agree	3. Partly agree	4. Partly disagree	5. Disagree	6. Strongly disagree	Total
8. Some of the cultural content in English language textbooks are offending.	Frequency	4	9	4	5	13	15	50.00
	Percent	8.0	18.0	8.0	10.0	26.0	30.0	100.0
	Merged percentage	34			66			

Table 8 implies that most students believed there is no offensive material in ideas of EFL textbooks towards other cultures. About two thirds of the students believed there is no offense in the cultural content of English language textbooks. Conversely, a third of the 50 participants believed there is some offensive materials in the cultural materials of EFL textbooks. These materials might be the ideas that contradict with the local cultural content of Arabs as reflected in the previous item of the questionnaire. The responses of this item are compatible with the responses of the 5th item. Students do not have issues with the English culture, but they believe it is more helpful to integrate their local cultural content in the EFL textbooks.

Table 8

Arabic observers collaborating with curriculum designers of textbooks

		1. Strongly agree	2. Agree	3. Partly agree	4. Partly disagree	5. Disagree	6. Strongly disagree	Total
9. There should be Arabic observers collaborating with curriculum designers of textbooks used for Arab students.	Frequency	17	22	4	2	2	3	50
	Percent	34.0	44.0	8.0	4.0	4.0	6.0	100.0
	Merged percentage	86			14			

Table 8 shows clearly that most respondents believed There should be Arabic observers collaborating with curriculum designers of textbooks used for Arab students. 86% of the students supposed that the developers of textbook curricula for Arab students ought to be assisted by Arabic-speaking observers. On the other hand, only 14% supposed that it is not important to have Arabic observers collaborating with curriculum designers of textbooks used for Arab students.

Means and standard deviations for each item of the scale

The following table shows the means and standard deviations for each and all of the nine items of the questionnaire:

Table 10

Means and standard deviation

Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. I do not feel it is important to be familiar with the ideas, values, ethics, and customs of English-speaking nations.	50	3.36	1.793
2. There is a lack of representation of my Arabic culture in the English language textbooks.	50	4.32	1.435
3. I wonder why the textbooks we study do not mention the Arabs and their civilization, in spite the fact that these books are intended for Arab students.	50	5.06	1.096
4. It is motivating to have the English teaching textbooks contain some information about Arab civilization such as the customs, traditions, Arab luminaries, and the names of Arab tourist countries and so on.	50	5.20	.857
5. I like to meet with English-speaking people not only to gain proficiency in speaking English, but also to learn about English Culture, values, ethics, habits and ways of thinking.	50	4.88	1.118
6. I think the cultural content of English language textbooks has had an impact on my attitudes and perceptions of other cultures.	50	4.40	1.355

12. I have many reservations about some of the ideas that are presented in the English language textbooks that do not align with my Arabic culture	50	4.00	1.457
15. Some of the cultural content in English language textbooks are offending.	50	2.82	1.734
16. There should be Arabic observers collaborating with curriculum designers of textbooks used for Arab students.	50	4.82	1.380
total	50	4.3178	.64983

It is noticed that almost all of the above averages are greater than the hypothetical average (3.5), which means most of the items of the questionnaire are significantly positive. To confirm the significance of the difference between each average for each item of the scale and the total score on this part, a one-sample T test was conducted. Below are the results:

Table 11

One-sample T test

Statements	Mean	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
1. I do not feel it is important to be familiar with the ideas, values, ethics, and customs of English-speaking nations.	3.36	.254	-.552	49	.583
2. There is a lack of representation of my Arabic culture in the English language textbooks.	4.32	.203	4.041	49	.000
3. I wonder why the textbooks we study do not mention the Arabs and their civilization, in spite the fact that these books are intended for Arab students.	5.06	.155	10.068	49	.000
4. It is motivating to have the English teaching textbooks contain some information about Arab civilization such as the customs, traditions, Arab luminaries, and the names of Arab tourist countries and so on.	5.20	.121	14.024	49	.000
5. I like to meet with English-speaking people not only to gain proficiency in speaking English, but also to learn about English Culture, values, ethics, habits and ways of thinking.	4.88	.158	8.726	49	.000
6. I think the cultural content of English language textbooks has had an impact on my attitudes and perceptions of other cultures.	4.40	.192	4.696	49	.000
12. I have many reservations about some of the ideas that are presented in the	4.00	.206	2.427	49	.019

English language textbooks that do not align with my Arabic culture					
15. Some of the cultural content in English language textbooks are offending.	2.82	.245	-2.773	49	.008
16. There should be Arabic observers collaborating with curriculum designers of textbooks used for Arab students.	4.82	.195	6.761	49	.000
total	4.3178	.09190	8.899	49	.000

It is noted that all of the above averages are statistically significant at the significance level ($0.019 \geq \alpha$) except for the first paragraph, which is related to the importance of being familiar with the ideas, values, ethics, and customs of the English-speaking countries. This is because participant's responses were almost even in regard to this statement which means it might not be an effective factor that can affect their attitudes. It is noticed from the results that T test numbers are high while alpha is less than 5%. This means that most students support almost all of the items of the questionnaire and most of the responses are positive.

Results of gender and age group variables

To check on the effect of both of the gender and age group variables, a two-way analysis of variance (2×3) was found, and the results of this analysis are as follows:

Table 12

Means and standard deviations of the total score on the scale

A. Gender		Mean	N	Std. Deviation
1. Male ذكر	1. Below 20 أقل من 20 سنة	4.7556	5	.77936
	2. Between 20- 30 بين ال 20 وال 30 سنة	4.2778	18	.76909
	3. Above أكثر من 30 سنة 30	3.7407	3	.23130
	Total	4.3077	26	.76356
2. Female أنثى	1. Below 20 سنة 20 أقل من	4.1111	7	.53672
	2. Between 20- 30 بين ال 20 وال 30 سنة	4.3810	14	.51143
	3. Above أكثر من 30 سنة 30	4.5926	3	.44905
	Total	4.3287	24	.51544
Total	1. Below 20 سنة 20 أقل من	4.3796	12	.69866
	2. Between 20- 30 بين ال 20 وال 30 سنة	4.3229	32	.66088
	3. Above أكثر من 30 سنة 30	4.1667	6	.56547
	Total	4.3178	50	.64983

The overall score of the **means and standard deviations** indicates that the variables of gender and age group do not significantly affect students' attitudes. To test the result of this analysis, we can further conduct Two-way examination of variance for the variables of gender, age group, and their interaction

The following table reflects bivariate examination of the age group and gender factors, as well as how they interact, for the study sample members' performance on the scale.

Table.13

Bivariate analysis of the variables of gender and age group and their interaction

Source	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender	1	.085	.080	.800
Age	2	.142	.119	.893
Gender * Age	2	1.190	2.889	.066

It is noted from the table 13 above that there are no statistically significant differences on the scale at the level of significance ($0.05 \geq \alpha$) on the performance of the study sample members caused by their gender, age group, and the interaction between them. In regard to gender, the values of the statistic (F) in the analysis of variance reached (.080). As for the age group, the values of the statistic (F) reached in the two-way analysis of variance (.119) furthermore, in regard to the interaction between gender and age group, the values of the statistic (F) in the two-way analysis of variance reached (2.889). All of these values are not statistically significant at the significance level ($0.05 \geq \alpha$)

Discussions

The research question of this study is: What is the Qatari students' attitude towards the cultural content of Q: Skills for Success textbooks? This question was addressed by a questionnaire that collects data to give an appropriate answer for this research question. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section collected biographical information of students. The purpose of collecting these data is to check whether they may have any moderating effects on student's attitude towards the cultural content of EFL textbooks. The result of the questionnaire showed that both of the moderating variables of age and gender has no effect on the attitude of learners towards the cultural content of EFL textbooks.

The second section of the questionnaire collected data about reasons for studying English language. The researcher wanted to investigate whether this factor has a moderating effect on the students' attitude. The result showed that most students are motivated to learn English by a verity of reasons. The top three reasons that were chosen by students are: "To be able to speak the language fluently, because my education requires that, and to increase my opportunity of getting a job". When having a deeper look at these top three selected reasons, it can be noticed that students learn English basically to get better job opportunity or because English is a requirement for their education. The most frequently selected reason which is "to speak the language fluently" might be looked at as a demand for the previously mentioned two reasons i.e. education and job opportunities. Learning about cultures of developed countries is also one of the reasons that learners chose frequently. This means that learners are interested to learn about other cultures especially the cultures of developed countries. This reason will be elaborated later in this section and will be linked to the responses of learners to the third section of the questionnaire as it seems to contradict somehow with it. Therefore, the responses of students proves that the motivation to study English language might be a moderating variable that affects learners' attitudes towards the cultural content of the EFL textbooks.

In regard to the third section of the questionnaire, the researcher developed nine items to explore learners' attitude towards the incorporation of the target language cultural content in their EFL textbook *Q: Skills for Success*. Students' perspectives regarding the cultural content of the "Q: Skills for Success" textbooks in Qatar shed light on the intricate relationship that exist between local cultural background and international or target language cultural content. According to this research, there has been generally negative responses among the sample of this study towards the incorporation of target language cultural content. Most students expressed a kind of negative attitude or rejection for being exposed to target language culture, which seems to contradict with the local culture's doctrine or believes. From the one hand, students expressed their interest to learn about the cultures of developed countries as referred to in the result of the second section of the questionnaire. From the other hand, the result of the third section proves that students do not prefer the integration of the target language cultural content. This gives an explicit indication that Qatari learners do not have any problems with other cultures and they do not mind even learning about other cultures. They just believe that studying English using EFL textbooks that integrate their local cultural content might ease their understanding and attract their attention more when learning English. Only a few students did not, however, draw attention to a discrepancy between the material in the textbooks and their personal cultural experiences, underscoring the difficulty of developing local cultural content that is relevant to international or target language.

These results are consistent with recent relevant literature on attitudes of students towards the cultural content of EFL textbooks. The necessity for integrating local cultural content in EFL textbooks has been highlighted by some similar studies conducted in other nations, such as Saudi Arabia and Japan, which have likewise revealed rejection to cultural content in English language teaching materials (Alshammari, 2016; Ahmed et al., 2011). The findings of this research add to the corpus of work by concentrating on the viewpoints of Qatari students in particular, offering insightful information on the local cultural content. This current study and some other relevant studies have shown that students might have a kind of negative attitudes towards teaching the culture of the target language. Cultural sensitivity, relevance, and other factors can play a role in how Qatari students perceive the cultural material and form their attitude towards the cultural content in the "Q: Skills for Success" textbooks. The research findings reveal that although Qatari students appreciate other cultures, they would prefer more concentration on their own culture in EFL textbooks. To prevent promoting prejudices, the cultural content should also be delivered in a neutral and respectful manner.

Teaching languages has advanced significantly from focusing on the target culture to teaching local culture in the last several years. This change entails acknowledging and appreciating the home cultures of the learners (Byram, 2004). Course designers and language instructors have to be attentive to how well local culture integrates into language instruction. In order to enhance students' attitudes and increase their self-confidence, Al Mawoda (2011) recommend integrating the culture of the learners into the target language instruction. As a result, during the recent last years more scholars are calling for the usage of local culture than before. Efforts have been made to create new teaching materials or modify already-published textbooks to better suit the cultural backgrounds of the students. One example of this phenomena is the idea of Islamic English (Rousseau, 2011).

The study has a number of implications for textbook authors and teachers. First, it emphasises how crucial it is to include content that is culturally appropriate to student's

cultural background in order to increase engagement. Educators in Qatar could also think about adding supplementary materials that integrate local examples to textbooks content to help students overcome cultural differences. These findings point to the importance of adding regional perspectives and maybe developing textbook versions that are customised for particular cultural contexts for textbooks designers and developers.

Recommendations and Suggestions

- **Incorporation of Local Cultural Content:** Educators and curriculum designers have to think about including more cultural elements that refer to Qatar and Arabs in EFL textbooks. This could entail making the material more approachable and interesting for learners by including regional examples, idioms, references to historical events, and current issues relevant to Qatari society.
- **Working Together with Local Experts:** Include educators, students, and cultural specialists from Qatar in the creation of the textbooks materials. By working together, the cultural material is guaranteed to be genuine and to correlate with the students' personal experiences.
- **Establish regular feedback channels** so that students can share their thoughts and recommendations about the cultural content of the textbooks. The curriculum may be regularly improved and adjusted with the help of this feedback.
- **Maintaining a Balance between Global and Local viewpoints:** In order to adequately educate students for life in a globalised society, it is crucial to balance local content integration with global viewpoints. The curriculum needs to promote knowledge and respect of regional and global cultures.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to question and investigate the attitude of Qatari students towards the cultural content of the English language textbooks that are used in a particular setting in the Community College at Qatar. Another purpose of this study was also to increase awareness among educators and textbooks writers of the need for these textbooks to represent an appropriate cultural content that the English language textbooks are intended to. It also sought to demonstrate to Arabic educational bodies in general and in Qatar in particular that the bulk of learners prefer the local cultural content over the target language cultural content to be integrated in the EFL textbooks when learning English. However most of the popular English-language resources portrayed Western culture as the prevailing culture. This study referred to some parallel studies that showed that the majority of the cultural content represented in these textbooks were from target language nations like the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada, whereas other nations cultures appeared to be ignored.

The results of this study indicated that the cultural content of English language textbooks has an impact on the attitudes of students. The results indicated also that learners prefer to have their local Arabic cultural content to be integrated in the EFL textbooks they use to study English. It is crucial to note that most students expressed a need for more representation of their own culture in the EFL textbooks. Lastly, the results indicated that the reason for the rejection of the target language culture representation might be the contradiction in some values, ethics and morals between both of the local and target language cultures. This highlights a gap in the current educational materials, where the balance between global and local content could be improved. The current study proved that some of

the present textbooks used in educational institutes in Qatar do not adequately address the needs and concerns of students. The study then made several recommendations and suggestions for future textbook material development in Qatar and possibly in other EFL contexts.

These findings of this research have important implications for policymakers, educators, and curriculum designers. A more specialized approach that respects and integrates regional and local culture is clearly needed in teaching materials. These observations are particularly significant for Qatar, which is developing its educational standards in accordance with its National Vision 2030.

In summary, the opinions of Qatari students regarding the cultural material in the "Q: Skills for Success" textbooks point to a larger issue in international education, which is the difficulty of finding a balance between global and local perspectives. In order to improve cultural relevance and inclusion of appropriate learning materials, this study lays the groundwork for future research and development in educational resources.

Limitations and Future Studies

While relating the findings of the study to broader research and educational environments, this section also acknowledges the limitations of the study and suggests channels for further researches.

Limitations

It is crucial to consider the study's limitations when analysing the results. Despite being large enough, the sample is limited to a particular population of Qataris, which may not fully represent the variety of student experiences in the country. Additionally, the study relies on self-reported attitudes, which can be biased by social desirability and other variables.

Upcoming Research

In order to better match the content of textbooks such as "Q: Skills for Success" with the cultural needs and preferences of Qatari learners, more study and curriculum adjustments may be required as English language learning is growing in Qatar. Further research could expand on this study by including a broader range of Qatari educational institutions or by comparing students from other Gulf countries. To deepen our understanding of how students perceive and understand cultural elements in educational materials or EFL textbooks, a more qualitative study focusing on the unique experiences and viewpoints of students would be valuable.

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