

QATAR UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

ACHIEVABILITY OF GRADE NINE QATARI ENGLISH KEY CURRICULUM

STANDARDS: TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

BY

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A Thesis Submitted to  
the Faculty of the College of  
Education  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of  
Masters of Arts in Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

January 2018

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## ABSTRACT

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January: 2018, Masters of Arts in Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.

Title: Achievability of Grade Nine Qatari English Curriculum Standards: A Teachers' Perspectives

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The aim of this study was to investigate ESL teachers' perspectives regarding Grade Nine English curriculum standards. In addition, participant' demographics and factors influencing the achievability of standards were studied. Demographics included gender, school location, teacher qualification and experienced in context of Grade Nine, SBE and Independent Qatari schools. The required data were gathered during the fall term of 2017 through a researcher-made questionnaire from responses of a representative sample of 311 ESL teachers in practice at Independent schools in Qatar. The instrument was first piloted before it was administered and it showed the reliability of 0.985 alpha coefficient value for the whole survey. The findings were analyzed using Descriptive and inferential like frequency, percentage, average and mean. SPSS software (version 23) was used to run t-tests, ANOVA and correlations to analyze the closed items of the questionnaire. The findings revealed that ESL had general agreement that English curriculum key standards were achievable in low level. In addition, results found that school location and teachers' prior SBE experience significantly influence on the achievability of certain standards strand.

## DEDICATION

*This thesis is especially dedicated to greatest family who supported and encouraged me to overcome all obstacles in process of learning.*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express thankfulness to my supervisor Professor Romanowski, Michael H. and Dr. Maha Ellili-Cherif, for encouragement and invaluable guidance and support. Without their supervision and constant help, this thesis would not have been possible. I am also grateful to Professor Yahya Al-Nakeeb and other colleagues who helped me and for their inspiration, motivation and support to complete this thesis work.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Globalization can be defined as “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” (Block, 2004, p. 31). This has led many countries to implement large-scale educational reforms in an attempt to promote economic growth and increase labor productivity. The underlying assumption is that equipping citizens with the necessary knowledge, skills and disposition is vital for the development of society and a shift towards a knowledge-based economy in order to increase economic competitiveness (Block, 2004; Rohmah, 2005; Sahlberg, 2004). More importantly, globalization has made it possible to align these reforms with current international practices (Sahlberg, 2004).

This phenomenon has had several consequences. The first is the wide spread of English and its rise to the status of a global language (Rohmah, 2005). English has become the language of key domains like science, technology, economy and trade. In some countries, English has become the lingua franca or the language of communication between different citizens who do not share a first language (Kazemi, et al., 2016). In other countries, it has gained the status of a second language, as evidenced by its use in official government communication and the media. In this context, governments worldwide have realized the importance of English and so have placed greater emphasis on the teaching of English in order to empower students and equip them with the knowledge to access global literacy (Rohmah, 2005; Sahlberg, 2004). In addition, some governments have integrated English into their educational system as a medium of instruction in K-12 as well as in higher education. The argument is that a high proficiency in English is required to help

countries and societies to keep pace with the growing changes in various fields. More importantly, a high proficiency in literacy skills, specifically English skills, has become the target of many educational reforms (Sahlberg, 2004, p. 74). Being the language of communication in various key domains, a high proficiency in English ensures access to knowledge and, therefore, increases economic development and competitiveness (Echevarria, et al., 2006).

The second consequence of globalization is that, with the rise of English as a global language, its leading role in world communication, social and cultural relations and international business has become a motive for seeking greater proficiency in mastering English in terms of the global Standards-Based Education. Several countries have embraced educational reforms that are driven by Standards-Based Education (Rohmah, 2005; Sahlberg, 2004). Reforms centering on standardization developed educational systems designed to attain predetermined expectations embodied in performance standards and embrace testing systems designed to measure the achievement of the standards. Globalization, coupled with standardization, impacts on the status of the English language and English language teaching (Sahlberg, 2004). Curriculum and teaching methodologies are selected to cover the core subjects and specific content areas specified in the standards.

Regarding the impact of globalization on English language teaching, “there seemed to be an implicit hyper globalism which envisaged the entire world learning English via one dominant methodology” (Block, 2004, p. 76). English has to be taught according to global standards in order to seek a precise understanding of the knowledge that is communicated in English, and to avoid any factors that could easily affect negatively this global means of communication. Accordingly, standards-based English teaching was the

key to achieving the global standards of success. The progressive growth of English as a global language, with an estimated billion L2 users worldwide, posed a new challenge in the teaching of ESL (Pickering, 2006).

The wide spread of English has impacted on educational systems that seek to improve their communities' proficiency to meet the scientific and economic changes in the world. Accordingly, English learning had to be adjusted to tight international high quality criteria in order to accomplish clear international communication that avoids any possible misunderstandings (Ogawa, et al., 2003). These criteria are referred to as curriculum standards. Currently, curriculum standards constitute the core structure of any standards-based system, including the educational reform of Qatar (Nasser, 2016).

### **1.1 Qatar's Educational Reform**

Standards-Based Education is the new goal for nations that are seeking to develop educational systems that meet global standards. Accordingly, globalization has sparked educational reforms in many countries. For example, the Gulf region has witnessed massive educational reforms. In particular, Qatar was one of the countries that initiated a radical reform of its educational system to meet the country's changing needs (Brewer, et al., 2007). The Qatari educational reform, referred to as Education for the New Era (EFNE), has gained significance because it was regarded as a crucial factor in helping to realize the Qatar National Vision 2030 (General Secretariat for Development Planning, 2009). According to this vision, education was considered a foundation of human development. Furthermore, QNV 2030 declared that no progress could be made unless high quality education and service training were developed using high quality educational standards.

Accordingly, internationally benchmarked standards have been set for each grade level for Kindergarten through grade 12 for Arabic, English, mathematics, and science (Alemadi, et al., 2013; Supreme Educational Council, 2016). Furthermore, Brewer et al. (2007) differentiated two types of curriculum standards in the following detailed definition:

Two types of curriculum standards would be defined: content standards and performance standards. Content standards are broad expectations about what students should know and be able to do in particular subjects and grade levels. Performance standards are explicit definitions of what students must do to demonstrate proficiency on the content standards at a specific level (Brewer, et al., 2007, p. 65).

Curriculum standards are successfully achieved when desirable learning outcomes are gained. Hence, they can only be effective when the content and student performance are well-implemented (Brewer, et al., 2007). In the context of Qatar, the curriculum standards served as an important pillar for Qatar educational reform. The Supreme Education Council (SEC), representing the main authority in charge of education in the country, considered curriculum standards to provide an essential road map for K-12 students to reach “international expectations of what students should know, understand and be able to do at each stage of their schooling, as well as on the current best practices in Qatar’s public schools” (Supreme Educational Council, 2004, p. 5). Furthermore, curriculum standards were seen as important in building successful citizens through acquiring critical thinking and the creative ability of problem-solving skills within the atmosphere of independent schools’ autonomy (Supreme Educational Council, 2004).

In a parallel step, the SEC has published annual reports to reflect the success of the new standards-based system. These reports provide a statistical overview of schools and schooling in Qatar under the new reform. However, these reports are more condensed in

administrative terms, and issues about curriculum standards evaluation and many other important academic aspects are not clearly elaborated.

EFNE included many critical changes. The adoption of Standards-Based Education, following the student-centered approach the use of English as a language of instruction and the founding of independent, autonomous schools were the main pillars of the new reform. Similar to the curriculum standards for other subjects, the SEC stated that the English curriculum standards (ECS) applied in Qatari independent schools as specific criteria that were designed to utilize the international expectations that benchmark the knowledge that students should possess at the various levels of their education (Supreme Educational Council, 2004). According to the SEC, curriculum standards transcended their role from within school to the students' entire life:

The standards focus on the content essential for preparing students to be engaged and productive citizens. Critical thinking, enquiry and reasoning are emphasised in all grades to ensure that students develop the ability to work creatively, think analytically and solve problems (Supreme Educational Council, 2004, p. 5).

Accordingly, the country's success was aligned to the success of the new educational reform. Likewise, the success of the new reform was based on the curriculum standards' effectiveness. The education reform could only be as good as the curriculum standards that were established and implemented. For EFNE, the "national curriculum standards are at the center of educational reform in Qatar" (Alemadi, et al., 2013, p. 8). New curriculum standards, benchmarked to those of high performing nations, guided the curriculum and pedagogy in independent schools (Brewer, et al., 2007, p. xvii). However, the curriculum standards had to accommodate the students' levels in order to be achievable. Low curriculum standards would not achieve the levels that are required internationally.



Likewise, high curriculum standards would be difficult to achieve. Therefore, the standards had to be assessed progressively (Alemadi, et al., 2013).

Following the implementation and assessment of the curriculum standards, the students in the independent schools demonstrated a 7% improvement in English compared to schools that had not adopted the curriculum standards (Brewer, et al., 2007). Likewise, independent school students performed better compared to students from other types of schools, especially with regard to the achievement of the English curriculum standards (Brewer, et al., 2007). However, while the approximately 100 figures and tables provided by the Evaluation Institute's Annual Report depicted various aspects of the educational system, it failed to describe the teachers' perspective of the curriculum standards or curriculum content. It also did not discuss the challenges associated with the implementation of these standards

Among the key challenges facing Qatar's education system was the underachievement of Qatari school students at all levels. Challenges associated with adopting the student-centered approach, using English as a language of instruction, founding independent autonomous schools, as well as differences between schools, textbooks and learning resources have also arisen. These challenges united teachers, parents and students together with administrators at all levels in promoting the success of the curriculum standards. However, researchers have concluded that the successful implementation of the curriculum standards shall be unachievable unless the teachers and administrators understand, support and are satisfied with the curriculum standards content and teaching materials (Alemadi, et al., 2013). Therefore, in this study, the teachers'

perspectives regarding Grade Nine students' achievement of the English curriculum standards are directly examined.

With the introduction of EFNE, Standards-Based Education was adopted. Initially, curriculum standards were designed for four main subjects (English, Arabic, science and mathematics) to serve as a framework for the K-12 educational system in Qatar. All independent schools were expected to follow the national curriculum standards. Accordingly, classroom instruction, planning, learning resources, educators' professional development, schools' evaluation, students' assessment, classroom activities and extra-curricular activities were all designed and implemented according to the newly-designed standards, that served as a path for independent schools to follow (Brewer, et al., 2007).

Although Arabic is the national language of Qatar, English is the first priority for use in the labor market and to prepare students for higher education abroad (Brewer, et al., 2007). Since English was prominent in the Qatari educational reform, professional development was dominated by workshops centering on the teaching of English, as this was designated the language of instruction for mathematics and science in all independent schools (Brewer, et al., 2007) and because the teachers' role in understanding, developing and implementing English standards is crucial. Concurrently, the teachers were trained to acquire adequate skills that would enable them to teach according to the curriculum standards (Brewer, et al., 2007).

The curriculum standards set the goals that teachers can follow in order to formulate lesson plans and learning materials that are appropriate to the grade and subject they teach (Alemadi, et al., 2013).

If school site administrators continue to pay minimal attention to how fully integrated the standards are in their teachers' classrooms, it is possible

(perhaps even likely) that little will change following the implementation of the Common Core (Montgomery, 2012, p. 56).

Hence, having a list of curriculum standards does not mean that these are achieved. Due to many factors, it may prove impossible to implement these standards effectively (Montgomery, 2012).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Within the context of education, the question of whether students can achieve the English curriculum standards has attracted attention within the last two decades (Mckay, 2000). Similarly, the curriculum standards emphasized by EFNE are of high priority (Alemadi, et al., 2013). Hence, efforts by the SEC and the independent schools' operators have been directed toward achieving the curriculum standards. In an effort to implement the curriculum standards, many independent schools have applied performance-based evaluation systems. Teachers' legal, contractual and working conditions have also been improved in an effort to make independent schools a more attractive work environment.

Similarly, great emphasis on English as a second language (ESL) has led to strong arguments regarding the need to implement English curriculum standards. In Qatar, the significance of English was clearly reflected in EFNE. English was designated the language of instruction and assessment for mathematics and science in order to reach international standards. Accordingly, teachers' proficiency in English was a core principle of professional development. In addition, curriculum standards for English were designed according to international criteria (Supreme Educational Council, 2004). Moreover, Porter (1993) connected students' achievement of the curriculum standards directly to the teachers' implementation of these standards. In other words, teachers' instructional

practice in implementing the standards is directly translated into “student learning of the desired content” (Porter, 1993, p. 25).

According to the researcher’s reflection on the English curriculum standards while teaching ESL in independent schools, questions like “How can students meet these standards?” were raised. Informal discussions about the standards raised other questions, like: “Can these standards be implemented in independent Qatari schools? Are teachers able to use these standards effectively?” Factors related to the teachers, students, parents, school support, professional development and testing systems were considered to be most strongly linked to this attainment. With that in mind, the following research questions were selected to guide this study.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

This study addresses the following two major research questions:

1. What are the teachers’ perspectives regarding each curriculum standards’ achievability in terms of English skills?
2. Which teachers’ variables (gender, qualifications, Grade Nine experience, experience in Qatar, prior SBE experience and school location) affect/differentiate the teachers’ perspectives regarding the achievability of the curriculum standards?
3. What are teachers’ perspectives regarding the factors that mostly matter the achievement of the Grade Nine English curriculum standards?
4. What is the relationship between the ECS strands and the factors influencing the achievement of the Grade Nine English curriculum standards according to the teachers’ perspectives?

This descriptive study investigates the achievability of the ninth grade English curriculum standards in independent schools in Qatar. Thirteen years after they were first implemented, this study examines the teachers' perspective regarding how much their students can achieve in regard to the Grade Nine English curriculum standards. Students' achievement was investigated according to the English key curriculum standards of Grade Nine in general. In addition, English skills were categorized according to the SEC publication into three main domains: word knowledge, listening and speaking, and reading and writing. Investigations of the curriculum standards pointed to the extent to which these standards are accessible and adequate in regard to the local context of independent Qatari schools. In addition, this study also examines the teachers' perspectives regarding the significant issues that might impede or facilitate the achievability of the standards.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

Since the English curriculum standards are a key component of EFNE, this study provides valuable information and insights into the implementation of Grade Nine English key curriculum standards and their degree of achievability. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Qatar may find this study a useful reference when developing policy and professional development related to the English curriculum standards for ninth grade. Moreover, this study contributes to the international literature on English curriculum standards by providing findings from Qatar.

#### **1.5 Operational Definitions**

Different usages of terms might cause them to be interpreted differently. Hence, the definitions were chosen based on research studies that examined the same concepts that this study seeks to investigate. Similarly, this study used the same operational definitions

employed by other researchers in terms of interpretation clarity, popularity within literature, relationship to the education context and direct investment within the context of this study (Soer, van der Schans, Groothoff, Geertzen, & Reneman, 2008).

English is considered a second language when it is the official language or the language of administration in a country where the citizens have a different language as their mother tongue. It is often used for various purposes and in different contexts, such as the government, the law courts, the media, and the educational system (Crystal, 1997). The term “ESL” or “English as a Second Language” is used to refer to the English language spoken by people whose mother tongue language is not English. Formerly used to designate ELL (English Language Learner) students, this term increasingly refers to a program of instruction designed to support the ELL. It is still used to refer to multilingual students in higher education (Squire, 2008, p. 3).

**Standards** are generally used to “define students’ knowledge and their learning abilities expected. They are considered as a reflection of what communities expect from learners” (Bailey & Huang, 2011, p. 345).

**ESL curriculum standards**, on the other hand, refer to what students must learn in English when it is not their mother tongue. They have three main goals, which encompass the ability to use English for communication in social settings, for achieving academically in content areas, and for pragmatic purposes, specifically the ability to ‘use English in socially and culturally appropriate ways’ (Bailey & Huang, 2011).

**Curriculum standards** are described in RAND’s report as “descriptions, by subject and grade level, of the common content that students should learn in each subject

(content standards) and what students must do to demonstrate proficiency (performance standards)” (Brewer, et al., 2007, p. xxxiii).

**Independent Qatari schools** are new schools that were initiated in Fall 2004 according to Qatar’s EFNE reform and are similar to charter schools in other countries. They embrace grades K-12 for males and females separately. Independent schools seek to satisfy the students’ needs in light of centrally-designed national curriculum standards. They are government funded, yet given a fair degree of autonomy in terms of their operation, including teachers’ hiring, textbooks, learning materials, and curricular and extracurricular activities implementation methods. The public schools in Qatar were completely transferred into independent schools by 2010 (Alemadi, et al., 2013; Brewer, et al., 2007; Supreme Educational Council, 2016; Ellili-Cherif, Romanowski, & Nasser, 2012; Kane, 1991; Ogawa, et al., 2003; McLaughlin & Shepard, 1995; Montgomery, 2012; Brewer, et al., 2007).

## **1.6 Organization of the thesis**

This thesis includes five chapters. The first chapter is an introduction that outlines the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the research questions that guide this study, the significance of the study, and the operational definitions used in this study. In chapter two, the related literature is reviewed that provides the theoretical framework and addresses research that is relevant to this study. Chapter 3 develops the research methodology and addresses the research context. In addition, the sample for the study, data collection instruments and procedures, data analysis, ethical considerations and several methodological limitations are discussed. In Chapter 4, the results of this study are presented and discussed in relation to the research questions. In addition, the chapter

provides a discussion of the findings in relation to the previously reviewed literature and studies. Finally, chapter five presents recommendations based on the findings of this study.



## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter examines the literature to explore how standardization led to Standards Based Education (SBE) and to standards-based curriculum, specifically English curriculum standards. For this purpose, this chapter defines the concept of standardization, addresses its advantages and disadvantages and explains how standardization led to the use of standards in education. Second, the reasons behind the use of standards and the various types of standards are discussed. Section three reviews the definition of Standards-Based Education (SBE), emphasizing the decentralizing of the education system through the delegation and devolution of power and authority. The advantages and disadvantages of SBE adoption, the need for SBE and the motives beyond its implementation are discussed. Finally, section four addresses the significance of the teachers' perceptions.

### **2.1 Standardization**

Standardization is dominant in many fields, such as business, technology, industry, research, education, economy and medicine (Choi & De Vries, 2011) and is considered a way to maximize quality by systemizing a particular process with the purpose of attaining a high degree of achievement (Wyse, et al., 2012). Zi and Blind (2014) define standardization as a “technical specification, adopted by a recognized standardization body, for repeated or continuous application” (p. 347). The purpose of standardization is to increase efficiency and improve achievement by establishing various types of standards.

Worldwide, standardization has been the foundation for most educational reforms (Madsen, 2011). Standardization is often considered a possible solution to educational problems and a way to provide high quality achievement (Kwon, 2008) and it seeks high-quality outcomes: global competence and knowledge management (Ang & Massingham,

2007). Kim (2010) found that standardization, when applied to education, is “a unifying education process, providing the same curriculum and expecting the same learning outcomes for all students” (p. 9).

### ***2.1.1 Advantages and disadvantages of standardization***

Generally, standardization offers both advantages and disadvantages in the field of education (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1

*Advantages and Disadvantages of Standardization*

Advantages	Disadvantages
Standardization represents a fixed step on the path toward benchmarking international achievement to increase quality (Atanase, 2010).	Standardization is criticized for potentially producing homogenized learning resources and driving out differentiation and learning (VanOverbeke, 2008).
Standardization promotes a degree of equity because it ensures that all students have access to an adequate curriculum (Bjerede, 2013).	The criticism of standardization is related to the “loss of work motivation” because of the routine nature and weakness of the standards adopted (Kwon, 2008, p. 1066).
Standardization can help teachers proof the curriculum by providing a scripted curriculum, which can reduce the harm done by poor teachers (Bjerede, 2013).	When expectations are standardized at a “rote performance” level, schools spend less time and energy on teaching and learning that goes beyond memory level (Bjerede, 2013).
Standardization leads to assessments that can give parents and students information about the school and students’ achievement compared with other schools locally, nationally, and internationally (Bjerede, 2013).	Contributes to disengagement among students (Bjerede, 2013).
Standardized assessments can provide feedback for schools about how the students are progressing and this can be used to improve learning (Bjerede, 2013).	Standardizing the curriculum limits the opportunities for students and creates a one-size-fits all curriculum (Bjerede, 2013).
Standardization shifts the process of teaching and learning to the outcomes and mastery of learning (Bjerede, 2013).	“Curriculum standardization de-professionalizes teaching by marginalizing the professional judgment, experience, and skill of teachers (to the degree that the curriculum is scripted and prescriptive” (Bjerede, 2013, para. 2).

## **2.2 Standards-Based Education (SBE)**

SBE reforms emerged in the 1980s and were designed to improve students' achievement through standardized instruction, standardized assessment and shifting decision-making to the schools (McGuirk, 2014). SBE succeeded in achieving equality and high quality education through mandating standards that focus on student learning, teacher instruction and professional development with the involvement of parents and school accountability (Hoover & Patton, 2004). The essence of SBE is the quality of the standards that guide the reform and learning. Echevarria et al. (2006) state, "SBE is an educational reform that depends on accurate criteria developed by specialist to improve achievement in content area by following suggested strategies and guides" (p. 199). Because of poor student achievement in many countries, the lack of a follow-up mechanism, the loose traditional teaching and learning tools, poor learning resources, unsafe learning environment and the various learning needs of students, the promotion of SBE is often considered to be urgently required (Brewer, et al., 2007; McGuirk, 2014).

Swanson and David (2002) suggest that SBE should be considered an initiative that promotes "an ambitious agenda in the sense that they aim to reach into individual classrooms, changing the nature of instruction with the ultimate goal of improving student learning" and providing schools' accountability (p. 1). This is achieved by developing what will be taught in the classroom (Burke, 2005), where SBE standardizes school programs (McCullum-Clark, 1995). Overall, SBE can be briefly defined as an educational reform that aims at high learning achievement through implementing rigorous standards which work as a guide for students, teachers, parents and stakeholders.

### *2.2.1 SBE Characteristics*

SBE depends on standards. As previously mentioned, SBE attains high learning outcomes by designing rigorous academic curriculum standards, effective assessments and pushing for school accountability for their implementation (Mangan, 2009). SBE is able to improve education “with coherent content standards in core academic subjects, measurable goals for student learning, and appropriate supports and accountability measures” (Polikoff, 2010, p. 1). To accomplish this, several elements of SBE are essential. First, the teacher’s practice is directed by teachers’ professional standards (Haralanova & Ronkova, 2014). Curriculum standards guide the teachers’ instruction toward excellence (Mangan, 2009). SBE “specifies new high-standards curricula and instructional techniques for the classroom” (Swanson & David, 2002, p. 2). Second, student learning and assessment are directly guided by curriculum standards, which makes teaching and assessment more effective. Clear, well-organized standards facilitate instruction (Mangan, 2009). In addition, standards dictate what students learn and “student performance expectations and making learning objectives easier to measure” (Abdel Latif, 2012, p. 78). On the other hand, assessments are more effective since they are aligned to the academic standards adopted in instruction (Mangan, 2009). Third, when standards play a key role in the teaching and learning process, school leaders are required to plan, monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. When this occurs and schools focus on standards, achievement increases because standards help to overcome possible management failure through placing a direct emphasis of progress and dereliction indicators (Mckay, 2000; Schmoker & Marzano, 1999; SEC, 2016).

### 2.2.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of SBE and standards

SBE is considered a way of systemizing education as a process from planning to evaluation (Baines & Stanley, 2006). However, several disadvantages are associated with this educational system. Table 2.2 below provides a list of SBE's advantages and disadvantages:

Table 2.2

#### *SBE Advantages and Disadvantages*

<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
Enables the planning, monitoring and evaluation of education (Brewer, et al., 2007; Schmoker & Marzano, 1999).	Doubt regarding schools' ability to fulfill the requirements (Berger, 2000).
Aligns assessment with instruction according to curriculum standards (Baines & Stanley, 2006).	Unfair to students from minority groups and with special needs (Berger, 2000).
Helps to overcome the lack of implementation, monitoring and evaluation required from schools (Brewer, et al., 2007).	Unfair to students from minority groups and with special needs (Hoover & Patton, 2004).
SBE seeks to achieve high-quality education (Schmoker & Marzano, 1999).	Puts pressure on teachers' performance (Grindon, 2014).
Refocuses the efforts of educational systems toward achieving academic standards (Berger, 2000).	Limit students' creativity because of uniformity (Kim, 2010).
Provides accurate information about students' achievement and direct expectations (Berger, 2000).	Limits teachers' creativity due to the standards mandated (Grindon, 2014).
SBE provides a clear guide for parents, students and educators to detect students' needs and offers suitable support to help them to improve (James-Hassan, 2014).	De-emphasizes the individualism of experienced teachers in favor of those with a poor subject-matter background, due to uniformity (Baines & Stanley, 2006).

## **2.3 Standards**

Standards are defined in various ways, all with the goal of promoting and attaining high achievement (Porter, Polikoff, & Smithson, 2009). Lin and Zhang (2014) reported that standards are designed to promote consistency between instruction and achievement. In addition, “standards specify what all students should know, understand, and be able to do [and] represent specific learning goals” (Urich, 2012, p. 6). Wiggins (1991) considers standards as a roadmap that is created to explain the knowledge and skills that students need to learn. Patricia (2005) argues that students’ involvement with standards means that “students are dynamic participants in their education rather than passive receptacles” (p. 226). Because standards serve as the tools for the implementation of a standardized educational system, developing well-designed standards is essential for a successful educational reform (Lawrenz, et al., 2005). Since they serve as the start and end point for standards-based curricula, standards must be aligned with the vision and goals of an organization (Gutierrez, 2014). Usually, standards are developed by specialists to achieve high-quality learning outcomes that are measured by standardized tests (Gorlewski, 2013).

### ***2.3.1 Standard types and criteria***

There are various classifications regarding the types of standards employed in the field of education. Wiggins (1991) differentiates between three types of standards. First, there are content standards that determine what students should know and be able to do. Second, performance standards provide students with specific performance expectations that include observable behaviors and expected results to determine satisfactory performance. Finally, there are work-design standards: the essential tasks that students should be able to complete (Wiggins, 1991). Wiggins (1991) points out that work-design

standards are similar to performance standards, referring to “what level of performance is good enough for students to be described as advanced, proficient, below basic, or by some other performance level” (Wiggins, 1991, p. 22).

Regarding the criteria for effective standards, standards must be clear and detailed in order to direct learners, teachers, parents and stakeholders regarding how to achieve predetermined goals (Dello-Iacovo, 2009; Rakow, 2008). Valid standards are those that emphasize coherence, implementation, the knowledge and skills of the people implementing the standards and the need to assess the standards’ achievement (Zhu, 2013). Hansen (1998) suggests that standards must be meaningful and reflect a consensus of what should be known in the particular discipline. More importantly, teachers, parents, students and the public must understand the standards, which must be accurate and challenging yet still attainable and measurable (Hansen, 1998). Bailey and Huang (2011) argue that the evaluation and results of any set of standards is an indicator of their validity and one way of determining their impact on learning. Standards-based curricula are only fruitful when high quality curriculum standards are applied because they work in accordance with international criteria (Ibrahim, 2016). In addition, standards can provide answers to questions such as “Are students learning? If so, what are they learning and how do we know?” (Rakow, 2008, p. 44).

### ***2.3.2 English Curriculum Standards***

English curriculum standards are required to help students to achieve English efficiency (Hoffmann, 2008). Luster (2011) states that curriculum standards “remain in the forefront of teaching reforms including English (p. 67). English curriculum standards “focus on the content essential for preparing students to be engaged and productive



citizens” (Supreme Educational Council, 2004, p. 5). Cheng (2011) suggests that the use of English curriculum standards can promote the development of students’ literacy at all levels. Standards facilitate students’ learning because they evolve “from very broad, basic goals to more specific objectives” (Stearns-Pfeiffer, 2012, p. 19). Furthermore, it is argued that standards make learning English easier and more flexible because they provide distinct components of skills and knowledge, and also allow for learning to be “more fluid than linear, more fortuitous than predictable” (Stearns-Pfeiffer, 2012, p. 19).

Powers (2010) suggests that the four English skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are “critical in most academic and workplace settings” (p. 129). Therefore, the structure of the English curriculum standards depends on the four English skills within each grade between K-12 (Cheng, 2011). Through this structure, the English curriculum standards provide a detailed explanation of the resources, assessments and expected outcomes for each skill and level. English curriculum standards create “descriptors and progress indicators that offered specificities for curriculum objectives and classroom activities” (Bailey & Huang, 2011, p. 346), and are supported by scope and sequence documents and charts that provide “an overview of the standards and summarize the content for each grade” (Supreme Education Council, 2004, p. 10). In addition to listening, speaking, reading and writing, word knowledge and grammar are also integrated within the standards (Brewer, et al., 2007). Finally, English standards specifically describe what students should be able to learn, how they can learn it and the extent of learning needed to attain a high quality understanding of each skill (Alemadi, et al., 2013). For example, listening and reading standards suggest types of texts that can help students of the related grade to achieve high levels of learning. Similarly, speaking and writing standards

specifically prescribe what students are expected to be able to talk and write about in each grade. Because English curriculum standards are performance-based, they “describe the degree to which ELLs can perform content-based linguistic tasks according to a language development continuum” (Lin & Zhang, 2014, p. 427).

#### **2.4 Achievability of the standards**

Research has found that various SBE contexts are related to a low level of achievement in English learning, as Tymms (2004) reported in relation to China. In Somalia, Eno (2017) found a sharp drop in the achievement of overall English skills (Eno, 2017). In the context of GCC countries, no remarkable differences were found. Ibrahim (2016) states, “although there are great strides toward English acquisition and education in the GCC, there still seems to be a noticeable lack of English proficiency” (p. 15). In addition, Ibrahim (2016) reported that, although generous funding has been provided to support education in GCC, “some local English language learners still face significant challenges to their academic performance in English” (p. 11).

Furthermore, Ibrahim (2016) attributed poor achievement in English in the GCC to “a combination of personal or individual styles and strategies of learning” (p. 14). Specifically, the reasons for the low levels of students’ outcomes in ESL were reported to “lie in the curriculum, the academic vocabulary instruction, and student self-efficacy” (Ibrahim, 2016, p. 15). Alshwiah (2009) states that a “Lack of vocabulary improvement” was also detected in Saudi Arabia (p. 3), however, “low scores on achievement tests in Gulf education systems may not be the fault of the teachers” (Wiseman & Al-Bakr, 2013).

## **2.5 Factors that influence the achievement of the standards**

Students' achievement of the English curriculum standards is influenced by a variety of factors, and teachers, students, parents, the quality of the assessment and the amount of school support have been found to play a significant role in the extent of standards achievement (Marzano, 2000).

### **2.5.1 The standards themselves**

Krigsvoll et al. (2010) reported that certain obstacles to attaining high achievement could be related to the standards themselves, which may be too high to meet (Alemadi, et al., 2013). When the curriculum standards are too high to meet or ambiguous, this could lead to low levels of implementation that could in turn cause low achievement (Judith, et al., 2004). Curriculum standards could not be well-developed and realistic because they were not designed by teachers (Locke, 2002). In addition, schools should have their own vision of standards implementation (McKay, 2000), so an assessment of the standards is recommended (Hider, 2006).

### **2.5.2 Teachers**

English curriculum standards simplify the teachers' instruction (Sleeter & Carmona, 2016). The English curriculum standards are considered the "prime goal of teaching" and the main strategy "to improve students' communicative competence" (Li & Yuan, 2013, p. 445). English standards serve as a guide for teachers, being the closest applicants of these curricula, to achieve the desired objectives (Clark & Clark, 2000). Teachers play a significant role in the use of standards and students' achievement of those standards because teachers are the direct implementers of the standards (Almuhaish, 2016; Altan, 2006; Collins & Pratt, 2011; Smith, 2015; Stearns-Pfeiffer, 2012). Teachers are an important factor in student achievement because of their daily, close interaction with

students (Collins & Pratt, 2011; Ingvarson, 1998; Shoja, 2016). Researchers have found that achievement increased in classrooms when well-trained teachers implemented curriculum standards (McIntyre, et al., 2010). In addition, Heidari and Tahriri (2015) found that issues related to teachers were identified as the most relevant reasons for the low achievement of standards

Alemadi et al. (2013) and Patricia (2005) confirmed that standards are unachievable unless they are deeply understood by teachers. Rakow (2008) found that, when teachers are familiar with the standards, they could easily facilitate students' high achievement. Therefore, enriching the teachers' understanding of standards implementation and supporting teachers with flexible methodologies, practical educational resources and formal authority, such as the inquiry approach, has been demonstrated to be effective in challenging students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The reason beyond that pointed at "teacher's experience to the specific areas that provide necessary conditions for reform" (Lam, 2011, p.23).

Another factor that influences the achievement of standards is the teachers' experience. There are several reasons why experience of the standards helps teachers to familiarize themselves with the assessment and so achieve higher results (Mangan, 2009). Al-Seghayer (2017) suggests that teaching experience is one of the successful ESL teachers' characteristics that translates into the high achievement of curriculum standards. Experienced teachers are better equipped to explore students' learning (Case, Marshall & Linder, 2010) and "refine the beliefs, knowledge, values, and assumptions that form their personal theories about teaching and learning" (Urrea, 2010, xii). Teachers' experience of working with standards directly influences student achievement (Porter, et al., 2009;

Montgomery, 2012, Haralanova & Ronkova, 2014). Experience of teaching the standards also aids teachers to align the standards with the assessment, thereby helping the students to achieve more (Baines & Stanley, 2006). In addition, the teachers' experience of teaching standards equips them with improved instructional techniques (Almuhaish, 2016; Swanson & David, 2002). In addition, this experience facilitates the integration of school plans into the standards because an expert teacher can fulfill the goals of both the standards and the school (McKay, 2000). Furthermore, Grindon (2014) found that experienced teachers can successfully work under high pressure to meet the standards' requirements (Grindon, 2014). Moreover, Collins and Pratt (2011) found that experienced teachers are able to predict achievement of students' success or failure, and use this to achieve better results (Collins & Pratt, 2011). To sum up, the experience of teachers has a clear effect on achievement levels (Stearns-Pfeiffer, 2012), because teachers can transfer the standards prescription into successful implementation related to real-life contexts, that leads to high achievement (Ellili-Cherif, 2014). In addition, teachers can cover various dimensions of the standards when they possess relevant experience (Abu-Tineh, 2015), which allows them to enhance students' achievement (Konstantopoulos, 2011). Finally, Stearns-Pfeiffer (2012) and Altan, (2006) reported that teachers' attitudes are directly related to and affected by their experience (Stearns-Pfeiffer, 2012; Altan, 2006).

Because of the important role played by teachers, professional development has been identified as a priority for SBE systems to help teachers to update their strategies in order to boost achievement (Brewer, et al., 2007; Ellili-Cherif, et al., Romanowski & Nasser, 2012; Hoover & Patton, 2004; Yarovaya, 2015). Al-Qahtani (2015) suggests that teachers' professional development has a strong relationship with students' achievement.

Similarly, a positive relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and students' achievement has been found (Konstantopoulos, 2011; Wossenie, 2014). In addition, teachers' effect on students' achievement was found to persist in future years (Konstantopoulos, 2011; Master, et al., Wyckoff, 2017).

### **2.5.3 Students**

In addition to the essential role of teachers, several studies have referred to the role of students and parents in enhancing or minimizing achievement. They share responsibility for success or failure (Maroun, et al., 2008). Certainly, students who possess a higher academic proficiency achieve higher results regarding academic assessments (Haas, et al., 2016). In addition, "students with interdependent self-construal, high competence or mastery goals tended to attribute academic success to internal regulation" (Luo, et al., 2014, p. 4), and a positive and significant relationship between students' achievement and their self-regulation has been found (Adigüzel & Orhan, 2017). A similar relationship was identified between students' attitude and their academic achievement in English (Fakeye, 2010). Fu (2013) draws attention to "ESL students' cultural and linguistic diversity" and knowledge. (p. 139). However, the students' role in learning English was, at times, limited to their social interaction and engagement in the classroom (Jaipal, 2002).

Several studies have found students' outcomes could be effective according to particular skill (s) of English. For instance, Chang (2001) found that "students' writing skills develop best when they interact with others and learn from their environment" (p. 77). In relation to curriculum standards, D'Abate and Lucia (2015) stated that students' self-learning ability directly affects their reading skills and overall literacy, thereby "satisfying the Common Core State Standards" (p. 112). Similarly, student's proficiency in their L1 listening skill was found to be positively interlinked with the development of

their L2 reading skill (Edele & Stanat, 2016). Because of “the influence of social background on reading disabilities as well as the relationship among decoding (Infante, 2001, p. 45), Infante recommended that “reading comprehension, and listening comprehension skills need to be addressed in assessment and treatment practices” (p. 45).

#### **2.5.4 Parents**

Parental support effectively influence students’ achievement (Gogoi, 2014). When parents and students are involved in understanding standards and assessment, this results in higher achievement (Bjerede, 2013). In addition, parents’ support of their children’s academic performance was also found to influence their level of standards achievement (Frome and Eccles, 1998). However, it is important that parents understand the standards in order to prepare their children for high achievement (Clark & Clark, 2000). Student readiness is also a factor that can influence their achievement level of the standards (Ibrahim, 2016; Luster, 2011; Rakow, 2008). In addition, Hughes and Kwok, (2007) found a positive relationship between student-parent, students-teacher and academic achievement. Lewis (2002) found a strong positive relationship between students’ achievement and parental involvement. Similarly, parents’ education was found to be positively correlated with students’ achievement in English (Yang, 2006). Frome and Eccles (1998) found positive correlations between the parents’ roles and their children’s achievement. In terms of English skills, “it was found that while the parents' SES did not show much effect on their children's listening and reading/writing performance during their elementary school years, it did indicate an effect on their speaking abilities at the fourth-grade level, if not earlier” (Butler, 2014, p. 424).

### 2.5.5 School Location

Porter (1993) reported direct differences in achievement according to different locations. Felipe (2009) found that school location had an effect on students' performance.

Baines and Stanley (2006) and Marzano (2000) found that schools in particular areas achieve differently because students and parents in certain areas are more attracted to the modern learning techniques and teaching strategies applied by schools. Berger (2000)

demonstrated that school location could create differentiation in achievement. Saraceni (2009) related the difference in achievement to factors connected with the local culture that

help or hinder achievement. Heck (2009) found that schools located in developed areas attained higher achievement than those in under-developed areas. School location was

found to be correlated with the background of the students enrolled (Van Welie, Hartog, & Cornelisz, 2013). Feng (2011) suggests that stakeholders have recognized that private

schools' location can directly influence the achievement of the standards. In relation to middle schools in particular, school location was found to be effective in terms of students' achievement and motivation (Xu, 2009). In the GCC countries, Maroun et al. (2008)

reported that the notion of school location could influence standards achievement in the context of education in Saudi Arabia. O'Sullivan, (2015) and Zehr (2008) noted the higher achievement in Abu Dhabi schools compared to that of schools in other locations in UAE.

In response to the issues related to location, Hu (2005) suggested strategies for overcoming the influence of school location by modifying certain standards according to

schools' needs (Hu, 2005). Similarly, Li and Yuan (2013) and Li (2007) called for a consideration of school location requirements to improve achievements. Lehman (2008)

suggested the development of specific standards related to the area's needs to overcome the different rates of achievement among schools.



### **2.5.6 Assessment**

Regarding the assessment system and standards, many studies have emphasized the significance of assessment in the curriculum standards in order for Standards-Based Education to succeed (Baines & Stanley, 2006; Bailey & Huang, 2011; Marzano, 2000; McGuirk, 2014; Yarovaya, 2015). Assessments are important because they are effective in charting students' progress in the context of standards achievability (Bjerede, 2013). Effective assessment should be aligned to the academic standards adopted during instruction (Mangan, 2009). Assessments “are considered to provide reliable and objective information regarding students' achievement” (Sireci & Faulkner-Bond, 2015, p.215). The more assessment is related to the curriculum standards, the more accurate the results attained (Tsang, Katz, & Stack, 2008).

### **2.6 Teachers' Perspectives**

Because teachers are directly involved in the implementation of educational policy, their perspectives should be considered. It is important that teachers' voices are heard during, after, and even before educational reform enters the dimension of implementation (Stearns-Pfeiffer, 2012). In addition, the teachers' perspectives are important because “teachers hold a unique stakeholder position as they link between the educational system, students, and parents thus requiring them to be of high caliber” (Maroun, Samman, Moujaes, Abouchakra, & Insight, 2008, p. 2).

Ingvarson (1998) found that teachers' perspectives are more significant within SBE systems. Altan (2006) went further in explaining how essential it is to understand ESL teachers' perspectives because they directly affect students' achievement of the English curriculum standards:

Teachers' beliefs influence their consciousness, teaching attitude, teaching methods and teaching policies. Teachers' beliefs also strongly influence teaching behavior and, finally, learners' development. The formation of teachers' educational beliefs in language teaching/learning process will exert an indiscernible effect on forming effective teaching methods and will bring about the improvement of learners' language learning abilities (Altan, 2006, p. 45).

In addition, teachers transfer performance standards, written in abstract texts and supported by educational materials, into real-life contexts in the shape of authentic teaching strategies derived from their own experience (Ellili-Cherif, 2014). Their daily interaction with the curriculum, learners' needs and learning progress demonstrate the importance of considering the teachers' perspective when predicting the success or failure of changes (Collins & Pratt, 2011). Teachers' perspectives are also important because their knowledge about the subject matter and beliefs about students are two important factors for successful learning (Ingvarson, 1998).

Stearns-Pfeiffer (2012) found that the teachers' perspectives regarding the achievement of the English curriculum standards differ. Some teachers felt pressured to achieve the standards whereas others believed the SBE has great value in enhancing students' achievement. Although standards play a direct role in educational reform, some teachers were frustrated because they felt that the curriculum standards, when first implemented, restricted their personal judgment, turning them into machines (Locke, 2002). Accordingly, it is important to investigate the teachers' perspectives in order to uncover the various dimensions of SBE (Abu-Tineh, 2015).

Teachers had diverse views regarding the use of standards. Glaus (2014) found that the teachers regarded the standards as time-consuming, felt repressed by them and that "whether or not there are new standards, curriculum revision is an ongoing part of these

teachers' professional lives. Each teacher expresses this assumption" (Glaus, 2014, p. 53). In addition, Sahari (2012) found that, in Saudi Arabia, "teachers have insufficient information about standards, which may affect using them in the classroom" (p. 89).

On the other hand, the teachers found that the standards were effectively worded (Washington, 2014). Elementary English teachers indicated that, when considering reading standards, teachers with high levels of efficacy demonstrated a higher motivation to implement the standards but also desired additional resources and support (Phillips, 2017). These same teachers indicated that they felt uncomfortable about the low degree of flexibility regarding the implementation of the standards. Overall, Phillips (2017) stated that, although the teachers were equipped with sufficient motivation and skills to implement the standards, "they still required clarification and additional resources regarding the Common Core Standards in English Language Arts" (p. 104).

## **2.7 Chapter Summary**

This chapter addresses the main areas of this study by examining the relevant literature regarding standardization; Standards-Based Education and standards providing advantages and disadvantages. In addition, the chapter addressed the English curriculum standards and the factors that influence the achievement of these standards, such as teachers, parents, students and the location of the school. Finally, the teachers' perspectives were presented.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Setting

The research setting refers to the physical and cultural site where a study is carried out and the data are collected (Cohen & Manion, 2011). This study focused on the teachers' perspectives on the achievability of the key English curriculum standards for Grade nine in Independent schools in Qatar. The data for this study were collected from ESL teachers working in independent Qatar schools. These schools constitute the site where Qatar's educational reform, EFNE (that introduced Standards-Based Education in Qatar), was implemented. The study presents the teachers' perspectives concerning their students' achievement of the Grade Nine English curriculum standards. In this chapter, the participants are described and the research questions and methods are developed. In addition, the chapter elaborates on the data collection and data analysis procedures. Finally, the chapter focuses on the ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

### 3.2 Research Questions

This study investigates the following research questions:

1. What are the teachers' perspectives regarding each curriculum standard's achievability in terms of English skills?
2. Which teachers' variables (gender, qualifications, Grade Nine experience, experience in Qatar, prior SBE experience and school location) affect/differentiate the teachers' perspectives regarding the achievability of the curriculum standards?
3. What are the teachers' perspectives regarding the factors that mostly matter the achievement of Grade Nine English curriculum standards?

4. What is the relationship between ECS strands and factors influencing the achievement of Grade Nine English curriculum standards according to the teachers' perspectives?

### **3.3 Participants**

The target population of this study was Grade Nine ESL teachers working in independent Qatari preparatory schools, teaching English to non-native students in mixed-ability classes. The teachers in these schools are required to teach more than one level. Therefore, the survey was addressed at all preparatory ESL teachers, who constitute 500 teachers in total. After several reminders, the number of respondents was 311 teachers out of the 500 targeted, with a response rate of 62.2%, which led to a sampling error of +/- 3.3%. The following section elaborates on the data generation methods used for the purpose of this study. It describes the research approach adopted for the data collection, and also provides a detailed description of the research instrument and the data collection procedure. Table 3 presents details regarding the participants' information.

**Table 3.1***Participants' Demography*

		Gender					
		Female		Male		Total	
		n	N %		N %		N %
	Total	82	100.0%	29	100.0%	311	100.0%
Qatar Experience	1-3 years' experience in ind. schools	01	55.5%	71	55.0%	172	55.3%
	4-8 years' experience in ind. schools	5	19.2%	28	21.7%	63	20.3%
	9 or more years' experience in ind. schools	6	25.3%	0	23.3%	76	24.4%
Grade 9 Experience	1-4 years' experience in G9	01	55.5%	50	38.8%	151	48.6%
	4 and more years' experience in G9	1	44.5%	79	61.2%	160	51.4%
Qualification	BA	28	70.3%	89	69.0%	217	69.8%
	High Diploma	1	17.0%	26	20.2%	57	18.3%
	Master's and PhD	3	12.6%	14	10.9%	37	11.9%
School location	Doha	37	75.3%	84	65.1%	221	71.1%
	Further Areas	5	24.7%	45	34.9%	90	28.9%
Prior SBI Experience	Experienced in SBS	9	54.4%	79	61.2%	178	57.2%
	Unexperienced in SBS	3	45.6%	50	38.8%	133	42.8%
Do you currently teach grade 9?	I currently teach G9	1	22.5%	49	38.0%	90	28.9%
	I am NOT currently teaching G9	41	77.5%	80	62.0%	221	71.1%

**3.4 Choice of Methods**

According to Casey (2006), the choice of research method is important in helping to plan and implement the study in a way that allows the researcher to obtain the required information. This study uses survey research and identifies the trends in ESL teachers' perspectives about the extent to which the English curriculum standards are achievable in independent Qatari schools. In addition, it explores and quantifies the factors that might influence the achievement of those standards from the teachers' perspective. It also sought to explore the relationship between the teacher variables (gender, qualifications, etc.) and

their perspectives on the achievability of the standards. A quantitative survey method was most appropriate for achieving these goals (Cohen & Manion, 2011).

According to Cohen and Manion (2011), quantitative research enables the researcher to “conceptualise reality in terms of variables” (p. 264), to measure those variables and study the relationships between them. It also helps to reach a wide sample of respondents. In addition, the quantitative method is usually adopted by researchers who seek to describe characteristics, and identify patterns or trends, based on the responses of a representative sample of the target population (Altan, 2006; Soslau & Yost, 2007).

According to Cohen and Manion (2011),

A researcher pursuing this model typically will be seeking to gather large-scale data from as representative a sample population as possible in order to say with a measure of statistical confidence that certain observed characteristics occur with a degree of regularity, or certain factors cluster together (p. 256).

Quantitative research is the most suitable choice when the researcher seeks to generalize the findings (Rilling, 2011). This model allows the use of numerical data, which increases the accuracy, validity and reliability and, therefore, allows the generalization of the findings (Cohen & Manion 2011). This research model is suitable to the purposes of this study, that aims to generalize the findings about the extent to which ECS is achievable in the Qatari educational context and the main factors that influence those standards (Kenett, 2006).

### **3.5 Data Generation Methods**

In order to address the research questions, a three-part survey was developed. Part 1 was designed to collect demographic information about the participants. It constitutes seven items that have been developed to identify the participants’ gender, teaching

experience in independent Qatari schools, prior SBE experience, Grade Nine teaching experience, current teaching of Grade Nine, qualification and school location. Appendix A presents the survey instrument used in this study. The abbreviations ‘SBE’ and ‘SBS’ were used interchangeably in this study to refer to the teachers’ experience in the context of standards.

The second part of the survey aimed to address the first research question, that investigates the teachers’ perspectives about the achievability of the key Grade Nine English curriculum standards; both individually and in terms of the strands. In this part of the survey, the respondents were required to indicate their perspectives on the extent to which their students were able to meet each key performance standard using a five-point Likert scale (5=Strongly agree, and 1=Strongly disagree). Part two consisted of 45 items representing the key English curriculum standards for Grade Nine. This part only included the “key” performance standards because these represent the basic requirements of every student at this grade level and are aligned to the national exams. Documents from the Supreme Educational Council (2004) suggest that:

[Key performance standards] ... are the standards that should be taught to all students and that all students should master. The national tests are based on these standards. The remaining non-key standards represent extension or enrichment objectives for the more able, or consolidation objectives for those who learn more slowly (p. 10).

The first and second parts of the questionnaire also served to answer the second research question that explores whether the teachers’ perspectives about standards’ achievability vary across the language skills scales, according to the participants’ gender, qualifications, Grade Nine experience, experience in Qatar, prior SBE experience and school location. Further details about the procedures applied to analyze the collected data,



in order to answer research question 2, are provided in the data analysis section of this chapter.

The third part of the survey was designed to collect data in order to address the third research question related to the factors that may influence the achievability of the five strands of the curriculum standards. This section included 23 items, which were identified by a group of 30 ESL teachers. This cohort of teachers was asked about the factors that, according to them, have the greatest influence on the achievability of the English curriculum standards in the local educational context. These factors were then categorized into seven domains with the help of three ESL professors from the College of Education. The domains identified were teachers, students, parents, school support, curriculum standards nature, testing systems and the professional development that the teachers had received about Standards-Based Education implementation, as well as the teachers' overall perspectives about the standards.

Similarly, parts I and III of the survey served to answer the research question regarding the relationship between the curriculum standards strands and the 23 factors that may influence their achievement.

### **3.5.1 Validity of the Survey**

Different measures were taken to ensure the instrument validity and reliability to ensure that it actually measures the areas that it sets out to measure (McKay, 2000).

#### **3.5.1.1 Content Validity**

After the researcher had designed the survey, it was sent to a panel of ESL education professors, who were specialized in English curriculum and instruction, to enrich with their comments on the content validity of the instruments and to suggest any deletions, additions

or modifications to the tool. Based on the panel of experts' comments, modifications were applied.

Then, a group of seven reviewers checked the survey's language, item wording clarity, length pertinence and content adequacy. These included the three previous specialist professors, two experienced ESL teachers in independent schools, an English coordinator at an independent school and an academic principal with an English teaching background. Out of the seven reviewers who examined this survey, a minimum of five of needed to agree that every item was clear and appropriate regarding the intended sample of the study. Based on the feedback they provided, several changes were made to the questionnaire. Accordingly, the reviewers approved all of the items included on the survey as valid for the purpose of the study. Finally, the final version was reviewed and approved by the thesis supervisor. A copy of the instrument is provided in Appendix (A).

### **3.5.1.2 Construct Validity**

“Validity is an important key to effective research. If a piece of research is invalid then it is worthless” (Cohen & Manion, 2011, p. 134). Hence, the construct of this study measures the extents of inter-correlation of survey items used to collect data about the participants' responses regarding ECS. Based on data collected from the survey, the researcher calculated the correlation between each of the items against the whole scale of the factor domain on the one hand, and the whole scale of the survey on the other, to ensure significant correlations at  $p < 0.01$ . Significant correlations between all of the items with the whole scale of their domains were found. The correlations of the items of the whole scale of the related domain were 0.419-0.834. The correlations between the items and the

whole scale of the survey were 0.419-0.832. The correlation of the items with their related domain was calculated and is presented in Table 3 below:

**Table 3.2**

*Items Correlation with Related Domain*

Domain related	Lower value	Higher value
Word knowledge	0.742	0.830
Listening	0.718	0.824
Speaking	0.752	0.834
Reading	0.697	0.825
Writing	0.760	0.825
Student	0.419	0.635
Teacher	0.603	0.639
Parent	0.529	0.581
School support	0.526	0.689
Testing system	0.639	
Curriculum standards	0.536	0.697
Professional development	0.664	0.722

Similarly, the correlation of the items with the whole survey was calculated and is presented in Table 3.3 below:

**Table 3.3**

*Items Correlation with Survey*

Domain related	Lower value	Higher value
Word knowledge	0.743	0.827
Listening	0.700	0.819
Speaking	0.745	0.827
Reading	0.726	0.820
Writing	0.758	0.832
Student	0.309	0.583
Teacher	0.527	0.580
Parent	0.491	0.562
School support	0.431	0.626
Testing system	0.580	0.580
Curriculum standards	0.419	0.686
Professional development	0.568	0.638

These correlation values show that the instrument possesses good validity. A table of the Validity of Items-Total Statistics is listed in Appendix B.

### 3.5.2 Reliability of the Survey

The reliability of the survey was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of internal consistency. The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was calculated for the survey as a whole and separately for six domains: word knowledge, listening, speaking, reading, writing and factors influencing standards' achievement. As shown in Table 5, the analyses produced a 0.985 alpha coefficient value for the whole survey, a 0.939 value for word knowledge, a 0.922 value for listening, a 0.968 value for speaking, a 0.941 value for reading, a 0.943 value for writing and a 0.936 value for the factors influencing standards' achievement. Based on the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient, the instrument possesses very high reliability.

**Table 3.4**

*Instrument Reliability Statistics*

Survey	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
All Survey	0.985	68
Word Knowledge	0.939	8
Listening	0.922	6
Speaking	0.968	15
Reading	0.941	8
Writing	0.943	8
Factors	0.936	23

### **3.6 Procedure**

First, instrument validity can be improved by piloting (Cohen & Manion, 2011). Hence, the questionnaire was piloted with 30 Grade Nine ESL in-service teachers at three independent schools in Qatar. The respondents in the pilot study were asked to provide written feedback on the clarity, layout and smoothness of the items and appropriateness of the wording and instructions to the teachers. The participants completed the questionnaire online and reported their remarks to the researcher. The participants' comments indicated that the questionnaire items were familiar and easy to answer. They also stated that it took them approximately 10 minutes to complete the online questionnaire. Based on this feedback, no modifications were made to the instrument. Accordingly, a link to the main questionnaire was sent to all ESL teachers in preparatory independent schools in Qatar through the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) in Qatar.

#### **3.6.1 Data Collection**

The questionnaire was administered electronically. An interactive electronic version was uploaded onto the Google Forms website and was emailed to the participants during the first week following the mid-term vacation of the second term of the academic year 2016-2017. In addition to the survey link, the email sent by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) included brief information about the research title and purpose. The survey was available to the respondents for three weeks. Likewise, the data were retrieved automatically as soon as each participant completed the questionnaire. By using this internet-based survey, incomplete answers, participant anonymity, human error and researcher' effects were kept to a minimum (Cohen & Manion, 2011). The data

collected were then exported by the researcher to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Version 24) software for analysis.

### **3.6.2 Data Analysis**

The data were entered into SPSS software for analysis. Questionnaire items included in the first part of the questionnaire, that related to the respondents' demographics, were treated as the dependent variables. Items from the second and third parts of the questionnaire were treated as independent variables.

In order to address the first research question of the study, that investigates the degree of achievability of the English curriculum standards (ECS), descriptive statistics were used to compute the means and standard deviation for each item individually, then in terms of the five strands (word knowledge, listening, speaking, reading and writing). In addition, the averages of the standards related to each of the five strands were then calculated. The standards were grouped into five strands that represent the curriculum standards of English language skills identified in the SEC English curriculum standard documents; namely, word knowledge (vocabulary) listening, speaking, reading and writing. These five strands were treated as independent variables.

In addition to the statistics of the means, standard deviations and averages, a chi square test was calculated to investigate the differences between the participants' responses and the achievability of the standards. According to Cohen and Manion (2011), "the chi-square statistic is usually used with nominal data" (p. 525). Hence, this quantitative study used the chi-square test to measure "the difference between a statistically generated expected result and an actual result to see if there is a statistically significant difference

between them” and to suggest that “the distribution of the data is not simply due to chance” (Cohen & Manion, 2011, p. 525).

The second research question explored how the teachers vary across the five strands of the standards (independent variables) according to gender, school location, qualifications, teaching experience in independent Qatari schools, teaching experience of Grade Nine, and prior experience of using Standards-Based Education (dependent variables). For this purpose, the descriptive statistics were manipulated in order to identify the overall means and standard deviations by strand. Then, the t-test and ANOVA statistics were applied to compare means and explore the influence between the dependent and independent variables.

As for data collected from the third part of the survey, descriptive statistics were used to compute the means and standard deviations for each item. Then, the factors were grouped by domain (teachers, students, parents, learning environment, the professional development of the teachers and the overall view of the standards), and descriptive statistics were used to identify and compare the means identified for each domain. Further, the correlations were computed to elaborate the relationship between the five strands of the standards and the six domains of the factors. Both the level and direction of the relationship were investigated.

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

The following ethical considerations were taken into account in conducting this study. Prior to the data collection, the researcher obtained formal approval from the Qatar University Institutional Review Board, as presented in Appendix F. In addition, the researcher obtained formal approval from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education

in order to collect data from the teachers working in independent schools, as presented in Appendix E. This approval also allowed the researcher to distribute the questionnaire online with the help of the Ministry.

Efforts were made to ensure the respondents' anonymity as well as the confidentiality of the data they provide. During the data collection process, they were not asked to provide any information that might identify them. For instance, the questionnaire did not ask for the respondent's name or the school where he/she teaches. In addition, the covering letter with the survey stated that their responses would be kept confidential.

Finally, in an attempt to ensure the respondents' voluntary participation in the study, they were required to sign a consent form prior to completing the questionnaire. It was also made clear to them that participation in this study was voluntary and that they should feel free either to agree or to refuse to participate in the study.



## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This chapter elaborates on the findings of this study that focused on the achievability of Grade Nine ECS and addressed the following four research questions:

1. What are the teachers' perspectives regarding each curriculum standards' achievability in terms of English skills?
2. Which teachers' variables (gender, qualifications, Grade Nine experience, experience in Qatar, prior SBE experience and school location) affect/differentiate the teachers' perspectives regarding the achievability of the curriculum standards
3. What are teachers' perspectives regarding the factors that mostly matter the achievement of the Grade Nine English curriculum standards
4. What is the relationship between the ECS strands and the factors influencing the achievement of the Grade Nine English curriculum standards according to the teachers' perspectives?

In this chapter, the findings of this study are presented in accordance with the structure of these research questions. The scores were all computed using SPSS Version 24 software.

### **4.1 Achievability of the key curriculum standards**

The first research question investigated the teachers' perspectives regarding the achievement of the key Grade Nine English curriculum standards. For this purpose, a descriptive analysis and averages were calculated.

First, the means and standard deviations of the participants' responses about the standards were calculated to review the teachers' perspectives about the achievability of

these standards separately and in terms of skills. The results of investigating the standards separately indicated a general high agreement among the ESL teachers regarding the achievability of the curriculum standards, as presented in Appendix (C). The data analysis indicated that the means of the standards ranged between 3.43 and 3.68. This showed that the participants tended to “somewhat agree”/“agree” that their students were able to meet the standards. Statistically, means values are interpreted according to a Likert scale, based on the following criteria: (1.00-1.8) = Strongly Disagree, (1.81-2.60) = Disagree, (2.61-3.4) = Somewhat Agree, (3.41-4.2) = Agree and (4.21-5.00) = Strongly Agree.

Regarding the achievability of the standards in terms of skills, the results of the means and standard deviations are presented in table 4.1. This indicated that the means related to vocabulary, listening, reading and writing ranged between 3.55 and 3.58. The “reading” and “writing” strands scored the smallest mean value (3.55), whereas the “speaking” strand scored the greatest mean value (3.58), compared to the other four strands of English. However, the mean values of the five strands of English were very close to each other, indicating an approximate agreement among the teachers about the poor achievability of the standards.

**Table 4.1**

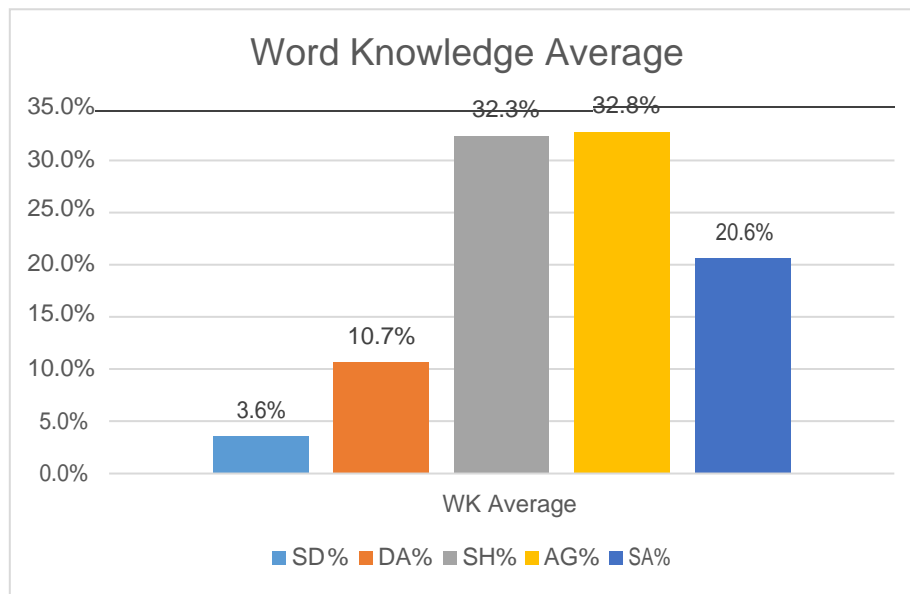
*Standards’ Statistics by Strand*

Grade Nine ECS Strand	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
Word knowledge	3.56	0.88	Somehow agree
Listening	3.57	0.91	Somehow agree
Speaking	3.58	0.87	Somehow agree
Reading	3.55	0.90	Somehow agree
Writing	3.55	0.90	Somehow agree

ESL teachers, in general, tend to underestimate their students' readiness to achieve the standards due to the nature of the standards or other factors affecting their achievement (Judith, Ogawa, & Samantha, 2004). From a researcher's point of view, this general agreement among the teachers suggests that this low achievability is worth investigating. Hence, in addition to the statistics for the means and standards deviation, the averages of the participants' responses were calculated in detail in terms of the standards' strands. According to SEC's documents, every cluster of English standards was structured into the following five strands: word knowledge, listening and speaking, reading and writing (SEC, 2004, p. 9). Accordingly and similar to the statistical analysis used to investigate the achievability of the standards separately, descriptive and average statistics were used to investigate the achievability of the standards in terms of strands.

#### **4.1.1 Word Knowledge Domain**

In terms of Word Knowledge standards, the table in Appendix (D) summarizes the percentages of teachers' responses' to this question according to the five-point scale used in this study (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Agree and Strongly Agree).



*Figure 4.1. WORD KNOWLEDGE AVERAGE*

According to the table in Appendix D and Figure 4.1, the greatest average of the teachers' responses about the "Word Knowledge" skill standards was "Somehow Agree" (31%). As the Chi square value equals 77.794a, with significant level equal to 0.00, this means that the majority of the teachers who participated in this study somehow agree on their students' achievement of the "Word Knowledge" standards. The item-by-item analysis shows that the teachers "agree" that two items related to the "Word Knowledge" standards are achievable: the first ("Use and consolidate the 2100 active vocabulary words from previous grades" with a Chi square equal to 98.630\* and a P value <0.05), and the third ("Consolidate from Grades 5-8 and extend the ability to recognize, investigate, and spell root words with a range of affixes; generate new words and guess the meaning of unknown words from affixes" with a Chi square equal to 117.666a and a P value <0.05).

On the other hand, the participants “somehow agree” about the other five items related to the “Word Knowledge” strand, with a Chi square ranging between 98.309a and 128.373a and a P value <0.05.

#### 4.1.2 Listening

**Table 4.2**

*Responses about Listening*

Listening Standards	SD %	DA %	SH %	AG %	SA %	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.	Decision
Understand a range of spoken texts containing complex utterances in a variety of face-to-face and audio (phone, broadcast, TV, film) forms on general and abstract topics.	4.2%	7%	32%	34%	23%	118.759a	0.000	AG
Follow a discussion between two people using context and key words to understand gist and main ideas.	3.9%	10%	31%	29%	27%	94.772a	0.000	SH
Follow and respond to hypothetical arguments, statements and questions, choosing between options, weighing consequences, forming preferences with reasons.	5.1%	12%	33%	33%	17%	97.633a	0.000	SH
Follow a straightforward persuasive argument to express a point of view, publicize or complain.	4.2%	13%	35%	29%	20%	92.842a	0.000	SH
Recognize and understand the purpose, content and features of more formal language through listening to a variety of announcements, warnings, advice, reminders and prohibitions, impersonal reports and formal invitations.	4.2%	11%	32%	30%	23%	92.650a	0.000	SH
Understand and respond to a range of functions in conversations.	3.2%	9%	32%	29%	26%	104.161a	0.000	SH
Listening Average	4.1%	10.2%	32.5%	30.7%	22.5%	92.810a	0.000	SH

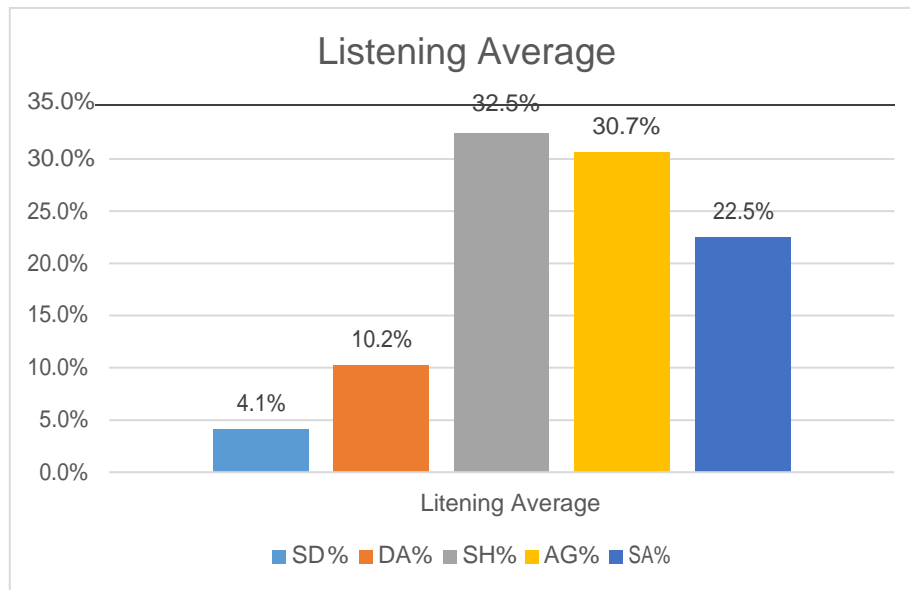


Figure 4.2. LISTENING AVERAGE

According to table 4.2 and figure 4.2, the greatest average of the teachers' responses about the "Listening" skill standards was "Somehow Agree" (32.5%), based on a Chi square value equal to 92.810a and a significance level equal to 0.00. This indicates that the majority of the participants "somehow agree" on their students' achievement of "Listening" standards. However, the item-by-item analysis shows that those teachers "agree" that the first item of "Listening standards" ("Understand a range of spoken texts containing complex utterances in a variety of face-to-face and audio (phone, broadcast, TV, film) forms on general and abstract topics") is achievable, with a Chi square equal to 118.759a \* and a P value <0.05. On the other hand, the participants "somehow agree" about the other five items related to the "Listening" strand, with a Chi square ranging between 92.650a and 104.161a and a P value <0.05.

### 4.1.3 Speaking

**Table 4.13**

*Responses about Speaking*

Speaking Standards	SD %	DA %	SH %	AG %	SA %	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.	Decision
Speak accurately and at length to explain, present opinions, recount, describe and summarise events and plans, using a series of 6-8 clear, connected utterances.	3.2%	13%	31%	31.2%	22%	90.109a	0.000	Agree
Pronounce words, utterances and connected speech at length, clearly and audibly, without significant interference from Arabic, paying particular attention to English.	2.3%	12%	32%	31%	23%	104.579a	0.000	Somehow Agree
Show awareness of other participants.	2.9%	8%	32%	31%	25%	115.961a	0.000	Somehow Agree
Use strategies for communication maintenance and repair.	3.5%	8%	34%	35%	19%	129.563a	0.000	Agree
Speak with some degree of fluency.	2.9%	10%	32%	34%	21%	115.093a	0.000	Agree
Prepare, present and discuss an explanation or description of a process, an event, a topic of interest or a project undertaken to interest and inform.	4.5%	10%	32%	33%	21%	102.682a	0.000	Agree
Prepare and present an opinion, point of view or justification intended to convince or persuade.	3.2%	14%	32%	30%	21%	87.666a	0.000	Somehow Agree
Summarize and relate main points in sequence from a text heard, read or seen using some key words or expressions from the text.	5.5%	13%	31%	32%	20%	79.402a	0.000	Agree

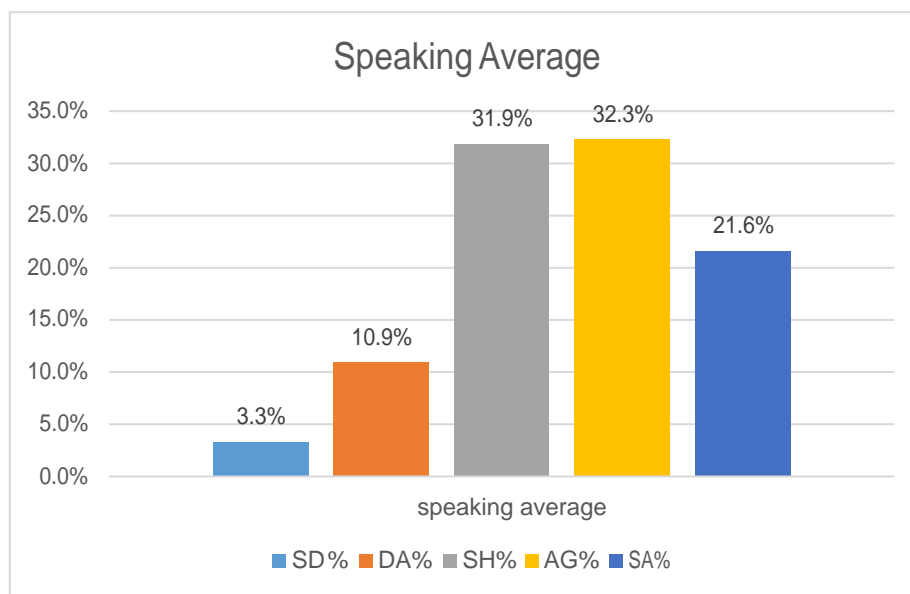
(\*continued)

Speaking Standards	SD %	DA %	SH %	AG %	SA %	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.	Decision
Discuss possible scenarios in the present and the future, based on hypothesis and supposition, using first and second conditionals with if, unless, could and might.	3.9%	12%	34%	32%	18%	103.421a	0.000	Somehow Agree
Consolidate ability to talk with reasonable accuracy and fluency about events in the future using present and future tenses, and extend to future continuous (will/may/might/won't be (do)ing) in positive and negative statements, and yes/no and wh-	4.2%	11%	31%	34%	20%	101.267a	0.000	Agree
Consolidate ability to talk with reasonable fluency about events in the past using past tenses: simple past, past continuous, past perfect, past perfect continuous, present perfect for unspecified past, using irregular past and past participle verb	2.3%	10%	33%	34%	21%	120.977a	0.000	Agree
Consolidate ability to talk with reasonable accuracy and fluency about unfinished actions which started in the past but continue in the present using present perfect and present perfect continuous with for and since.	3.2%	14%	33%	28%	21%	87.408a	0.000	Somehow Agree
Consolidate ability to talk with reasonable accuracy and fluency about events in the present using present continuous and simple present tenses.	3.5%	9%	29%	35%	24%	111.363a	0.000	Agree

(\*continued)



Speaking Standards	SD %	DA %	SH %	AG %	SA %	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.	Decision
Consolidate from Grade 8 making suggestions, giving advice, warning, stating prohibitions and obligations.	2.6%	9%	30%	33%	24%	112.360a	0.000	Agree
Make and respond to polite, formal requests and give instructions, in face-to-face and telephone situations.	2.3%	11%	30.8%	30.5%	25%	101.974a	0.000	Somehow Agree
speaking average	3.3%	10.9%	31.9%	32.3%	21.6%	120.302a	0.000	Agree



*Figure 4.3. SPEAKING AVERAGE*

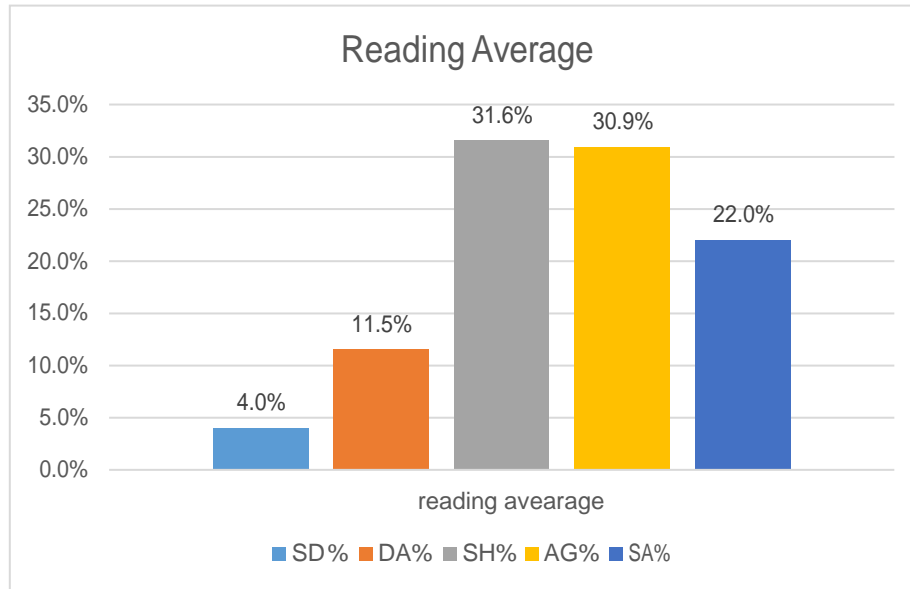
According to table (4.3 and figure 4.3, the greatest average of the teachers' responses about the "Speaking" skill was "Agree" (32.3%). As the Chi square value equals 120.302a with a significant level equal to (0.00), this means that the majority of the teachers who participated in this study "agree" on their students' achievement of "Speaking" standards. The item-by-item analysis shows that the teachers "agree" about their students' achievability of nine items, as Table 4 shows that the Chi square ranges between 79.402a and 129.563a and the P value <0.05. On the other hand, the participants "somehow agree" about the achievability of the other six standards, as Table 4.3 shows that the Chi square ranges between 87.408a and 115.961a and the P value <0.05.

#### 4.1.4 Reading

**Table 4.4**

*Responses regarding Reading*

Reading Standards	SD %	DA%	SH%	AG%	SA%	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.	Decision
Independently and intensively, read texts of at least 1000 words.	4.8%	13%	32%	28%	22%	79.016a	0.000	Somehow Agree
Continue to read extensively from read-graded readers and other appropriately levelled texts drawing the 1500-2000 key word range; read and return it within a given time period.	5.1%	12%	32%	32%	20%	87.730a	0.000	Somehow Agree
Recognize contexts, purposes and features of formal English through reading, for example, notices and announcements, letters, reports, essays and critical reviews.	2.9%	11%	35%	31%	20%	110.592a	0.000	Somehow Agree
Search and navigate the Internet to derive predetermined and specific information from a variety of sources; collate by downloading, cutting, pasting, etc. to form a coherent text	3.9%	14%	24%	35%	23%	87.923a	0.000	Agree
Interpret and evaluate texts.	4.5%	13%	36%	28%	19%	96.154a	0.000	Somehow Agree
Recognise through reading and comparing a range of narratives how authors create settings and portray characters.	2.6%	11%	32%	31%	24%	101.621a	0.000	Somehow Agree
Read widely for information.	3.9%	10%	31%	31%	24%	94.579a	0.000	Somehow Agree
Read and understand persuasive texts.	4.2%	9%	31%	31%	24%	99.723a	0.000	Somehow Agree
reading average	4.0%	11.5%	31.6%	30.9%	22.0%	108.791a	0.000	Somehow Agree



*Figure 4.4. READING AVERAGE*

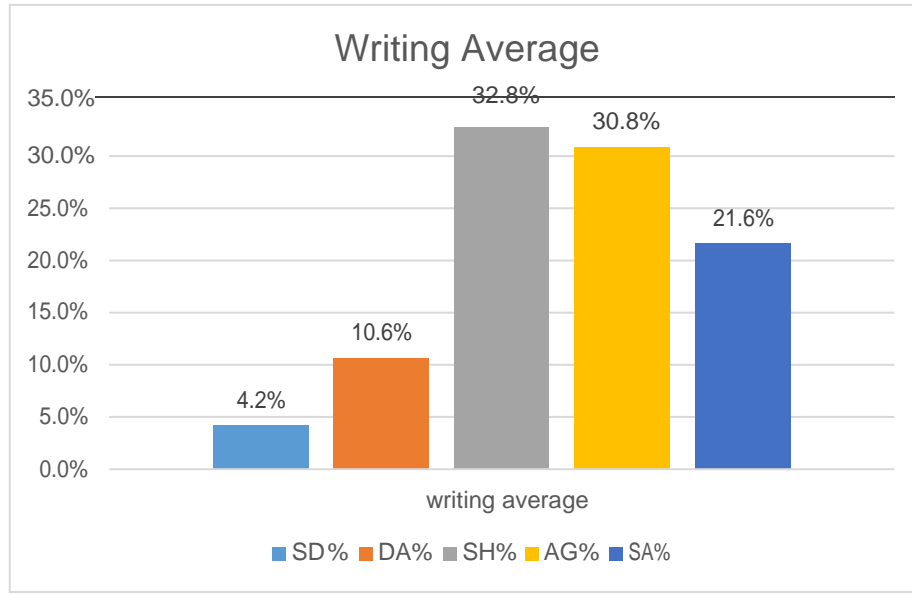
According to table 4.4 and figure 4.4, the greatest average of the teachers' responses about the "Reading" skill standards was "Somehow Agree" (31.6%). As the Chi square value equals 108.791a with a significant level equal to 0.00, this means that the majority of the teachers who participated in this study somehow agree on their students' achievement of the "Reading" standards. The item-by-item analysis shows that the teachers "agree" that the fourth item of "Reading standards" ("Search and navigate the Internet to derive predetermined and specific information from a variety of sources; collate by downloading, cutting, pasting, etc. to form a coherent text") is achievable, with a Chi square equal to 87.923a \* and a P value <0.05. On the other hand, the participants "somehow agree" about the other seven items related to the "Reading" strand, with a Chi square ranging between 79.016a and 110.592a and a P value <0.05.

## 4.1.5 Writing

**Table 4.5**

*Responses regarding Writing Standards*

Writing Standards N= 311	SD %	DA%	SH%	AG%	SA%	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.	Decision
Plan a piece of writing in note or diagrammatic form showing the main points in sequence.	4.5%	11%	32%	32%	21%	92.746a	0.000	Somehow Agree
Use the full range of punctuation appropriately with 70% accuracy.	3.9%	10%	26%	36%	24%	103.389a	0.000	Agree
Use a computer to plan, compose, edit and present own writing.	5.5%	10%	30%	30%	24%	81.106a	0.000	Somehow Agree
Independently compose texts of up to 15 sentences in 3 or more connected paragraphs, as appropriate to the purpose.	4.2%	9%	34%	31%	22%	110.013a	0.000	Somehow Agree
Drawing on ideas and models from reading, compose narratives based on known or imagined stories, personal experiences or recounts of events.	2.3%	12%	32%	31%	23%	103.711a	0.000	Somehow Agree
Drawing on experience of reading, compose information texts which present information based on personal knowledge or research.	3.2%	11%	35%	31%	21%	109.659a	0.000	Somehow Agree
Write persuasive texts, in the form of short essays, letters or scripts for oral presentation, arguing for or against a particular view on an issue of topical or personal interest.	4.2%	13%	36%	29%	18%	100.302a	0.000	Somehow Agree
Compose short essays, up to 200 words, drawing on work in another curriculum subject or an issue of topical interest, using the organizational features typical of a discussion text to balancing and weigh arguments, and drawing a conclusion.	5.8%	10%	38%	27%	19%	102.071a	0.000	Somehow Agree
Writing Average	4.2%	10.6%	32.8%	30.8%	21.6%	115.029a	0.000	Somehow Agree



*Figure 4.5. WRITING AVERAGE*

According to table 4.5 and figure 4.5, the greatest average of the teachers' responses about the writing skill standards was "Somehow Agree" (32.8%). Based on a Chi square value of 115.029 with a significance level equal to 0.00, this indicates that the majority of the teachers who participated in this study somehow agree about their students' achievement of the writing standards. The item-by-item analysis shows that the teachers agree that the second item of writing standards ("Use the full range of punctuation appropriately with 70% accuracy") is achievable, with a Chi square equal to 103.389a and a P value <0.05, whereas they somehow agree about the other seven items (a Chi square ranging between 81.106a and 110.013a and a P value <0.05). This indicates that the students have generally moderate writing skills, yet they can achieve more on certain easy topics like punctuation, when the accuracy level required is relatively low.

## **4.2 Variables influencing ESC achievability**

The second research question is addressed in this part. This question focused on whether the teachers' variables influence their perspectives of the achievability of the standards by strand. For this purpose, the means of the five strands of word knowledge, listening, speaking, reading and writing skills were compared to the dependent variables of the participants' gender, qualifications, Grade 9 experience, experience in independent Qatari schools, prior SBE experience, and school location.

The influence of the teachers' gender, Grade Nine experience, prior Standards-Based Experience and school location on the achievement of the standards was investigated by conducting a t-test analysis because each of these variables contains two sub-divisions. The influence of the variables related to the teachers' experience at independent Qatari schools and their qualifications were investigated by conducting an ANOVA analysis because each of these variables consists of three sub-divisions. Results below the value 0.05 are considered significant in terms of the influence of the dependent variable on the English strands.

### **4.2.1 Influence of the Gender Variable**

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare female and male conditions of teachers' gender to five strands of the English standards.

**Table 4.6***T-test Equality of Gender means*

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	<u>Sig. (2-tailed)</u>
Word knowledge	Female	182	3.5797	0.92418	0.06851	0.566	309	0.572
	Male	129	3.5223	0.81706	0.07194			
Listening	Female	182	3.6145	0.93801	0.06953	0.985	309	0.326
	Male	129	3.5116	0.86281	0.07597			
Speaking	Female	182	3.6293	0.91507	0.06783	1.206	309	0.229
	Male	129	3.5090	0.79346	0.06986			
Reading	Female	182	3.6140	0.93535	0.06933	1.377	309	0.170
	Male	129	3.4709	0.85489	0.07527			
Writing	Female	182	3.6264	0.92698	0.06871	1.771	309	0.078
	Male	129	3.4428	0.86207	0.07590			



**Table 4.7***T-test-Influence of Gender on ECS Strands*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances								
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	
Word knowledge	Equal variances assumed	2.912	0.089	<b>0.566</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>0.572</b>	0.05738	0.10144	-0.14222	0.25699
	Equal variances not assumed			<b>0.578</b>	<b>294.274</b>	<b>0.564</b>	0.05738	0.09934	-0.13812	0.25289
Listening	Equal variances assumed	0.878	0.349	0.985	309	0.326	0.10284	0.10446	-0.10270	0.30838
	Equal variances not assumed			0.999	288.905	0.319	0.10284	0.10298	-0.09985	0.30553
Speaking	Equal variances assumed	6.721	0.010	1.206	309	0.229	0.12026	0.09976	-0.07603	0.31655
	Equal variances not assumed			1.235	296.650	0.218	0.12026	0.09737	-0.07137	0.31189
Reading	Equal variances assumed	2.075	0.151	1.377	309	0.170	0.14308	0.10392	-0.06139	0.34755
	Equal variances not assumed			1.398	289.813	0.163	0.14308	0.10233	-0.05833	0.34449
Writing	Equal variances assumed	1.453	0.229	1.771	309	0.078	0.18354	0.10366	-0.02042	0.38751
	Equal variances not assumed			1.793	287.308	0.074	0.18354	0.10238	-0.01797	0.38506

The results show that there is no significant influence of the teachers' variable of gender on achievement with regard to the five strands of ECS. Tables (4.6) and (4.7)

present the scores for the t-test means and influence for the female and male conditions. The values scored for word knowledge referred to ( $M=3.5$ ,  $SD=0.9$ ,  $t(309)=0.5$ ,  $p=0.5$ ) for females and ( $M=3.5$ ,  $SD=0.8$ ,  $t(309)=0.5$ ,  $p=0.5$ ) for males. The female scores for listening pointed to ( $M=3.6$ ,  $SD=0.9$ ,  $t(309)=1.2$ ,  $p=0.2$ ) and to ( $M=3.5$ ,  $SD=0.8$ ,  $t(309)=1.2$ ,  $p=0.2$ ) for males. In terms of speaking, the female scores were ( $M=3.6$ ,  $SD=0.9$ ,  $t(309)=0.9$ ,  $p=0.3$ ), whereas the male ones were ( $M=3.5$ ,  $SD=0.7$ ,  $t(309)=0.9$ ,  $p=0.3$ ). The female scores in terms of the reading strand equaled ( $M=3.6$ ,  $SD=0.9$ ,  $t(309)=1.3$ ,  $p=0.1$ ) in the time male's scored equaled ( $M=3.4$ ,  $SD=0.8$ ,  $t(309)=1.3$ ,  $p=0.1$ ). Finally, in terms of writing, t-test means and influence scored ( $M=3.6$ ,  $SD=0.9$ ,  $t(309)=1.7$ ,  $p=0.07$ ) for female condition and ( $M=3.4$ ,  $SD=0.8$ ,  $t(309)=1.7$ ,  $p=0.07$ ) for male.

#### **4.2.2 Influence of Grade Nine Experience Variable**

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the 1-4 years and 4 and more years' conditions of teachers' experience in Grade Nine according to five strands of the English standards.

**Table 4.8***Influence of G9 Experience - Means*

Grade 9 Experience		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Word knowledge	1-4 years' experience in G9	151	3.6233	0.77634	0.06318	1.315	309	0.190
	4 and more years' experience in G9	160	3.4922	0.96659	0.07642			
Listening	1-4 years' experience in G9	151	3.6380	0.81326	0.06618	1.250	309	0.212
	4 and more years' experience in G9	160	3.5094	0.98685	0.07802			
Speaking	1-4 years' experience in G9	151	3.6671	0.78954	0.06425	1.738	309	0.083
	4 and more years' experience in G9	160	3.4967	0.92985	0.07351			
Reading	1-4 years' experience in G9	151	3.6175	0.81806	0.06657	1.192	309	0.234
	4 and more years' experience in G9	160	3.4953	0.97743	0.07727			
Writing	1-4 years' experience in G9	151	3.6159	0.81498	0.06632	1.246	309	0.214
	4 and more years' experience in G9	160	3.4883	0.97872	0.07737			

**Table 4.9**

*Influence of G9 Experience- T-test of Means*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed )	Mean Differenc e	Std. Error Differenc e	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper	
Word knowledg e	Equal variance s assumed	4.08 6	0.04 4	1.31 5	309	0.190	0.13116	0.09977	- 0.06516	0.3274 8
	Equal variance s not assumed			1.32 3	301.38 9	0.187	0.13116	0.09915	- 0.06396	0.3262 7
Listening	Equal variance s assumed	4.79 5	0.02 9	1.25 0	309	0.212	0.12859	0.10288	- 0.07383	0.3310 2
	Equal variance s not assumed			1.25 7	303.55 1	0.210	0.12859	0.10231	- 0.07273	0.3299 2
Speaking	Equal variance s assumed	1.24 9	0.26 5	1.73 8	309	0.083	0.17044	0.09809	- 0.02257	0.3634 6
	Equal variance s not assumed			1.74 6	305.64 8	0.082	0.17044	0.09763	- 0.02168	0.3625 6
Reading	Equal variance s assumed	4.52 2	0.03 4	1.19 2	309	0.234	0.12224	0.10252	- 0.07948	0.3239 6
	Equal variance s not assumed			1.19 8	304.69 4	0.232	0.12224	0.10199	- 0.07847	0.3229 4
Writing	Equal variance s assumed	2.71 2	0.10 1	1.24 6	309	0.214	0.12761	0.10245	- 0.07397	0.3291 9
	Equal variance s not assumed			1.25 2	304.33 1	0.211	0.12761	0.10191	- 0.07292	0.3281 5

As tables 4.8 and 4.9 show, no significant influence of Grade Nine experience was found with regard to strands achievement. In terms of the word knowledge strand, the scores for the conditions (1-4 years' experience) were ( $M=3.6$ ,  $SD=0.7$ ,  $t(309) = 1.3$ ,  $p = 0.1$ ), and ( $M=3.4$ ,  $SD=0.9$ ,  $t(309) = 1.3$ ,  $p = 0.1$ ) (4 and more years' experience). In terms of listening, the scores for the (1-4 years' experience) condition pointed to ( $M=3.6$ ,  $SD=0.8$ ,  $t(309) = 1.2$ ,  $p = 0.2$ ), whereas the scores for the (4 and more years' experience) condition pointed to ( $M=3.5$ ,  $SD=0.9$ ,  $t(309) = 1.2$ ,  $p = 0.2$ ). Regarding speaking, the (1-4 years' experience) condition scored ( $M=3.6$ ,  $SD=0.8$ ,  $t(309) = 1.7$ ,  $p = 0.8$ ) and ( $M=3.4$ ,  $SD=0.9$ ,  $t(309) = 1.7$ ,  $p = 0.8$ ) (4 and more years' experience) condition. In terms of reading, the scores for the (1-4 years' experience) condition were ( $M=3.6$ ,  $SD=0.8$ ,  $t(309) = 1.1$ ,  $p = 0.2$ ) and ( $M=3.4$ ,  $SD=0.9$ ,  $t(309) = 1.1$ ,  $p = 0.2$ ) for the (4 and more years' experience) conditions. Similarly, the writing scores referred to ( $M=3.6$ ,  $SD=0.8$ ,  $t(309) = 1.2$ ,  $p = 0.8$ ), and ( $M=3.4$ ,  $SD=0.9$ ,  $t(309) = 1.2$ ,  $p = 0.2$ ) for the conditions of (1-4 years' experience) and (4 and more years' experience), respectively. Specifically, our results suggest that, whether teachers have higher or lower experience in Grade Nine, their perspectives about their students' ability to achieve the standards related to either strand of ECS have no significant influence.

### **4.2.3 Influence of school location**

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare Doha and further areas of the conditions of the teachers' school location with the five strands of the English standards.

**Table 4.10***School Location - Means*

School location		Group Statistics				t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
Word knowledge	Doha	221	3.6097	0.87799	0.05906	1.696	309	0.091
	Further Areas	90	3.4236	0.87724	0.09247			
Listening	Doha	221	3.6410	0.89688	0.06033	2.119	309	<b>0.035</b>
	Further Areas	90	3.4019	0.91625	0.09658			
Speaking	Doha	221	3.6419	0.86381	0.05811	2.001	309	<b>0.046</b>
	Further Areas	90	3.4259	0.86177	0.09084			
Reading	Doha	221	3.6250	0.89005	0.05987	2.162	309	<b>0.031</b>
	Further Areas	90	3.3819	0.92035	0.09701			
Writing	Doha	221	3.6126	0.88580	0.05959	1.914	309	0.057
	Further Areas	90	3.3972	0.93383	0.09843			

**Table 4.11**

*School Location Influence - T-test for High Quality of Means*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper	
Word knowledge	Equal variances assumed	0.660	0.417	1.696	309	0.091	0.18612	0.10976	-0.02985	0.40209	
	Equal variances not assumed			1.696	165.294	0.092	0.18612	0.10972	-0.03052	0.40275	
Listening	Equal variances assumed	0.447	0.504	2.119	309	<b>0.035</b>	0.23917	0.11285	0.01712	0.46123	
	Equal variances not assumed			2.100	162.027	<b>0.037</b>	0.23917	0.11388	0.01430	0.46405	
Speaking	Equal variances assumed	0.185	0.668	2.001	309	<b>0.046</b>	0.21600	0.10794	0.00361	0.42840	
	Equal variances not assumed			2.003	165.523	<b>0.047</b>	0.21600	0.10783	0.00310	0.42891	
Reading	Equal variances assumed	0.832	0.362	2.162	309	<b>0.031</b>	0.24306	0.11240	0.02189	0.46422	
	Equal variances not assumed			2.132	160.298	<b>0.035</b>	0.24306	0.11400	0.01792	0.46819	
Writing	Equal variances assumed	1.167	0.281	1.914	309	0.057	0.21533	0.11253	-0.00608	0.43675	
	Equal variances not assumed			1.871	157.613	0.063	0.21533	0.11506	-0.01193	0.44260	

As tables 4.10 and 4.11 show, there was no significant difference found in terms of word knowledge or writing strands standards. The word knowledge cores for Doha were (M=3.6, SD=0.8,  $t(309) = 1.6$ ,  $p = 0.09$ ) and (M=3.4, SD=0.8,  $t(309) = 1.6$ ,  $p = 0.09$ ) for further areas conditions. In regards to the writing strand, the scores for Doha were (M=3.6, SD=0.8,  $t(309) = 1.9$ ,  $p = 0.05$ ) and (M=3.3, SD=0.9,  $t(309) = 1.8$ ,  $p = 0.06$ ) for further areas conditions. Specifically, our results suggest that, whether the teacher's school is located in Doha or in another area, the teacher's perspective about his/her students' ability to achieve the standards for word knowledge and writing is unaffected.

On the other hand, tables 4.10 and 4.11 show a significant difference in terms of the listening, speaking and reading strands of ECS. In regards to listening, the scores for Doha were (M=3.6, SD=0.8,  $t(309) = 2.1$ ,  $p = 0.03$ ) and (M=3.4, SD=0.9,  $t(309) = 2.1$ ,  $p = 0.03$ ) for further areas conditions. In terms of speaking, the scores for Doha referred to (M=3.6, SD=0.8,  $t(309) = 2.0$ ,  $p = 0.04$ ) and to (M=3.4, SD=0.8,  $t(309) = 2.0$ ,  $p = 0.04$ ) for further areas conditions. In terms of reading, the scores for Doha equaled (M=3.6, SD=0.8,  $t(309) = 2.1$ ,  $p = 0.03$ ) and (M=3.3, SD=0.9,  $t(309) = 2.1$ ,  $p = 0.03$ ) for further areas conditions. These results, presented in Tables 4.10 and 4.11, suggest that the teachers' school location had an effect on the standards achievement for listening, speaking and reading skills. Specifically, our results suggest that, when the teachers' schools are located in Doha, their perspectives about their students' abilities to achieve the standards for listening, speaking and reading increase.



#### 4.2.4 Influence of the Prior SBI Experience Variable

An independent-sample t-test was conducted to compare the conditions of teachers with and without prior SBI experience according to the five strands of the English standards.

**Table 4.12**

*SBI Experience- Means*

Group Statistics						t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Prior SBI Experience	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean				
Word knowledge	experienced in SBS	178	3.6390	0.85214	0.06387	1.936	309	0.054
	unexperienced in SBS	133	3.4445	0.90824	0.07875			
Listening	experienced in SBS	178	3.6320	0.89930	0.06741	1.355	309	0.176
	unexperienced in SBS	133	3.4912	0.91571	0.07940			
Speaking	experienced in SBS	178	3.6547	0.83333	0.06246	1.776	309	0.077
	unexperienced in SBS	133	3.4787	0.90438	0.07842			
Reading	experienced in SBS	178	3.6187	0.88071	0.06601	1.447	309	0.149
	unexperienced in SBS	133	3.4690	0.93115	0.08074			
Writing	experienced in SBS	178	3.6475	0.85733	0.06426	2.209	309	<b>0.028</b>
	unexperienced in SBS	133	3.4201	0.95015	0.08239			

**Table 4.13**

*SBI Experience Influence*

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed )	Mean Differenc e	Std. Error Differenc e	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Word knowledg e	Equal variance s assumed	0.14 3	0.70 6	1.93 6	309	0.054	0.19450	0.10047	- 0.00319	0.3921 8
	Equal variance s not assumed			1.91 8	274.26 2	0.056	0.19450	0.10140	- 0.00512	0.3941 2
Listening	Equal variance s assumed	0.04 0	0.84 1	1.35 5	309	0.176	0.14079	0.10388	- 0.06361	0.3452 0
	Equal variance s not assumed			1.35 2	281.70 2	0.178	0.14079	0.10415	- 0.06423	0.3458 1
Speaking	Equal variance s assumed	0.56 5	0.45 3	1.77 6	309	0.077	0.17598	0.09907	- 0.01896	0.3709 3
	Equal variance s not assumed			1.75 5	271.20 7	0.080	0.17598	0.10025	- 0.02139	0.3733 6
Reading	Equal variance s assumed	0.05 6	0.81 2	1.44 7	309	0.149	0.14969	0.10345	- 0.05387	0.3532 6
	Equal variance s not assumed			1.43 5	275.60 8	0.152	0.14969	0.10429	- 0.05561	0.3550 0
Writing	Equal variance s assumed	0.51 2	0.47 5	2.20 9	309	0.028	0.22736	0.10294	0.02480	0.4299 2
	Equal variance s not assumed			2.17 6	267.59 8	<b>0.030</b>	0.22736	0.10448	0.02164	0.4330 8

According to tables 4.12 and 4.13, a significant influence was only found related to the teachers' prior SBE experience of the standards of writing. Scores for the experienced

teachers referred to ( $M=3.6$ ,  $SD=0.8$ ,  $t(309)=2.2$ ,  $p=0.02$ ) and to ( $M=3.4$ ,  $SD=0.9$ ,  $t(309)=2.1$ ,  $p=0.03$ ) for the inexperienced teachers' conditions. These results indicate that the teachers' prior SBI experience had an effect on the standards achievement for the writing skill. Specifically, our results suggest that, according to the participants' perspectives, the students' ability to achieve the standards for writing increases when the teachers had prior SBI experience.

On the other hand, no significant difference was found for teachers' prior SBE experience with regard to the achievement of the strands related to word knowledge, listening, speaking and reading. In terms of word knowledge, the scores for the experienced teachers referred to ( $M=3.6$ ,  $SD=0.8$ ,  $t(309)=1.9$ ,  $p=0.05$ ) and ( $M=3.4$ ,  $SD=0.9$ ,  $t(309)=1.9$ ,  $p=0.05$ ) for the unexperienced teachers) conditions. In terms of listening, scores for experienced teachers were ( $M=3.6$ ,  $SD=0.8$ ,  $t(309)=1.3$ ,  $p=0.1$ ) and ( $M=3.4$ ,  $SD=0.9$ ,  $t(309)=1.3$ ,  $p=0.1$ ) for the unexperienced teachers' conditions. In terms of speaking, results values for experienced teacher condition scored ( $M=3.6$ ,  $SD=0.8$ ,  $t(309)=1.7$ ,  $p=0.07$ ) and ( $M=3.4$ ,  $SD=0.9$ ,  $t(309)=1.7$ ,  $p=0.08$ ) for the unexperienced teachers' conditions. As presented in Tables 4.12 and 4.13, the results suggest that teachers' SBI prior experience did not have an effect on standards achievement in the case of word knowledge, listening, speaking and reading skills. Specifically, our results suggest that, whether teachers have prior SBI experience or not, the teachers' perspectives about their students' ability to achieve the standards related to word knowledge, listening, speaking and reading were unaffected. They were only found to be significant in terms of the writing strand.

#### 4.2.5 Influence of the Independent School Experience Variable

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of the teachers' years of experience in independent Qatari schools on the five strands of English curriculum standards, 1-3, 4-8 and 9 and more conditions.

**Table 4.14**

*Independent School Experience*

Descriptive		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Word knowledge	1-3 years' experience in ind. schools	172	3.6344	0.86877	0.06624
	4-8 years' experience in ind. schools	63	3.5496	0.82353	0.10375
	9 or more years' experience in ind. schools	76	3.3832	0.93705	0.10749
	Total	311	3.5559	0.88042	0.04992
Listening	1-3 years' experience in ind. schools	172	3.6705	0.85573	0.06525
	4-8 years' experience in ind. schools	63	3.4735	0.91787	0.11564
	9 or more years' experience in ind. schools	76	3.4298	0.99378	0.11399
	Total	311	3.5718	0.90757	0.05146
Speaking	1-3 years' experience in ind. schools	172	3.6663	0.83483	0.06366
	4-8 years' experience in ind. schools	63	3.5672	0.83110	0.10471
	9 or more years' experience in ind. schools	76	3.3930	0.94717	0.10865
	Total	311	3.5794	0.86740	0.04919
Reading	1-3 years' experience in ind. schools	172	3.6330	0.88782	0.06770
	4-8 years' experience in ind. schools	63	3.5377	0.84052	0.10590
	9 or more years' experience in ind. schools	76	3.3914	0.97817	0.11220
	Total	311	3.5547	0.90419	0.05127
Writing	1-3 years' experience in ind. schools	172	3.6512	0.87455	0.06668
	4-8 years' experience in ind. schools	63	3.5159	0.85622	0.10787
	Total	311	3.5502	0.90375	0.05125

**Table 4.15***Independent School Experience - ANOVA*

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Word knowledge	Between Groups	3.330	2	1.665	2.164	0.117
	Within Groups	236.965	308	0.769		
	Total	240.295	310			
Listening	Between Groups	3.817	2	1.909	2.337	0.098
	Within Groups	251.523	308	0.817		
	Total	255.341	310			
Speaking	Between Groups	3.949	2	1.974	2.652	0.072
	Within Groups	229.288	308	0.744		
	Total	233.237	310			
Reading	Between Groups	3.098	2	1.549	1.906	0.150
	Within Groups	250.348	308	0.813		
	Total	253.446	310			
Writing	Between Groups	4.864	2	2.432	3.016	0.050
	Within Groups	248.336	308	0.806		
	Total	253.199	310			

According to tables 4.14 and 4.15, no significant effect of years of teachers' experience in independent Qatari schools was found in terms of the five strands of ECS. The values at the  $p < .05$  level for the three conditions related to the teachers' years of experience at independent Qatari schools were  $[F(2, 308) = 2.16, p = 0.11]$ ,  $[F(2, 308) = 2.33, p = 0.098]$ ,  $[F(2, 308) = 2.65, p = 0.072]$ ,  $[F(2, 308) = 1.906, p = 0.150]$  and  $[F(2, 308) = 3.016, p = 0.050]$  for the strands of word knowledge, listening, speaking, reading and writing, respectively. Accordingly, these results suggest that the levels of teachers'

experience at independent Qatari schools did not have an effect on the students' achievement of ECS related to the five strands.

#### **4.2.6 Influence of the Teachers' Qualification Variable**

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of the teachers' level of qualification on the five strands of the English curriculum standards, BA, high diploma and Master's and Ph.D. conditions.

**Table 4.16***Teachers' Qualification*

Descriptive		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Word knowledge	BA	217	3.5726	0.89044	0.06045	3.4534	3.6917	1.00	5.00
	High Diploma	57	3.6338	0.83881	0.11110	3.4112	3.8563	1.38	5.00
	Master's and PhD	37	3.3378	0.87344	0.14359	3.0466	3.6291	1.00	5.00
	Total	311	3.5559	0.88042	0.04992	3.4576	3.6541	1.00	5.00
Listening	BA	217	3.6121	0.89966	0.06107	3.4918	3.7325	1.17	5.00
	High Diploma	57	3.6023	0.91328	0.12097	3.3600	3.8447	1.33	5.00
	Master's and PhD	37	3.2883	0.91931	0.15113	2.9818	3.5948	1.00	5.00
	Total	311	3.5718	0.90757	0.05146	3.4705	3.6731	1.00	5.00
Speaking	BA	217	3.6025	0.87034	0.05908	3.4860	3.7189	1.00	5.00
	High Diploma	57	3.6316	0.83970	0.11122	3.4088	3.8544	1.73	5.00
	Master's and PhD	37	3.3640	0.88424	0.14537	3.0691	3.6588	1.00	5.00
	Total	311	3.5794	0.86740	0.04919	3.4826	3.6762	1.00	5.00
Reading	BA	217	3.5991	0.89735	0.06092	3.4790	3.7191	1.13	5.00
	High Diploma	57	3.5548	0.92733	0.12283	3.3088	3.8009	1.63	5.00
	Master's and PhD	37	3.2939	0.88840	0.14605	2.9977	3.5901	1.00	5.00
	Total	311	3.5547	0.90419	0.05127	3.4538	3.6555	1.00	5.00
Writing	BA	217	3.5829	0.90437	0.06139	3.4619	3.7040	1.00	5.00
	High Diploma	57	3.5877	0.88954	0.11782	3.3517	3.8237	1.75	5.00
	Master's and PhD	37	3.3007	0.90689	0.14909	2.9983	3.6030	1.00	5.00
	Total	311	3.5502	0.90375	0.05125	3.4494	3.6511	1.00	5.00

**Table 4.17***Influence of Teachers' Qualification - ANOVA*

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Word knowledge	Between Groups	2.165	2	1.083	1.400	0.248
	Within Groups	238.129	308	0.773		
	Total	240.295	310			
Listening	Between Groups	3.380	2	1.690	2.066	0.128
	Within Groups	251.960	308	0.818		
	Total	255.341	310			
Speaking	Between Groups	1.988	2	0.994	1.324	0.268
	Within Groups	231.249	308	0.751		
	Total	233.237	310			
Reading	Between Groups	2.944	2	1.472	1.810	0.165
	Within Groups	250.502	308	0.813		
	Total	253.446	310			
Writing	Between Groups	2.617	2	1.308	1.608	0.202
	Within Groups	250.583	308	0.814		
	Total	253.199	310			

The results shown in tables 4.16 and 4.17 suggest that the teachers' qualification has no significant influence on the achievement of the English curriculum standards related to the five strands of ECS. The levels of the teachers' qualification at the  $p < .05$  level for the three conditions: (a) Ba, (b) high diploma and (c) Masters and PhD scored  $[F(2, 308) = 1.083, p = 0.248]$ ,  $[F(2, 308) = 2.060, p = 0.128]$ ,  $[F(2, 308) = 1.324, p = 0.268]$ ,  $[F(2, 308) = 1.810, p = 0.165]$ , and  $[F(2, 308) = 1.608, p = 0.202]$  in terms of the word knowledge, listening, speaking, reading and writing strands respectively.



In conclusion, the t-test and ANNOVA analyses indicated that no significant results were found for the effect of the variables of teachers' gender, experience in Grade Nine, independent Qatari schools' experience and qualification on the five strands of ECS. However, significant results were found for the effect of the variables of teachers' school location and prior SBI experience on certain of the five strands of ECS. This could refer to the different influence of the dependent variable on the five strands, and lead to mutual interactions in terms of the dependent variable (Cohen & Manion, 2011, pp. 648-649).

#### **4.3 The Factors with the main influence on ECS Attainment**

Based on the literature and the teachers' answers, 23 factors are believed to have an influence on standards achievement. To answer the third research question, two procedures were carried out using SPSS V. 24. First, descriptive statistics of the 23 factors, which might influence the achievement of the curriculum standards, were individually computed and presented in Table 24, where the means and standard deviation were computed for each item individually. Second, the average of the 23 factors was calculated to elaborate more precisely the expected influence of these factors on the attainment of the curriculum standards, as presented in table 25 and figure 6.

### 4.3.1 Means of the factors

**Table 4.18**

*Means of Factors*

Factors influencing Standards Achievement	Mean	Standard Deviation
Student's lack of commitment to do homework hinders achieving the ECS.	3.79	1.07
Students are motivated to study English.	3.08	1.25
Students are not seriously committed to learning English, which hinders the achievability of ECSs.	3.73	1.05
Use of topics of student's interest helps them to achieve the ECS.	3.96	1.02
Student's actual/current level of English proficiency helps to achieve the ECS.	3.36	1.25
Teachers are equipped with the methodologies that help them to implement the ECS.	3.86	1.06
Teachers have classroom management skills that are needed to help them implement the ECS.	3.81	1.04
The teacher's role as facilitator helps students to achieve the ECS.	4.00	0.95
ESL teachers in Independent schools have a positive attitude to ECS.	3.58	1.10
Parents encourage their children to give importance to English as a subject at school.	3.21	1.26
Parents encourage their children to participate in English extra-curricular activities that helps to achieve the ECS.	3.15	1.23
Parents level of proficiency in English allows them to support their children's learning of English.	3.40	1.32
The textbooks used help students to achieve the ECS.	3.51	1.16
Teaching time is sufficient to achieve all the ECS.	3.26	1.28
The learning environment allows for the implementation of the ECS.	3.69	1.11
The use of ICT in teaching English helps in achieving ECS.	3.81	1.04
Large classes hinder ECS achievement.	3.87	1.12
Teachers are provided with resources that are needed to implement the ECS.	3.74	1.05
The testing system matches the ECS.	3.52	1.13
The ECS are appropriate to the context of Independent school Grade nine students.	3.43	1.17
The ECS are too ambitious to achieve.	3.55	1.06
The professional development offered to teachers sufficiently prepares them to implement the ECS.	3.74	1.01
Curriculum Standards Specialists provide effective support to teachers that helps to achieve the ECS.	3.58	1.05

### 4.3.2 Averages of the factors

**Table 4.19**

*Average of Factors*

Factors influencing standards achievement	n	SD %	n	DA %	n	SH %	n	AG %	n	SA %	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.	Decision
Teachers are equipped with the methodologies that help them to implement the ECS.	1 3		1 9			20 62	12 0	39 %		31 %	142.103a	0.000	A
Teachers have classroom management skills that are needed to help them implement the ECS.	1 1		2 1			23 73	11 6	37 %		29 %	130.270a	0.000	A
The teachers' role as facilitator helps students to achieve the ECS.	6	2%	3	4%		66	11 6	37 %		35 %	173.196a	0.000	A
ESL teachers in Independent schools have a positive attitude to ECS.	1 4		3 5			11 90	10 1	32 %		23 %	87.119a	0.000	A
Parents encourage their children to give importance to English as a subject at school.	3 7	12 %	5 2	17 %		29 89		24 %		18 %	26.926a	0.000	S A
Parents encourage their children to participate in English extra-curricular activities that helps to achieve the ECS.	3 7	12 %	5 5	18 %		30 92		25 %		15 %	33.100a	0.000	S A
Parents' level of proficiency in English allows them to support their children's learning of English.	3 4	11 %	4 7	15 %		24 75		23 %		27 %	28.469a	0.000	S A
The textbooks used help students to achieve the ECS.	2 2		3 7	12 %		26 80	10 4	33 %		22 %	69.916a	0.000	A
Teaching time is sufficient to achieve all the ECS.	3 7	12 %	5 3	17 %		24 75		27 %		20 %	22.585a	0.000	A
The learning environment allows for the implementation of the ECS.	1 6		2 6			26 82	10 2	33 %		27 %	95.511a	0.000	A
The use of ICT in teaching English helps in achieving ECS.	5 1	2%	0 1			83 24		94 %		99 %	114.257a	0.000	S A
Large classes hinder ECS achievement.	1 5		1 7			24 76		28 %		37 %	127.248a	0.000	S A
Teachers are provided with resources that are needed to implement the ECS.	5 8	5%	7 2	5%		76 78		88 %		5 %	107.280a	0.000	A
The testing system matches the ECS.	1 9		3 4	10 %		25 91	10 0	34 %		28 %	79.466a	0.000	A
The ECS are appropriate to the context of Independent school Grade nine students.	2 4		3 9	13 %		29 90		31 %		20 %	62.907a	0.000	A
The ECS are too ambitious to achieve.	1 2		3 3	11 %		10 5	34 %			22 %	99.466a	0.000	S A
The professional development offered to teachers sufficiently prepares them to implement the ECS.	1 0	4%	3 1			11 86	5 %	93 %		68 %	130.752a	0.000	A
Curriculum Standards Specialists provide effective support to teachers, that helps to achieve the ECS.	1 5 3		3 4 1	11 %		30 94 11		30 %		24 %	82.746a	0.000	A
Overall Factors	1 9	6.1 %	3 3	10.6 %		83 66	26.96 %	31.00 %		80.25 %	184.482a	0.000	A

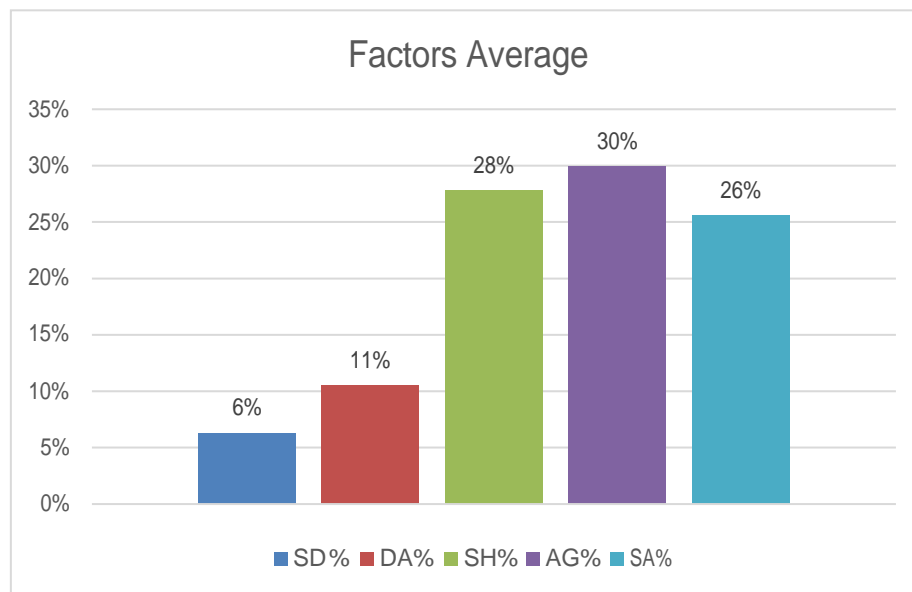
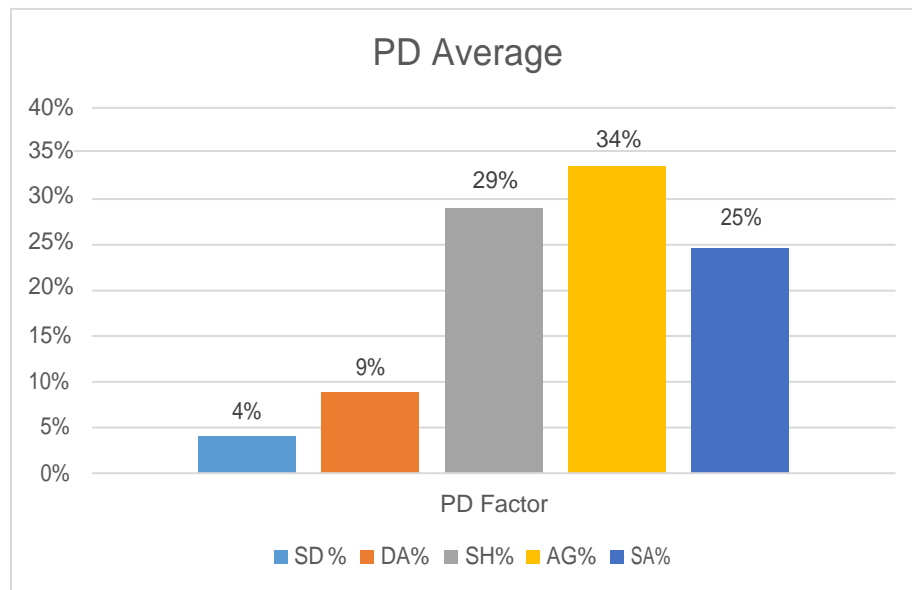


Figure 4.6: FACTORS AVERAGE

According to table 4.19, and based on the Chi square value of 184.482a with a significant level of 0.00, this means that AG (Agree) occupies the largest percentage here (31.0%). According to figure 4.6, “Agree” was the most common response by the participants for the 14 items about the factors influencing standards’ achievement, whereas “somehow agree” was the most common response among the participants regarding the other seven items. However, two items had the highest percentage of strong agreement (strongly agree) among the participants, as 32% strongly agreed that using ICT in teaching English helps to achieve the English curriculum standards, and 37% also strongly agreed that large classes hinder English curriculum standards’ achievement. Overall, since the means for all of the factors ranged between 3.08-4.00, the teachers’ consensus agreement on the influence of the factors analyzed could be interpreted as meaning that they are

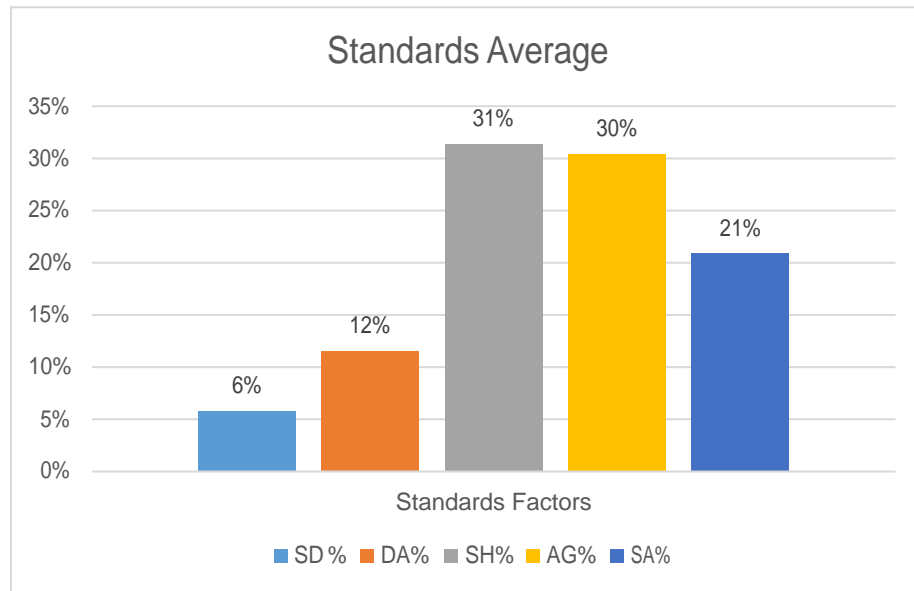
significant for achieving the standards. However, the following figures specifically present the average participants' responses per factor.

Figure 4.7 presents the Professional Development Factor Average. The participants' highest decision was "Agree" because it refers to the highest average percentage.



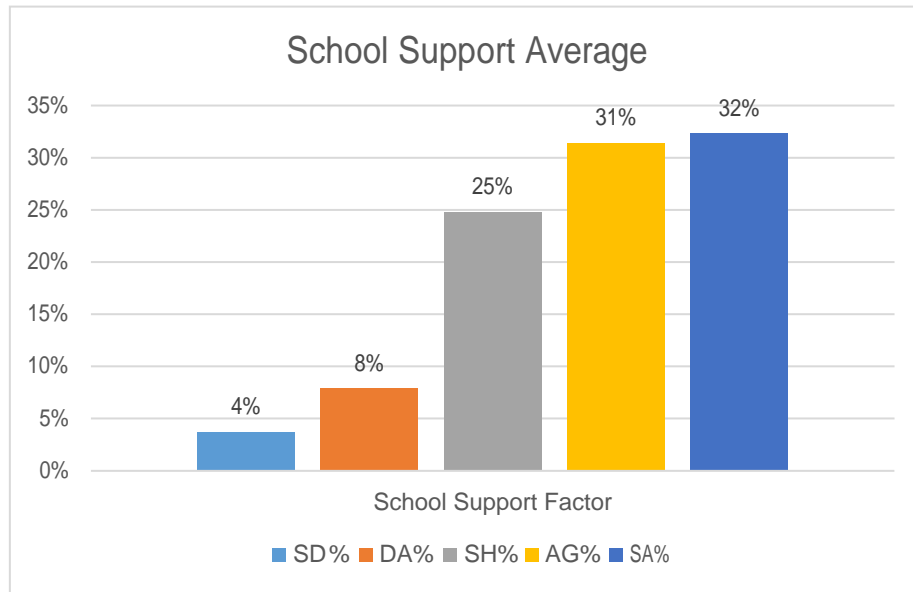
*Figure 4.7: PD AVERAGE*

As Figure 4.8 shows, the Standards Factor Average of the participants' decision was "Somehow Agree", because it referred to the highest average percentage.



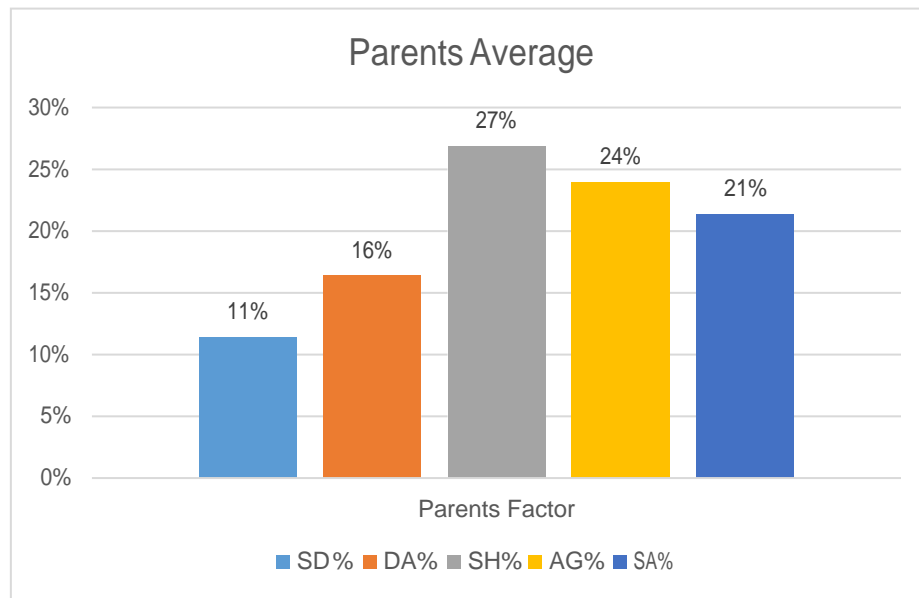
*Figure 4.8: STANDARDS AVERAGE*

Figure 4.9 shows the School Support Factor Average. The participants' most common decision was "Strongly Agree".



*Figure 4.9: SCHOOL SUPPORT AVERAGE*

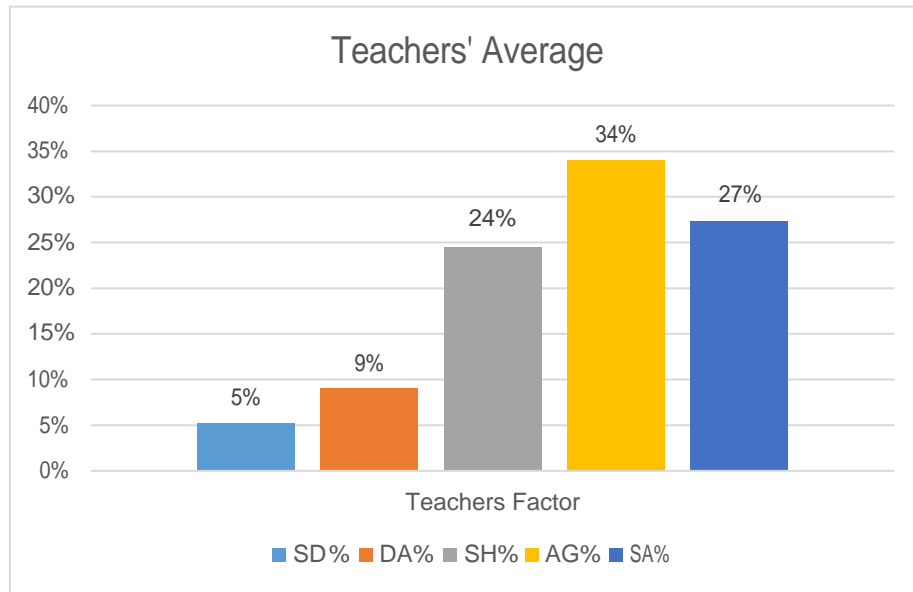
Figure 4.10 presents the Parents Factor Average, showing that the participants' most common decision was "Somehow Agree".



*Figure 4.10 PSRENTERS' AVERAGE*

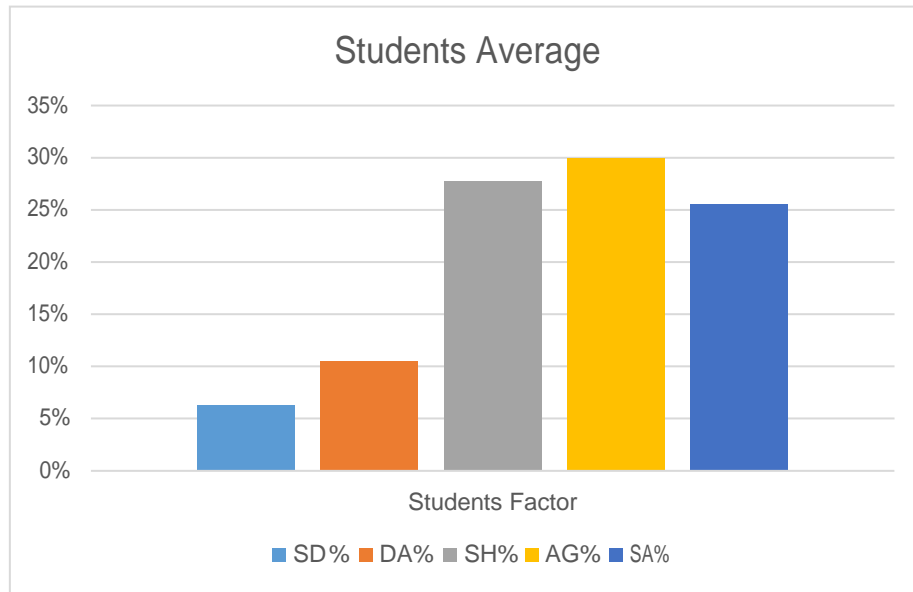
Figure 4.11 presents the Teachers Factor Average where the participants' most common decision was "Agree".





*Figure 4.11: TEACHERS' AVERAGE*

Figure 4.12 presents the Students Factor Average. The participants' main decision was "Agree", because this refers to the highest average percentage.



*Figure 4.12: STUDENTS' AVERAGE*

#### **44 Factors-ECS Relationship**

The relationship between the factors influencing the achievement of the Grade 9 English curriculum standards according to the teachers' perspectives and the five strands of the English standards was subjected to a correlational analysis to check the power and direction of any relationship that could be found between them.

**Table 4.20***Factors –Strands Correlations*

	Pearson Correlation					
	Word knowledge	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	All Standards
Teachers	.589**	.592**	.599**	.582**	.555**	.598**
Students	.602**	.616**	.629**	.623**	.610**	.632**
Parents	.537**	.560**	.572**	.557**	.573**	.574**
School support	.628**	.632**	<b>.635**</b>	.631**	.620**	.645**
Standards	.559**	.589**	.572**	.577**	.558**	.586**
PD	.569**	.586**	.613**	.593**	.580**	.603**
Testing system	<b>.496**</b>	.487**	.500**	.507**	.481**	.507**
Influencing factors	.689**	.703**	.712**	.702**	.689**	<b>.717**</b>

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the factors influencing the achievement of ECS, represented by seven domains of factors, as presented in Table 26, and ECS represented by their five strands of word knowledge, listening, speaking, reading and writing.

#### 4.4.1 Teacher Domain

There was a positive correlation between teacher domain and the five strands of ECS,  $r$  between [0.555-0.599],  $n = 311$ ,  $p = 0.000$ . A scatterplot figure summarizes the results. Overall, there was a strong, positive correlation  $r$  domain and the five strands of ECS. Increases in the teachers' practices were correlated with increases in the rating of ECS achievement.

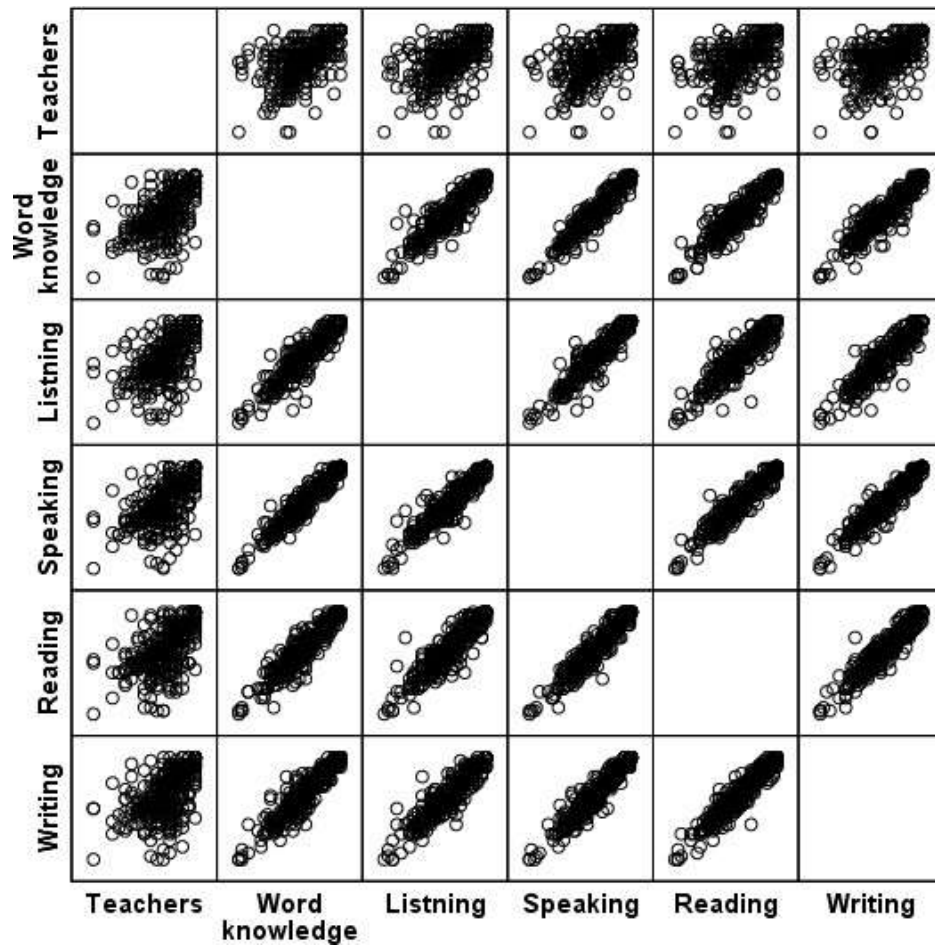


Figure 4.13: TEACHER-STRANDS RELATIONSHIP

#### 4.4.2 Student Domain

There was a positive correlation between the teacher domain and the five strands of ECS,  $r = [0.602-0.623]$ ,  $n = 311$ ,  $p = 0.000$ . A scatterplot figure summarizes the results of correlations. Overall, there was a strong, positive correlation between the r domain and the five strands of ECS. Increases in the teachers' practices were correlated with increases in the rating of ECS achievement.

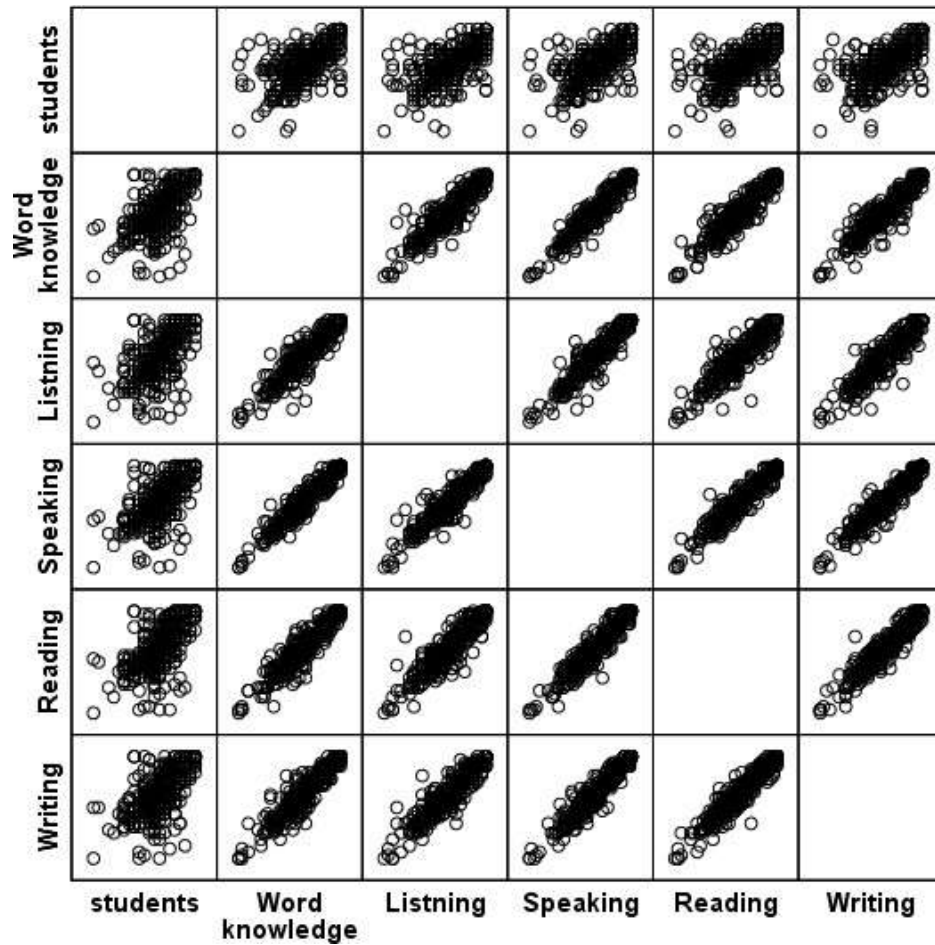


Figure 4.14: STUDENT-STRANDS RELATIONSHIP

#### 4.4.3 Parent Domain

There was a positive correlation between the teacher domain and the five strands of ECS,  $r = [0.537-0.573]$ ,  $n = 311$ ,  $p = 0.000$ . A scatterplot figure summarizes the results.

Overall, there was a strong, positive correlation between the r domain and the five strands of ECS. Increases in the teachers' practices were correlated with increases in the rating of ECS achievement.

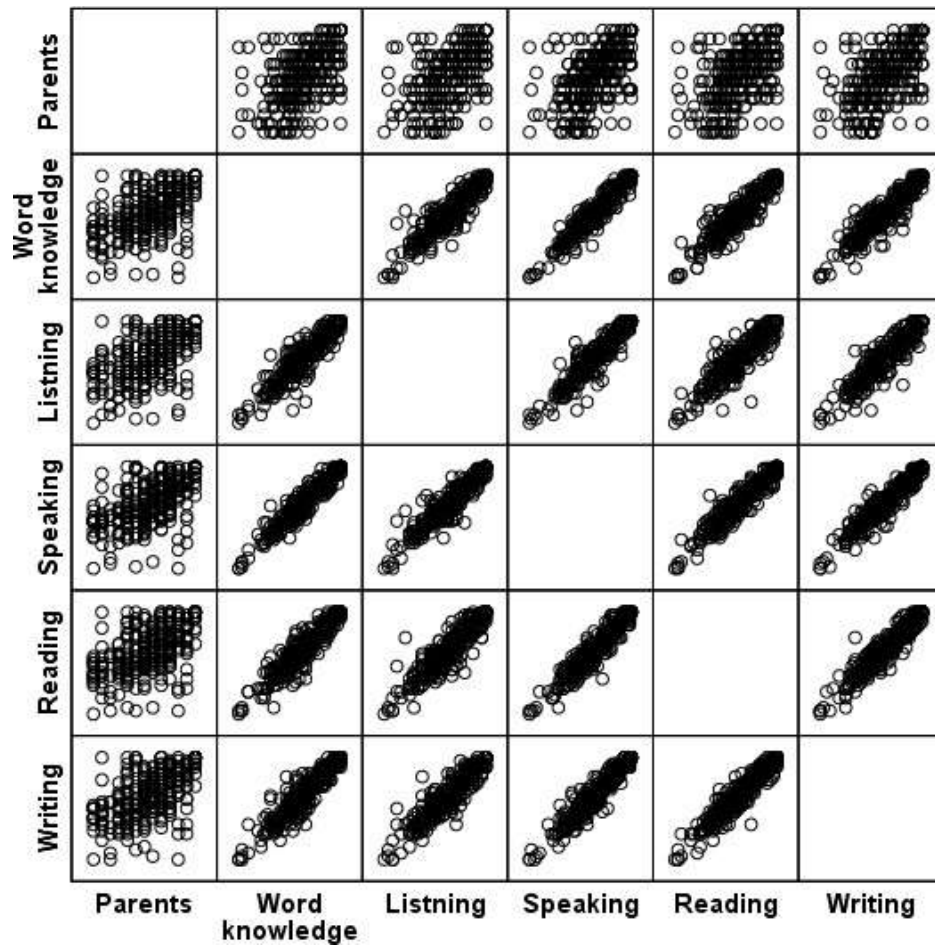


Figure 4.15: PARENTS-STRANDS RELATIONSHIP

#### 4.4.4 School Support Domain

There was a positive correlation between the teacher domain and the five strands of ECS,  $r = [0.620-0.635]$ ,  $n = 311$ ,  $p = 0.000$ . A scatterplot figure summarizes the results of correlations. Overall, there was a strong, positive correlation between the r domain and the five strands of ECS. Increases in the teachers' practices were correlated with increases in the rating for ECS achievement.

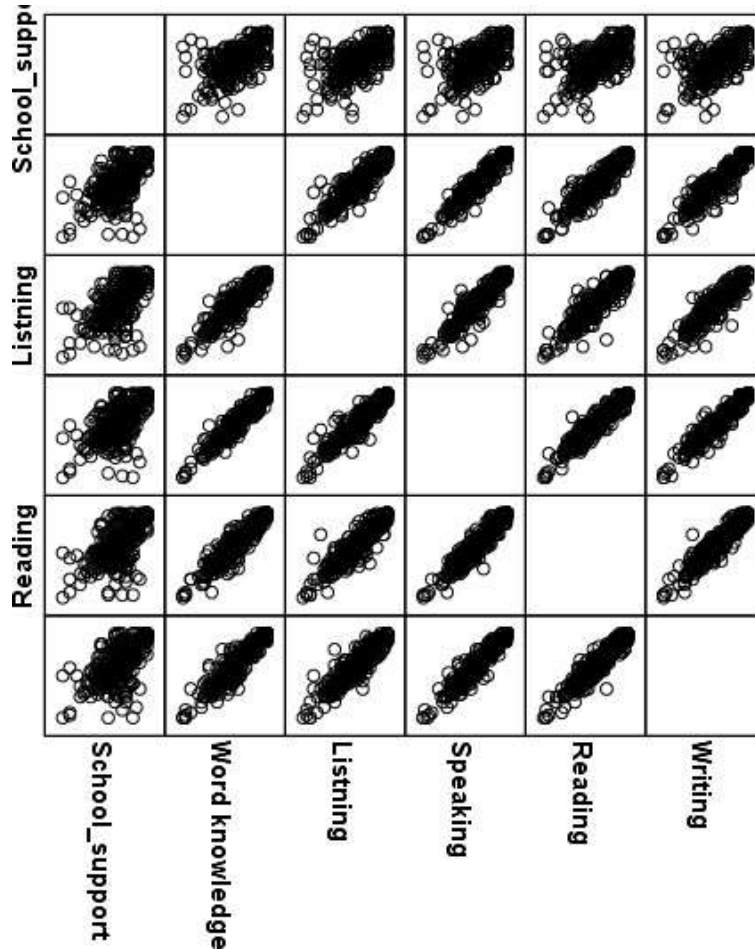


Figure 4.16: SCHOOL SUPPORT-STRANDS RELATIONSHIP

#### 4.4.5 ECS Domain

There was a positive correlation between teacher domain and the five strands of ECS,  $r = [0.558-0.589]$ ,  $n = 311$ ,  $p = 0.000$ . A scatterplot figure summarizes the results. Overall, there were a strong, positive correlation between the r domain and the five strands of ECS. Increases in the teachers' practices were correlated with increases in the rating for ECS achievement.

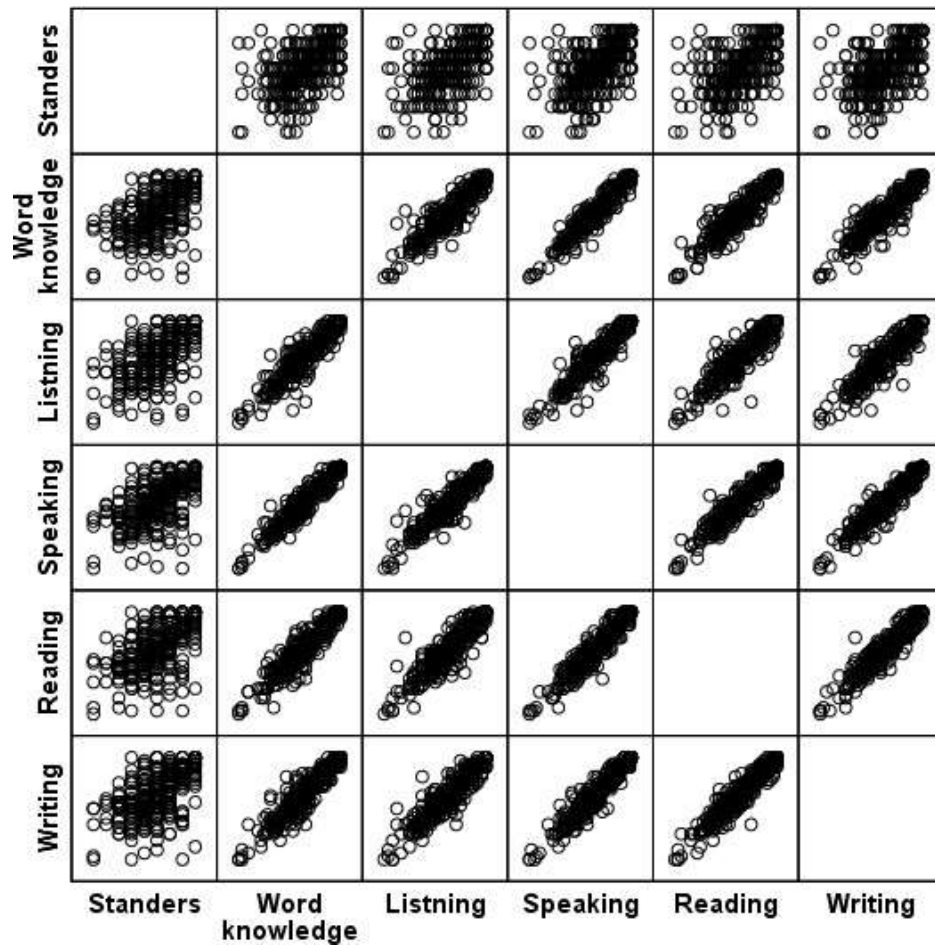


Figure 4.17: STANDARDS-STRANDS RELATIONSHIP



#### 4.4.6 Teacher's PD Domain

There was a positive correlation between teacher domain and the five strands of ECS,  $r = [0.569-0.613]$ ,  $n = 311$ ,  $p = 0.000$ . A scatterplot figure summarizes the results. Overall, there were a strong, positive correlation between the r domain and the five strands of ECS. Increases in the teachers' practices were correlated with increases in the rating for ECS achievement.

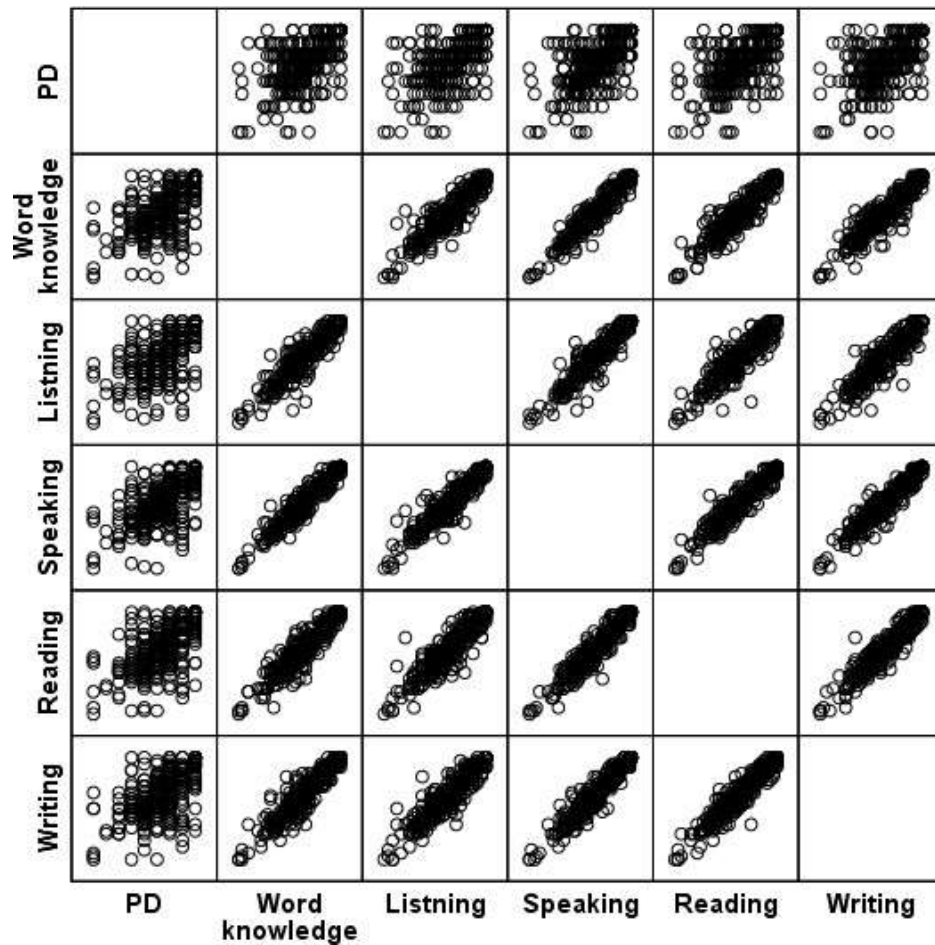


Figure 4.18: PD-STRANDS RELATIONSHIP

#### **4.4.7 Testing System Domain**

There was a positive correlation between teacher domain and the five strands of ECS,  $r = [0.481-0.507]$ ,  $n = 311$ ,  $p = 0.000$ . Overall, there was a strong, positive correlation between the r domain and the five strands of ECS. Increases in the teachers' practices were correlated with increases in the rating for ECS achievement.

#### **4.4.8 Overall factors**

There was a positive correlation between teacher domain and the five strands of ECS,  $r = [0.689-0.712]$ ,  $n = 311$ ,  $p = 0.000$ . Overall, there was a strong, positive correlation between the r domain and the five strands of ECS. Increases in the teachers' practices were correlated with increases in the rating for ECS achievement.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which Grade Nine English key curriculum standards are achievable by independent Qatari schools from the perspectives of the ESL teachers. The data for this study were collected from 311 ESL teachers at independent Qatari schools through a questionnaire-based online survey. The online survey utilized a 5-point Likert Scale designed by the researcher to assess the extent to which the Grade Nine curriculum standards are achievable from the teachers' perspectives. With the support of MOEHE, the survey was emailed to all ESL independent preparatory schoolteachers. SPSS V24 was used for the data analysis to calculate the means, Standard Deviation, average and percentages. To analyze the categorical data, a Chi-square test was conducted. Furthermore, t-test and ANNOVA statistics were used to investigate the influence of different variables on the independent variable. In addition, correlations were used to identify any potential relationships between the variables.

This chapter consists of four sections. The first section discusses the results of the empirical findings presented in Chapter 4 in the context of the research questions and literature review. The limitations of this study are discussed in the second section, while the third section provides recommendations for future studies. Finally, the fourth section provides a summary of this chapter.

### **5.1 Research Question 1: What are the teachers' perspectives regarding each curriculum standards' achievability in terms of English skills?**

In response to the first research question, English curriculum standards' achievability was investigated in terms of English skills. The results of this study indicated

a high level of agreement among ESL teachers on students' moderate achievement of the Grade Nine English Curriculum Standards. For a deeper analysis of ECS achievement, the overall English key curriculum standards were investigated, then analyzed in categories corresponding to the five standards' strands: (a) word knowledge, (b) listening, (c) speaking, (d) reading and (f) writing.

### **5.1.1 Achievability of the overall English Key Curriculum Standards**

In light of the descriptive analysis conducted on the 45 curriculum standards, this study concluded that the participants agreed in regard to ECS achievement. The participants displayed a consensus that ECS was achievable but at the lowest level. The results of this study were consistent with previous studies conducted in GCC countries and in different areas of the world. In the GCC countries, standards were achievable at a medium level in Saudi Arabia (AL Sahari, 2012), but at a low level in the GCC educational systems in general (Wiseman & Al-Bakr, *The Elusiveness of Teacher Quality: a Comparative Analysis of Teacher Certification and Student Achievement in Gulf Cooperation Council (Gcc) Countries.*, 2013). Therefore, the low levels of achievement in GCC education emphasize the need to make extra effort in this context to raise the level of standards' achievability (Ibrahim, 2016). A few years after a standards-based reform was adopted, similarly low achievement levels were noticed in China (Tymms, 2004) and the United States (Mangan, 2009).

Because English skills are integrated, different achievement levels of the standards could be expected (Montgomery, 2012). However, achievability was sometimes related to differences in the context where the standards are implemented (Zhu, 2013). In different

contexts, the authentic and individual testing of the students' abilities was emphasized to conserve equal priorities of achievement in terms of skills (Huang, 2009). In studies conducted where English is a first language, the researcher deems that low levels of achievability may be expected. However, searching for possible differences in terms of the strands was recommended.

### **5.1.2 Achievability of the English Key Curriculum Standards by Strand**

In this study, the participants' perspectives about the students' readiness to achieve the ECS were considered according to each strand of the ECS.

#### **5.1.2.1 Achievability of the Word Knowledge English Key Curriculum Standards**

In terms of the word knowledge strand, the response that attracted the highest percentage was 'agree'. Approximately one third of the participants (32.8%) agreed that their students are able to achieve the standards of this strand.

Those results agreed with previous studies. The word knowledge strand was significant in terms of both its depth and size in predicting academic performance, and shares hegemony with other English skills, especially reading, that directly affect students' achievement (Qian, 2002). Hence, the need for a larger word knowledge size was declared (Ibrahim, 2016). Together with the speaking skill, word knowledge had a higher percentage of achievement than listening, reading and writing (Ibrahim, 2016). The higher achievement of these two skills was related to the nature of English as a communicative means, whose main dependence is on vocabulary and speaking (Bailey & Huang, 2011). Similarly, higher levels of vocabulary achievement were faced by moderate levels related

to the writing skill (Cheng, 2011), which is integrated with all other skills (Harrison, et al., 2016).

From a researcher perspective, the differentiation of the strands outcomes is logical, due to the students' different needs and talents. In addition, learning materials may focus more on certain skills de-emphasizing the others. Moreover, the teachers' emphasis on differentiation strategies in terms of vocabulary could enhance the students' overall proficiency, particularly because the standards of the word knowledge strand are integrated with the other four strands and covered through them (SEC, 2004). Therefore, a focus on word knowledge is present while learning any other skill. In addition, the testing systems play an important role in placing a higher priority on certain skills rather than others. For example, when the word knowledge strand has a higher weigh in terms of marks, concentration will be applied to it. Although the word knowledge strand was not given a separate weighting in the Qatari National curriculum standards, it was not underestimated but rather integrated with the other four strands (SEC, 2004). Therefore, as word knowledge conforms to the essence of communication, a higher weighting of speaking, for example, will make it a focus during instruction, learning and assessment. Hence, the necessity for placing an equal focus on every English skill will be recommended (Huang, 2009).

#### 5.1.2.2 Achievability of the Listening English Key Curriculum Standards

In terms of listening, the participants in this study tended to select 'somehow agree'. Almost one third of the participants (32.5%) somehow agreed that their students are able to achieve the standards related to this strand. The literature provided similar results

regarding the moderate achievement of listening skills. Due to the lack of direct teaching of effective listening skills, student's weak self-monitoring, and the moderate usage of music, weak academic performance in listening was encountered (Barr, Dittmar, Roberts, & Sheraden, 2002; Dello-Iacovo, 2009). In a different context, the students' low achievement in listening affected their self-efficacy (Zhang, 2015). The students' achievement in listening was low because a deep investment of metacognitive strategies is required whereas the students' abilities are diverse (Shen, 2010; Young, 1996). However, when learners are only experienced in listening to their non-native teachers, their performance was found to be fair (Eno, 2017).

#### 5.1.2.3 Achievability of the Speaking English Key Curriculum Standards

Similar to word knowledge, the standards of the speaking strand had higher achievability than the other strands. The majority of the participants of this study 'agree' (32.3%) that their students are able to achieve the standards of this strand. The students' achievements in speaking were found to be limited in a study conducted recently in Indonesia, relating responsibility to the teachers' role (Manurung & Mashuri, 2017). When students' speaking skills were investigated in Somalia, the learners displayed similar weaknesses, mainly because of their lack of English speaking practice in classroom (Eno, 2017). The difference between the findings of this study and previous ones found in the literature may be related to differences in context. From the researcher's point of view, the speaking skill had the highest achievement ranking in this study because the students are exposed to English culture through the media, games and the huge number of expatriates living in the country. In addition, speaking is less demanding for students and can be corrected in a friendly manner.

#### 5.1.2.4 Achievability of the Reading English Key Curriculum Standards

For the reading strand, 31.6% of the responses were ‘somehow agree’, thereby indicating a lower level of reading achievability, as also found by another recent study (Eno, 2017). The reasons for this low achievement in reading were related to the teacher’s dominant role in class and students’ English proficiency levels, when the students’ achievement in reading was measured in terms of standardized tests (Jenkins & Demaray, 2015). In addition, middle school students’ poor motivation towards reading is mentioned widely throughout the literature (Unrau & Schlackman, 2006). Gulf countries scored in the lower third of the reading comprehension assessment in international programs like the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (Ibrahim, 2016). From a researcher perspective, independent schools’ teachers are not given the chance to follow up and work on developing their students’ reading because they are advised by English coordinators and standards specialists only to activate silent individual reading. Together with the students’ lack of motivation to read, this skill could explain the overall low proficiency in English.

#### 5.1.2.5 Achievability of the Writing English Key Curriculum Standards

In terms of the strand of writing, 32.8% of the responses collected by this study were ‘somehow agree’ regarding the writing standards’ achievement. The difficulty in achieving the writing skill was similarly detected in studies in different contexts (Huang, 2009), and attributed to a lack of practice (Eno, 2017).

## **52 Research Question 2: Which teachers’ variables (gender, qualifications, Grade Nine experience, experience in Qatar, prior SBE experience and school location)**



## **affect/differentiate the teachers' perspectives regarding the achievability of the curriculum standards?**

To answer the second research question, the influence of demographical variables on the English curriculum standards was examined. The participants' gender, qualifications, Grade 9 experience, experience in independent Qatari schools, prior SBE experience and school location were investigated through statistical and inferential analyses.

### **5.2.1 Influence of Gender**

The results of this study found no significant correlation between the teacher's gender and ECS achievement, which corresponds with earlier studies. A study conducted in Jordan reported that English scores did not differ significantly due to gender (Al-Faoury & Freahat, 2014). In addition, the effect of gender on achievement was deemed to be based on stereotypes rather than on research, as heterogeneity of gender and reading needs were concluded (Sokal, Katz, Chaszewski, & Wojcik, 2007). Students' academic performance did not mutate according to the teacher's gender (Marsh, Martin, & Cheng, 2008), which had no correlation with achievement. For example, female teachers found an incentive for language learning in India (Chudgar & Sankar, 2008). Similarly, symmetry of teacher-student gender was found to enhance achievement (Dee, 2007, p. 548). For the researcher, the effect of gender did not have a remarkable influence on the students' achievement. Both men and women are treated equally in the twenty-first century. In the context of MOEHE in Qatar, equal opportunities in education, payment and professional development are provided to all teachers, regardless of their gender.

### **5.2.2 Teachers' qualification**

This study found that the teachers' qualification did not have a significant influence on the five strands of standards' achievement, since they may provide the teachers solely with theoretical knowledge that is not required in the classroom (Shuls & Trivitt, 2015). Similarly, the teachers' experience in the standards minimizes their relationship with the school type and grade level (Hampton, 2002). For example, a teacher with 20 years' experience outside the context of SBE might still be unable to achieve very much unless he/she has received effective training on the standards. This is why teachers' qualification has a weak association with students' academic performance (Palardy & Rumberger, 2008). Moreover, the literature referred to highly-qualified teachers being less efficient with regard to teaching low-achieving students (Samson & Lesaux, 2015).

On the other hand, a positive relationship was found between teachers' qualifications and middle grades students' achievement (Baldi, Warner-Griffin, & Tadler, 2015; Croninger, Rice, Rathbun, & Nishio, 2007). However, from a researcher's point of view, this study's findings seem logical because the content that elementary school students are expected to cover does not require teachers with doctorate degrees as much as skillful facilitators of students' learning.

### **5.2.3 Teachers' experience in independent schools**

In the literature, the teachers' prior experience is generally considered advantageous for higher performance, especially for novice teachers. However, no significant correspondence was found in this study between the students' ability to achieve the ECS and the teachers' experience in independent schools. Similarities in the

achievement of students at different independent schools could justify this result. The dearth of research in the context of independent school experience makes it difficult to compare what this study found with the findings of earlier studies.

Generally, the teachers' experience in a similar context was considered advantageous for higher performance, especially for novice teachers. International experience was stated to be key to novice teachers' success (Malewski, Sharma, & Phillion, 2012). The teachers demonstrated that multicultural experience had a positive effect on their classroom practice (Kolano, Dávila, Lachance, & Coffey, 2014). Apart from technological issues, teacher's experience outside the independent school system is still beneficial (Gravett & Loock, 2014). For beginner English teachers, prior experience in a related environment was found to enhance their success in the new teaching environment (Lee, 2017). In addition, other findings reveal that new teachers lack the support of an integrated professional culture conceived from prior experience (Kardos & Johnson, 2007).

#### **5.2.4 Teachers' experience of Grade Nine**

Generally, a hermeneutic correlation between developing teaching strategies and experience is inevitable (Case, Marshall, & Linder, 2010). However, this study did not detect a significant influence on achievement in terms of the participants' experience of Grade Nine. Such findings could be interpreted as the result of the integration of curriculum standards related to the elementary grades. Therefore, no difference arose among participants, since they were all teachers of elementary grades. Multigrade teaching experience was reported to foster students' progress academically, socially, emotionally and intellectually (Sampson & Condy, 2016). Further, a recent study conducted in the

Sultanate of Oman found that teachers' experience has a significant relationship with students' achievement for every Grade (Ambusaidi & Al-Farei, 2017). In addition, research shows that teachers who have been exposed to grades K-12 have a higher ability to enhance resources to support the students' progressive learning (Gilmer, 2010). On the other hand, teachers' grade experience was deemed helpful in reducing stress (Malik, Mueller, & Meinke, 1991), and it was recommended to focus teachers' professional development on how students learn a particular content (Birman, Desimone, Porter, & Garet, 2000). However, the researcher considers the findings of this study to be logical with reference to the significance of grade experience in the context of curriculum standards. The researcher believes that the standards of the elementary grades are integrated in terms of depth and content. In fact, "the standards do not imply that each student in a grade is necessarily at the same level of achievement" (Supreme Educational Council, 2004, p. 11). Therefore, teachers are advised to implement the standards from different grades to fulfill students' needs adequately.

### **5.2.5 Influence of School Location**

School location was found to have a significant influence with regard to three strands, namely: (a) listening, (b) speaking and (c) reading. Hence, the results of this study agree with those of previous studies. Direct differences in achievement in different locations were reported (Porter, 1993). In addition, the stakeholders have recognized the distinction and privacy of how schools' location directly influences the achievement of the standards (Feng, 2011), and students' performance (Felipe, 2009). Schools located in developed areas attained higher achievement than those in under-developed ones (Heck, 2009). To overcome the influence of school location, the modification of standards

according to the schools' needs could be implemented (Hu, 2005). Hence, considering the school location requirements (Li & Yuan, 2013; Li, 2007), and suggesting more specific standards related to the area's needs, could help to overcome the different rates of achievement among schools (Lehman, 2008). In GCC countries, school location was reported to influence standards achievement in Saudi Arabia (Maroun, Samman, Moujaes, Abouchakra, & Insight, 2008), which was clear from a comparison among schools in various areas of UAE as well (O'Sullivan, 2015; Zehr, 2008). In relation to middle schools in particular, school location was found to enhance students' motivation (Xu, 2009), which led to differentiation in achievement (Berger, 2000). The difference in achievement was related to factors connected with the local culture that either help or hinder academic performance (Saraceni, 2009) and to attracting students and parents to the modern learning techniques and teaching strategies applied by schools (Baines & Stanley, 2006; Marzano, 2000). Accordingly, schools can achieve differently because they are not fulfilling all of the needs of the students by applying various schemes of learning strategies (Hoover & Patton, 2004), with a clear reference to the students' backgrounds (Van Welie, et al., 2013).

From the researcher's point of view, the influence of school location on students' achievement could be significant in different ways (Cheng, 2011). In central locations, schools could have high competence levels that can enhance the students' outcomes. In addition, stakeholders would find it easier to visit nearby schools than one located further away. This could lead to a loose commitment toward schools that could in turn lead to low achievement. On the other hand, further areas used to lack homogeneity. Classes can constitute a very low or very high number of students. In addition, classes could include multi-grade students. This would overload instructors to cover the standards intensively in

class, leading to possible low achievement during assessments. Moreover, homogenous groups of people who generally belong to one tribe, with mutual interests and a shared background, are usually concentrated in one area. Hence, priorities of interest could have a deep influence on learners' motivation toward education.

### **5.2.6 Influence of Prior Standards-Based Education Experience**

Regardless of their prior experience, all teachers require preparation that reflects English learners' needs (Faez, 2012). In terms of the influence of the teacher's prior SBE experience, the findings of this study detected a significant influence in the context of the writing strand. Such a result does not appear strange because plenty of studies refer to the significance of the teacher's experience and familiarity with the standards. The teachers' attitudes were reported to be directly related to and affected by their experience, that will clearly be reflected in their instruction (Stearns-Pfeiffer, 2012; Altan, 2006). Hence, the standards could be unachievable unless they are deeply understood by the teachers (Alemadi, et al., 2013), who can better develop the implementation of the standards by possessing relevant experience (Brewer, et al., 2007).

Furthermore, the teachers' experience was reported to be the main reason for high achievement only when the stakeholders stop paying minimal attention to how fully integrated the standards are in their teachers (Montgomery, 2012) because teachers directly affect achievement according to their experience of the standards (Porter, et al., 2009). Teachers who possess a deep acquaintance of the standards are more capable of fulfilling the requirements of both the standards (Patricia, 2005) and the students, because they could easily direct students towards high achievement (Rakow, 2008). Hence, teachers'

implementation of the standards is directed by their professional Standards-Based Experience (Haralanova & Ronkova, 2014), simply because familiarity with the standards makes teachers familiar with the assessment and so better placed to promote achievement (Mangan, 2009). Experienced teachers can align the standards with the assessments, and so help their lead students to achieve better academic outcomes (Baines & Stanley, 2006). In addition, the teachers' experience of the standards equips them with improved instructional techniques (Almuhaish, 2016; Swanson & David, 2002), and facilitates the integration of the school plans into the standards to fulfill the goals of both the standards and the school (McKay, 2000).

Furthermore, experienced teachers can successfully work under high pressure accompanied by standards requirements. When they possess adequate experience, they are able to predict success or failure (Grindon, 2014). Hence, they can ensure higher student achievement desired with the minimum tension (Collins & Pratt, 2011). To sum up, the consequences of experienced teachers appear clearly in the achievement levels (Stearns-Pfeiffer, 2012) because they can transfer the standards' prescription into successful implementation related to the real-life context, that easily leads to high achievement (Ellili-Cherif, 2014). With SBE experience, teachers can skillfully cover various dimensions of the standards (Abu-Tineh, 2015), and enhance their students' achievement in future years (Konstantopoulos, 2011). Standards-Based Education experience turns teachers into effective agents who can activate positive change in the classroom because they are supported by the best instruction methods to help satisfy all student needs (Dutro, et al., 2002; Wang, 2017). Prior SBE experience provides teachers with the required accuracy to teach English skills. Standards related to the writing strand, for instance, require highly

experienced teachers because they are deeply restricted by standards prescriptions, unlike other strands' requirements (Wang, 2017).

The researcher perceives the significance of teachers' experience in the domain of standards, particularly because it could minimize the personal conceptions of teachers derived from other educational systems; experience. Concentrating on attaining the goals of the curriculum standards could emphasize the teachers' efforts and creativity toward high achievement. Hence, the best agents to represent the systems goals would be teachers with SBE experience (Wang, 2017). In addition, experienced teachers are able to simplify the standards for the students, thereby enhancing their achievement.

### **53 What are teachers' perspectives regarding the factors that mostly matter the achievement of Grade Nine English curriculum standards?**

To investigate the factors that influence the achievement of the curriculum standards, 23 factors related to the teachers, students, parents, school support, standards, testing systems and professional development of teachers were studied. The descriptive statistics indicated that the majority of teachers agree that those 23 factors affect standards' achievement. Specifically, they somewhat agree about the factors related to the standards' nature and parents' attitudes, and agree about the factors related to students, teachers, professional development and the testing system. However, the participants strongly agree about the influence of the factors related to school support on the achievement of the standards. In addition, correlational statistics pointed at a strong positive relationship between the seven domains of factors on the one hand, and the achievement of the five strands of standards on the other hand. The strongest relationship was found among the



factors related to the school support domain and the standards' strands. However, the lowest level of relationship - although still strong - was between the testing system and the standards' strands. Therefore, teachers could have some doubts regarding the testing system implemented in independent schools. Hence, this could be a landmark for stakeholders to emphasize the role of schools in providing adequate assessment mechanism.

## **54 What is the relationship between the ECS strands and the factors influencing the achievement of the Grade Nine English curriculum standards according to the teachers' perspectives?**

### **5.4.1 The factors related to the teachers**

In terms of the factors related to teachers, previous studies referred to the significant role played by teachers in students' achievement. Teachers are the direct implementers of the standards (Almuhaish, 2016; Altan, 2006; Collins & Pratt, 2011; Smith, 2015), who facilitate student learning by the authentic strategies that students need (Ellili-Cherif, 2014). Because of their daily, close interaction with the students, the teachers are best placed to predict and manage high achievement (Collins & Pratt, 2011), thereby making them an important factor in this (Ingvarson, 1998; Shoja, 2016). The teachers were found to enhance the students' achievement in general (Stearns-Pfeiffer, 2012), and in English in particular (Heidari & Tahriri, 2015) The teachers' self-efficacy increased the students' achievement (Konstantopoulos, 2011; Wossenie, 2014), even in future years (Konstantopoulos, 2011; Master, et al., 2017). From the researcher point of view, teachers should receive every attention and support because the students only see their teachers every day. They deal with the teachers, and are assessed, reinforced, punished, supported

and rewarded by them. Accordingly, teachers interest the students. Therefore, if education aims at satisfying the students' needs, the teachers should be satisfied.

#### **5.4.2 The factors related to the students**

Student-based factors are related to student achievement. English learners with high proficiency levels achieve more during academic assessments (Haas, Tran, & Huang, 2016). Academic achievement was found to be interlinked with students' self-regulation (Adigüzel & Orhan, 2017) and attitudes toward English learning (Fakeye, 2010). Similarly, student-parent and student-teacher relationships are reflected in academic achievement (Hughes & Kwok, 2007). From the researcher perspective, however effective the instructional strategies that the teachers use, the students' achievement could still be marked as low, when they are demotivated to learn, and refuse to engage in activities and homework.

#### **5.4.3 The factors related to the parents**

Several studies have referred to the role of parents in enhancing or minimizing achievement. They share responsibility for success or failure (Maroun, Samman, Moujaes, Abouchakra, & Insight, 2008) and influence the students' achievement by increasing their motivation (Gogoi, 2014). Such a positive relationship seems logical because of the strong influence of parents' perceptions on their children's academic performance (Frome & Eccles, 1998). Hence, parents and students were strongly advised to get involved in understanding the standards and assessment to boost their children's achievement (Bjerede, 2013). Parents need to understand the standards to be able to prepare their children for high achievement (Clark & Clark, 2000). Therefore, parents should prepare their children to get

ready for learning. Hence, students' readiness helps to achieve both the standards and their parents' satisfaction (Ibrahim, 2016; Luster, 2011; Rakow, 2008).

From the researcher point of view, successful learning can only be attained by integrating the efforts of the school and home together. In addition, because of the strong family ties in the Middle East, parents have a magical effect on their children in terms of enhancing their motivation and helping them to work harder to achieve the standards. Hence, the parents' perspectives about their role in promoting their children's learning are essential. Accordingly, parents are strongly advised to support the schools' efforts to enhance the students' performance. The parents' perspectives regarding educational strategies, mandated by schools to encourage students' commitment, should be positive. Parents should welcome schools' punishment and reinforcement practices because such strategies support their children's learning. Parents are advised to prioritize students' achievement in comparison to their actual efforts paid.

#### **5.4.4 The factors related to school support**

This study found that factors related to school support are extremely significant because of the strong relationship between them demonstrated by the correlational statistics. This could be due to the integration between the items of this domain with other domains items in the context of the factors influencing standards' achievement. School autonomy under the SBE reforms could help or hinder students' achievement (Ringsmose, 2013), through fulfilling the students' needs (Marzano, 2000; McGuirk, 2014; Kim, 2010; Polikoff, 2010; Zehr, 2008; Zellman, et al., 2009). Schools are responsible for the students' achievement (Brewer, et al., 2007; Baines & Stanley, 2006; Guarino & Tanner, 2012;

Hoover & Patton, 2004; Mangan M. P., 2009; O'Sullivan, 2015), by providing a safe learning environment, supplying effective textbooks that are aligned to the standards, reducing crowded classrooms and following up students' commitment together with many other issues to assist standards achievability (Marzano, 2000; McGuirk, 2014; Kim, 2010; Polikoff, 2010; Zehr, 2008; Zellman, et al., 2009).

#### **5.4.5 The factors related to the curriculum standards**

In terms of the standards' nature, several prior studies recommend the continuous assessment of the standards. Several obstacles to attaining high achievement could be related to the standards themselves (Krigsvoll, Fumo, & Morbiducci, 2010). For instance, the standards could be difficult to meet (Alemadi, et al., 2013) or ambiguous, that would lead to low levels of implementation and so low achievement (Judith, Ogawa, & Samantha, 2004). In addition, curriculum standards may be unrealistic because they were not designed by teachers (Locke, 2002). Not only the teachers but also the schools should have their own vision of standards implementation (McKay, 2000). Accordingly, an assessment of the standards' suitability to the school's needs is recommended (Hider, 2006). From the researcher point of view, the English curriculum standards could be well designed to fulfill the English requirements in some contexts as they may be inadequate for use in other environments. That does not mean changing the language criteria but, rather, reconsidering a practical modification of the standards in light of the students' interests, linguistic background, grades level, the standards' feasibility and practicality regarding implementation by teachers, learning resources supporting their achievability, and assessment system aligned to them.

#### **5.4.6 The factors related to the testing system**

In terms of the factors related to the testing system, several prior studies emphasize the significance of the assessment of the curriculum standards in order for Standards-Based Education to succeed overall (Baines & Stanley, 2006; Bailey & Huang, 2011; Marzano, 2000; McGuirk, 2014; Yarovaya, 2015). Assessments are important because they are effective pointers of the students' progress in the context of standards' achievability (Bjerede, 2013). Hence, effective assessment should be aligned to the academic standards adopted in instruction (Mangan, 2009), and evaluated in relation to the instruction's objectives (MacGinitie, 1973). Accordingly, the relationships between high-stakes testing and achievement are expected to be strong (Marchant, Paulson, & Shunk, 2006). Assessments "are considered to provide reliable and objective information regarding students' achievement" (Sireci & Faulkner-Bond, 2015, p.215). Further, assessments are significant tools for evaluating the efficiency of the teachers, principals, schools and overall educational system, as far as they are related to classroom instruction, because high stakes assessment was not found to be useful in improving learning (Levine & Levine, 2013). Hence, the more assessment is related to the curriculum standards, the more accurate will be the results attained (Tsang, Katz, & Stack, 2008). In addition, schools with a high number of students per class or very few students could have misleading achievement levels. For example, in a school in a remote area that has only four students per class, the failure of one student will show up as a 25% failure overall. Accordingly, the assessment may lack clarity, especially with regard to accurate measurement. Inaccurate interpretation could lead to misguided planning and unwelcome remedies that would result in poorer attainment

From a researcher's perspective, students need to be familiar with the testing system in order to prepare appropriately and achieve high results. Teachers also need to focus on effective implementation. In addition, parents and stakeholders need to measure the progress of achievement in light of the standards. Accordingly, modified remedial plans could be designed to compensate for shortages and enhance the progress of the current assessment system. In addition, the researcher believes that what was learnt in the classroom should be reflected in the assessments because students expect to reflect what they have learnt in their tests.

#### **5.4.7 The factors related to professional development**

In terms of the factors related to the teachers' quality, professional development was found to be a priority for SBE systems in helping teachers to familiarize themselves with the new strategies needed to enhance achievement (Brewer, et al., 2007; Ellili-Cherif, et al., 2012; Hoover & Patton, 2004; Yarovaya, 2015). Researchers found effective changes taking place in classrooms where well-trained teachers implemented the standards (McIntyre, Kyle, Chen, Munoz, & Beldon, 2010). Particularly for English, professional development is very important because it helps English teachers to face "the double challenge of promoting English language and literacy development, as well as academic achievement across subject areas" (Lee & Buxton, 2013, p.110).

On the other hand, many studies support the positive relationship between teachers' experience and high achievement. Deep experience was considered one of the successful ESL teacher's characteristics (Al-Seghayer, 2017), as this enables them to explore students' learning (Case, et al., 2010), pinpoint their significant attitudes (Tanner, 1982),

and “refine the beliefs, knowledge, values, and assumptions that form their personal theories about teaching and learning” (Urrea, 2010, xii). In-context practical training could positively help teachers, where theoretical training should be kept to a minimum. Relating the learning strategies and resources to the English curriculum standards is highly recommended because teachers need to develop their practice in class. Topics related to the students’ interests and environments could prove helpful.

## **55 Limitations**

This study utilized an online survey to assess the extent to which the Grade Nine curriculum standards are achievable from the teachers’ perspectives. However, some responses could not be justified due to the nature of the quantitative method. For instance, the study was unable to answer why some participants reported strong agreement with the achievement of a certain standard. Similarly, it remains unclear why school location had a significant influence on listening, speaking and reading but not on writing and word knowledge standards.

On the other hand, the investigation of standards’ achievability in this study was based on the teachers’ perspectives. Hence, the findings could indicate different conclusions about achievability depending on whether the standards are studied from the students, parents, principals, or standards specialists’ perspectives. Therefore, further qualitative studies and one examining the perspectives of other players in the educational system would be valuable. In addition, studies to deeper understand the factors that may lead to higher standards’ achievement would contribute further insights to the study domain. For example, factors related to the teacher’s nationality, type of school, and non-

curricula activities could be added to factors influencing standards' achievement. Further, in-depth interviews with the participants will enrich the responses and results. Finally, this study was conducted to the context Grade Nine core curriculum standards of English in the state of Qatar in the academic year 2016-2017. Hence, further studies on the different contexts of the standards and the different grades in different countries will help to improve academia further.

## **56 Recommendations**

Curriculum standards are the core of Standards-Based Education, dominating most of the educational systems worldwide (Clark & Clark, 2000). The participants in this study reported high levels of agreement regarding a moderate chance of standards' achievability. Therefore, a modification of the standards is recommended for the higher attainment of ECS (Mangan, 2009). In addition, the significance of the teachers' prior SBE experience and school location were emphasized as effective variables regarding ECS achievement. Hence, considering teachers in practice's experience to modify the curriculum standards could be one way of improving the standards. They are in the best position to overcome the challenges facing students' low achievement, based on their practical experience. Since they are in constant contact with their students, they will always be best placed to find the easiest achievable form of standards to fulfill their students' needs in light of their actual abilities. On the other hand, an adjustment of the standards to the school environment could help to improve achievement. Students, teachers, principals and parents would be invited to meet adequate standards that look more familiar, less challenging and less ambiguous (Judith, et al., 2004). Finally, standards modification should be holistic. Effective standards are those which are achievable (Brewer, et al., 2007). In other words, the high quality prescription



of the ECS is highly recommended to consider factors found by this study to be mostly matter achievement. This study suggested that 23 factors related to the teachers, students, parents, school support, curriculum standards, testing system and teachers' professional development influence ECS attainment. Therefore, the future modification of the standards could be enlightened by the influence of those factors.

In short, teachers, together with their partners in the educational field, are invited to initiate practical methodologies for dealing with the curriculum standards' low achievability, spurred by this study. Ensuring teachers' high skills and abilities to implement the standards would inevitably provide the required support for students to meet them, and so enhance the education quality in schools, while considering the learning environment while monitoring standards progress could improve the implementation of the standards and so promote higher outcomes. However, stakeholders are advised to support teachers in any way possible because they are the pillar of education success. Accordingly, the teachers' perspectives provide valuable indicators of the educational reform's progress (Stearns-Pfeiffer, 2012).

## **57 Conclusion**

Guided by the teachers' perspectives, this study investigated the English curriculum's core standards represented by Grade Nine standards as an example, to explore the current situation of English learning in independent schools in Qatar.

By examining the perspectives of ESL teachers in independent Qatari schools, this study found that the English core curriculum standards were only achievable at a low level. In addition, the study found that school location and teachers' prior SBE experience

significantly influence the standards' achievability. Moreover, this study found that 23 factors related to the teachers, students, parents, school support, standards, testing system and teachers' professional development had a strong influence on the standards' attainment.

Accordingly, this study supports both the systemic and individual improvement of English learning. Systemic development urges the stakeholders to follow this study's findings by considering the factors that have the greatest influence on promoting the achievement of the standards. Such factors do not relate to the teachers only. Hence, an overall effort within the educational field is required to modify the standards into an easy guide to students' progress. In addition, educators and stakeholders have spent more than a decade since the announcement of EFNE in Qatar adjusting teachers' professional development, the curricula, textbooks, assessments and the standards' alignment to plans and overviews. Now, the findings of this study can be used to generate high quality education by concentrating on helping teachers to fulfil schools' requirements. However, educators, led by teachers, can use this study as a road map to rethink the personal practice towards working on the standards. This study provides a database of the variables and factors that have been found to be important in achieving the standards. Hence, teachers are invited to think of innovative methods for encouraging students to achieve highly with regard to the standards. Principals, parents and stakeholders are encouraged to a similar meditation. Individually, teachers, principals and curricula specialists can compare their beliefs to the teachers' perspectives described in this study and reflect on the practical implementation of ECS. Equally important is an awareness that the unexamined pervasive

perspectives that prevail regarding education may thwart every positive effort to enhance education.

Using multiple statistical analysis, this study contributes toward the literature by prioritizing the teachers' perspectives to elicit how the English curriculum standards are actually met. When school location, teachers' SBE experience and influential factors consider teachers' perspectives, worthwhile conversions can begin regarding English teaching and learning.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Survey

#### Survey

Thank you for accepting to respond to this survey that investigates ESL teach perspective on the achievability of Grade 9 ESL curriculum standards. The survey that take about 30 minutes to complete.

Please be assured that your identity will remain anonymous and will not be disclose any stage of this research. Also, be informed that data collected will be saved by researcher in such a way that no other party can access it, and will only be used for purposes of this study.

If you are interested in obtaining the results of this survey, feel free to contact me vis mail at [fa1404579@cu.edu.qa](mailto:fa1404579@cu.edu.qa)

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Firas Alkurdi

#### Part I

This part asks information about you. Please tick the option that applies to you.

1. **Gender**

- Female
- Male

2. **Before teaching at Qatari Independent Schools, did you teach in a standard-based educational system?**

- Yes
- No

3. **Qualification**

- BA
- Higher Diploma
- Master's
- PhD

4. **Grades you are currently teaching ...**

- Seven
- Eight
- Nine
- More than one grade level in the preparatory stage

5. **I have taught English for Grade 9 for ...**

- One year
- Two years
- Three years or more

6. **I have been teaching English at Qatari independent schools for ... years.**

- 1-3
- 4-7
- 8-12
- more than 12

7. **School location**

- Doha
- Further areas



**Part II**

This question asks your opinion about your students' ability to achieve the key performance English curriculum standards by the end of Grade 9. Please select the option that best expresses your opinion using the following scale: Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Somehow Agree=3, Disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1.

I think that by the end of Grade 9, my students will be able to ...		SA	4	3	2	SD
		5				1
1.	Use and consolidate the 1100 active vocabulary words from previous grades.					
2.	Recognise, understand and use a range of approximately 500 active words for listening, speaking, reading and writing, using the list of recommended key words for guidance.					
3.	Consolidate from Grades 5-8 and extend ability to recognise, investigate and spell root words with a range of affixes; generate new words and guess the meaning of unknown words from affixes.					
4.	Collect and classify more roots of words to extend vocabulary, support spelling and use as clues to predict the meaning of words in context.					
5.	Extend recording and building of transitive/intransitive, split/non-split phrasal verbs and idioms, and consolidate use of phrasal verbs from previous grades.					
6.	Extend recording and building of verbs which take the gerund, the infinitive or both, and consolidate use of gerunds and infinitives from previous grades.					
7.	Extend recording and building of verbs and adjectives which take prepositions, and consolidate use from previous grades.					
8.	Through own knowledge and use of dictionary and thesaurus, find and use alternative words and phrases to enhance speech and writing.					
9.	Understand a range of spoken texts containing complex utterances in a variety of face-to-face and audio (phone, broadcast, TV, film) forms on general and abstract topics.					
10.	Follow a discussion between two people using context and key words to understand gist and main ideas.					
11.	Follow and respond to hypothetical arguments, statements and questions, choosing between options, weighing consequences, forming preferences with reasons.					
12.	Follow a straightforward persuasive argument – to express a point of view, publicise or complain.					
13.	Recognise and understand the purpose, content and features of more formal language through listening to a variety of announcements, warnings, advice, reminders and prohibitions, impersonal reports and formal invitations.					
14.	Understand and respond to a range of functions in conversations.					
15.	Speak accurately and at length to explain, present opinions, recount, describe and summarise events and plans, using a series of 6-8 clear, connected utterances.					
16.	Pronounce words, utterances and connected speech at length, clearly and audibly, without significant interference from Arabic, paying particular attention to English.					
17.	Show awareness of other participants.					
18.	Use strategies for communication maintenance and repair.					

I think that by the end of Grade 9, my students will be able to ...		SA	4	3	2	SD
		5				1
19.	Speak with some degree of fluency.					
20.	Prepare, present and discuss an explanation or description of a process, an event, a topic of interest or a project undertaken to interest and inform.					
21.	Prepare and present an opinion, point of view or justification intended to convince or persuade.					
22.	Summarise and relate main points in sequence from a text heard, read or seen using some key words or expressions from the text.					
23.	Discuss possible scenarios in the present and the future, based on hypothesis and supposition, using first and second conditionals with <i>if, unless, could and might</i> .					
24.	Consolidate ability to talk with reasonable accuracy and fluency about events in the future using present and future tenses, and extend to future continuous ( <i>will/may/might/won't be (doing)</i> ) in positive and negative statements, and <i>yes/no</i> and <i>wh</i> -type questions with long and short answers.					
25.	Consolidate ability to talk with reasonable fluency about events in the past using past tenses: simple past, past continuous, past perfect, past perfect continuous, present perfect for unspecified past, using irregular past and past participle verb forms accurately.					
26.	Consolidate ability to talk with reasonable accuracy and fluency about unfinished actions which started in the past but continue in the present using present perfect and present perfect continuous with <i>for</i> and <i>since</i> .					
27.	Consolidate ability to talk with reasonable accuracy and fluency about events in the present using present continuous and simple present tenses.					
28.	Consolidate from Grade 8 making suggestions, giving advice, warning, stating prohibitions and obligations.					
29.	Make and respond to polite, formal requests and give instructions, in face-to-face and telephone situations.					
30.	Independently and intensively, read texts of at least 1000 words.					
31.	Continue to read extensively from read-graded readers and other appropriately levelled texts drawing the 1500-2000 key word range, read and return it within a given time period.					
32.	Recognise contexts, purposes and features of formal English through reading, for example, notices and announcements, letters, reports, essays and critical reviews.					
33.	Search and navigate the internet to derive predetermined and specific information from a variety of sources; collate by downloading, cutting, pasting, etc. to form a coherent text.					
34.	Interpret and evaluate texts.					
35.	Recognise through reading and comparing a range of narratives how authors create settings and portray characters.					
36.	Read widely for information.					
37.	Read and understand persuasive texts.					
38.	Plan a piece of writing in note or diagrammatic form showing the main points in sequence.					
39.	Use the full range of punctuation appropriately with 70% accuracy.					
40.	Use a computer to plan, compose, edit and present own writing.					

I think that by the end of Grade 9, my students will be able to ...		SA	4	3	2	SD
		5				1
41.	Independently compose texts of up to 15 sentences in 3 or more connected paragraphs, as appropriate to the purpose.					
42.	Drawing on ideas and models from reading, compose narratives based on known or imagined stories, personal experiences or recounts of events.					
43.	Drawing on experience of reading, compose information texts which present information based on personal knowledge or research.					
44.	Write persuasive texts, in the form of short essays, letters or scripts for oral presentation, arguing for or against a particular view on an issue of topical, or personal interest.					
45.	Compose short essays, up to 200 words, drawing on work in another curriculum subject or an issue of topical interest, using the organizational features typical of a discussion text to balancing and weigh arguments, and drawing a conclusion.					

### Part 3

This question asks about some factors that might influence the achievement of the English curriculum standards (ECS). Please indicate your opinion about the following items using the following scale: Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Somehow Agree=3, Disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?		SA	4	3	2	SD
		5				1
1.	The textbooks used help students to achieve the ECS.					
2.	Student's lack of commitment to do homework hinders achieving the ECS.					
3.	Teaching time is sufficient to achieve all the ECS.					
4.	The professional development offered to teachers adequately prepares them to implement the ECS.					
5.	The learning environment allows for the implementation of the ECS.					
6.	Parents encourage their children to give importance to English as a subject at school.					
7.	Teachers are provided with resources that are needed to implement the ECS.					
8.	Teachers are equipped with the methodologies that help them to implement the ECS.					
9.	The testing system matches the ECS.					
10.	Teachers have classroom management skills that are needed to help them implement the ECS.					
11.	Students are motivated to study English.					
12.	Use of topics of students' interest helps them to achieve the ECS.					
13.	ICT makes teaching easier, but it does not support ECS achievement.					
14.	Students' cheating misleads ECS achievement.					
15.	The ECS are appropriate to the context of independent school Grade nine students.					
16.	The teacher role as facilitator helps students to achieve the ECS.					
17.	ESL teachers in independent schools have a positive attitude to ECS.					
18.	Large classes hinder ECS achievement.					
19.	Students' English skills allow to easily achieving the ECS.					

Do you agree with the following statements?	SA	4	3	2	SD
	5				1
their children's learning of English through classroom and extra-curriculum activities.					
obvious.					
standards Specialists provide effective support to teachers & ECS.					
if proficiency in English allows them to support their learning of English.					

## Appendix B: Validity of Items

Strand	Validity of Items-Total Statistics		
	Standard	Correlation with factor	Correlation with all survey
Word knowledge	Use and consolidate the 2100 active vocabulary words from previous grades.	0.763	0.753
	Recognise, understand and use a range of approximately 500 active words for listening, speaking, reading and writing, using the list of recommended key words for guidance.	0.756	0.743
	Consolidate from Grades 5-8 and extend ability to recognise, investigate, and spell root words with a range of affixes; generate new words and guess the meaning of unknown words from affixes.	0.778	0.783
	Collect and classify more roots of words to extend vocabulary, support spelling and use as clues to predict the meaning of words in context.	0.830	0.827
	Extend recording and building of transitive/intransitive, split/non-split phrasal verbs and idioms, and consolidate use of phrasal verbs from previous grades.	0.742	0.768
	Extend recording and building of verbs which take the gerund, the infinitive or both, and consolidate use of gerunds and infinitives from previous grades.	0.806	0.789
	Extend recording and building of verbs and adjectives which take prepositions and consolidate use from previous grades.	0.765	0.804
	Through own knowledge and use of dictionary and thesaurus, find and use alternative words and phrases to enhance speech and writing.	0.830	0.818

(\*continued)

Strand	Validity of Items-Total Statistics		
	Standard	Correlation with factor	Correlation with all survey
Listening	Understand a range of spoken texts containing complex utterances in a variety of face-to-face and audio (phone, broadcast, TV, film) forms on general and abstract topics.	0.718	0.700
	Follow a discussion between two people using context and key words to understand gist and main ideas.	0.796	0.813
	Follow and respond to hypothetical arguments, statements and questions, choosing between options, weighing consequences, forming preferences with reasons.	0.806	0.801
	Follow a straightforward persuasive argument "to express a point of view, publicise or complain.	0.744	0.797
	Recognise and understand the purpose, content and features of more formal language through listening to a variety of announcements, warnings, advice, reminders and prohibitions, impersonal reports and formal invitations.	0.785	0.808
	Understand and respond to a range of functions in conversations.	0.812	0.819
	Speak accurately and at length to explain, present opinions, recount, describe and summarise events and plans, using a series of "clear, connected utterances.	0.824	0.810
	Pronounce words, utterances and connected speech at length, clearly and audibly, without significant interference from Arabic, paying particular attention to English.	0.805	0.811
Speaking	Show awareness of other participants.	0.821	0.806
	Use strategies for communication maintenance and repair.	0.764	0.754

(\*continued)

Strand	Validity of Items-Total Statistics		
	Standard	Correlation with factor	Correlation with all survey
	Speak with some degree of fluency.	0.789	0.790
	Prepare, present and discuss an explanation or description of a process, an event, a topic of interest or a project undertaken to interest and inform.	0.812	0.800
	Prepare and present an opinion, point of view or justification intended to convince or persuade.	0.798	0.796
	Summarise and relate main points in sequence from a text heard, read or seen using some key words or expressions from the text.	0.834	0.827
	Discuss possible scenarios in the present and the future, based on hypothesis and supposition, using first and second conditionals with if, unless, could and might.	0.780	0.792
	Consolidate ability to talk with reasonable accuracy and fluency about events in the future using present and future tenses, and extend to future continuous (will/may/might/won't be (do)ing) in positive and negative statements, and yes/no and wh-type qu	0.809	0.787
	Consolidate ability to talk with reasonable fluency about events in the past using past tenses: simple past, past continuous, past perfect, past perfect continuous, present perfect for unspecified past, using irregular past and past participle verb forms	0.765	0.745
	Consolidate ability to talk with reasonable accuracy and fluency about unfinished actions which started in the past but continue in the present using present perfect and present perfect continuous with for and since.	0.832	0.817

(\*continued)

Strand	Validity of Items-Total Statistics		
	Standard	Correlation with factor	Correlation with all survey
Reading	Consolidate ability to talk with reasonable accuracy and fluency about events in the present using present continuous and simple present tenses.	0.819	0.819
	Consolidate from Grade 8 making suggestions, giving advice, warning, stating prohibitions and obligations.	0.752	0.747
	Make and respond to polite, formal requests and give instructions, in face-to-face and telephone situations.	0.830	0.812
	Independently and intensively, read texts of at least 1000 words.	0.789	0.789
	Continue to read extensively from read-graded readers and other appropriately levelled texts drawing the 1500–2000 keyword range; read and return it within a given time period.	0.802	0.793
	Recognise contexts, purposes and features of formal English through reading, for example, notices and announcements, letters, reports, essays and critical reviews.	0.795	0.809
	Search and navigate the Internet to derive predetermined and specific information from a variety of sources; collate by downloading, cutting, pasting, etc. to form a coherent text	0.697	0.726
	Interpret and evaluate texts.	0.809	0.820
	Recognise through reading and comparing a range of narratives how authors create settings and portray characters.	0.822	0.813
	Read widely for information.	0.772	0.788
	Read and understand persuasive texts.	0.825	0.804

(\*continued)

Strand	Validity of Items-Total Statistics		
	Standard	Correlation with factor	Correlation with all survey
Writing	Plan a piece of writing in note or diagrammatic form showing the main points in sequence.	0.810	0.812
	Use the full range of punctuation appropriately with 70% accuracy.	0.760	0.758
	Use a computer to plan, compose, edit and present own writing.	0.761	0.767
	Independently compose texts of up to 15 sentences in 3 or more connected paragraphs, as appropriate to the purpose.	0.789	0.780
	Drawing on ideas and models from reading, compose narratives based on known or imagined stories, personal experiences or recounts of events.	0.825	0.828
	Drawing on experience of reading, compose information texts which present information based on personal knowledge or research.	0.807	0.832
	Write persuasive texts, in the form of short essays, letters or scripts for oral presentation, arguing for or against a particular view on an issue of topical or personal interest.	0.821	0.793
	Compose short essays, up to 200 words, drawing on work in another curriculum subject or an issue of topical interest, using the organizational features typical of a discussion text to balancing and weigh arguments, and drawing a conclusion.	0.793	0.793
Student	<b>Domain</b>		
	<b>Factors</b>		
	Student's lack of commitment to do homework hinders achieving the ECS.	0.501	0.459
	Students are motivated to study English.	0.624	0.566
	Students are not seriously committed to learning English,	0.419	0.309

(\*continued)

Strand	Validity of Items-Total Statistics		
	Standard	Correlation with factor	Correlation with all survey
Teacher	which hinders the achievability of ECSs.		
	Use of topics of studentsâ€™ interest helps them to achieve the ECS.	0.635	0.525
	Studentsâ€™ actual/current level of English proficiency helps to achieve the ECS.	0.624	0.583
	Teachers are equipped with the methodologies that help them to implement the ECS.	0.603	0.531
	Teachers have classroom management skills that are needed to help them implement the ECS.	0.639	0.527
	The teacherâ€™s role as facilitator helps students to achieve the ECS.	0.631	0.546
	ESL teachers in Independent schools have a positive attitude to ECS.	0.631	0.580
	Parents encourage their children to give importance to English as a subject at school.	0.581	0.550
Parents	Parentsâ€™ encourage their children to participate in English extra-curricular activities that helps to achieve the ECS.	0.567	0.562
	Parentsâ€™ level of proficiency in English allows them to support their childrenâ€™s learning of English.	0.529	0.491
	The textbooks used help students to achieve the ECS.	0.668	0.634
School support	Teaching time is sufficient to achieve all the ECS.	0.545	0.494
	The learning environment allows for the implementation of the ECS.	0.680	0.626
	The use of ICT in teaching English helps in achieving ECS.	0.556	0.431
	Large classes hinder ECS achievement.	0.526	0.452

(\*continued)



Strand	Validity of Items-Total Statistics		
	Standard	Correlation with factor	Correlation with all survey
	Teachers are provided with resources that are needed to implement the ECS.	0.689	0.547
<b>Testing system</b>	The testing system matches the ECS.	0.639	0.580
<b>Curriculum Standards</b>	The ECS are appropriate to the context of Independent school Grade nine students.	0.697	0.686
	The ECS are too ambitious to achieve.	0.536	0.419
<b>Professional Development</b>	The professional development offered to teachers sufficiently prepares them to implement the ECS.	0.664	0.568
	Curriculum Standards Specialists provide effective support to teachers that helps to achieve the ECS.	0.722	0.638

## Appendix C: Responses regarding ECS

### *PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES ABOUT ECS*

Grade Nine English Key Curriculum Standards	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
Use and consolidate the 2100 active vocabulary words from previous grades.	3.51	1.07	Somehow Agree
Recognise, understand and use a range of approximately 500 active words for listening, speaking, reading and writing, using the list of recommended key words for guidance.	3.62	1.09	Somehow Agree
Consolidate from Grades 5-8 and extend ability to recognise, investigate, and spell root words with a range of affixes; generate new words and guess the meaning of unknown words from affixes.	3.62	1.02	Somehow Agree
Collect and classify more roots of words to extend vocabulary, support spelling and use as clues to predict the meaning of words in context.	3.55	1.06	Somehow Agree
Extend recording and building of transitive/intransitive, split/non-split phrasal verbs and idioms, and consolidate use of phrasal verbs from previous grades.	3.47	1.00	Somehow Agree
Extend recording and building of verbs which take the gerund, the infinitive or both, and consolidate use of gerunds and infinitives from previous grades.	3.59	1.01	Somehow Agree
Extend recording and building of verbs and adjectives which take prepositions and consolidate use from previous grades.	3.58	1.06	Somehow Agree
Through own knowledge and use of dictionary and thesaurus, find and use alternative words and phrases to enhance speech and writing.	3.52	1.10	Somehow Agree
Understand a range of spoken texts containing complex utterances in a variety of face-to-face and audio (phone, broadcast, TV, film) forms on general and abstract topics.	3.64	1.04	Somehow Agree
Follow a discussion between two people using context and key words to understand gist and main ideas.	3.65	1.09	Somehow Agree
Follow and respond to hypothetical arguments, statements and questions, choosing between options, weighing consequences, forming preferences with reasons.	3.44	1.07	Somehow Agree
Follow a straightforward persuasive argument to express a point of view, publicize or complain.	3.48	1.07	Somehow Agree

(\*continued)

Grade Nine English Key Curriculum Standards	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
Recognize and understand the purpose, content and features of more formal language through listening to a variety of announcements, warnings, advice, reminders and prohibitions, impersonal reports and formal invitations.	3.57	1.08	Somehow Agree
Understand and respond to a range of functions in conversations.	3.65	1.06	Somehow Agree
Speak accurately and at length to explain, present opinions, recount, describe and summarize events and plans, using a series of 6-8 clear, connected utterances.	3.56	1.07	Somehow Agree
Pronounce words, utterances and connected speech at length, clearly and audibly, without significant interference from Arabic, paying particular attention to English.	3.60	1.03	Somehow Agree
Show awareness of other participants.	3.68	1.03	Somehow Agree
Use strategies for communication maintenance and repair.	3.58	1.00	Somehow Agree
Speak with some degree of fluency.	3.60	1.02	Somehow Agree
Prepare, present and discuss an explanation or description of a process, an event, a topic of interest or a project undertaken to interest and inform.	3.56	1.06	Somehow Agree
Prepare and present an opinion, point of view or justification intended to convince or persuade.	3.50	1.07	Somehow Agree
Summarize and relate main points in sequence from a text heard, read or seen using some key words or expressions from the text.	3.48	1.11	Somehow Agree
Discuss possible scenarios in the present and the future, based on hypothesis and supposition, using first and second conditionals with if, unless, could and might.	3.48	1.04	Somehow Agree
Consolidate ability to talk with reasonable accuracy and fluency about events in the future using present and future tenses, and extend to future continuous (will/may/might/won't be (do)ing) in positive and negative statements, and yes/no and wh-	3.55	1.06	Somehow Agree
Consolidate ability to talk with reasonable fluency about events in the past using past tenses: simple past, past continuous, past perfect, past perfect continuous, present perfect for unspecified past, using irregular past and past participle verb	3.61	1.00	Somehow Agree

(\*continued)

Grade Nine English Key Curriculum Standards	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
Consolidate ability to talk with reasonable accuracy and fluency about unfinished actions which started in the past but continue in the present using present perfect and present perfect continuous with for and since.	3.49	1.07	Somehow Agree
Consolidate ability to talk with reasonable accuracy and fluency about events in the present using present continuous and simple present tenses.	3.67	1.04	Somehow Agree
Consolidate from Grade 8 making suggestions, giving advice, warning, stating prohibitions and obligations.	3.68	1.03	Somehow Agree
Make and respond to polite, formal requests and give instructions, in face-to-face and telephone situations.	3.66	1.04	Somehow Agree
Independently and intensively, read texts of at least 1000 words.	3.49	1.11	Somehow Agree
Continue to read extensively from read-graded readers and other appropriately levelled texts drawing the 1500-2000 key word range; read and return it within a given time period.	3.50	1.09	Somehow Agree
Recognize contexts, purposes and features of formal English through reading, for example, notices and announcements, letters, reports, essays and critical reviews.	3.54	1.02	Somehow Agree
Search and navigate the Internet to derive predetermined and specific information from a variety of sources; collate by downloading, cutting, pasting, etc. to form a coherent text	3.61	1.10	Somehow Agree
Interpret and evaluate texts.	3.43	1.07	Somehow Agree
Recognize through reading and comparing a range of narratives how authors create settings and portray characters.	3.63	1.04	Somehow Agree
Read widely for information.	3.61	1.08	Somehow Agree
Read and understand persuasive texts.	3.63	1.08	Somehow Agree
Plan a piece of writing in note or diagrammatic form showing the main points in sequence.	3.54	1.08	Somehow Agree
Use the full range of punctuation appropriately with 70% accuracy.	3.66	1.07	Somehow Agree (*continued)

Grade Nine English Key Curriculum Standards	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
Use a computer to plan, compose, edit and present own writing.	3.58	1.13	Somehow Agree
Independently compose texts of up to 15 sentences in 3 or more connected paragraphs, as appropriate to the purpose.	3.58	1.05	Somehow Agree
Drawing on ideas and models from reading, compose narratives based on known or imagined stories, personal experiences or recounts of events.	3.61	1.03	Somehow Agree
Drawing on experience of reading, compose information texts which present information based on personal knowledge or research.	3.55	1.03	Somehow Agree
Write persuasive texts, in the form of short essays, letters or scripts for oral presentation, arguing for or against a particular view on an issue of topical or personal interest.	3.45	1.06	Somehow Agree
Compose short essays, up to 200 words, drawing on work in another curriculum subject or an issue of topical interest, using the organizational features typical of a discussion text to balancing and weigh arguments, and drawing a conclusion.	3.44	1.09	Somehow Agree

## Appendix D: Responses regarding WK Standards

### PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES ABOUT WK STANDARDS

Word knowledge Standards	SD %	DA %	SH %	AG %	SA %	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.	Decision
Use and consolidate the 2100 active vocabulary words from previous grades.	4.8%	11%	32%	33%	19%	98.630*	0.000	Agree
Recognize, understand and use a range of approximately 500 active words for listening, speaking, reading and writing, using the list of recommended key words for guidance.	4.8%	8%	33%	30%	25%	103.518*	0.000	Somehow Agree
Consolidate from Grades 5-8 and extend ability to recognize, investigate, and spell root words with a range of affixes; generate new words and guess the meaning of unknown words from affixes.	3.2%	10%	29%	37%	21%	117.666a	0.000	Agree
Collect and classify more roots of words to extend vocabulary, support spelling and use as clues to predict the meaning of words in context.	3.5%	11%	34%	30%	22%	98.309a	0.000	Somehow agree
Extend recording and building of transitive/intransitive, split/non-split phrasal verbs and idioms, and consolidate use of phrasal verbs from previous grades.	1.6%	15%	36%	30%	18%	110.688a	0.000	Somehow agree
Extend recording and building of verbs which take the gerund, the infinitive or both, and	3.5%	9%	32%	37%	19%	128.373a	0.000	Somehow Agree (*continued)

Word knowledge Standards	SD %	DA %	SH %	AG %	SA %	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.	Decision
consolidate use of gerunds and infinitives from previous grades.								
Extend recording and building of verbs and adjectives which take prepositions and consolidate use from previous grades.	3.9%	11%	32%	32%	22%	98.341a	0.000	Somehow Agree
Word Knowledge Average	3.5%	14%	31%	29%	23%	77.794a	0.000	Somehow agree

## Appendix E: MOEHE Approval

### MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION APPROVAL



التاريخ : 2017/1/22م

تسهيل مهمة القانم بالبحث الميداني في المدارس

السيد: مدير إدارة التوجيه التربوي المحترم

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

نود إحاطتكم علماً بأن الباحث/ الباحثون المذكورة أسماؤهم أعلاه، يصدر إجراء دراسة ميدانية في مدرستكم وبياناتهم كالتالي:

- اسم الباحث: فراس عبد الله الكردي
- جهة البحث: برنامج ماجستير، تخصص المناهج والتدريس والتقويم- كلية التربية- جامعة قطر.
- عنوان البحث: مدى تحقق معايير مناهج اللغة الإنجليزية الرئيسية للصف التاسع في المدارس المستقلة في قطر من وجهة نظر معلميها
- هدف البحث:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استقصاء إلى أي مدى يجد معلمو اللغة الإنجليزية أن المعايير الرئيسية لمناهج اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة ثلثية محققة من قبل الطلاب مع متابعة طرق تطبيقها والعوامل المساعدة أو المعيلة لتحقيقها وبحث أفضل السبل المقترحة للوصول إلى أفضل تحقيق لها في المدارس المستقلة في دولة قطر.

- عينة البحث: معلمو ومخيمات اللغة الإنجليزية للصف التاسع في المدارس المستقلة في قطر.

التاريخ: 2017\1\18

عليه، يرجى التكرم بتسهيل مهمة الباحث، علماً بأن البيانات ستكون سرية ولأغراض البحث العلمي..

مع شكرنا لحسن تعاونكم معنا ،،،

د. عزيزة أحمد السعدي

مدير إدارة السياسات والأبحاث التربوية

التاريخ : 2017\1\22





## Appendix F: QU-IRB Approval



### Qatar University Institutional Review Board QU-IRB

January 23, 2017

Mr. Firas Abdullah Alkurdi  
Graduate Student Project  
College of Education  
Qatar University  
Tel.: 33835519  
Email: [fa1404579@qu.edu.qa](mailto:fa1404579@qu.edu.qa)

Dear Mr. Firas Alkurdi,

Sub.: **Research Ethics Review Exemption / CEDU Graduate Student Project**  
Ref.: Project titled, "Achievability of Grade Nine Qatari English Curriculum Standards: A Teacher's Perspective"

We would like to inform you that your application along with the supporting documents provided for the above proposal, is reviewed and having met all the requirements, has been exempted from the full ethics review.

Please note that any changes/modification or additions to the original submitted protocol should be reported to the committee to seek approval prior to continuation.

Your Research Ethics Approval No. is: **QU-IRB 727-E/17**

Kindly refer to this number in all your future correspondence pertaining to this project.

Best wishes,

Dr. Khalid Al-Ali  
Chairperson, QU-IRB

