CAN STUDYING ABROAD CHANGE THE ATTITUDE OF SAUDI MALES ON SEX SEGREGATION?
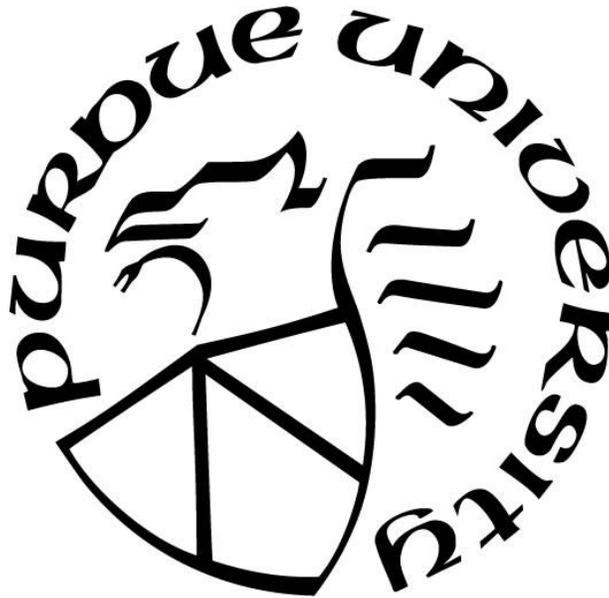
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To my wife Nada, and my junior Omar

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

This study aimed at investigating the divergence in attitudes between Saudi students who have lived in the United States for four years or more compared to Saudi students who have not lived outside Saudi Arabia for more than a three-month period. A survey was designed based on the main aspects of Saudi culture for this study as surveys are found to be the most common means for measuring attitudes. Two samples of Saudi students were recruited, one sample included students who have lived in the United States for four years or more, and the other sample consisted of those who have not lived outside Saudi Arabia for more than three months. A statistically significant difference between the two samples was found; students who have lived in the United States for four years or more were found to be more tolerant than those who have not lived abroad for more than three months towards the issue of sex segregation in mixed environments.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The presence of Saudi students in the United States dates back to 1947. During that time, the Saudi government transferred 30 students studying at the American University of Beirut in Lebanon to Texas State University in the US. Four years later, in 1951, Saudi Arabia opened its first Cultural Office in New York whose role was supervising students studying in US schools (Abouammoh, Smith & Duwais, 2014). During the first appearance of Saudi students in the United States, that is, the period from 1947 until before 2005, a few studies have been conducted (El-Banyan, 1974; Al-Khudair, 1978; Shabeeb, 1996). The second period of the Saudi students' presence in the United States was associated with starting the King Abdullah Scholarship Program in 2005. The program, according to Bukhari and Denman (2013) is believed to be the largest funded governmental program around the world. Driven by its need for reformation of the cultural structure and seeking the reduction of Wahhabis' influence, the Saudi government launched the program to send Saudi youth abroad (Alhazmi, 2015; Ottaway, 2012). Since the start of the program, thousands of Saudi students have experienced cultural contact with multiple cultures worldwide. The program allows the Saudi students to study in different countries such as the United States, Britain, Australia, Japan, and China (Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education, 2019). These students might bring potential cultural changes upon their return to Saudi Arabia due to their cultural contact with countries/cultures they temporarily settled in (Taylor, Charles, Albasri & Wasmiah, 2015). By reviewing the relevant literature, an in-depth look at cultural change's possibility appears to have been complex and face several obstacles, such as cultural dimension differences, psychological stresses, and behavioral difficulties. In order to investigate the possibility, the KASP program might bring regarding changing the values of the Saudi

culture, this study focuses on one potential change that Saudi students in the United States may bring back decreasing Wahhabi's impact on Saudi society regarding sex segregation. I argue that Saudi students' long-term residence is a vital factor in the acculturation process.

Since the beginning of the KASP program, a number of studies have been conducted on Saudi students in the United States. Most of these studies followed the descriptive approach and only a few followed the quantitative approach. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches are essential for building an integrated understanding of human phenomena. However, most of the studies on Saudi students have mainly focused on descriptive views. These studies dealt with issues of acculturation and adjustment challenges, focusing on the use of the interviews and then reviewing the most notable topics that appear during the interview with the respondents. These topics revolve around behavioral difficulties that include language difficulties, weather difficulties, eating difficulties, and psychological difficulties that include attachment from home and family, loneliness, isolation, and racism. These topics are significant; however, it is time to bring a different view of the experiences of Saudi students in the United States. A view that looks at the overall level of experience, examines one element of Saudi culture, and uses a quantitative approach that sees the experience as an objective matter is needed. In this research, the purpose of utilizing the quantitative approach, besides diversifying Saudi students' body of knowledge, was to impart a different perspective about this topic. The application of this perspective occurred by subjecting the KASP program to investigation and trying to inspect its final results on Saudi society regarding the possibility of a change in Saudi students' cultural values as an outcome of living in the United States. Cultural change was among the goals that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia aimed to obtain from establishing this program (Saudi Arabian

Ministry of Education, 2019). This study examined the extent to which this desire of Saudi Arabia for cultural change will be fulfilled.

Finally, by using a quantitative approach with a group of participants, this study investigated the cultural change that could happen to Saudi students at collective level. The collective level is difficult to implement without the quantitative approach, and is an essential phenomenon in social sciences. The collective phenomena in social sciences include but are not limited to collective identity, national identity, and collective memory (Wilson, 2005). This study examined the possible of change in cultural values of Saudi students in the United States as a group-level phenomenon.

In 2005, the Saudi government and the United States government signed an agreement, known as the King Abdullah Scholarship Program (KASP), to facilitate the flow of Saudi students to the United States. This agreement made Saudi students the fifth largest group of international students in the U.S.A, after China, India, South Korea, and Germany (Taylor & Albasri, 2014).

The United States has ambitious expectations for Saudi students in the United States, especially as agents of change once they return home after completion of their studies. James B. Smith, the American Ambassador to Saudi Arabia stated in a speech to 6,000 Saudi students who were departing to the United States, that he wished these students would return with "new ideas and perhaps new ways of looking at the world" (Ottaway, 2012, p. 4). In February 2019, statistics from the Saudi Ministry of Education indicated that 92000 student members of KASP are studying in several countries. Most of these students, 58000, are studying in the United States, forming 60% of all Saudi students abroad (AlAsiri, 2019; AlShehri, 2018; Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education, 2019).

The establishment of KASP lies behind reforming Saudi Arabia in several different aspects such as academic, cultural and work environments (Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education, 2019). KASP's goals, as stated on the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education's website are:

I.   To sponsor qualified Saudis to study in the best universities around the world.

II. To bring about a high level of academic and professional standards, in Saudi educational institutions, through the foreign scholarship program.

III. To exchange scientific, educational, and cultural experiences with countries worldwide.

IV. To build up qualified and professional Saudi staff in the work environment.

V.   To raise and develop the level of professionalism among Saudis (Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education, 2019).

Some researchers argued that besides the announced goals, there are also either accompanying effects or implicit goals (Alhazmi, 2015; Hilall & Denman, 2013; Ottaway, 2012). For example, Alhazmi (2010) argued that by sending many young Saudis to study abroad, the Saudi government has decided to open the country and the culture to globalization. The Saudi government wants to ensure that Saudi people can interact with people from other cultures and religions. The largest religion in Saudi Arabia is Islam, and the exposure to people of different cultures would mean that the people would interact with other religions, which would lead to enrichment of the culture. The interactions would foster unity and cooperation between the Saudi and other foreign nationals (Alhazmi, 2010; Ottaway, 2012).

Hilall and Denman (2013) shed light on the KASP role as a tool to bridge the gap between Saudi Arabia and the United States, especially after the disharmony that resulted between both sides after 9/11. For instance, Saudi Arabia has been held responsible for generating and adopting Wahhabis radical ideas, which has caused massive damage to its image, especially in the US, as fifteen of the nineteen hijackers of the 9/11 incident were from Saudi Arabia (Kamrava, 2013).

Ottaway (2012) argued that there was another unpublished goal of KASP that will lead to the development and reformation of Saudi institutional and social-cultural structures. King Abdulla, the founder of KASP, was keen on curbing the spread of Wahhabis ideology, especially after the 9/11 incident. The goal was to form a body of Saudi reformers who would be used to curb the activities and the influence of the Wahhabi religious establishment on Saudi society.

The rise of the present-day phenomenon Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia goes back to the binary authority's birth between the Saud family and the Al Alshaik family in the eighteenth-century (Baki, 2004). The term "Wahhabi" is after the Muslim scholar Muhammad bin Abd al Wahhab, who lived in the Arabian Peninsula between (1703- 1791). Abd al Wahhab's movement started as a response to what he believed was a moral decline of his society. Abd al Wahhab's goal was to return to the pure practice of Islam. His movement united with the armed action of Muhammad bin Saud, the old founder of the modern-day Al Saud ruler in Saudi Arabia. Both leaders began the process of uniting disparate tribes in the Arabian Peninsula (Blanchard, 2007). The Wahhabi establishment has a powerful influence on Saudi society's various aspects, including beliefs about sex segregation.

The social domain in Saudi Arabia is divided into private and public domains (AlMunajjed,1997). Men belong to the public domain in which religious, economic, and political activities are practiced (Alhazmi & Nyland, 2011; AlMunajjed,1997). Women belong exclusively to the private domain where family, intimate life, education, and children care activities are practiced (Alhazmi & Nyland 2011; AlMunajjed,1997). In all aspects of life in Saudi Arabia, males and females are segregated. There are male and female sections in public environments such as every school, airports, and restaurants.

Like other Islamic schools, the Wahhabis establishment has developed its concepts and rules for relationships between males and females. However, these rules, unlike other schools, are less tolerant and very conservative. These rules affirm that women must cover their faces completely, as a primary starting point. Women must not leave their homes unless for necessity because a Muslim woman's duty is staying home to raise the righteous Islamic generation. If there is an urgent need to work, women must not work in mixed environments (AlArabiya, 2010; Aziz, 2010; Hubard, 2016; Salamah, 2016; Wagemakers, 2016). Sex segregation has affected the Saudi economy and social life for decades (Al-qahtani, 2012; Saqib, 2016).

However, sex segregation in Saudi Arabia is not only religious practice. It is a practice that has its origins in Saudi society's tribal nature (Alhazmi, 2010; Bajnaid & Elyas, 2017). The roots of sex segregation in Saudi Arabia derive from the Bedouin customs of the Arabian Peninsula society (Bajnaid & Elyas, 2017). Bedouin societies developed their social system, which does not allow contact between men and women unless they are first-degree relatives. Bedouins, in particular, and Arabs, in general, are patriarchal communities that see women as part of men's ownership (El Saadawi, 1977). These perceptions give men the absolute power to act in what they deem right or wrong, just as they use their lands or cars (El Saadawi, 1977). More in-depth details regard to sex segregation will be reviewed in chapter two.

Additionally, the masculine society nature in Saudi Arabia hinders attempts to changes. When the Saudi government approved the right to vote for municipal councils in 2015, men's authority stood in the way of Saudi women going to the polls and electing their representatives (Tønnessen, 2016). Back then, when women were not allowed to drive, Saudi men refused to take their women and sisters to the polls. Meaning that even if governmental regulations changed, men's power plays a vital role in obstructing achieving the desired change.

There is a possibility that Saudi students enrolling in the program will have a massive impact on Saudi Arabia in terms of culture change (Taylor, Charles, Albasri & Wasmiah, 2015). Interacting with another people from various cultures allows the exchange of ideas and impacts the social-cultural environment and influences value systems (Kaplan, 1966; Okantey, 2012; Sawir, Marginson, Deumert, Nyland & Ramia, 2008; Zhu, Jiang & Watson, 2011). For example, there is a difference in perception of the gender-gap between Eastern and Western countries (Alhazmi, 2010; Hofstede, 2011). Gender gap refers to the notion that women have a distinctive nature and caring values from men (Hofstede, 2011). A difference in the gender gap is that both male and female students in Western countries engage in the same activities and learn in the same classroom. Female students express themselves as freely as their male counterparts. Saudi students had to adjust their values to participate fully in such cultures (Al-hazmi, 2010). The Saudi alumni take their skills from the United States back to Saudi Arabia and seek to reapply them. Saudis in the U.S become a part of the American culture, thereby bringing some of that culture back to Saudi Arabia, expanding the potential for Saudi Arabia to show significant cultural changes (Taylor, Charles, Albasri & Wasmiah, 2015). Students bring new perspectives, affecting their home society by exchanging these new ideas and views (Sawir et al., 2008). Changes happen through either the official positions of these returnees or having an influence on their social circles. The expectation about international students is that some of them return to hold senior positions with vast influence in their countries, such as the military, education, business, and technology (Kavas & Kavas, 2008; Lau, 1984; Mathai, 1994).

In the relevant literature, one of the most common concepts to understand changes that occur due to living abroad and communicating of two different cultures is the acculturation theory (Smith & Khawaja, 2011; Thomson & Hoffman-Goetz, 2009). According to Ryder,

Alden, and Paulhus (2000), acculturation is the process of cultural alteration of an individual or group, by accommodating to or borrowing some characteristics from another culture and integrate cultures due to lengthy contact. Among the noticeable shortcoming of acculturation definitions is that these definitions are not comprehensive. The word "lengthy" in the previous definition is ambiguous. Because of international students' absence of permanent residency in host cultures, acculturation's prior description does not appropriately apply to them. What describes international students the best is the sojourners' adjustment (Brein & David,1971). This term refers to the sojourners, including international students, who intend to stay in the host countries for a specified time and then return to their countries (Laubscher, 1996). Lysgaard (1955) developed his theory, U-curve, that addresses international students' full adjustments to the host culture according to a specific timeline. The theory divides the cultural adjustment process that international students go through in host countries into four stages: honeymoon, culture-shock, adjustment, and mastery (Hung-Wen, 1999). The first stage occurs within 1-4 months. The second occurs between 4-12 months. The third occurs between 12-36 months. The last occurs when an individual has lived in a foreign culture for 49 months or more. In the mastery stage, international students' adjustment has improved immensely to match the local culture. By reviewing the empirical literature on the U-curve theory, Black and Mendenhall (1990) concluded that the theory has the most common application on international students. They also found that 12 research studies supported the theory and the importance of the length of residency is a decisive factor in the adjustment processes according to the hierarchy of time as U-curve Theory proposes. Still, it is a crucial factor in acculturation. Previous studies showed that long-stays contribute to reducing stress levels (Demes & Geeraert, 2015; Lee, Koeske, & Sales, 2004), students' depression resulting from the discrepancy between expectations and

performance (Heppner, Mallen, Liao, & Wu, 2007), homesickness, cultural difference, social isolation, academics, and unfamiliar climate stress (Yu-Wen, 2005).

Plenty of studies about international students focused on challenges that students face during adjustment time. These studies focused on several aspects international students encounter, such as academic and learning second language stresses (Ammigand, Drexler, Williamsonb & Guerra 2019; Chen, 1999; Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006; Mori, 2000; Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006; Zhang & Goodson 2011). Also, some studies focused on socio-cultural stresses such as detachment from the home country (Szabo, Ward, & Jose, 2016; Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006), depression (Ammigand, Drexler, Williamsonb & Guerra 2019; Yan and Berliner, 2013), lack of friends and loneliness (Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002), lack of social supports (Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen & Van Horn, 2002), lack of confidence when interacting (Robertson, Line, Jones &Thomas, 2000), coping strategies (Szabo, Ward, & Jose, 2016), and discrimination (Hanassab, 2006; Lee & Rice; Schwartz, Ungerer, Zamonga, & Szapocznik, 2010; Marquardt, Steigenga, & Williams, 2013).

However, there is a dearth of studies that investigate changes that happen at the cultural values level as a result of acculturation (Kim & Abro, 2001; Marin & Gamba 2003). Most studies concerning cultural values change due to acculturation were limited and broadly investigated the immigrants' population. These studies found immigrants to changes in their cultural values related to gender roles and familialism, "strong identification and attachment with nuclear and extended families as well as feelings of loyalty, reciprocity, and solidarity" (Triandis, Marin, Betancourt, Lisansky & Chang, 1982, p.411), and most of these studies were conducted on Latin population (Marin & Gamba 2003). Only one study seems to be close to the nature of the international student population. Tang and Dion (1999) conducted a study on

Chinese immigrants – that initially began as students – acculturation who have been living in Canada between 10-12 years to investigate their attitudes and traditionalism. The study found that women were significantly less traditional in their beliefs and expectations regarding family hierarchy and social roles than men.

According to the U-curve theory timeline proposal, students who reach the mastery stage will possibly have a change in their cultural values, which this research intended to argue. Over the past few decades, numerous studies concerning adjustment and acculturation have shown that international students' adjustment improves, and acculturative stress reduces over time. Some studies have ignored the possibility of cultural values change and focused broadly on behaviors and language level (Kim & Abro, 2001; Thomson & Hoffman-Goetz, 2009). Other studies have shown that behavioral changes that occur during adjustment and acculturation indicate changes at the level of cultural values. Behaviors and values should be viewed as intertwined, and we should not view them independently from each other. Any changes that occur in our behaviors, may indicate a change in our values (Marin & Gamba, 2003; Shim & Schwartz, 2007). A more detailed explanation of the relationship of behavioral change and value will take place later on in this study. The purpose of this argument is to indicate the possibility of change in international students' behaviors and values.

Statement of the Problem

The increasing number of Saudi students in the U.S. is one of the steps to reduce the impact of extreme religious and cultural limitations on Saudi society (Ottaway, 2012). Previous studies covered several aspects of the experience of Saudi students abroad. Al-Mussaitir (2015) studied what motivates and prevents Saudi students from communicating with American people. Hayan (2013) and Bilal (2017) found that the students enrolling in the program became more

open-minded and developed liberal ideas compared to Saudi culture. Shaw (2010) found that the program contributed to changing Saudis' negative image about the United States. Some studies focused on specific demographical characteristics when studying Saudi students' experience in the United States. For example, gender (Alshabibi, 2018; Alhajjuj, 2016; Omair, 2019; Hyan, 2013; Kampman, 2011; Song, 2020) and marital status (Al Ramadan, 2016). Some studies focused on challenges that Saudi students face in the United States. These challenges relate to identity conflict (Al-Sebaitian, 2015; Asfahani, 2017; Hall, 2013 Sandekian, Weddington, Birnbaum & Keen, 2015), cultural impacts (Razek & Coyner, 2013), discrimination (Al-Qarni, 2018; Alsharari & Teodorescu 2019), and acculturation-adjustment (Alasiri, 2019; Al-Khedaire, 1978, Al-Murshidi, 2014; Davis & McGovern, 2015). However, no one has tried to measure the extent to which Saudi students' attitudes change regarding sex segregation after enrolling in the program and living in the West, the United States in this study. It is unclear if studying abroad can change Saudis' attitude toward sex segregation in Saudi Arabia.

Also, there are two drawbacks to these studies. First, the vast majority followed the descriptive approach. For example, Heyn (2013) used a semi-structured interview to collect data from nine Saudi male students to explore their experiences in American universities. Alqarni (2018) conducted qualitative research using semi-structured interviews with eight Saudi international students to explore the needs and difficulties that they experienced at Humboldt State University. Shaw's research (2010) was conducted following a qualitative case study and photo-elicitation research that was conducted on 25 Saudi students. Al-Musaiteer (2016) adopted a semi-structured interview with three Saudi male students to investigate factors that affect the interaction between Saudis and Americans. Alsabatin (2015) conducted individual interviews with 21 Saudi Students to observe the benefits for Saudi students studying in the U.S.A.

The second is related to the first aspect, which is that these studies focused on the individual level. This is, of course, due to the approach because it would not be possible to argue group level experiences of Saudi students by studying individual cases.

Research Question

This study focuses on one potential change that Saudi students in the Unites States may bring back, decreasing Wahhabi's impact on Saudi society; sex segregation. The research question is: Will Saudi male students living in the United States for four years or more report a more tolerant attitude towards mixed-sex workplaces in Saudi Arabia than domestic students who have never lived outside Saudi Arabia for more than three months?

The study involves only male participants because men are the most substantial factor in a woman's inability to work. Saudi culture is a male domination culture in which men play an essential pivotal role in determining women's decisions (Alqahtani & Hizam, 2015; Tønnessen, 2016).

This study uses U-curve theory as a reference in participants' selection. The participants from the United States enrolled in this study fall within the last stage of the U-curve theory, mastery stage, in which participants have been living in the US for 49 months (four years) or more. Also, by doing so, this study targets undergraduate students who form 49%, the majority of KASP members (Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education, 2019).

Also, the Saudi Arabian participants enrolled in this study included only those who have not lived outside Saudi Arabia for more than three months. The goal was to limit the control group in this study to find the living abroad variable's effect. According to the theory, living abroad for three months falls within the honeymoon stage. During this stage, the other culture would have a significant impact on the individuals. However, three months are not enough to

develop a stable attitude toward full adjustment according to the theory. More detailed explanations of sampling will be in Chapter Three.

Importance of the Study

Saudi Arabia has been a conservative country that has adhered to Wahhabi's ideologies. The belief system, especially regarding sex segregation, has had severe ramifications on the Saudi economy and social life for decades (Al.qahtani, 2012; Saqib, 2016). A close look at the reality of sexual segregation in Saudi Arabia leads us to a clear conclusion, sex segregation results from Wahhabi establishment's extreme understanding of the religious verses (Al-arabiya, 2010; Hubard, 2016). The practice of sex segregation, as in the current manner in Saudi Arabia, has no background from the Quran nor Islamic religious literature before the existence of Wahhabis ideology in Arabic Peninsula (Alhazmi & Nyland, 2015). This study aims to add literature to develop solutions and measures to help Saudi Arabia and other countries that fight against radical thoughts to improve the Saudi economy and women's lives. This study aims to provide possible solutions to help societies suffering from extremism around the world, especially countries with political and religious systems similar to Saudi Arabia in the Middle East.

This research also attempts to assess the impact of the KASP program, fourteen years after its conception. The research's contribution will help decision-makers as they evaluate and adjust the program to achieve both its published and unpublished goals.

Also, this study is important in examining changes that occur in international students' cultural values. As mentioned previously, changes in cultural values are topics that previous studies of acculturation ignored. We hope that this research will be a proposal for developing such a model

Theoretical Framework

This study builds upon two main theories: U-curve and acculturation. The U-curve theory role will be a reference for the participants' selection regarding the length of stay. Saudi Students in the united states participated in this study will be in the mastery stage. The U-curve theory defines the mastery stage at 49 months or more (Hung-Wen, 1999). The participants from Saudi Arabia will be within the three-month period; they have never been abroad. The results interpretation will be in light of the three possible scenarios that may result from the acculturation of two groups: acceptance, adaptation, and reaction. More detailed explanations of these two theories will be in Chapter Two.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Acculturation Theory

Acculturation is change of an individual or a people resulting from adapting and

borrowing some traits of another culture after lengthy contact (Padilla & Perez, 2003). The main

driver of the acculturation process stems from the fact that newcomers must coexist with new

contexts, that are completely different from the backgrounds from which they came. These

contexts include: 1) physical changes, such as changes in the place of living and types of homes.

2) biological differentiation, such as experiencing with new kinds of diseases. 3) Political

changes conveyed by the host culture to newcomers. 4) Economic reform due to changes in the

types of economic activities. 5) Cultural transformations, which are significant contributors to

acculturation cultures (Berry, 1997).

Acculturation is a phenomenon where cultural-behavioral alterations may occur within

both hosts and newcomers; however, the host culture is more likely to be the dominant power

impacting the other enormously (Berry, 1997). In 1954, the Social Science Research Council

described acculturation as a shift in a culture emerging from direct cultural transmission between

two or more cultures (Hansen, Shneyderman & McNamara, 2018). When two cultures interact,

there is no doubt that cultural diffusion borrowing, or conflict will arise (Trimble, 2003).

"Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having

different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the

original cultural patterns of either or both groups" (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits 1936, p. 149).

Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, (1936) identified several types of physical contact where

acculturation is likely to occur. The first type of contact occurs between the entire population and

a specific group of another community. For example, communication between traders, religious

leaders, and special artisans in a society with other members of the same society. The second type of contact occurs when communication occurs in a friendly or non-friendly manner. The third aspect of interaction occurs between equally sized or remarkably different sized of population. In the fourth, contact occurs between two groups that have immense differences in material or non-material characters of culture, or both. In the fifth, contact occurs either remotely through cultural carriers or through physical contact where one group from a different culture settles in anew area creating a settlement culture which is a combination of the interacting cultures (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits 1936).

When applying these physical types to Saudi students in the United States, they fit with most the physical types of contact where acculturation at the group level is likely to occur. They fit with the second type, which is when communication occurs in a friendly manner. They also fit with the third type, which is when interaction occurs between an equal size of population or a remarkably smaller or larger size. Finally, they fit the fourth, which is when contact occurs between two groups that have immense differences in material or non-material characters of culture, or both.

A pragmatic-nature relationship seems to be motivating acculturation (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits, 1936). Benefits that each side (people of the host culture and the newcomers) might gain from the interaction plays a significant role in acculturation success. To illustrate, acculturation occurs under two types of each group trait: presented and selected traits. On the one hand, the presented traits refer to the characteristics that the host culture gives to the newcomers because of 1) practical advantages like economic or political benefits, and 2) the desire of the donor group to diffuse their values such as humane ideals, modesty, ethics, and religious ideas. On the other hand, selected traits are traits that are accepted by the receiving group because of 1)

economic advantages and social advantages such as prestige, and 2) trying to match the existing culture-patterns (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits, 1936). American universities, for instance, rely upon the advantages of living in the United States as presented traits to attract Saudi and other international students. American universities seek to attract international students, for economic reasons, by marketing itself as an environment for better education, strong sports programs, safe environments, learning social skills and cultural experiences (Luetke & Xu, 2018).

There are some factors that interfere with the integration of traits into the accepting culture during the process of acculturation (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits, 1936). These factors are 1) time that has elapsed since accepting the traits, 2) conflict that resulted because of contradiction between the old and the new traits, and 3) the element of adjustment which includes a) modifying and reinterpreting the accepted traits, b) altering the old cultural patterns, c) displacement of older traits, and d) the change that resulted in the process of acculturation (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits, 1936).

Redfield, Linton & Herskovits, (1936) identified three situations in which acculturation may occur at the group level. The first is when a culture, either forcibly or voluntarily, received a group of people. The second is when there is no political and social equality between the two groups. The third is when there is inequality between the groups' population. In the third situation, the results will be: "1) political dominance by one group without recognition of its social dominance, or 2) political and social dominance by one group or 3) recognition of social superiority of one group by the other without the exercise by the subject group; of political dominance by the former" (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits, 1936. p. 150-151).

There are three types of cultural patterns resulting from acculturation at the group level. The first is acceptance. In this pattern, the new culture takes over the original culture's values,

leading to cultural and heritage loss. In this case, the transformation happens deep in the inner values of the affected culture. The second is adaptation. In adaptation, both cultures combine and create a harmonious cultural pattern. The harmony between the two cultures either generates a reconciled cultural pattern or a mutual model where both cultures share some values and, at the same time, maintain some original cultural aspects, while living in a peaceful environment. The third pattern involves reaction. Due to the interaction of cultures, the result may be oppression or rejection of one culture by the other. In the latter situation, a contra-acculturative would be formed as a psychological reaction. In such cases, contra-acculturative is either compensation of a sense of inferiority or a desire to return to the original culture (Redfield, Linionu & Herskov, 1936).

Attempting to predict the nature or the amount of change that may occur in the positions held by Saudi students on sexual segregation as a result of living in the United States of America, yields many possibilities. Firstly, the first scenario, acceptance, may occur. Accordingly, there would be a profound change in the attitudes of Saudi students, and they would become more open and accepting of women working in mixed environments.

Secondly, the second scenario may occur, adaptation, where a peaceful coexistence is formed between Saudi students and the American community in which they live.

Lastly, the third scenario, rejection, may occur. In this case, there is a high possibility that the Saudi students will isolate themselves as a psychological reaction of either oppression or rejection by American society, based on the theory predictions. As a result, Saudi students may show a stronger tendency to uphold their original values, which include their conservative stance that refusing women working in on mixed environments.

24

Time plays a significant role in bridging the gap and facilitating of foreigners' adjustment to a culture (Al-Khedaire, 1978). For example, students who had been living in the United States for three or more years had a better understanding of the American culture compared to the students who had just arrived (Al-Khedaire, 1978).

U-Curve Theory

The role of time can be understood through one of the most common theories in the domain of intercultural communication: U-curve Theory. Adjustment to a new culture is an element that occurs in people (students, workers, refugees, etc.) who find themselves in new cultures. The U-curve, commonly-known as Lysgaard's U-curve model, is a theory that seeks to explain how people adjust to new cultures (An & Chiang, 2015). It refers to the adjustment curve, which traces how a person interacts with the host culture (Markovizky & Samid, 2008). For international students, the adjustment to a new culture allows them to settle into the learning institutions with ease. A fast and smooth adjustment to the foreign culture will enable people to function effectively in the new cultures (Louis,1980). The U-curve model allows the description of the cultural adjustment process that foreigners experience to alter their original cultural-based beliefs in order to adapt to the host culture (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). The theory notes that there are four stages of cultural adjustment. The four stages are; the honeymoon stage, the culture-shock stage, the adjustment stage, and the mastery stage. The phases occur progressively, and new elements of integration characterize each stage (Black & Mendenhall 1991).

Degree of Adjustment

7.0
6.5
6.0
Honeymoon
5.5
5.0
4.5
4.0
Adjustment
3.5
3.0
2.5
Culture Shock
2.0
1.5
1.0

0-2   3-4   4-6   6-9   10-12   13-24   25-36   46-48   49+

Time in Months

Mastery
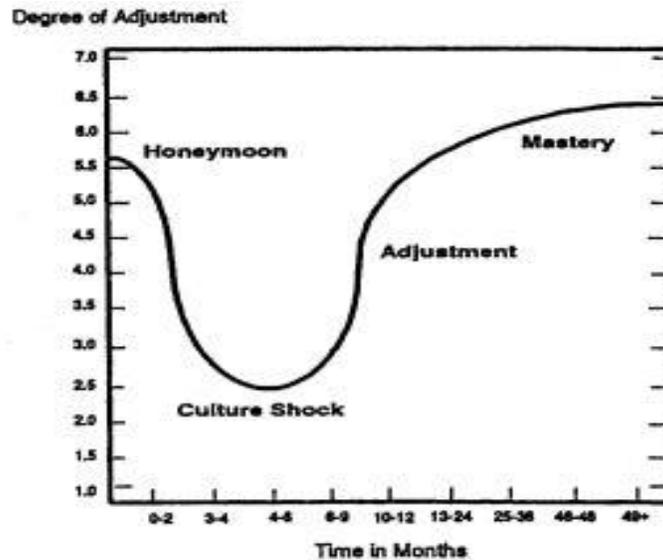
Figure 1: The U-curve of cross-cultural adaptation (Source: Hung-Wen, 1999)

Honeymoon Stage

Many foreigners find the honeymoon stage exciting (Gammel 1998). In this stage, thrilling events occur. The person moving into the new culture does not have time to diagnose the cultural elements of the host people fully. Students during this stage engage in learning about the school, their classroom schedules, and the geographical layout of the school and the local community. They are interested in learning about exciting places to visit, such as museums, monuments, shopping malls, and other areas of interest. It is also in this phase that the students make their first contact with members of their host culture (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). The new students are eager to make new friends, who usually guide them around. In cases where there are language barriers, the first people of contact are critical in guiding the newcomers. The people in this stage are learning about essential elements of the new culture, such as diet, currency conversions, transportation, and other mundane activities (Black & Mendenhall, 1991).

However, at the end of the honeymoon stage, the excitement declines, and they enter a new phase where they start to feel overwhelmed by the new culture (Markovizky & Samid, 2008). The new stage is known as the culture-shock stage.

Culture-shock Stage

In this phase, people want to build more meaningful relationships. However, it may not be easy to develop friendships quickly due to underlying cultural differences (Torbiorn, 1982). The local are also apprehensive of the foreign culture and want to understand as much as they can about the foreigners before they extend their friendship (Torbiorn, 1982).

Further, frustration develops in this stage as foreigners begin to feel alienated from their friends and family. They begin to feel alienating as they settle down and have more free time, which allows them to take a closer look at their surrounding environment and understand the local culture more deeply. In this stage, people start to understand the new elements of the local culture. In this stage, foreigners also start to identify new elements of the culture and begin forming perceptions regarding the new culture (Tobiorn, 1982). The phase also requires an adjustment of the foreigner's culture, and they have to adjust their behaviors and adopt the elements of the local culture (Markovizky & Samid, 2008). For example, in this stage, people may find that they are struggling with communication, especially if they have strong accents which may cause the locals hosting them to struggle to understand what is being communicated.

The excitement begins to fade, as the foreigners become accustomed to the local culture. For students, the schoolwork may begin piling up, causing them to become more frustrated. Additionally, elevated expectations begin to cause frustrations if they are unmet, and the foreigners must adjust their expectations, and these experiences become frustrating. Foreigners also can become bitter towards the local culture, as they find changes too much to handle.

Adjustment Stage

The adjustment stage allows frustrations to decline as foreigners get used to and appreciate the host culture (Usunier, 1998). It is also characterized by increasing knowledge and satisfaction as foreigners learn how to operate in the new culture. People becoming apprehensive about the local culture and realize that they need to embrace it. For students, this is the stage where they begin to become more familiar with the local culture and lose the selective perception about the host culture that they gained and start to sufficiently acclimate to it and master how to act correctly based on the social standards of the host environment. The familiarity allows them to lower their expectations and become more realistic about the local environment (Usunier, 1998; Townsend, 2007).

Mastery Stage

The final stage, mastery, involves the total embracement of the host culture (Black & Mendenhall, 1991). At this stage, the language and communication aspects have improved immensely to match the local culture. The accent may have changed significantly to match the host culture's accent. Foreigners also begin to understand the actions of the local culture and embrace them, which reduces the frustration that they may have been experiencing. Students in this stage have also made friends and feel part of the host community. Foreigners embrace the local cultures and enjoy being in the host culture more. There is a higher tolerance for the new elements of the host culture, especially the strange elements (Black & Mendenhall, 1991). For students, this is the stage where they experiment with the dishes and elements of the cultures that they were reluctant to try. The visitors also teach the host culture interesting factors of their culture.

As mentioned in Chapter One, Saudi Arabia has set goals for the program, including bringing about changes at the cultural level. This desired cultural change pass through psychological operations that students experience abroad. The environment where individuals live plays a significant role in shaping individuals' views. Views form through individuals' relating to a specific type of culture-country. So, moving to a foreign culture-country has an impact on the individuals by adjusting their identity. This process is known as acculturation, in which individual or group change because of consistent communication between people of the host culture and newcomers.

Culture and Intercultural Communication

During the last few decades, intercultural communication has become a worldwide phenomenon accompanying globalization (Al-Musaiteer, 2015). The increase in globalization has led to the interaction of various cultures as people now engage internationally in areas such as business, medicine, religion, and education (Al-Musaiteer, 2015). In Saudi Arabia's case, the 9/11 incident and the desire for economic reformation have motivated the decision-makers to adopt intercultural communication through international education to bring changes in different levels (Al-Hazmi, 2015; Ottaway, 2012).

Cultures define how people think, feel, act, and, consequently, speak, and listen to each other (Schooler & Hofstede, 1983). Culture has various definitions, but some of the most accepted definitions are aspects that characterize a particular category of people. Culture is the exhibition of behavior that is specific to a group of people and which separates them from another category of people (Schooler & Hofstede, 1983). Culture may be defined according to the context one finds themselves. One of the most important implications of the term culture is the references it makes to the environment where a person is brought up, and according to

geography and their racial and ethnic background. Therefore, it is common to reference various cultures such as American Culture, Asian Culture, and European culture, among others. However, even in larger cultures, there are specific and minor cultures, which may result in the creation of the sub-cultures; meaning a collection of people or a specific social class that differs in particular areas from a broader culture is part of it, and the difference may be associated with lifestyle, beliefs, specialization in one of the areas of knowledge or way of understanding the world (Fine & Kleinman, 1979).

Intercultural communication refers to the process where people who are from diverse cultural backgrounds exchange information, which includes ideas, information, and thoughts using both verbal and non-verbal elements of communication (Gardner, 2010). Intercultural communication also entails the study of how people from diverse cultures interact and the strategies that are adopted in overcoming the barriers that present themselves due to differences in cultures. Intercultural communication may also be viewed as a communication process where people from diverse cultures must recognize the differences and overcome barriers for communication to be effective (Gardner, 2010).

The focus of studies on intercultural communication aim to understand and cope with the challenges of communication that arise due to differences in culture such as dress code, language, or how people view time and other differences (Haller; Maude, 2016; Naegele & Berger, 2019). Therefore, the effectiveness of the intercultural communication of Saudi students abroad is conditional on both cultures (host and foreigners) being able to understand of each other. It is crucial for Saudi students to understand the cultural elements of the United States, to fit into the host culture and to reach a level of successful intercultural communication.

One of the biggest challenges might hinder cultural adjustment during intercultural communication, hence acculturation of the Saudi students in the United States is the cultural dimension differences between the two communicative cultures. For international students, studies indicate that the greater the differences between the cultural dimensions between international students' culture and the culture of the host country, the more difficult it is for them to adjust (Suanet & Van de Vijver, 2009; Otlu, 2010).

Differences in Cultural Dimensions Challenges

Four elements influence communication between cultures. Each culture has differences in the perception of these elements. They are power distance, individualism, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 2011).

Firstly, power distance measures how power differences within societies, institutions, and organizations are defined and implemented. People's perception of their power position influences their communication. Power distance is the acceptance that power is unequal, and some people wield higher power. In more conservative societies, they have very high-power distance, where the persons in low power positions do not question the decision of those in power. However, in progressive societies, there is a low power distance, where decisions can be challenged by a person who wields the least power (Taras, 2017). Therefore, intercultural communication is impacted by power distance, especially when people from cultures that have differences in power orientation interact.

Secondly, individualism refers to the extent that a society embraces a person's independence (Hofstede, 2011). Societies that have a communal approach tend to undertake activities collectively, where success is seen as a shared activity. The integration into groups influences how society perceives success and integration (Hofstede, 2011; Taras, 2017).

Communal societies value interpersonal relationships, and they tend to cater to the people (Taras, 2017). However, individualistic societies encourage people to be self-dependent (Taras, 2017). This factor influences communication immensely. While a person from a communal culture may want to communicate about their challenges, the people from individualistic cultures may feel bothered and less likely to participate in this type of communication (Taras, 2017).

Thirdly, masculinity verses femininity, refers to how roles in a society are distributed between male and female genders (Taras, 2017). The larger the gap in gender perception, the more differences there are in how men and women perceive themselves. In societies that have a more significant gap, men are more assertive, while women are more empathetic. However, in societies with less significant gender gaps, both genders have the same perception. (Hofstede, 2011; Taras, 2017).

Fourthly, uncertainty avoidance refers to society's tolerance for uncertainty and vague situations. Some societies have a high intolerance for unstructured situations, which may hamper their attitudes in such situations. Unstructured situations are usually unpredictable and may influence communication. Societies that have a high tolerance for unstructured situations are more relaxed when they find themselves in such situations. Communication is affected by this element as it influences emotions (Hofstede, 2011).

When looking at the cultural dimensions: Power Distance, Individualism-Collectivism, Masculinity-Femininity, and Uncertainty Avoidance of the two acculturated groups (Saudi Arabia and the United States), the differences seem fundamentally evident. For example, the culture of Saudi Arabia is a collectivistic culture in which higher priority is given to the group than to the individual. Also, the culture of Saudi Arabia is a man-dominant culture (High masculine). The culture of Saudi Arabia is a high-Power Distance culture where people highly

32

value hierarchical relationships and respect for authority. Additionally, the culture of Saudi Arabia is an Uncertainty Avoidance culture meaning the members of Saudi culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations.

In contrast, the cultural identity of the United States is an individualistic culture where the priority is given to the individual rather than the group. Also, the culture of the United States is a feminine culture where women and men can perform the same task. Besides, the culture of the United States ranks low in terms of Power Distance and is a risk-seeking culture in term of Uncertainty Avoidance (Alamri, Alexandra, Cristea & Al-Zaidi, 2014; AlAsiri, 2019; Alqahtani & Hezam 2015; Bergiel, Bergiel & Upson, 2012; Hofstede, 2003).

Additionally, one fundamental difference between the Saudi and American cultures is that Islamic religious principles inspire Saudi culture. In comparison, personal freedoms and freedom of expression encourage American culture (Al-Asiri, 2019). Saudi culture does not accept tattoos, men's ear piercings, drinking alcohol, nightclubs, and indecent dressing, and see them as forbidden behaviors according to Islam. For Americans, these are acceptable behaviors and fall under personal choices and legitimate individual liberties (Asiri, 2019).

Acculturation in International Students

This section examines the experience of international students' adjustment and acculturation. The purpose of this section is to highlight the possibility of a change of cultural values via behavioral difficulties international students encounter during adjustment and acculturation. It also highlights the importance of the time factor and the seriousness of stress, which may pose a threat to students' acculturation, and, consequently, a threat to their entire experience.

To begin with, knowing the changes at the behavioral level such as communication difficulties with faculty, peers and local community that international students encounter is important to understanding the relationship between the acculturation and adjustment of Saudi students and the possibility of a change in their cultural values. Previous studies argued that behavioral changes that occur during adjustment and acculturation manifest the possibility of cultural values change and we should not view them independently from changes in our value system (Marin & Gamba, 2003; Shim & Schwartz, 2007). Behavioral changes that arise during adjustment reflect changes within values among individuals (Shim & Schwartz, 2007). To clarify, values mainly function as motivation for an individuals' worldview and a guide for behavioral patterns. The role of values is to shape one's behaviors toward specific practices, as this goes hand in hand with one's values (Shim & Schwartz, 2007). Therefore, any changes happen in our behaviors mean that we change in our values. (Leong, 1992; Shim & Schwartz, 2007). In the context of Saudi students studying abroad, there are two examples of behavioral changes that are directly related to values change. According to Shabeeb (1996) (as cited in Heyn, 2013) Saudi students face difficulty using bathroom facilities due to religious differences (showering with other people). Given the fact that Islam forbids nudity and defines what part of men's bodies they can show. In addition, Saudi students had to adjust their behaviors to fit within Western institutions that do not separate men and women in classes (Alhazmi & Nyland 2013). Such behaviors must have touched upon their cultural values and the cultural context they came from.

International students experience adjustment difficulties that may impact their behaviors and values; these issues arise due to differences in cultural characteristic (Lee & Carrasquillo, 2006; Ingman, 2003; Zhou, Frey, & Bang, 2011). For example, Korean students in the US came

from a Confucian culture, where the values of the education system depend on the absolute obedience to elders, parents, and teachers and are fundamental values in Confucianism's principles (Lee, 1998). Korean students expect their teachers to have full control over the class, and their role is to be merely listeners. Some Asians cultures such as Koreans, Chinese, and Taiwanese are raised to control their emotions, and an open discussion or an informal relationship between the students and the professor in a classroom would be met with confusion and uncertainty (Ferguson, 2001; Liberman, 1994). These Asian students face different educational values in the United States. The education values of the American system depend upon the European tradition in which student personality is pragmatic, critical, capable of solving problem through reasoning, applying independent learning, and the courage to debate and answer questions (Chen, 1999; Skow & Stephan, 2000; Liberman, 1994). Another challenge international students face in the United States is unfamiliarity with the interaction norms of Americans tradition. For example, Americans tend to express their direct acceptance or rejection of an invitation. However, in Asian cultures that rely upon modesty and the concept of losing face. Chinese students would indirectly turn down an invitation by accepting the invitation but hinting that they might not make it to the party (Gebhard, 2010).

However, time (meaning the length of stay in the host country) is an essential factor in international students' adjustment and acculturation (Al-Khedair, 1978; Leclere, Jensen, & Biddlecom, 1994; Reddy, 2003; Markovizky, 2008; Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006; Westermeyer, Neider, & Callies, 1989). To illustrate, in a study examining how the length of stay impacted students' adaption based on U-curve theory proposal, Surdam and Collins (1984) found that students who lived in the United States for more than 49 months adapted to American culture more than those who just arrived or who lived in the United States between 2-4 years. Also,

Shim and Schwartz (2007) found that length of stay and length of studying in the United States was positively correlated with less cultural adjustment difficulties, referring to the role of the educational system in impacting students' values, views, and cognitions. Aldawsari, Adams, Grimes and Kohn (2018) found that students who have been studying in the United States for more than two years have significantly better environmental mastery than others who have been living in the US for a shorter time. Briones, Verkuyten, Cosano and Tabernero (2012) found that a person needs 3-5 years to reach a decent language proficiency level, which is the comparative period of the mastery stage in U-curve theory.

Language proficiency is one of the most significant problems that international students encounter when acculturating and adjusting to the host culture (Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006; Mori, 2000; Zhang & Goodson, 2011). Language and cultural understanding are inseparable from each other. It is impossible to understand a culture or for a culture's values to transition from one generation to another or from one culture to another without a correct and in-depth understanding of the language (Watson, 2007). The importance of English language proficiency for international students does not only mean the ability to speak fluently it also includes the ability to deeply understand the culture, participate in the host community, and make friends. This helps them avoid the negative psychological effects of language weakness such as anxiety and depression that prevent the cultural experience and obtain its acculturation outcome; change. There is a relationship between depression and the lack of English fluency among international students (Ammigand, Drexler, Williamsonb & Guerra 2019; Rabia & Hazza 2017; Mori, 2000; Wu, Garza & Guzman, 2015). International students with less English proficiency report a higher level of anxiety symptoms than other students. There is also a relationship between English fluency and depression. Students with less English proficiency reported more symptoms of

depression. An increase in communication and self-expression capabilities might decrease

mental health concerns (Ammigand, Drexler, Williamsonb & Guerra 2019; Mori, 2000).

Psychological challenges are among the observed adjustment and acculturation

difficulties that international students report feeling (Alqahtani & Hizam, 2015; Heyn, 2013;

Szabo, Ward, & Jose, 2016; Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006; Yan & Berliner, 2013). The primary

psychological challenge emerges from leaving their original cultures (Szabo, Ward, & Jose,

2016). Detachment from the home country and being far from loved ones is a low-control

situation that generates psychological issues such as anxiety (Sheehan & Pearson, 1995; Wang &

Mallinckrodt, 2006). What is concerning is that students from collectivistic cultures, like Saudi

culture, have shown more depression and anxiety symptoms than students from other cultures.

Students from collectivistic cultures studying in the United States feel that they do not belong to

the place and the culture, making them feel lonely, hence isolating themselves (Wang and

Mallinckrodt, 2006). However, younger students are more likely to show an upbeat approach to

both cultures during acculturation than older students. Older students are more attached to their

traditional customs and beliefs, making them feel more isolated from the host culture than

younger students (Hansen, Shneyderman, McNamara & Grace, 2018).

Another psychological challenge that many scholars found is discrimination (Hanassab,

2006; Lee & Rice, 2007; Smith & Khawaja, 2011). Students from Africa, Asia, India, and the

Middle East reported significant perceived discrimination compared to domestic students and

others from Canada, Europe, and New Zealand (Lee & Rice, 2007). International students

experience discrimination on-campus, including discrimination while dealing with school

faculty, and off-campus communications, including housing and shopping. There is evidence of

discrimination in institutions of higher education in the United States due to demographic and

cultural factors. Prejudice against international students occurs when communicating with professors, classmates, faculty, and possible employers (Hanassab, 2006). International students experience discrimination in different forms: cultural prejudice, verbal discrimination, and feelings discomfort direct at confrontation. These challenges were due to discrimination or exclusion based on different statuses, which were language or race (Lee & Rice 2007; Hanassab, 2006).

There is a relationship between perceived discrimination and high levels of depression (Ammigand, Drexler, Williamsonb & Guerra 2019). Discrimination harms the psychological well-being and adjustment of international students (Ammigand, Drexler, Williamsonb & Guerra 2019). Also, discrimination may lead some international students to isolations and forming sub-cultures because of their intense need for a community and individuals around them to express their desires, problems, and interests (AlAsiri, 2019; Garza, 2015; Negi, 2012; Scwartz, Ungere, Zamonga, & Szapocznik, 2010).

Sex Segregation in Saudi Arabia

To understand sex segregation and other aspects of the cultural identity of Saudi Arabia, several components appear to be significant in forming this identity. The culture of Saudi Arabia is described as a country of Wahhabi, an orthodox form of Islam regarding its religion, tribal nature, collectivistic culture in which higher priority is given to the group than to the individual, and as a male-dominated society. However, among these components, religion and tribal nature seem to be directly linked to sex segregation (Alhazmi & Nyland 2013; Alqahtani & Hizam, 2015; Baroni, 2007; Blanchard, 2010; Darwish & Huber, 2003; Sampson, 1977; Long, 2005; Long & Maisel, 1997.; Kumaraswamy, 2006; Nevo, 1998; Zuhur, 2005).

Sex Segregation from Religious Perspective

Sex segregation in its current form in Saudi Arabia goes back to the birth of the binary authority between the Saud family and the Al Alshaik family in the eighteenth-century (Baki, 2004; Wagemakers, 2016). The binary authority led to the rise of the present-day phenomenon, which is known now as Wahhabism. Wahhabism is classified under the *Salfi* Islamic school, which is one of four different Islamic schools. Each school has its own points of view and interpretations of Islamic norms and doctrines (Baki, 2004). In Saudi Arabia, people who adhere to this faith call themselves Unitarians (*muwahiddun*) or *Salafiyyun*. They prefer the term *Salafiyyun* because it stems from the word *Salaf*; meaning to follow the guidance of Prophet Mohammed (Blanchard, 2007). Saudi Arabia, under the influence of Wahhabism has adopted the Quran, Muslims' holy book, and the Hadith, the written record of Muhammad's declarations, as its constitution and the government guides "people to do right and shun evil, it fulfills the duty regarding God's call" (Baki, 2004, p. 2). Wahhabis take the Quran's warning about sex-mixing and interpret it in an extremist manner. For example, Wahhabis refer to the story of Yusuf (Joseph) that is mentioned in the Quran as an inevitable evil outcome of sex mixing; "Now the woman in whose house he has solicited him, and closed the doors on them. 'Come,' she said, take me!" (Q. 12: 22-34). From the previous verse, Wahhabis infer that being alone with a woman creates the temptation to commit adultery, so men and women must be separated (Wagemakers, 2016). The mistaken interpretation influences relationships between males and females. The interpretation forbids direct communication between the two genders unless they are first degree relatives (Salamah, 2016).

The Wahhabi bases its view on sex segregation on the following factors. The first factor is that Wahhabis believe that they must protect the so-called real Islam from other corrupting powers in the world (Wagemakers, 2016). They reject the Western model of life and the way

they treat women. The Wahhabis' position on sex segregation states that "gender relations are sometimes partly informed by conspiratorial ideas about Westernization (*taghrib*) caused by supposed enemies of Islam who try to corrupt the religion in general and the chastity of Muslim women in particular" (Wagemakers, 2016, p. 40).

The second explanation for Wahhabis' ideas on sex segregation stem from the notion that men and women were created equal, but Wahhabis assigns each sex different tasks. For instance, women must stay home and take care of their children to raise a generation that serves the Islamic nation. Furthermore, Wahhabi ideology believes that women must not go to work outside the home because such activity is against the nature of women who were created to be taken care of by men (Wagemakers, 2016).

Third, Wahhabi scholars believe that sex-mixing would lead to forbidden actions, and therefore, it must be prohibited. To justify the argument, Wahhabis rely on an Islamic principle that was developed by earlier scholars (AlMunajjed,1997). The principle is known as *sadd al-darai* (blocking excuses). This term refers to the idea that some actions may not be bad in and of themselves, but there is a bad side to it, which may not be immediately apparent. For example, a female talking to a male coworker is not bad but it could be the start of a relationship that can lead to taboo acts such as sexual relationships outside of marriage, which are prohibited in Islam (Wagemakers, 2016).

For many years, the Wahhabis have resisted progressive ideas. In 1963, the Saudi government sent troops to break up massive demonstrations against women's education in Buraydah in mid-Saudi Arabia. In 1979, Juhiman Alotaybi, a Muslim extremist with a group of followers, occupied the Holy Mosque in Mecca trying to end the Western's influence on Saudi Arabia (Hamdan, 2005). Although Wahhabis have changed their form of protest from violence to

written demands, they still resist reformative efforts. Abdulrahman Al-Barrak, one of the religious leaders, requested that the government stop sending girls to study abroad. On Twitter, he stated that "sending girls overseas is forbidden. It is going to spoil their religion and honor. I ask the decision-makers not to do so" (Al-Husayn, 2014). Similarly, in 2014, the Saudi cultural attaché in the US had to talk to the media, dispelling a rumor about a Saudi girl that converted to Christianity. Al-Essa, the cultural attaché, described the rumor as an attempt to undermine and fight the success of KASP (Al-Dobayan, 2014). In 2014, many religious activists protested in front of the royal court in the capital Riyadh for five days. They appealed to the King to stop the Ministry of Labor from applying a plan aimed at allowing women to work in some private sectors, such as lingerie stores (Al-Shamany, 2014).

Sex Segregation from Tribal-Cultural Perspective

Segregation between males and females in Saudi Arabia is in line with Arabic traditions that tend to preserve the family's honor (Bajnaid & Elyas, 2017). Tribes' roles and traditions play a significant part in the relationship between males and females (Bajnaid & Elyas 2017). In Bedouin societies like the Saudi society, the relationship between men and women, according to Abu-Lughod (1989), is formed by "Sexual division of labor and a social system structured by the primacy of agnatic bonds (those between male and female paternal kin) and the authority of senior kinsmen, and maintained by individuals whose attitudes and actions are guided by a shared moral ideology" (Abu-Lughod, 1989, p. 640). The goal of this structure is to prevent every person from committing dishonorable actions. Arab men try to avoid what they believe are sources of weakness and lack of self-control, especially with whom a sexual relationship is possible. Supported by families and tribes, the members of Bedouin societies have developed the

system of sex-segregation to retain respect and to meet the code of morals and honor that are valued by the community (Abu-Lughod, 1989).

Arabs, including Saudis, have developed a special concept stemming from the presence of their own private space (the family). This concept is that men must protect their own private spaces as part of their responsibility as men. Later, the idea of protection has evolved into the concept of (*Ird*), to become an essential value in Arab culture (Deaver, 1980; Feghali, 1997; Madek, 2005). In the Arabic culture, (*Ird*) is a highly valued concept that shapes a dominating element related to women's position (Feghali, 1997). One form of honor is seen through sexual behavior. Such actions, in addition to the number of sons and their generosity, would determine the individual's place in his family and his tribe. Thus, Arabic tribes' members act rigorously when it comes to the family and tribe's reputation to secure their status. In Arabic culture, the forms of shameful actions are not determined only by direct sexuality. "The network of norms surrounding (*Ird*) extends to many actions that are only remotely connected with sex: loud speech, bearing, appearing in public places" (Feghali, 1997, p. 356). For women, behaviors such as powerful speech, and indecently appearing in public places would be a violation of the ethical code. Such violation pushes the family, relatives and even another member of the tribe to impose a punishment (Feghali, 1997; Madek, 2005). "The penalty for loss of (*Ird)* is related to public acknowledgment of the violation; further, light to severe penalties, including death, must be enacted promptly to protect the (*Ird*) of the family" (Feghali, 1997, p. 357).

Saudis are taught to be proud of their roots and tribes so that they have an appreciation of the tribe's norms. Although being proud of another identity other than Islam is forbidden based on Islamic standards, the reality is that tribal pride exists. For example, each family would ask a potential groom about his racial origin before accepting him as a husband of their daughter. In

some cases, families go back to historical references to make sure that the groom's tribe origins are a member of the whole Arabic tribe. The authority of tribes goes beyond that. For example, the minister of justice has announced that the Supreme Court had investigated more than 31 divorce petitions. The Supreme Court received these cases from women's brothers and relatives asking for a divorce based on tribal incompatibility (Bajnaid & Elyas, 2017).

The Saudi society has been structured, due to its tribal nature, in a way that makes it difficult to penetrate the restrictions imposed on women that aim to protect the honor and the (*Ird*) of the family and the tribe. In a case of loss of honor (*Ird*) of a family, it cannot be restored even after many generations. Therefore, Saudi women are kept out of the public domain to protect the honor of the family and the tribe by imposing a policy of sex segregation (Alhazmi & Nyland, 2015). Thus, originating from religious (Wahbbisim) interpretation and culture norms, segregation between males and females has impacted many life aspects in Saudi Arabia. One obvious place of impact is in workplaces.

Sex Segregation in Workplaces

There is a justifiable need to enhance the structure of the Saudi economy, especially in terms of women's participation (Alqahtani, 2012). Women are a large part of the population, and their failure to engage in economic activities means that nearly half of the population does not contribute to economic growth and development. Cultural and religious differences and intolerance hamper the success of measures taken to enhance Saudi economy. "Legislative, social, educational, and occupational constraints prevent women from fully participating in the Saudi labor market" (Saqib, 2016, p. 90). The regulations that prohibit women from engaging in or making economic and political decisions causes them to be economically dependent, which

robs them of their independence. Consequently, many women contend with unhappy marriages (Alqahtani, 2012).

Data indicates that women in Saudi Arabia are overwhelmingly wasted power. For instance, only 6% of Saudi women work in the labor market, making Saudi Arabia one of the countries with the smallest contribution of women to the economy (Alqahtani, 2012; Chulov, 2017). 80% of working women are in the education sector, and 16.9% are in the medical industry, while just 0.8% work in the private sector (Alqahtani, 2012).

The economy of Saudi Arabia is structured around a social contract model. The decrease in oil prices has pushed the leaders of the country to rethink the efficiency of this model. In this model, the royal family distributes a large portion of the oil profit to the people to gain political loyalty. This model worked well in the 1960s and 1970s; however, with the growth in the population and the increase in citizens' needs, the model has lost its effectiveness (Chulov, 2017).

Saudi Arabia has explored various ambitious measures to enhance women's contributions to the labor force market (Saqib, 2016). However, these measures have not helped improve women's involvement in the Saudi labor force. In 2017, the General Authority for Statistics in Saudi Arabia indicated that the unemployment rate among males in Saudi Arabia does not exceed 6%, while it is 34.5% among women (Williams, Al-awwad, & Alfayez, 2019). Therefore, there is still massive untapped potential. The government should implement more further measures to overcome these obstacles. These steps include:

i) improving the educational system

ii) improving the regulations of the labor market, which do not create equality between men and women

iii) creating a positive atmosphere for women

iv) shedding light on the positivity of women's participation in the labor force (Saqib, 2016).

One of the most significant steps that Saudi Arabia has taken to bring about changes in the social and economic levels was through King Abdullah Scholarship Program. Since the beginning of King Abdullah Scholarship Program in 2005, thousands of Saudi students have benefited from American educational institutions (Taylor, Charles, Albasri & Wasmiah,2015). These days, more than 50000 Saudi students' study in various American states, representing 60% of the total Saudi students enrolled in the program (AlAsiri, 2019; AlShehri, 2018; Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education, 2019.

Acculturation in Saudi Students in the United States

The preparation of the Saudis students' journey abroad starts before departing for the U.S.A. Each student is required to attend a three-days orientation program. The orientation program is usually organized in three Saudi cities: Riyadh in the Middle of Saudi Arabia, Jeddah in the West, and Alkhobar in the East. In this orientation, multiple lectures are given in different domains. For example, academic lectures discuss how to communicate with American universities to get admission, the kinds of schools, and universities. Security lectures educate the students on how to obey the host culture's laws and checking I-20 and visa status. Preparation lectures were an introduction to culture shock, and how to interact with different cultures respectfully. At the end of the orientation, each student receives a guidebook (in Arabic), containing information about the United States. The guidebook involves six chapters. The first chapter includes information about the departments of Saudi Arabia's cultural mission (SACM) in addition to contact information. The second chapter covers studying in the United States. It provides information about getting an entry visa to the U.S.A and advises about to receive

acceptance from a university. The third chapter contains information regarding students arriving in the U.S.A, and it guides them on how to open a student file in SACM, assigning an academic advisor, issuing a financial support letter from SACM, and getting a health insurance ID. The fourth chapter covers academic affairs. It explains types of degrees that American institutions offer, academic transcripts, adding or dropping classes, and grade point average. Also, it guides them on how to transfer from one university to another and the process and the requirements that a student needs to change academic majors. Chapter five tackles medical care; it has all the necessary information in terms of health insurance. Chapter six is about the free airline tickets that Saudi Arabia provides to the students and their families and how to renew Saudi passports (Albalawi, 2013). Ministry of Higher Education, 2019, Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, 2019). Once a student arrives to the United States, the first stop is the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission. The Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission is the organization that welcomes the students when they arrive in the United States and work with the students until their last day in the country. It was started in 1951, when the first group of Saudi students came to the United States (Al-Balawi, 2013). The Saudi Cultural Mission provides students with financial and academic support. There are many advisors who observe the progress of the student in the scholarship program. Every Saudi student has an advisor who follows up with the student from their first day of arrival in the United States until graduation (Al-Balawi, 2013). In other words, the Saudi government provides Saudi students with the necessary care they need to overcome financial, educational and, psychological difficulties they might encounter while studying in the United States.

The most crucial goal for Saudi students is focusing on their educational goals (Shaw, 2010). At the same time, they wanted to learn about other cultures. The Saudi students in the United States indicated that their dream is to return home with different perspectives and

enriched cultural experiences (Shaw, 2010). They wished to implement change, which would include changing the country, such as infrastructure, the community, and themselves. Some Saudis wish to obtain prominent social position by studying in the United States. Some students disclose that they are studying abroad to satisfy their parents' desire to brag that a family member has an education from the United States of America (Heyn, 2013)

Studying in the United States allowed Saudi students to change their views of the United States (Shaw, 2010). Before moving to the United States, many students had misinformed ideas about the United States. Their perceptions about the United States were influenced by mass media, such as movies. They assumed that the US is a dangerous country, full of gangsters, and people who are not friendly. However, upon their arrival in the United States, they realize that their perceptions were misinformed, and instead, they notice that the people are warm and kind (Shaw, 2010).

Saudis in the U.S.A. reported positive experiences about their studies in the US. For example, some students reported that they had access to excellent professors, and high-level technology. Additionally, some students reported that they believed that Americans are open-minded and have the most beneficial educational system in the world (Heyn, 2013). Some students revealed that they had some negative views of the United States before coming. Some of their fears include concern regarding racism, religious prejudice, and the perception that Americans are unfriendly. However, they found America to be a safe place, and accommodating as Americans are friendly and kind.

Some Saudi students in the United States indicated studying abroad positively influenced their beliefs and opinions towards women and admiration for different worldviews (Bilal, 2017; Heyn, 2013). Their change in attitude is expected to be experienced upon their return home after

completion of their education (Heyn, 2013). The chances of interaction between Saudi males and females abroad that KASP offers made them rethink and question their attitudes about the relationship between men and women (Bilal, 2017; Hall, 2013). One of the Saudi participants stated that:

> Unfortunately, back home they taught us that men and women could not be together, cannot be friends, they cannot be close together, but when we came here, we found out that everything is good. You can be friends, a boss, a coworker. Therefore, the way that they taught us back home is wrong (Hall, 2013, p. 75-77).

Also, through studying abroad, Saudi students are more likely able to expand their thinking and embrace comprehensive views about the world and develop understanding and respect towards other religions and cultures (Alsabatin, 2015; Heyn, 2013; Hilal, Scott & Maadad 2015). One participant reflected the previous notion by saying:

> I believe in freedom, and in the United States anyone can do whatever they want. However, back home, everything we do is Islam, Islam, Islam, Islam, but here it's freedom. There is religious freedom, and one can choose to be Muslim, Christian, Jewish, or an atheist (Heyn, 2013, p. 107).

However, the journey of Saudi Students in the United States is characterized with challenges. The differences in economic, educational, psychological, social, cultural, ethical, and political characteristics impact Saudi international students more, compared to students from other progressive countries (Miller 2002; Razek & Coyner 2013).

Like other international students, a poor grasp of English seems to be the most significant barrier preventing Saudi international students in the United States from attaining social integration (Alsabatin, 2015; Al-Musaiteer; 2016; Alqarni, 2018; Alsharari & Teodorescu 2019; Hall, 2013; Heyn, 2013; Shaw, 2010). The ability to understand American culture means not only the ability to speak the English language but also the ability to know common idioms and tell jokes (Alqarni, 2018). However, the more time students spent, the better their English skills

became, facilitating their integration with the local culture (Al-Musaiteer; 2016). Also, time plays a significant role in bridging the gap and facilitating of Saudi students' adjustment to American a culture (Al-Khedaire, 1978). For example, students who had been living in the United States for three or more years had a better understanding of the American culture compared to the students who had just arrived (Al-Khedaire, 1978).

Some Saudi in the USA indicated they preferred spending time with other Saudis because it gives them a feeling of belonging (Alqarni, 2018). However, it was not effective in improving their mastery of English or advancing their language skills. Students reported that most interactions with American students were initiated through group study. However, Saudi students in the USA revealed that the majority of American students were not interested in developing friendships with them. One student stated that "The media distorted the picture of Saudi people… and made Americans turn away from us" (Alsabatin, 2015, p. 78). Some students indicated they felt more comfortable interacting with other international students than with American students (Alsabatin, 2015). Also, some students expressed that they preferred communicating with Mexican Americans rather than white Americans. The perception was due to the feeling that white Americans are self-centered, while Mexican Americans share similar cultural norms with Saudis (Alqarni, 2018).

Some Saudi students were more interested in interacting with American people when they benefited from such interaction (Al-Musaiteer, 2016). Additionally, Saudi students are more interested in interacting with Americans who respected their culture and religions. However, the students noted that they avoided any situation where they felt that the interaction would threaten their identity or if the interaction would distract them from achieving their goals (Al-Musaiteer, 2016).

Another challenge that some Saudi students face in the United States is discrimination. The discrimination suffered by Saudi students in the United States includes several forms. First, because of their Saudi nationality. Some Americans provoke Saudi students to the point that they were forced to hide their Saudi citizenship. Second, because they are Muslims. Some Saudi students said they were harassed by some Americans because of the disclosure of their religion, and they were asked if they wished to change their faith. Finally, discrimination include veiled girls due to their wearing of the Hijab (Alqarni, 2018; Alsharari & Teodorescu 2019). Saudi students might be a target of racial discrimination like other students from Africa, Asia, India, and the Middle East. A study by Lee and Rice (2007) showed that students from these regions reported significant perceived discrimination compared to domestic students and others from Canada, Europe, and New Zealand. Also, the fact that they are Arabs and Muslims may make them vulnerable to profiling or discrimination. In the United States, stereotypes about Arabs and Muslims is that they are primitive, terrorists or supportive of terrorism, untrustworthy, and pose a threat to American culture and identity (Salib, 2010).

Moreover, some students reported that one of the challenges they faced in the United States was the alienation from their families and culture. For example, due to the communal practice of Saudi culture, the student struggled to eat. One of the most significant difficulties facing Muslim students and Saudis in particular is obtaining halal food, especially in rural areas and during school hours (Alqarni, 2018).

Saudi males and females experience different kinds of feelings about being in a mixed environment abroad. Saudi students may suffer pressing challenges and battle difficulties in adapting to social environments that are incredibly varied and opposite to their home social context (Hall, 2013). Male students felt that the mixed environment was a threat to their identity.

They felt as though they were losing their power and control, compared to their home culture, where women are subjugated by men. The lack of gender-based roles affected the character of men. Women in the United States are independent and make decisions independently (Hall, 2013). In Saudi, men dominate nearly all professionals and hold the "decision-making position in society, while women are required to seek permission from men for nearly all activities. In general, men are charged with the responsibility for the actions that women take in society" (Hall, 2013, p. 24-25). Males faced a serious culture shock of receiving instruction from women. Sharing classrooms with, being disciplined by, and facing opposition from women, resulted in the males feeling as though they were losing control and their identity. Hence, Saudi students may struggle to adjust to such situations, which seem strange to them (Alhazmi, 2010).

Mixed environments impact female students by making them feel as though they were under a threat of physical violence (Alhazmi, 2010). Saudi women do not feel comfortable taking classes with other Saudi males while studying abroad (Sandekian, Weddington, Birnbaum & Keen, 2015). The female students felt that Saudi male students are fond of interrupting them while speaking. Some of them preferred talking to other Saudis because they speak the same language, which makes communication easier; also, Saudi females appreciated the opportunities to interact with their male faculty. They reported that male faculty were more respective and supportive (Sandekian, Weddington, Birnbaum & Keen, 2015).

For Saudi students, being in a mixed environment caused communication difficulties, especially for females (Al-Murshidi, 2014). While Saudi students had no problems interacting with females from the same country, females preferred not to interact with students from other countries. Such difficulties may halt the transformation of Saudi international students. For example, the students' relationships in the host country play a significant part in their adjustment

51

process. Relationships with staff members or with other students can motivate and accelerate the process of cultural adjustment. Similarly, personality traits such as a lack of confidence and/or homesickness might hinder the cultural adjustment of the student (Al-Murshidi, 2014).

Many Saudi Students go to the United States with their wives and children. It is a double-edged sword to be married and an international student (Al Ramadan, 2016). For instance, married international students face more difficulties than their unmarried peers. In addition to burden of studying, they must assist their wives and children with adjusting to life in the United States (Al Ramadan, 2016; Davis & McGovern, 2015). This can reflect in instability in their marriages. However, an ideal marriage can be helpful in terms of cultural adjustment because this kind of relationship can serve as social support, decreasing social isolation (Al Ramadan, 2016).

The adjustment of Saudi Students is dependent on from which region they came. Saudi students who came from more modernized cities in Saudi Arabia, such as the capital Riyadh, and Jeddah, the two biggest cities where there are companies and major universities, adjust more easily compared to students who came from small and conservative cities (Davis & McGovern, 2015).

Saudi students seem to have succeeded in finding psychological support methods to ensure that they remain in a stable mental state. One of the essential support factors for members of societies of a collective nature, like Saudi society, is social support such as family and friends of co-nationals. The family was the primary support element for Saudi students abroad (Heyn, 2013). Seeking psychological support and motivation, Saudis students remain in consistent contact with their families at least twice a month. This permanent contact provides psychological support for students while studying abroad (Heyn, 2013; Lefdahl-Davis & McGovern, 2015).

Summary of Literature Review

Saudi Arabia has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in international education to bring about socio-economic change (Taylor, Charles, Albasri & Wasmiah, 2015). When carefully considering the possibility of this change, the difficulties facing Saudi students are very significant. To clarify, whether or not acculturation is a success depends on the extent of the difference in cultural dimensions. When looking at the cultural dimensions: Power Distance, individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, and uncertainty avoidance of the two acculturated groups (Saudi Arabia and the United States), the differences seem fundamentally evident. As explained previously, the two cultures are different in all the cultural dimensions.

Moreover, international students from Saudi Arabia are among the group of international students who are expected to be exposed to discrimination in the United States. Saudi students among the group of international students are expected to expose to discrimination based on their language and race, along with students from Asia, India, and Latin America. Those groups of students are the most likely to experience discrimination that would lead them to form sub-cultures and lead to isolation from the host community and not benefiting from the acculturation experience (AlAsiri, 2019; Garza, 2015; Lee & Rice, 2007; Negi, 2012).

However, the practical experience of Saudi students seemed promising. Several studies reported profound changes in cultural values, such as changes in Saudi students' stance on other religions, cultures, and women. Hence, the belief that their attitudes on sex segregation might also be affected by living in the United States.

This study will answer the question: Will Saudi male students living in the United States for four years or more report a more tolerant attitude towards mixed-sex workplaces in Saudi Arabia than domestic students who have never lived outside Saudi Arabia for more than three months?

53

CHAPTER 3. METHOD AND RESULTS

Method

Participants/Procedure

This study used a survey to answer the research question. Participants in this study were 199 Saudi citizens, divided into two groups; 93 participants from Saudi Arabia, and 106 Saudi students living in the United States. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling. The purposive sample strives to target individuals of a particular nature for inclusion in the study (Boyle & Schmierbach, 2015). Students participating in this study are exclusively Saudi international students in the United States. To find whether there is a significant difference between the attitude of both groups toward working women in mixed environments, a t-test of two-tailed unpaired groups was performed. Data was analyzed using SPSS computer Statistic software.

The survey was sent to two professors at Taif University in Saudi Arabia. They were asked to distribute it to their students and to share it with professors from other regional universities in Saudi Arabia. Regarding the sample from the United States, the survey was sent to the presidents of three Saudi student associations: Fresno State University, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, and Indiana Tech University, they were asked to distribute the surveys to members of their associations. Data collection occurred between March 1, and March 22, 2020.

The final data for both samples included only male participants because men are the most influential factor in a woman's inability to work. As described in Alqahtani and Hizam (2015) the culture of Saudi Arabia is a culture of male domination in which men play an essential pivotal role in determining women's choices. Even if they are willing to work, Saudi women

cannot exceed the restrictions and powers that men create. These restrictions and controls are not only a significant impediment to a woman's ability work, but also ownership her decisions (Tønnessen, 2016). In other words, the focus of this research is the extent of the cultural shift that studying abroad may have on the primary element of resistance toward Saudi women aspiring to obtain their legitimate rights. After all, these rights that the government supports through its recent decisions include allowing women to drive, to travel without a guardians' permission, and to stay in hotels without guardians, as well as prohibiting and not allowing marriage for people under the age of eighteen.

Sample from Saudi Arabia

The sample from Saudi Arabia included only those who not lived outside Saudi Arabia for more than three months. The participants were selected this way to limit the control group for this study to find the effect of the living abroad variable. Accordingly, the U-curve theory helped determine the length of time on which participants from Saudi Arabia would be excluded. According to the theory, living abroad for three months falls within the honeymoon stage. During the honeymoon time, the other culture would have an impact on someone. However, three months is not enough time to develop a stable attitude toward full adoption from the American culture. So, participants from Saudi Arabia, who answered that they had lived outside Saudi Arabia for more than three months were excluded from the study. After sorting the data to only include the targeted sample (living abroad variable and sex status), the sample size of participants from Saudi Arabia was 78.

Seventeen of the participants from Saudi Arabia were from the South of Saudi Arabia, two from the East, one from the North, forty-three from the West, and fifteen from the Central region. Ages ranged from 18 to 44 years (mean age =22). Four individuals were married, and

seventy-four were single. Sixty-seven individuals were Bachelor students, and six were Graduate students, and five were Associate degree students.

Sample from the United States

The sample from the United States included only male participants who have been living in the USA for more than four years. Considering the goal of this study was to examine the impact of cultural adoption on Saudi Arabia, the selection of the participants from the United States was based on the last stage of the U-curve theory, mastery stage. The mastery stage requires four years, according to the theory's timeline. Thus, participants from the United States must have been living in the United States for four years. After sorting the data to include only the targeted sample (living abroad variable and sex status), the sample size of participants from the United States was 45 participants.

Six of the 45 participants from the United States were from the South of Saudi Arabia, fifteen from the East, two from the North, twelve from the West, and ten from the Central region. Ages ranged from 20 to 43 years (mean age =27). Fourteen individuals were married, and thirty-one were single. Thirty-one individuals were Bachelor students, and fourteen were Graduate students.

Instrument

To answer the research question, I created a semantic scale survey of seven items where participants answered the question: What is your impression about a Saudi girl working in a mixed environment? Each item had two opposite poles indicating a positive or negative impression. For example, participants were asked whether they think that a woman who works in a mixed environment:

56

- is an excellent representation of Saudi women or inadequate representation

- is religious or not religious

- matches or does not match the society's culture

- she is a tribe member or not a tribe member

- has a lack family supervision or has enough family supervision

- cares about her reputation or does not care about her reputation

- cares about (family, relatives, tribe) opinions or does not care about (family, relatives, tribe) opinions

- is happy with her job or she is not happy and doing it because of her need to make a living

- should be proud of herself or should be ashamed of herself

- is a role model of young Saudi women or she is not a role model of young Saudi women

- probably has lost many friends because of her job or she probably has many friends,

- if single, her job will negatively impact her getting married or if single, her job will not negatively negatively impact her getting married

- if married, her job will lead to martial instability or if married, her job will not lead to martial instability

- is a victim of Western, liberal, secular ideas or is an independent person and not influenced by Western, liberal, secular ideas (see appendix).

The rationale behind designing a specific survey for the Saudi students centers around the fact that not all the items found in surveys and models in the relevant literature would fit this targeted population as most of these surveys and models are designed, for example, precisely for immigrant populations (Alwin & Krosnick, 1991; Demes & Geeraert, 2014). In point of fact, the uniqueness of Saudi culture has also led to the designing of an original survey, a culture that is described as a Wahhabi's culture. In addition, as has been previously explained in the review of the literature, the Saudi culture is tribal in nature, collectivistic culture, and as a male-dominated culture (Alhazmi & Nyland 2013; Alqahtani & Hizam, 2015; Baroni, 2007; Blanchard, 2010;

Darwish & Huber, 2003; Sampson, 1977; Long, 2005; Long & Maisel, 1997.; Kumaraswamy, 2006; Nevo, 1998; Zuhur, 2005).

Each participant chose from a seven-point scale between the two opposite impressions. Cronbach's Alpha reliability indicator of 0.92 was attained; meaning the results were reliable, as Cronbach's Alpha should exceed 0.70 to be reliable (Boyle & Schmierbach, 2015).

Results

Will male Saudi students living in the United States for more than four years report a more tolerant attitude towards mixed-sex workplaces in Saudi Arabia than domestic students who have never lived outside Saudi Arabia for more three months?

The *t.test* shows that the difference between groups is statistically significant. The mean of the 45 Saudi students who have been living in the United States for more than four years was 66.37, *SD* =16. The mean of the 78 domestic participants who not lived outside Saudi Arabia for more than three months was 57.80, *SD*=20.65, $t(121) =2.39$, *p*=0.01. Therefore, Saudi students in the United States reported a more tolerant attitude towards mixed-sex workplaces in Saudi Arabia than domestic students who have never lived outside Saudi Arabia for more three months.

CHAPTER 4. DISCUSSION

The results provide evidence of KASP's (King Abdullah Scholarship Program) ability to change Saudis' attitude on Saudi working women in mixed environments. As the results revealed, Saudi students who have lived in America for four or more years showed significantly more tolerant attitudes toward mixed environments than their Saudi peers who have not lived outside Saudi Arabia for more than three months. A thoughtful consideration of these results indicates many of possibilities that may be behind this shift that contributed to the Saudis in America adopting this tolerant attitude.

Connecting the results of this study to the three patterns that result from acculturation at the group level (Reaction, Acceptance, and Adaptation) can draw three likely conclusions. First, the pattern of Reaction does not apply to Saudi students participating in this study. The pattern of Reaction would be supported by a psychological reaction of the rejection that Saudi students came to feel toward American culture because of bad experiences in the United States after exposure to racism, for example. Such events would cause Saudi students to isolate themselves and refuse all Americans and Western values-society due to compensation of inferiority sense or a desire to go back to the original culture. In this case, the result would be a tendency to reject women's work in mixed environments to have a less tolerant attitude than the results showed. This result would have the Saudi students maintain their prior beliefs. The findings do not support this trend.

Second, when looking for evidence of the Acceptance pattern, one might find that no longer oppose women working in mixed environments. However, before beginning to explain the results based on the Acceptance pattern, it is necessary to highlight that Redfield, Linton, and Herskov (1936) pointed to complete cultural and heritage losses among this scenario. Within the

limits of this study, this criterion applies only to what has been studied, which is the position of the Saudis on women's work in mixed environments. This research studied one aspect of Saudi culture related to the relationship between men and women, precisely sex segregation. It considers that the position of the Saudis on sex segregation is a genuinely religious and heritage-cultural belief stemming from the deep foundations of Saudi Islamic and Arabic identity (Al-Qahtani & Hizam 2015; Abu-Lughod 1989; Bajunid & Elias, 2017; Feghali 1997; Salamah, 2016; Wagemakers, 2016).

It is possible to say that the students have given up their original opposition to having women work in mixed environments. The current view can be a result of a profound shift in inner values because of living in the United States. This is in line with the acculturation at the group level that the theory predicts with the Acceptance pattern. In the Acceptance pattern, the theory hypothesizes that foreigners will assimilate "not only to the behavior patterns, but the inner values of the culture they have come into communication with" (Redfield, Linton & Herskov, 1936. p. 152). Such a profound transformation can be seen in the previous literature. Indeed, Bilal (2017), and Heyn (2013) found that studying in the United States enabled Saudi students to build or rebuild their beliefs and values. For example, one of the values mentioned the most was students' ideas and beliefs about women (Bilal, 2017; Heyn ,2013). One participant said that "I think women have the right to work everywhere just like men have this right" (Heyn, 2013. p. 109).

The idea of advocating or not opposing the work of women in mixed environments is a revolutionary relative to Wahhabism. This ideology insists upon the impossibility of equality between men and women (Wagemakers, 2016). The rejection of equality between men and women by the Salafi Wahhabis Islamic establishment is rooted in Saudi Arabia. Salafi Wahhabis

believe that men and women are created equal; however, every sex has a different role; men should work, and women should raise children (Wagemakers, 2016). Accordingly, the "developed" tolerant attitude that students showed regarding women working in mixed environments to studying in America may be a result of rejecting the original cultural value upholding sex segregation.

The program may also have contributed to breaking the severity of the Wahhabi narrow-minded view of things. One of the things that characterize the Wahhabi religious establishment is that it does not welcome opinions' plurality. Their position on the segregation of sexes stems from what they believe is the only right interpretation of Quran verses they adopted, knowing that there are four different Islamic schools (Shafii, Hanafi, Hanbali, Maliki). Each school has different definitions and interpretations of all aspects of life and Quran verses. Wahhabis adopt the less liberal interpretations, the Salafi Hanbali school. The Hanbali school requires women to cover their entire face. While, Hanafi and Hanbali schools are less conservative regarding the Islamic dressing code and do not command women to cover their full face (Aziz, 2010).

Dr. Ahmed Al-Ghamdi is one of the most recognizable religious reformers in Saudi Arabia in the last decade. Al-Ghamdi was the former head of what was known as the religious police and dissident son of the Wahhabi establishment. After extensive research, Al-Ghamdi concluded that the strict opinion concerning the hijab issue and the issue of women's work Wahhabis adhere to represents the minority in the Islamic spectrum (AlArabiya, 2010). According to Al-Ghamdi, this strict view cannot be understood except through the fact it is in harmony with customs and traditions in the Arabian Peninsula, more than as religious legislation and sacred order (AlArabiya, 2010). Extremists in Saudi Arabia have controlled the scene for many decades. They have imposed these radical visions as divine truths that cannot be reviewed

or criticized (AlArabiya, 2010). Wahhabis do not tolerate others who disagree with them in religious ideas and opinions. Al-Ghamdi himself was the target of harassment and assault by those who saw in his views an encroachment on the principles of the Wahhabis Islamic views (Al-arabiya, 2010; Hubard, 2016). Al-Ghamdi was forced to early retirement from his job. Also, he informed that extremists attacked his house, wanting him to allow them to mix with his female family members as long he believes it's not forbidden in Islam. Also, his views caused the divorce of his sister (Hubard, 2016).

Bilal (2017) observed the theme of openness toward other religions and cultures during investigating Saudi students' experience in the United States. Those who have enrolled in the King Abdullah Scholarship Program showed a tendency towards openness and acceptance of others' opinions, ideas and beliefs, in contrast to what Wahhabis ideology affirms. To clarify, one of the most apparent forms of change that can be evidence of KASP's ability to undermine the influence of the Wahhabi establishment on Saudi Arabia, as Ottaway (2012) claims, is the program's ability to bring religious pluralism to Saudi Arabia. One of the most attractive features of Western societies is that they incubate religious pluralism (Bilal, 2017). Despite their religious differences, religious sects in Western countries live in peace alongside one another. According to Bilal (2017), one Saudi participant said that:

> I go to the mosque here in jumuah (Friday prayer), and I park in front of church. That's beautiful. I like that. I love that. It's peace. Everyone has like their freedom. Everyone doing like his what he has to do. And we live in peace, stay together. I love it. I wish we had that back home, churches and stuff. So, we should respect other religions…I like Saudis to try to feel free share society with other religions, other people (p. 63).

In the same way that the call for equality between men and women is considered a revolutionary stance in regard to the Wahhabis ideology that beliefs in inequality between men and women; the request for pluralism of religion is also a revolutionary stance opposed to the

essence of Wahhabi ideology. Wahhabi ideology rejects any existence of any temples and practices of any non-Islamic worship on Islamic lands (Nevo, 1998).

These profound changes in cultural values and beliefs lead to talking about mental programming. Because they were programmed at an early age, most of our values and beliefs are not rational (Hofstede, 1980). It is possible to say that the experience of studying abroad enabled Saudi students to review and to question some of their values and ideas from their original culture, including their attitude towards women working in mixed environments, as the results of this study showed. This interpretation can also be supported by the notion of mental programming, precisely the collective level, in which people can change through the environment around them. According to Alhazmi and Nyland (2010) for Saudi men, perceptions about women are associated with fear and hesitation. These two perceptions stem from the sex segregation on which they were brought up culturally and religiously. The feeling of fear and doubt stems from the fact that the man has the conviction that women are weak and cannot defend themselves in the event of an assault that may take her *Ird*, which is essential. Simultaneously, some men are "not confident' enough to control their sexual desires without social maintenance" (Alhazmi & Nyland 2010, p. 9). Studying abroad may allow the students to test some of their fears and hesitation regarding the relationship between men and women. Living in a society where males and females interacting and working in everyday life as happening in American society does not mean forbidden actions are going to occur as Wahhabis ideology states. This interpretation is in line with what one Saudi student said about his experience living abroad:

> I had a certain idea about [women's role], like, working outside home …
> but when I came here and saw women's life, yes certainly women don't live
> in paradise, but in the end, she could be herself [what she wants to be] in
> one way or another" (Alhazmi, 2010, p.16).

This interpretation is even more significant when considering the average ages of the participants in this study. The participants' average age is 27, which means that most of them have come to the United States at the age of 23. This early age may allow them to change their convictions more than people of older generations. This is in line with a previous study by Hansen, Shneyderman, McNamara and Grace (2018) that found younger students were more likely to show a positive approach under acculturation than older students. Older students were more attached to their traditional customs and opinions (Hansen, Shneyderman, McNamara & Grace, 2018).

However, Acceptance does not fully apply to Saudi students. According to the theory, Acceptance will be a complete cultural loss, which is something that has not been studied in this research. As mentioned before, this study focuses on one aspect of Saudi culture related to the relationship between men and women, precisely sex segregation. Also, as many studies revealed, Saudi students in the United States still maintain their cultural and religious customs. For example, Razek and Coyner (2013) found that Saudi students still cling to their collective cultural dimension. Some Saudi indicated that they are recommending officials at the International Admission Office in their universities to pass their phone numbers to the newly arrived Saudi students to assist (Razek & Coyner, 2013). One student stated that "I also try to help other Saudi women in the program by passing my notes from the previous semester to them. Sometimes, these notes are helpful" (Razek & Coyner , 2013, p. 110).

Moreover, a study by Alqarni (2018) showed that some Saudi students in small urban areas where there were no stores that offer halal food, had to change their diet entirely because of the lack of stores selling halal meat. Students forced to change their diet to a vegetable and snack

system (Alqarni, 2018). That means students still adhere to their religious customs and have not entirely abandoned them as the theory presume.

Third, it appears that Saudi students in America have been able to create daily interactive spaces to connect with Americans; these spaces depend on shared values and interests. These shared interests and values, as the theory states in the Adaptation pattern, work meaningfully for individuals from both cultures to provide common cultural grounds and events of occasionally meeting (Redfield, Linton & Herskov,1936). To clarify, the tolerant attitude the students reported in this study can be assumed to be a success of the acculturation process they went through. The harmony of opinions and ideas that occur in daily life between Saudis and Americans can facilitate the adaptation of Saudi students and make them feel that they live in a reconciliatory environment, hence the success of the acculturation process. This interpretation is consistent with a previous study by Al Musaiteer (2015). It found that shared similar values with people of the American culture encourage Saudi students to communicate effectively. For example, Saudi students in the United States succeeded in using cultural-common with Americans to create a thriving communicational environment. One of the things that Americans and Saudis have in common is their enthusiasm for sports. One Saudi student relied on his passion for sport as a successful strategy for creating a good relationship with American society members, which, in turn, facilitated harmony with American people-culture (Al Musaiteer, 2015). Another student found in talking about religion a way to create a mutual space that allowed him to have a good relationship with American people (Al Musaiteer, 2015). Despite the profound differences between Islamic religion and Christianity, the student found a mutual relationship between him and religious students (Al Musaiteer, 2015). There was an atmosphere of respect and friendly discussion between him and people who have an obligation to their religion, even if they were

from a different religion. This is consistent with prior studies (Gareis, 2012; Hinchcliff-Pelias & Greer, 2004) that mutual interests and values allow international students to form friendships with people of the host culture and not to feel alone during the time living overseas. Hence, helping them adapt to the host culture and decreasing acculturative stress.

Limitation

The diversity of the sample to contain all components of Saudi society was a challenge to this study. It is noticeable in this study that there is a difference in the number of participants with respect to the demographical representation of Saudi Arabia. For example, the number of participants from the west region for Saudis sample who did not live outside Saudi for more than three months was noticeably higher than other participants, forty-three (33.54%). This can pose an issue because Saudi Arabia is vast and diverse in its tribal and religious nature. At the tribal level, each tribe has different customs. The tribes of the south differ from the north, the east, and the center. Part of the Saudi Arabia's cultural diversity is that it includes citizens who do not belong to tribes at all.

Along with tribes, Saudi society has multiple religious sects as well. Although the Wahhabi Salafi school represents the largest segment, there are Shiites in the eastern region, Ismailis in the southern part, and Sufis in the western area. Each sect has its views regarding hijab and sex segregation. It was challenging to obtain a sample that gathered all of the kingdom's tribes, non-tribes and religious sects. To obtain a sample representing all Saudi social fabric is challenging because it requires a lot of effort, funding, and human resources. It also required the participants to disclose their full names, including the name of the tribe, which is the last name, and their religious sect. This matter may cause reluctance to the participants.

The present study encountered complexities in communicating with some directors of the three Saudi student associations during the survey distribution. It took some of them a long time to answer my inquiries. The responses to the survey from some associations members were weak, which resulted in sending the survey a second time, adding a note asking those who answered the survey the first time to ignore the email.

Implications for Future Studies

This study creates more questions to be answered in future surrounding the phenomenon of sex segregation in Saudi Arabia. It is a cultural phenomenon stemming from the customs and traditions of the Arabian Peninsula's inhabitants. Noticeably, most studies on sex segregation, especially those carried out after the events of 9/11, focused on the phenomenon as a religious practice, which is true, but largely overlooked the fact that it is a tribal cultural practice before it was a religious basis. Interestingly, the only study on Saudi students that argued that the phenomenon is fundamentally a cultural phenomenon, and that holy verses do not forbid mixing, but rather the Wahhabi understanding of the poems do was the study by Alhazmi and Nyland (2010). In case Saudi researchers want to develop an integrated knowledge that produces solutions based on a correct and integrated understanding regarding sex segregation, they should conduct more studies on the cultural-tribal dimension of this phenomenon. The present research recommends more studies focusing on the changes that intercultural communication through KASP may bring about in tribal beliefs. An interesting one to start with would be the *Ird* and dishonor concept, which constitutes a principal cornerstone of the value system of the Saudi man in particular and the Arab in general in dealings with women (Madek, 2005).

This thesis also recommends more studies focusing on those who return to Saudi Arabia after finishing their educational journey abroad. It would be beneficial to discover whether they

will keep their new thought processes or give them up under the pressure of the norms and the traditions in their original society.

This study also suggests conducting studies that concentrate on the changes that may occur in the Saudi cultural dimensions because of living abroad. It would be useful to know if Saudi students who live in the United States will change in their collectivistic dimension, for example, and become more individualistic along the lines of American society.

Another suggestion for future research would be studying the attitudes of Saudi females towards working in mixed-sex environments. In 2019, the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education revealed female students studying in the United States form 34% of KASP members. Another suggestion for researchers in the future would be examining if these female students would have a more tolerant attitude than their counterparts. Focusing on other variables that may change female perception working in mixed environments, such as the recently witnessed changes in Saudi Arabia would also be another future possibility to investigate. Some of these variables include allowing women to drive, travel, accommodation in hotels without a male guardian and appoint several women in top positions, such as selecting several women to the position of ambassadors and appointing a woman to the work of university chancellor (Naser, 2020).

Another future study that would be very beneficial would be on the Saudis' attitude on sex segregation by focusing on students from other host countries. Besides students in the United States, Saudis are studying in many other countries such as Canada, England, and Australia, as well as Eastern countries such as Malaysia, Japan, and South Korea (Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education, 2019). Such studies can provide decision-makers with useful data to evaluate, improve, and achieve the best possible outcome from the program.

CONCLUSION

There were two main goals and contributions from conducting this study. The first was to verify the possibility of changes in Saudi students' (KASP members) cultural values occurring from the acculturation due to studying abroad. The second was to add a quantitative dimension to the studies of Saudi students in the United States.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has invested hundreds of millions in international education to bring about cultural change via its students who study in several countries around the world. Despite the cultural differences between Saudi Arabic and the American culture, Saudi students deal with acculturative stress while studying abroad. This study revealed the King Abdullah Scholarship Program has the ability to change the attitude of Saudis towards Saudi women working in mixed environments. This thesis revealed that Saudis who have lived in the United States for more than four years showed a more tolerant attitude toward mixed-sex environments than Saudis who did not live out Saudi Arabia for more than three months.

The present study addresses a gap in literature regarding Saudi international students in the United States by focusing on one aspect of Saudi culture; sex segregation, in contrast to previous studies that focused mostly on Saudi students' experiences in general. Empirically, the present thesis subjected KASP's ability to bring about cultural change to examination. Additionally, the present study adds to literature related to Saudi students through the use of quantitative statistical approach, focusing on the attitude of Saudi on sex segregation at the group level, unlike previous studies that mostly used the descriptive method through personal interviews to collect data.

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APPENDIX A

(Consent form and the survey for the sample from the USA)

You are receiving this email because you are a member of Saudi Students Association in (name of the university). You are invited to participate in this survey, which is a part of the fulfillment of the requirements for Masters' degree at Purdue Fort Wayne University.

This research investigates in the attitude of Saudi students regarding sex segregation. There are no known risks or benefits from participating in this research. You can refuse to engage or to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. Your participation is voluntary. There are no anticipated costs to participate in this research. No identifying information will be collected. All the data are anonymous. If you have questions about your rights while taking part in the study or have concerns about the treatment of research participants, please contact Yaser Almalki (almay01.pfw.edu), the principal investigator, Dr. Assem Nasr (nasra@pfw.edu) or Purdue's Human Research Protection Program at (765) 494-5942, email (irb@purdue.edu) or write to:

Human Research Protection Program - Purdue University

Ernest C. Young Hall, Room 1032

155 S. Grant St.

West Lafayette, IN 47907-2114

If you are over 18 years and want to participate in this study, please click Next to start the survey. Doing so indicates your consent to use your answers as part of this research project.

I have been living in the United States for (choose one):

○**4 Months or less** ○**4 months - one year** ○**one year - 4 years** ○**More than 4 years**

Sex: ○**Male** ○**Female** Age: _____

Where are you from: **East of Saudi Arabia**○ **West of Saudi Arabia**○ **North of Saudi**

Arabia○ **South of Saudi Arabia**○ **Middle of Saudi Arabia**○

Education: **Bachelor's** ○ **Higher Education (Masters, PhD)** ○ **Other:** _____

Married Status: **Single**○ **Married**○

Please, answer the following items by marking where represents your agreement:

Q/ What is your impression of a Saudi girl who works in a mixed sex environment?

Each answer should reflect your degree of agreement with the statements on the left and the right. Number 7 means that you are 100% agree with the statement on the left, and number 1 means you are 100% agree with the statement on the right. Choosing number 4 means that your answer is Natural.

1/She matches society's culture □□ □ □ □ □□ She doesn't match society's culture.

2/She is a religious □□ □ □ □ □□ She is not religious.

3/She is a tribe member □□ □ □ □ □□ She is not a tribe member

4/She has a lack of family supervision □□ □ □ □ □□ She has enough of family supervision.

5/She is a good representation of Saudi women □□ □ □ □ □□ She is a bad representation of Saudi women.

6/She cares about her reputation □□ □ □ □ □□ She does not care about her reputation.

7/She cares about (family, relatives, tribe) opinions □□ □ □ □ □□ She does not care about (family, relatives, tribe) opinions.

8/She is happy with her job □□ □ □ □ □□ She is not happy and doing it because of her need to make a living.

9/ She should be proud of herself □□ □ □ □ □□ She should be ashamed of herself.

10/She is not a role model of young Saudi women □□ □ □ □ □□ She is a role model of young Saudi women.

11/She probably has lost many friends because of her job □□ □ □ □ □□ She probably has many friends.

12/If she is single, her job will negatively impact her getting married □□ □ □ □□□ If she is single, her job will not negatively impact her getting married.

13/If she is married, her job will lead to martial instability □□ □ □ □ □□ If she is married, her job will not lead to martial instability.

14/ She is a victim of Western, liberal, secular ideas □□ □ □ □ □□ She is an independent person and not influenced by Western, liberal, secular ideas.

APPENDIX B

(Survey for the sample from Saudi Arabia)

I have lived out of Saudi Arabia for more than three months: ○**Yes** ○**No.**

Age: ____

Region in Saudi Arabia: **East**○ **West** ○ **North**○ **South**○ **Middle**○

Education: **Bachelor's** ○ **Higher Education (Masters, PhD)** ○ **Other:** _____

Married Status: **Single**○ **Married**○

Please, answer the following items by marking where represents your agreement:

Q/ What is your impression of a Saudi girl who works in a mixed sex environment?

Each answer should reflect your degree of agreement with the statements on the left and the right.

Number 7 means that you are 100% agree with the statement on the left, and number 1 means you

are 100% agree with the statement on the right. Choosing number 4 means that your answer is

Natural.

1/She matches society's culture □□ □ □ □ □□ She doesn't match society's culture.

2/She is a religious □□ □ □ □ □□ She is not religious.

3/She is a tribe member □□ □ □ □ □□ She is not a tribe member

4/She has a lack of family supervision □□ □ □ □ □□ She has enough of family supervision.

5/She is a good representation of Saudi women □□ □ □ □ □□ She is a bad representation of Saudi women.

6/She cares about her reputation □□ □ □ □ □□ She does not care about her reputation.

7/She cares about (family, relatives, tribe) opinions □□ □ □ □ □□ She does not care about (family, relatives, tribe) opinions.

8/She is happy with her job □□ □ □ □ □□ She is not happy and doing it because of her sever need of make living.

9/ She should be proud of herself □□ □ □ □ □□ She should be ashamed of herself.

10/She is not a role model of young Saudi women □□ □ □ □ □□ She is a role model of young Saudi women.

11/She probably has lost many friends because of her job □□ □ □ □ □□ She probably has many friends.

12/If she is single, her job will negatively impact her getting married □□ □ □ □□□ If she is single, her job will not negatively impact her getting married.

13/If she is married, her job will lead to her married instability □□ □ □ □ □□ If she is married, her job will not lead to her married instability.

14/ She is a victim of Western, liberal, secular ideas □□ □ □ □ □□ She is an independent person and not motivated by the Western, liberal, secular ideas.

APPENDIX C

IRB Approval

PURDUE
UNIVERSITY

This Memo is Generated From the Purdue University Human Research Protection Program System, Cayuse IRB.
Date: January 7, 2020
PI: ASSEM NASR
Department: PFW ARTS & SCIENCES ADMIN, PFW COMMUNICATIONS
Re: Initial - IRB-2019-361
KING ABULLAH SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM IMPACT ON SAUDI ARABIA

The Purdue University Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) has determined that the research project identified above qualifies as exempt from IRB review, under federal human subjects research regulations 45 CFR 46.104. The Category for this Exemption is listed below . Protocols exempted by the Purdue HRPP do not require regular renewal. However, the administrative check-in date is **January 7, 2023**. The IRB must be notified when this study is closed. If a study closure request has not been initiated by this date, the HRPP will request study status update for the record.

Specific notes related to your study are found below.
Decision: Exempt
Category: Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording).
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Findings:
Research Notes:

Any modifications to the approved study must be submitted for review through Cayuse IRB. All approval letters and study documents are located within the Study Details in Cayuse IRB.

What are your responsibilities now, as you move forward with your research?

Document Retention: The PI is responsible for keeping all regulated documents, including IRB correspondence such as this letter, approved study documents, and signed consent forms for at least three (3) years following protocol closure for audit purposes. Documents regulated by HIPAA, such as Release Authorizations, must be maintained for six (6) years.

Site Permission: If your research is conducted at locations outside of Purdue University (such as schools, hospitals, or businesses), you must obtain written permission from all sites to recruit, consent, study, or observe participants. Generally, such permission comes in the form of a letter from the school superintendent, director, or manager. You must maintain a copy of this permission with study records.