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Influences on International Saudi Students’ Sojourner Acculturation in the U.S.

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Influences on International Saudi Students’ Sojourner Acculturation in the U.S.

Abdulah Shaban AlAsiri

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my loving mother, Sharifah. You have given me all you can and more. I owe to you everything.
Acknowledgements

This journey has been one of the greatest challenges I have ever faced. Gladly, I was not alone. Professor Daniel Brown has been with me since the very beginning. I could not have gone through it alone. I am indebted and beyond grateful to Professor Brown, who without his guidance, patience, generosity, and experience, this work would have not been completed. I do not think words can fully express my gratitude. Nevertheless, I wish to attempt to convey the highest admiration and appreciation that I have for him.

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Abstract

Research on international students’ experiences in tertiary institutions abroad suggest they face difficulties related to culture, language, and socialization (e.g., Andrade, 2006; Hellsten, 2002). To encourage more successful socialization and English language development, the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission established a cap on the enrollment of Saudi students in any institutions abroad since 2014. The effectiveness of these quotas in promoting socialization is not known, but anecdotal evidence and an exploratory study conducted by the author suggest other (perhaps more influential) factors affecting Saudi students’ opportunities for socialization (in this study defined more specifically as sojourner acculturation) and subsequent language development. Previous studies of international students’ social adjustment that included Saudis found they face challenges because of their social, cultural, educational, language and religious backgrounds linked to fundamental differences in societal norms and values between their home and host countries (e.g., Albalawi, 2015; Garza 2015).

Building from these findings, and informed by exploratory study results of focus group interviews, the present study aimed to measure the extent to which Saudi international students are socializing in English, and to determine the factors that most influence their outcomes. The study uses a survey administered to 247 Saudi students studying in universities across the U.S. Findings reveal much successful perceived acculturation among Saudi international students and that difficulties correlated significantly with issues of a cultural nature more than they do with any other issues.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Among all other countries, the U.S. has the highest number of Saudi international students who are studying abroad from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia -58,726 students- according to the Scholarships Department in the Saudi Ministry of Education (AlShehri, 2018). These students studying in the U.S. represent 60% of all Saudi students studying abroad as reported by ArabNews (2016). And these numbers will increase, as the Cultural Attaché, Dr. Mohammed Aleissa, announced: “… King Salman bin Abdulaziz is keen to see this program [the scholarship] continue…. and get the continuous funds and support as he directly endorses it… This scholarship program is of great significance to the Saudi leadership since the time of the late King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz and will continue to be so into our future.” (Alhayat, 2016).

However, in a crucial recent policy shift, the Saudi Cultural Mission in Washington D.C. (SACM), which is responsible for overseeing the international Saudi students who are in the U.S. on a government scholarship or studying at their own expense, has set a cap/quota for each university, college, and program in the U.S. starting in October 2014. SACM claimed that the purpose behind this quota is to “…prevent overcrowding which could potentially negatively affect the scholarship experiences of the Saudi students abroad…” (SACMMedia). Dr. Abdulghani AlHarbi, the Assistant Cultural Attaché of Academic Affairs at SACM, said in an interview with SACMMedia that the purpose of this quota is so that “the [Saudi] students do not overcrowd a certain program which will negatively affect the quality of the academic subject taught and the variety and diversity of completing academic assignments because of the lack of the diversity of students.”, (SACMMedia). In the same interview, Dr. AlHarbi also defined ‘overcrowding’ as “having 25 [Saudi] students in a bachelor’s program, 15 [Saudi] students in a master’s program, and 5 in a doctoral program.”, (SACMMedia). In the same article, Dr. Aleissa
also stated that the main goals of the scholarship programs in Saudi Arabia are to encourage international Saudi students to socialize with American and other international colleagues to exchange knowledge and be familiar with other cultures (SACMMedia). Also, SACM believes that by implementing such quotas on the numbers of Saudi students, they will help encourage them to socialize more with other foreign and American students. Although this policy may appear intuitively appealing and is anecdotally supported by many Saudi students, a better understanding of the factors that may influence Saudi students’ success to socialize while in the U.S. could help with further policy design.

The quota has already made an impact on U.S. tertiary educational institutions where the number of students from Saudi Arabia decreased 14%, as reported by Zong and Batalova (2018) from the Migration Policy Institute. The report also stated that this is due to the restructuring of scholarship programs in Saudi Arabia. These policy changes from SACM affect Saudi students as well in terms of enrollment, choices, and options for study abroad in American tertiary educational institutions and locations. They also affect public and private intensive English programs (IEPs), English as a Second Language (ESL) centers, and other educational and academic institutions across the U.S. Success or failure of these programs in terms of student enrollment could hinge upon such policy following the growth of the international Saudi students’ population of ESL students since 2005. In a research conducted by Shaw (2012), many IEPs were flooded unexpectedly with hundreds of applications from Saudi students who wanted to enter the U.S. to study English and join U.S. tertiary educational institutions later. The numbers of Saudi students according to Shaw were unprecedented.

While this quota has serious impacts on international Saudi students’ enrollment in U.S. tertiary institutions, the motivation and assumptions behind it deserve attention. Assuming a
central goal of this policy shift is related to concern over international Saudi students’ socialization into the host country to improve English (among other benefits of integrating cross-culturally), an investigation into these students’ experiences abroad and socialization is warranted. It could be that implementing a cap is instrumental to achieve SACM’s stated goals for Saudi students abroad, but the range of potential factors that may influence their acculturation deserves attention in light of these policy shifts. Therefore, the purpose of the current study was to better understand the degree to which these students were socializing in the American communities where they were living, and to investigate the factors that supported or hindered their acculturation with this new cap policy in place. After reviewing the literature of the field of sojourner international students, whether Saudis or others, and discussing the results of recent and relevant research studies which investigated these issues, experiences, and difficulties, the researcher presented the results of this study, discussed the findings, and suggested solutions.

**The Purpose**

The objective of this thesis is to measure the extent to which current international Saudi students are acculturating in the U.S. and to investigate the influences on such acculturation. This is done to determine and categorize such influences in order to understand and shed more light on the difficulties and issues this population is facing in order to provide suggestions and recommendations on how to eliminate or minimize the effects of these influences as possible.

**The Significance**

It is a vital issue to facilitate the acculturation experience of all international students in any foreign environment. It is vital as well to investigate the problems international students face during their sojourn to host countries. It is also crucial to seek solutions and provide
recommendations to increase their acculturation in host countries, which entails engagement in host societies and development of their linguistics and social skills.

Beltrán (2004) states that, “...language is a social behavior and is more than just a knowledge of the linguistic system.” Language is a social device and we are social beings (Baldwin, 2016), and if society is the garden where language should prosper and grow, acculturation is the botanical effort that should be employed to help our language grow in a more natural way for sojourners studying abroad with goals of language development. Acculturation is important in learning English as a second language for all international students studying in the U.S. Lesley (1988) argues that the relationship between learning a language and the process of acculturation is an issue that attracted researchers’ attention in the field of second language acquisition, especially in the field of learning English as a second language. She continued to say that language teachers have become more aware that language cannot be taught in a “cultural vacuum.”

The present study set to measure the extent of sojourner acculturation of international Saudi students in the U.S. It aimed to examine the influences on international Saudi students’ sojourner acculturation to help in identifying the issues they face which could help inform policy decisions for SACM, U.S. tertiary educational institutions, and the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia. This study could also help other stakeholders to have a better understanding of the issues international Saudi students face that prevent them from acculturating. Findings could also help inform understanding of issues of other international students in the U.S., especially those who come from the Gulf Cooperation Council countries (e.g. Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, etc.) who share a lot of similarities that include religion, culture, and language due to the geographical proximity and the shared open borders among citizens.
Moreover, the international Saudi students’ experiences with adjustment is under researched (Carty, et al 2007; Caldwell, 2013; Heyn, 2013; Hofer, 2009; Shaw, 2010). This study aimed to help shed some light on the issues of sojourner acculturation faced by one of the major populations in U.S. tertiary educational institutions and one crucial to continued international growth, the Saudi international sojourners. This research aimed to update, analyze, compare, revisit, broaden and investigate previous research results and findings on Saudi study abroad students which could help inform, update and develop the decision making processes taken by scholarship departments in Saudi Arabia and other Saudi educational and supervisory bodies abroad such as SACM. This study aimed to update and examine previous findings on international students’ sojourn acculturation in general or those relevant to the Saudi international students and the various complex issues they may be facing.

In addition, this study aimed to provide recommendations and suggestions for host tertiary institutions to ease and improve the sojourn acculturation of Saudi international students in the U.S. and other international students as a whole. It is hoped that results of this study could help in increasing the positive influences as well as minimizing the effects of the negative influences on acculturation in order to ensure and secure smooth and productive sojourn experiences that would maximally benefit international students’ English language development and help inspire further research in this area.
Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Defining Sojourner Acculturation

One of the basic conditions for international students studying in the U.S. on an F-1 visa is to have and maintain a residence abroad without the intention to give it up, according to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (2018). This condition makes it clear for international students that they are not in the U.S. to stay, which defines them as ‘sojourners’. The *Merriam-Webster Online dictionary* defines acculturation as “the cultural modification of an individual, group, or people by adapting to or borrowing traits from another culture.” International students who temporarily leave their home cultures are in this category (Noyongoyo, 2011). On a similar note, Sorrells (2013) defined acculturation as the cultural modification of an individual or a group of people by adapting to or borrowing traits from another culture. In addition, Padilla and Perez (2003) define acculturation as the cultural modification of an individual, a group, or people by adapting to or borrowing some traits from another culture and a merging of cultures as a result of prolonged contact.

However, international students may lack the length of residence required and the long-term intentions for their cultures and the culture of the host country to merge substantially. For instance, Church (1982) argued that sojourners would have relatively short visits to new cultures while having no intention to settle permanently, and defined this adjustment as a *sojourner adjustment*, a term first used by Brein and David (1971). He explained that this term better describes the phenomenon for students studying abroad because other terms like *cultural* or *cross-cultural adjustment* or *adaptation*, or *cultural* or *ethnic assimilation*, are ambiguous or suggest a more permanent assimilation to the host culture than the real situation.
In a study done on acculturative stress among black South Africans studying in the United States in 1996, Laubscher defined *sojourner acculturation* as the acculturative process and experience of international students who reside in a culture other than their own for a temporary period that is no less than six months. The present study will adopt and adapt, in part, Laubscher’s (1996) definition of sojourner acculturation. Specifically, the definition of *sojourner acculturation* for the purposes of this present study is the acculturative process and the dynamics of the socialization experience of international students temporarily residing in a host country for an educational purpose for a period that is no less than six months. The rationale for limiting the timeframe to at least six months’ experience residing abroad is to target students who have supposedly moved through the typical early culture shock stage, illustrated by Lysgaard’s 1955 U-curve model (see Figure 1). This model is commonly known as Lysgaard’s U-Curve Theory of Adjustment.

![Figure 1 Lysgaard’s Cultural Adaptation U-Curve Model (Lee, 2006)](image-url)
The U-curve model suggests that international students would experience four main stages, which include the honeymoon stage, the culture shock (hostility) stage, the adjustment stage and, at last, the mastery stage. The honeymoon stage is where the students first arrive to the host country and they usually feel happy and excited, but slightly nervous to start their new journey. However, the hostility stage is where the students start to realize, internalize and notice all the differences in the culture and the environment around them. This is when they usually start feeling confused, lonely, and homesick. Hence the decline showed in degree of adjustment stipulated in Figure 1. Shortly after that, the adjustment stage begins. The adjustment stage is where the students start to adjust to the new environment and start making an effort to keep up with their surroundings. At the end comes the mastery stage, which usually begins after 6-9 months, where the students start to function more effectively in the host country and start to feel confident again and comfortable to make new friends and engage in social activities. According to this model, it is more likely that sojourners will be in a position to acculturate successfully after the initial culture shock phase, which helped in deciding the inclusion criteria for participants in the present study. This model is used nowadays by many universities around the globe to explain to international students the stages of culture shock and adjustment to new environments as universities, advising and orientation programs believe it relates to international university students adjustment throughout the world.

Church (1982) criticized the U-Curve model because some studies found that not all international students experience the same stages in the sequence the model suggests (Becker, 1968; Golden, 1973; Klineberg & Ben Brika, 1972, Selby & Woods, 1966). Also, he criticized it because although depression occurs to some degree, it is not universal (Klineberg & Hull,
1979). In addition, Church claimed that even the studies that supported Lysgaard’s U-Curve model showed “marked differences” in the time parameters set in the model ranging from nine months (Deutsch & Won, 1963; Scott, 1956, and Sewell & Davidsen, 1961) to four or five years (Davis, 1963, 1971, and Shepard, 1970). However, Black and Mendenhall (1990), in a study reviewing the empirical evidence for Lysgaard’s U-Curve, state that Church’s (1982) review of the U-Curve theory was “brief and somewhat limited.” Black and Mendenhall also state that the U-Curve adjustment theory is the theory most commonly used. In their conclusion, Black and Mendenhall found that 12 out of the 18 articles and research studies they reviewed for the U-Curve hypothesis indicated support for the U-curve hypothesis. They also concluded that the existing literature at the time indicates that a rejection or acceptance of the U-Curve adjustment theory by scholars or cross-cultural trainers is “premature” and that more carefully designed research is needed in the field.

In spite of the fact that this model is controversial, it is still considered as one of the major theories that guided the research on expatriate adjustment and many scholars have continued to rely on it (Lee, 2006). For example, according to Lee (2006), many studies used it to describe the cross-cultural adjustment process of expatriate employees and sojourners who reside in a host culture (Lysgaard, 1955; Black & Mendenhall, 1990, and Usunier, 1998).

**Influences on Sojourner Acculturation of International Students**

In general, the literature regarding the explicit acculturation of international student sojourners is scarce and limited with a few exceptions that include studies by Martin, (1987); Searle and Ward, (1990), and Ward and Chang, (1997), according to Anderson and Guan, (2017). However, acculturation in relation to international students, in general, has been the focus of
much research (e.g., Banjong, 2015; Katsara, 2015; Koseva, 2017; Koyama, 2009; Leong, 2015; Nilsson, 1999; Ritter, 2013; Ritter, and Roth, 2014; de Souza, 2012, and Zhai, 2002). In addition to culture shock, studies have shown that different groups of international students in the U.S. face various problems such as problems related to communication, English language, depression, and other issues (Garza, 2015; Galloway & Jenkins, 2005; Hanassab, 2006; Lin & Yi, 1997, and Misra, Crist & Burant, 2003). Moreover, in a study of the effect of cultural adjustment on the academic achievement of international students, Nasir, 2012, among other studies in the literature, conducted a correlation analysis that revealed a “significant correlation between cultural adjustment and academic achievement.” Nasir, 2012 continued to say that there were significant differences in the academic performance of the international students between high and low level of cultural adjustment.

Among the most commonly investigated problems is the evident basic issue of culture shock, which is a term that has many definitions. One of the earliest definitions in the literature dates back almost 60 years and is attributed to Oberg (1960) who defined culture shock as the combination of frustration and anxiety a person feels following the absence of familiar cues after entering an unfamiliar cultural environment. Newer studies defined culture shock as the disorientating experience of the individual’s sudden realization that their perspectives and behaviors are not shared by others in the current environment (Furham, 2012). For the present study, culture shock is defined in line with earlier research as the sudden realization of the changes, differences, and dissimilarities experienced in a foreign new environment. This change could very well present a psychological challenge that may cause depression and homesickness. The adjustment to such changes is the effort exerted towards shifting oneself to fit more appropriately with the host environment.
The acculturation process can also be both psychologically draining and detrimental to the health of international students. When international students try to adapt to a new host environment they face many difficulties in doing so which could hinder and affect their health and academic success, according to Chiu (1995). In a longitudinal study of the adaptation of international students in the U.S., Cemalcilar and Falbo (2008) found that their transition can be psychologically challenging, even for educated international students with prior knowledge of the host culture and language skills. These results were consistent with earlier research (Ryan & Twibell, 2000). In a longitudinal study of adjustment and strain among international and domestic sojourners, Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen, and Horn (2002) found that relocation alone can be a stressful and a challenging experience. They concluded that international student sojourners had much greater problems and difficulties in adjusting to their new universities during the initial transition period.

Other serious health issues that could affect international student sojourners include depression (Jung, Hecht & Wadsworth, 2007), psychological and mental problems (Bradley, 2000, and Mori, 2000), social and identity issues (Pedersen, 1991), feelings of isolation and discrimination (Lee and Rice, 2007; Robertson, Line, Jones & Thomas, 2000; Schmitt, Spears & Branscombe, 2003, and Sodowsky & Plake, 1992, and Spaulding and Flack, 1976), and loneliness (Komiya & Eells, 2001; Sawir, E., Marginson, S., Deumert, A., Nyland, C. & Ramia, G. 2008, and Oberg, 1960) among other various serious issues that could very likely harm their acculturation progress as well as their academic success.

Unfortunately, problems of sojourners do not end here as the issue could be more complicated as many international students in the U.S. feel isolated from host national peers. This isolation leads them to suffer from loneliness and depression (Trice, 2007). In addition, a
study on international students’ academic performance and the effects of campus resources (Banjong, 2015) found that international students are prone to homesickness and lack of social support. In addition to culture shock, discrimination, linguistic barriers, stresses associated with immigration regulations, financial issues, loneliness and depression and anxiety, other studies found that international students face difficulties adjusting to foreign foods and difficulties changing eating habits and customs (Berry, 2003; Church, 1982; Liang & Fassinger, 2008; Mesidor and Sly, 2016; Poyrazli, Kavanaugh, Baker & Al-Timimi, 2004; Rai, 2002; Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002; Wan, 2001; Ying & Liese, 1994, and Zhang and Goodson, 2011).

This long list of potential difficulties could also significantly lower their potential for acculturation and could lead them to form their own sub communities as they would naturally feel the need to communicate and express their problems to someone who understands them (Garza, 2015), which could only lead to furthering their isolation from the host community and worsening their acculturation experience.

**International Saudi Students’ Sojourner Acculturation**

Although much research has been conducted on international students’ experiences in the U.S. in general, there are still relatively few studies that examine the international Saudi student population specifically, despite their increasing presence in American tertiary institutions (Heyn, 2013). In addition, when the issue comes to international Saudi students’ acculturation or adjustment, there has been even less done. The research is limited and scarce as reported in many recent studies (Carty, Moss, Alzayyer, Kowitlawakul & Arietti, 2007; Brown & Aktas, 2012; Callaway, 2010; Hozik & Wright, 1996; Jacob, 2001; McDermott-Levy, 2011; Shaw,
2009; Suleiman, 1999; Tinsley, Turan, Aslani & Weingart, 2011). There are, however, few exceptions that are relevant to the topic of the present study, which are be highlighted below.

Being from one of the top ten countries with the highest numbers of international students in the U.S. since 1979, as reported by Zong and Batalova from the Migration Policy Institute (2018), Saudi international students are bound to be part of at least some studies in the literature. However, they are sometimes categorized under general terms such as Arab students, Middle Eastern students, or Muslim students. In a study investigating international students’ perceptions regarding discrimination, Lee and Rice (2007) found that international students who come from Asia, India, Latin America, and the Middle East reported considerable negative experiences of discrimination in America while students from Europe, Canada, and New Zealand did not report any direct negative experiences with discrimination with regard to their race or culture.

As is evident in the research, cultural distance, which describes the difference between two cultures, has great influence on international students’ adjustment and acculturation. This problem can worsen relative to the depth and size of the cultural distance and difference between the international students’ cultures and the culture of the host country. For example, in an investigation of college adjustment of international students and the roles of gender, acculturative stress, coping skills, cultural distance, and perceived social support, Otlu (2010) found that most studies that are relevant to cultural distance and adjustment revealed that the higher the cultural distance and cultural differences between the cultures of the host and home countries, the lower the adjustment or greater the difficulties faced by the international students in the adjustment process (Rosenthal, Russell & Thomson, 2007; Suanet & de Vuver, 2009, and Yeh, and Inose, 2003). This was also supported in a study conducted by Ward, Bochner,
and Furnham (2001) who concluded that frequency of interactions between international
students and host nationals is largely dependent on the cultural distance between the cultures
of the host country and the culture of the international students.

The cultural distance is relatively great between Saudi Arabia and the U.S. The
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a religiously based monarchy where the sovereign's dominant
powers are regulated according to Shariah -Islamic law, tribal laws, and national customs (Gall
& Hobby, 2007). The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, although sharing many similarities with the
U.S., is fundamentally different in significant ways. These differences include, but are not
limited to, culture, religion, education, social norms, customs and national ideals. For example,
in a study conducted by Ourfali (2015) to compare the western and eastern cultures, she found
that the Saudi society is considered a collective society which means that in Saudi culture
loyalty is crucial for all members of that society and is stronger than any other rules or
regulations. This contrasts with Ourfali’s characterization of the U.S. society as individualistic,
which means that the American culture is known for looking only after themselves and their
direct family members. Ourfali also reported that the Saudi society and its codes of behavior
does not accept untraditional behavior. On the other hand, the U.S. society is fairly open to
trying new or different ideas. In addition, the Saudi culture is based strongly on Islamic and
Arabian cultural beliefs that do not accept having a boyfriend or girlfriend, tattoos, facial
piercings for men, partial nudity in public places (indecent clothing), profanity, alcohol
consumption, nightclubs, recreational drugs, public display of affection, etc., which are
behaviors that could be accepted in the U.S. as personal freedom or freedom of speech.

These vast differences can prove very problematic for Saudi students in the first few
months studying abroad due to the size and depth of this cultural distance. For example, in a
qualitative research study investigating the cultural adjustment of 25 female international Saudi students studying across the U.S., Lefdal-Davis and Perrone-McGovern (2015) found that most of them experienced the most difficult period of adjustment in the first three months. In addition, the study also found that other Saudi female participants had some struggles for the most part after three or six months. However, only one female participant stated that she had an easy exciting experience at the first 1-3 months, the honeymoon stage, but then she stated that she had the most difficulty and struggled with adjustment after 1-2 years.

The Kingdom is also known for being an Arabian traditional country that prides itself in keeping and preserving its identity on both the domestic and global fronts. It also encourages its citizens to hold fast to their traditions and take pride in the Saudi image when abroad, as tourists, individuals, and certainly students, whether under SACM’s supervision or not. The Kingdom and its affiliate government’s international bodies and tertiary institutions strongly encourage Saudi citizens, through various means, sometimes even addressed as “ambassadors of the Kingdom,” to be at their best behavior as they are representing the Islamic religion and the Kingdom abroad. This is also continuously reflected in the rhetoric given by H.E. Khalid bin Salman, the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia in Washington D.C., to the Saudi international students in the U.S. as he addressed them as the “ambassadors of their country” (Almowaten). SACM also in its correspondences encourages them to be ambassadors of their country in national and international celebrations, events, their daily routines and the way they dress, act, or even address others. Therefore, the cultural distance could possibly be greater because the Saudi international students are expected to uphold traditional values abroad which could play a significant role, among other influences, on their acculturative processes and experience.
There are many studies that examine the population of Saudi international students specifically with regard to their experiences abroad. These studies range from examining the cultural, religious, and academic differences experienced by Saudi international students (Alamri, 2017), their adjustment challenges (Caldwell, 2013; Shabeeb, 1996), adjustment to learning in the U.S. (Unruh & Obeidat, 2015), their success strategies (Shaw, 2010), and the role of social support systems (Asfahani, 2018). In addition, there are also studies that examine their acculturation experience (Alsabatin, 2015), cultural impacts (Razek & Coyner, 2013), intrapersonal identity conflict (Asfahani, 2017), and intercultural communication experiences (Al Musaiteer, 2015). Also, there are studies that focus solely on one demographic such as a study done on adjustment experiences of married international Saudi students (Al Ramadan, 2016), as well as studies that focus on one gender such as the experiences of male Saudi international students (Heyn, 2013), or studies that focus solely on female Saudi international students and their experiences abroad (Arafah, 2017; Young & Clark, 2017; Davis, 2014, and Lefdahl-Davis & Perrone-McGovern, 2015). There are other studies in the literature that investigate international students in general and their population include a small number of Saudi nationals (Abu Rabia, 2016; Al Murshidi, 2014; Banjong, 2015; Chavoshi, 2017; Garza, 2015; Jean-paul, 2015; Lesley, 1988). These studies as well as other relevant work will be discussed throughout the remainder of the literature review and in the discussion section.

A study very similar to the present study was done by Laubscher (1996) on sojourner acculturation and acculturative stress focusing on the sojourn experience of approximately 300 black South African students who were studying in the U.S. The study pointed to the particular salience of the relationship between acculturative stress and gender, strategies of acculturation, religious change, satisfaction with the sojourn, discrimination, and duration of stay in the U.S.
Laubscher also found that female participants were prone to higher levels of acculturative stress than male participants. The study used a survey/questionnaire that included some items that have been adopted and adapted for use in the current study. The variables investigated by Laubscher (1996) were concerned with the relationship between acculturative stress and acculturation strategy, gender of participants, religious change, discrimination, and satisfaction with the sojourn journey.

Moreover, in a study conducted to help voice the issues of international Saudi students to shed more light on the lack of research on this group (although they represent an important increasing vulnerable population in the U.S.), Shaw (2012) sums up the problem by saying:

“… there was a dearth of research about the Saudi experience in the U.S. and little was known of their strategies for succeeding in their new educational environment. While research has been conducted to understand the challenges and needs of international students in general (with Asian students as the central focus), little research has been undertaken to understand the Saudi Arabian experience. In addition, studies exist that determine how to support international students (again predominantly Asian students), yet there is little that focuses on Saudi Arabian students.”

One of the few exceptions, however, is Jammaz’s (1972) study, that was conducted nearly 50 years ago. Jammaz’s study was a quantitative survey study carried out on approximately 400 Saudi students in the U.S. to investigate their adjustment problems. It was the first to examine adjustment problems of international Saudi students in academic tertiary institutions in the United States. Jammaz’s study after running a one-way analysis of variance to determine the degree of association between adjustment and the variables (e.g. age, marital status, previous employment, etc.) found that there was a high degree of association between age, marital status, previous employment, size of the college in the U.S., academic majors of study, academic difficulties of the Saudi students and their adjustment in the U.S. Also, the
study found low association between duration of stay and the Saudi students’ adjustment as well as no significant association between place of residence in Saudi Arabia and the level of study of Saudi students and their adjustment to life in the U.S. However, Jammaz’s study was conducted in 1972 and its results and methods could be outdated and in need of a revisit. Moreover, at the time of Jammaz’s study, SACM and the scholarship program had not yet been established in its current form, with the same resources and support from the Saudi government.

The variables of focus in Jammaz’s (1972) study were age, marital status, employment experience prior to studying in the U.S., academic classification, urbanization, length of residence in the U.S., type of college, academic major, and academic difficulties. These variables were included in the present study to revisit Jammaz’s speculations and findings due to the various vast changes that may have very well took place concerning Saudi international students since the time of Jammaz’s study.

In a study of Saudi student sojourners’ culture shock, Asfahani (2017) attempted to answer his research question which was “Is there a relationship between the intercultural background variables (the length of time spent in the United States, the length of previous experiences outside Saudi Arabia, the length of time studying English as second language, and the frequency and nature of interactions with Americans) and intrapersonal identity conflict?” In doing so, he tried to assess the role of exposure in intrapersonal identity conflict of international Saudi students by using a survey sent to a random sample of 210 Saudi students in the U.S. Asfahani reported that there is not a relationship between exposure and identity conflict. This means that the issues of acculturation could not be because of issues of
interpersonal identity issues. However, due to the vast difference between the U.S. and Saudi cultures, this is worth a revisit in the present study.

Moreover, in a study on the acculturation needs of international students in U.S universities, Garza (2015) stated that many participants in her study, among whom were Saudi students, indicated that they relied on social media websites for posting questions, requests, or asking for help to get familiar with their university and the community they live in or even for finding rides around the campus or city. Moreover, Asfahani’s study (2017) was also limited to international Saudi students in the U.S. who were involved in SACM’s King Abdullah’s Scholarship Program. The participants were all over 18 years old, which is the same population and age group the present study is investigating. Several items from Asfahani’s (2017) that were relevant to the acculturation of Saudi international students’ sojourner acculturation were adapted and used in the present study. In addition to the variables of gender, age and location, the variables of Asfahani’s (2017) study were length of stay in the U.S., length of previous experiences abroad, length of time in ESL learning centers, frequency and nature of interactions with native English speakers, and intrapersonal identity conflict. Asfahani’s survey combined two surveys, one is Leong and Ward’s (2000) Ethno-Cultural Identity Conflict Scale (EICS) in order to measure exposure and conflict, and the other was developed by the researcher. Asfahani found that there was no relationship between exposure and Saudi students’ identity conflict.

According to various studies done on international Saudi students in the U.S., Saudi international students face many issues that include homesickness and loneliness among other similar adjustment issues (Al Hazmi, 2010; Al Murshidi, 2014; Al Musiteer, 2015; Alhazmi & Nyland, 2012; Al-Jasir, 1993; Al-Khedaire, 1978; Garza, 2015; Jammaz, 1972; Macias, 2016).
Al Musaiteer (2015) argues that the inter-cultural communication between Americans and Saudi students abroad has been affected due to the 9/11 tragedy. By the same token, Denman and Hilal (2011), when investigating the mobility of Saudi international student sojourners in the period between 2006 and 2009, found that the crimes that were committed on 9/11 severely affected Americans’ perceptions and impressions of Saudis living or studying in the U.S. Denman and Hilal (2011) continue to say that there was increased violence against Saudis in the U.S., and on a governmental scale visa regulations for Saudis became stricter. These changes in governmental policies and U.S. public attitudes towards Saudis have made Saudi students unwilling and unable to share their personal opinions while studying in the U.S. These issues are a few of those that many international students in the U.S. face which could prevent them from acculturating or socializing with the community, and instead seek to form their own mini communities, be it at the university as anecdotal evidence suggests or online (Garza, 2015).

This thesis study aimed to investigate the issues preventing and influencing the sojourner acculturation of international Saudi students in U.S. academic environments to create the hoped-for opportunities for social language contact and development in English proficiency. No previous studies to date have investigated the factors that influence Saudi study abroad students’ acculturation as it may relate to language learning. Studies have explored the Saudi students’ experience in relation to issues of gender-mixed classrooms in Australia (e.g., Al Hazmi, 2010, and Alhazmi and Nyland, 2012), identity conflict (Asfahani, 2017), and cultural shock (e.g. Al Murshidi, 2014; Al-Jasir, 1993; Al-Khedaire, 1978; Jammaz, 1972; Macias, 2016; Mustafa, 1985, and Shabeeb, 1996), although none discussed these issues as they directly affect English learning or sojourner acculturation. To fill this gap and help
inform current policy, this study set out to investigate the extent to which international Saudi students are acculturating and seeks to identify the influences on their sojourner acculturation in the U.S. It investigates the factors supporting or hindering Saudi study abroad students’ acculturation for language contact to explore the assumptions behind the limits set on enrollment numbers in U.S. tertiary institutions by SACM, and hopefully, provide insight in how these students can be best supported to maximize their experiences abroad.

The Exploratory Study

A qualitative exploratory study (AlAsiri, 2018) was conducted in the Winter of 2018 by the researcher. The exploratory study used semi-structured focus-group interview data from 12 international Saudi student participants. The participants were studying at the English Language Services center at GVSU in Allendale. The exploratory study aimed to investigate factors that contributed to sociocultural conformability, which is defined, for the purposes of the exploratory study and the present study, as the Saudi participants’ willingness (or unwillingness) to accept and follow American customs and social ideals and the effects of this on their engagement in learning the English language while studying abroad in the U.S.

The data included four focus-group interviews—two groups of three male students and two groups of three female students. The focus groups were separated by gender to help the participants get as comfortable and honest as possible when talking about interactions with or thoughts about the opposite gender inside or outside the classroom. The interviews were conducted in Arabic and resulted in three hours and 19 minutes of recorded data. The data was analyzed through content analysis and themes were identified within each content area and discussed, such as culture shock, accepting host country’s social values and norms, socialization,
gender-mixed classrooms, and participation in social activities in the host community. After themes were identified they were then tallied according to the frequency of mention across all 12 participants and relevant quotes were translated into English.

The data gathered in the exploratory study shed some light on our understanding of the influence of sociocultural conformability on language socialization among Saudi students abroad. For example, results suggested that the Saudi participants in the study had high acceptability of the norms and values adopted by the U.S., but they were not socializing. Also, the results suggested that students’ sociocultural conformability may not have had strong influences on their socialization. Furthermore, the data revealed that these students did not face challenges with other international students from opposite genders in gender-mixed classrooms, which is contrary to what Lesley (1988) and Al Hazmi (2010) suggested. However, the study found that Saudi international students were facing some challenges with regards to the presence of the opposite Saudi gender in the classroom. Almost all participants in the study reported that being mixed with the opposite Saudi gender caused them problems with participation, learning progress, and other issues related to classroom activities as well as extracurricular activities.

Furthermore, the participants in the exploratory study showed high acceptability of the host country’s norms and social values. However, they were not able to socialize due to reasons beyond their control, such as culture shock and linguistic and cultural barriers.

Motivation for the Present Study

Some of the results of the exploratory study were surprising, such as that Saudi students who were part of the exploratory study had high acceptability of social norms, values, and customs of the U.S., and were not affected by the presence of the opposite gender of other international
students (from other countries) in the classroom. Also, the participants in the exploratory study did not suffer from culture shock for a prolonged time. These results motivated the researcher to investigate the issues reported by the participants that presumably affected their acculturation progress and English language learning. These results were the motivation for the present study to further explore these issues on a larger sample for more generalizability and to help suggest solutions. The exploratory study was carried out initially to investigate the effects of sociocultural conformability on international Saudi students’ perceived progress in their English learning, and whether there was any relationship between high or low sociocultural conformability and English learning. However, the exploration of descriptive statistics on this small sample did not suggest such anticipated relationships. Furthermore, the issues these students in the exploratory study were facing with socializing were due to other various reasons such as language ability, cultural differences, lack of engagement in the society, and gender-mixed classrooms with the opposite Saudi gender. This led the researcher to believe that these students were struggling in their first months (4-8 months) with English learning because the host institution nor SACM were paying enough attention to their social, cultural, and educational, needs as many other research studies have concluded. These students should be allocated enough time, orientation, and effort to help them integrate into the new environment.
Research Questions

This study had two research questions, as follows:

Research question number one: To what extent are international Saudi students experiencing sojourner acculturation?

Research question number two: Which factors affect international Saudi students’ sojourner acculturation?
Chapter 3: Methodology

The study took place in the U.S. because the researcher was present in the U.S., had conducted an exploratory study on Saudi students in the U.S., and had anecdotal evidence that Saudi international students in educational tertiary institutions in the U.S. face numerous problems, as confirmed by studies mentioned in the literature review. In order to collect data, an online survey was designed by adapting and developing from the relevant studies in the literature. A survey was administered online to reach a much more diverse and larger potential participant sample of the population intended as this is one of the many advantages online surveys have according to Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010), and was one of the limitations of Jammaz’s (1972) at that time. The literature also suggested that online surveys are becoming more prominent, as their administration can overcome many problems found with traditional administration methods such as easy access to the populations that could be harder to reach otherwise (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2010), as was the case with international Saudi students who were scattered all around the U.S. at the time of the present study. The survey was translated into Arabic by an official translator and the translation was reviewed by two other official government translators in Saudi Arabia to make sure that the meanings were thoroughly and carefully conveyed into Arabic. The survey was translated into Arabic because according to Church, Katigbak, and Castaneda, (1988) concepts are more refined in the mind of the respondent if they are given the chance to respond in their native language. Research has also proven that the language of the survey can impact not only attitudes, but behavior as well (Akkermans, Harzing, and Witteloostuijn, 2010).

Moreover, in a study of the challenges in international survey research, Harzing, Reiche, and Pudelko’s (2013) suggested that translation might have a symbolic effect for the participants as even if the participants were comfortable with English, the translation will show them that the
researcher has gone through the effort and expense to make responding as easy as possible for
them. Harzing et al (2013) continued to say that this effort may also influence response rates and
recommended that the language of the survey should be determined by the participants’ language
proficiencies. In this study, all participants native language was Arabic, which was the main
reason behind translating the survey into Arabic for data collection purposes.

Participants

The number of participants at the time was 272. However, 25 participants failed both or either
two statements that were included to check attentiveness. Therefore, these participants were
disqualified from the survey completely. Only the feedback of the remaining 247 participants
were used to attempt answering the research questions of this present study.

The 247 participants included in the present study were all holding Saudi nationality and
were studying in U.S. educational tertiary institutions for at least 6 months as full-time students
holding F-1 visas at the time. However, one student reported being in the U.S. for 5 months and
were included. The descriptive data of these participants are available in results section below.
This was done to ensure that they were only sojourners who were planning or intending to return
to Saudi Arabia after their sojourn. The participants were all at least 18 years old and were also
supervised by SACM to ensure that they were sojourners and that their academic tuitions were
fully covered by SACM and that they were receiving a monthly stipend, which should have
sufficed for them not to need to seek employment in the U.S. Participants were studying in the
undergraduate and graduate levels (Bachelor's, and Master's in Arts and Science) but did not
include any doctoral students.
Research Instrument

To measure acculturation, Lee (2006) stated that the degree of adjustment is not measured by conformity to the culture of the host country. Instead it is measured in terms of variables such as comfort or satisfaction with the new environment, attitudes, contact with host nationals, or difficulties with aspects of the new environment (Torbiorn 1982; Black & Mendenhall 1990). The present study adapted, developed, and derived survey items from relevant studies in the literature, which include Lee’s (2006) adjustment measure, Berry’s acculturation model and strategy (1994, 1997), as well as other items and variables adapted and adopted from Jammaz (1972), Laubscher (1996), Jean-Paul (2015), Barry (2005), Akinniyi (1992); Yakunina, Weigold, Weigold, Hercegovac and Elsayed, (2013), Garza (2015), and Asfahani (2017). Each of these studies is concerned with somewhat similar variables and a similar population of international sojourners. However, the present study was concerned with how much international Saudi students were acculturating in the U.S. and the factors influencing this acculturation process. The items that were adopted and adapted from these studies are specified in Appendices E and F with the corresponding variables and relevant studies mentioned. Acculturation, the dependent variable, was operationalized in the present study through measurement of perceived general attitudes about one’s own acculturation and integration/marginalization in the study abroad environment. The independent variables believed to be of influence on the acculturation of Saudi students for the present study (based on the previous literature) were culture shock, personality traits, cultural distance, cultural identity, language ability, attitudes towards gender-mixed classrooms, discrimination, influence of other Saudi students, and institutional support. These variables will be discussed thoroughly in the research variable section below.
The online survey (see Appendix B), was divided into three main sections. The first section contained 35 items including two statements to check attentiveness to bolster reliability, which result in a total of 37 items. The second section contained two open ended questions. The last section contained background questions about the participant.

The items used in the survey were all based on relevant research in the field and were all trying to operationalize a variable or sub variable in the study. Two open ended questions were also added to help the participants express what they think were other variables or sub variables that the study perhaps did not cover. A Likert-scale was used with five levels for expressing agreement and disagreement and the survey was shared with participants using Google Forms.

The survey also included demographic questions asking participants to volunteer sharing their age, marital status, gender, length of stay, length of time spent learning English in the U.S., type of academic program they chose in the U.S., their academic background, GPA, estimated time before their graduation, current occupation in Saudi Arabia (if any), participation in any official orientation in Saudi Arabia and the U.S. (if any), urbanization (whether the participants come from a city, town, or village in Saudi Arabia), name of the state and university where they were studying, and whether they have been back to Saudi Arabia and how many times they have gone back as well as the amount of times they usual go back in a single year. These background questions were all included in the present study because they were found to affect sojourn acculturation (Asfahani, 2017; Jammaz, 1972, and Laubscher 1996). This background information was also used to help verify that participants meet the inclusion requirements of this study (e.g. age, length of stay, etc.). Other background information helped in comparing these participants to those in previous studies such as marital status, urbanization, and gender (Jammaz, 1972), length of stay and length of studying English (Asfahani, 2017), and orientation (Garza,
2015). Some other background information was included because previous research suggested students' GPA values are negatively related to passive leisure time (George, Dixon, Stansal, Gelb, and Pheri, 2008). The present study also included academic background, which could also be explored as a potential influence on sojourn acculturation (Jammaz, 1972). The demographic and background variables can be found in Section C of the survey (see Appendices A and B).

The survey provided these items to which the participant would select an appropriate answer in a 5 agreeability levels on a Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, disagree, strongly disagree). The items were as direct and as simple as possible to help the participants reach common answers and understand them fully as Dörnyei & Taguchi, (2010) recommended. Two statements were used to check if the participants taking the survey were paying attention. They were asked twice in different places to select certain options as answers to prove they were reading attentively. Responses of participants who failed to do so were disregarded from the study. The information and data collected from participants did not in any way lead back to the participants. The survey did not ask for names, phone numbers, emails, or any information that could directly lead to the participants or reveal their identity in any way. Participation in the survey was also voluntary.

Research Variables

Research question number one.

Research question number one was operationalized by comprising two sub variables as stipulated in Appendix E. The research question was to measure the extent the international Saudi students were experiencing sojourner acculturation. The sub-variables that were used to operationalize this question were as follows:
1. General attitude about one’s own acculturation:

This sub variable adapted and adopted adjustment measure items from Lee (2006), Jammaz (1972), and Laubscher (1996). This was to test the international Saudi students’ comfort levels during the sojourn, since the day of their arrival until the day they participated in the survey of the present study.

2. Integration/ marginalization:

In this sub variable, the participants would express the nature and type of their relationships in the host country and its nationals. And whether they have made friendships with native speakers or not and whether their relationships in America are only with other international or Saudi students. This would help in identifying the type of relationships the international Saudi students had, which would help in giving an overall picture of their sojourn acculturation. This also utilized the integration and marginalization strategies from Berry’s acculturation model (1994, 1997). However, due to the nature of the sojourn acculturation of Saudi students, only integration and marginalization were incorporated as it is adapted from Barry’s Male Arab Acculturation Scale (2005). Also, this was done because Ng, Wang, and Chan (2017) in a study on acculturation and cross-cultural adaptation found that the notions of integration and marginalization have been widely researched for several decades (e.g., LaFromboise, Coleman & Gerton, 1993; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013). Moreover, they found that previous studies consistently established the beneficial effects of integration and the detrimental effects of marginalization on adaptation outcomes (Curran, 2003; Hui et al., 2015; Kosic et al., 2006; Sam & Berry, 1995, and Zheng, Sang & Wang, 2003), whereas research on impacts of assimilation
and separation strategies on adaptation outcomes has produced inconsistent findings and weak predictive power (Sam & Berry, 1995; Tinghög et al., 2009).

Appendix E contains the dependent variables used in this research as well as the items that were adopted or adapted or developed from earlier research studies as stipulated in each row.

**Research question number two**

Research question number two was operationalized by comprising nine sub variables as stipulated in Appendix F. These sub variables were adopted from relevant research (Jammaz, 1972; Jean-Paul, 2015; Asfahani, 2017; Laubscher, 1996, and Garza, 2015) which involved varying influence on sojourner adjustment and acculturation. The sub variables that were used to operationalize the potential influences of sojourn acculturation were as follows:

1. **Culture shock**

This variable has been found to have had a significant effect on the sojourner acculturation of international students (Lysgaard, 1955; Church, 1982; Jammaz. 1972; Mesidor & Sly, 2016; Zhang & Goodson, 2011). These effects are believed to be of higher significance on the sojourner acculturation experience for Saudi students due to the various and vast differences between the American and Saudi cultures. These differences extend to so many levels. These differences include, but are not limited to, food, religion, education, punctuality, and language (see figure 2) as identified by the cultural Iceberg Model (Hanley, 1999).
2. **Personality traits**

This variable was intended to measure whether the participants were introverts or extroverts, which could help in understanding whether they preferred to sit home and enjoy reading a book in a quiet environment or if they preferred to go out and socialize with others. By including this sub-variable, it could help in explaining whether the issues of the participants’ sojourn experience were simply related to their individual choices or personality traits. This sub variable was developed from the results of the exploratory study (AlAsiri, 2018).

3. **Cultural distance**

Berry (1997), in a study of immigration, acculturation, and adaptation said:

“Cultural distance (how dissimilar the two cultures are in language, religion etc.), too, lies not uniquely in the background of the acculturating individual but in the dissimilarity between the two cultures in contact. The general and consistent finding is that the greater the cultural differences, the less positive is the adaptation. This is the case for sojourners and immigrants (Ward & Kennedy,
Greater cultural distance implies the need for greater culture shedding and culture learning, and perhaps large differences trigger negative intergroup attitudes, and induce greater culture conflict leading to poorer adaptation.”

Berry (2005), and Berry, Phinney, Sam, and Vee der (2006) argued that cultural distance between two societies must be taken into consideration when studying the acculturation process. And from this, we can see that cultural distance is in fact an important variable to be taken into consideration for this study which could serve to mediate acculturation.

4. Cultural identity

In a study that investigated the sojourner culture shock of international Saudi students in studying in the U.S. and their intrapersonal identity conflict, Asfahani (2017) found that the majority of the Saudi students in his study did not report that they were experiencing intrapersonal identity conflict while living in the U.S. However, in the exploratory study of AlAsiri (2018) conducted on Saudi students, themes of cultural identity conflicts were detected. Therefore, the researcher of the present study included cultural identity as a potential influence on the acculturation of Saudi students in the U.S.

5. Lack of language ability

The ability to use English in social situations was investigated based on findings from the researcher’s exploratory study and other studies in the literature (AlAsiri, 2018; Galloway & Jenkins, 2005; Hanassab, 2006; Lin & Yi, 1997, and Misra, Crist & Burant, 2003). Within this sub-variable, the perceived ability of international Saudi students in using English was assessed
to better understand the extent to which their sojourner acculturation was hindered merely by their own lack of English language abilities and associated low self-confidence in using English.

6. **Attitudes towards gender-mixed classrooms**

This sub-variable was used to explore the effects of this new feature of the educational academic environment for international Saudi students, which is mixed educational environments. This was investigated before in previous research (Al Hazmi, 2010, and Alhazmi & Nyland, 2012; Shaw, 2012; Macias, 2016) and this topic also surfaced in the exploratory study. The results from these previous studies suggested that international Saudi students may have some issues with gender-mixed classrooms that could affect their progress academically. Their academic progress could possibly lead to struggles in their overall acculturation in the U.S.

7. **Discrimination**

This variable could help in identifying the extent to which the problems the international Saudi students were facing in their sojourn were external and environmental. Issues of discrimination against international students in the U.S. has been reported in many, if not most, studies in the literature review. This variable is relevant to the present study as international Saudi students are one of the most vulnerable international students in the U.S. to be discriminated against simply because of their political, religious or ethnic backgrounds as discussed earlier in the literature review.

8. **Influence of other Saudi students**

This variable would attempt to measure the extent, if any, to which international Saudi students affect each other’s acculturation, English learning progress, ability and need to make
international or American friends. This could also help in understanding whether the issue of lower acculturation could be due to the mini communities that some international students from Asian countries, including Saudi Arabia, create as Garza (2015) has documented.

9. **Perceived lack of institutional support**

Orientation programs are important for all international students as research has proven that it eases their journey and adjustment into the new environment. Providing help predeparture and after arrival to the host country could be integral to ease the acculturative stress and the difficulties the international students may face with culture shock as may be the case for Saudi sojourner international students (Garza, 2015; Jammaz, 1972; Mori, 2000; Rice, Choi, Zhang, Morero & Anderson, 2012; Sam, 2001; Suanet & Van De Vuver, 2009; Zheng & Berry, 1991).

**Piloting of the Survey**

The survey of the present study was piloted once with five Saudi students between 18-32 years old who were undergraduate and graduate students studying in Kalamazoo, Allendale, Grand Rapids, and Lansing areas in Michigan. These participants were studying at various universities in Michigan to ensure that the piloting is done on a relevant population. First, they were asked to read the consent form before participating in the pilot. After that, they were asked to provide their email addresses. The survey solicitation email along with the survey link was sent thereafter.

Each participant was asked to fill in the survey individually sitting in a secluded room with the researcher in a quiet environment. The participants were encouraged to use their own electronic devices such as laptops or mobile phones. This was done to make sure that the survey would be accessible through different electronic means the survey participants would normally use. The researcher made sure that the participants were not disturbed in any way. This was done
to ensure that the participants were paying attention, and focusing on reading the survey without any noise or interference. They all answered the survey individually. The researcher asked them to read each question or item carefully and to ask any time if anything is unclear and why it was unclear to make sure the language and translation of the survey was completely understood and clear.

The participants were observed and their time of completing the survey was recorded using a stopwatch and a notebook. This was done to estimate how long the survey would take each participant. The participants were not aware that they were timed during this piloting in order to make them as comfortable as they could be.

The researcher asked the participants, upon completion of the survey, how clear the items were and if there was anything that could be improved in the survey items or design. The responses were used to develop the survey. Some typing errors were corrected. Other redundant information such as “Please proceed to the next page for the survey.” in the solicitation email and the first page of the survey was only removed from the solicitation email. Some items were made clearer upon the suggestions of the pilot participants such as adding the adverb “negatively” to this item: “I feel that gender-mixed classrooms are negatively affecting my progress in the academic environment.” The survey was sent again for an official translation team in Saudi Arabia to proofread before it was sent to participants.

**Procedures**

After obtaining IRB approval, on January 14, 2019, and fulfilling the necessary research training and all other requirements for conducting human research (see Appendix D), the survey was sent to prospective participants through various means. SACM in Washington D. C. was contacted via
email and phone in order to help secure a number of Saudi participants through them. After satisfying SACM’s conditions, the survey then was posted onto SACM’s Facebook page on January 17, 2019. The survey was also sent through social media applications such as WhatsApp and Telegram as Saudi students studying in the U.S. were known to use these applications to contact one another for help or inquiries. The researcher stopped accepting participants on January 22, 2019. The data’s excel file was downloaded from the Google Forums website. A key sheet was developed by the researcher to codify the items, open ended questions, two statements to check attentiveness, and the background information.

Analysis

The Statistical Consulting Center (SCC) at Grand Valley State University was consulted three times in the course of conducting this thesis. These consultations were regarding the analysis of the quantitative data. Generally, the potential relationship was explored between the independent variables (i.e., the factors that have been shown in previous research to potentially influence sojourner acculturation) and students’ self-reported acculturation (dependent variable) using inferential statistics with the aim of generalizing findings. The open-ended questions were analyzed by means of content analysis procedures (Popping, 2015). The researcher read all 247 responses of the participants to these open ended questions and then attempted to find common themes or patterns. These themes or patterns were coded in order to make them countable. After translating the qualitative data from Arabic into English, interrater reliability was used to assess the reliability of 20% of the coding enlisting the help of another graduate student in applied linguistics (Popping, 2015).
Quantifying the dependent variable data (Appendix E)

It is necessary to mention again that research question number one “To what extent are international Saudi students experiencing sojourner acculturation?” and the dependent variables in Appendix E were meant to measure the extent of acculturation. Likert-scale answers were given a value from 1-5, depending on how positively the items in the survey affect acculturation. For example, we can see that the first item in the first dependent variable “General attitude about one’s own acculturation.” in see Appendix E, which is “I feel that I have integrated to the American culture,” carries a positive addition to acculturation. That is, if the participants chose “Strongly Agree”, which means that they feel that they have integrated to the American culture, then their degree of acculturation deserves five points because integrating to the American culture means they are acculturating (Laubscher 1996; Jammaz 1972; Berry, 1997, and Barry 2005). However, if the participants chose “Strongly Disagree”, which means that they feel that they have not integrated to the American culture, then their degree of acculturation deserves one point as they may not be acculturating.

On the other hand, if the item in Appendix E is worded in a way that would have a negative effect on acculturation, the item’s value would be reversed. This means that the Likert-scale answers, which were (Strongly Agree, Agree, Somewhat Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree), would be given a reversed value from 1-5. For example, the fourth item in the second dependent variable “Integration/marginalization” in Appendix E, which is “I spend more time online on social media websites and applications with my family and friends from Saudi Arabia than I do with Americans I know here,” the item carries a negative effect for acculturation. That is, if the participants chose “Strongly Agree”, which means that they do spend more time online on social media websites and applications with their family and friends from Saudi Arabia than
spending time with Americans they know, then their degree of acculturation deserves one point because spending less time with host nationals could very well mean they are not acculturating as well. Table 3 below provides an example of the coding criteria taken to codify the dependent variables.

Table 3

*Examples for how the data was codified*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Positive/Negative</th>
<th>Likert scale</th>
<th>Value Assigned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General attitude about one’s own acculturation.</td>
<td>Since arriving to the U.S. I feel like I have transitioned successfully into the community.</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Strongly Agree.</td>
<td>Five points.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration/marginalization</td>
<td>I spend more time with other Saudi students than I do with native speakers of English.</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Five points.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quantifying the independent variable data (Appendix F)

It is necessary to mention again that the research question number two “Which factors affect international Saudi students’ sojourner acculturation?” and the independent variables in Appendix F were meant to measure the factors influencing the extent of acculturation. In the attempt to analyze the data for Appendix F, the Likert-scale answers, which were (Strongly Agree, Agree, Somewhat Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree), were given a positive value from 1-5, in the survey depending how highly they influence acculturation. For example, the first item in the first independent variable “culture Shock” in Appendix F, which is “I feel homesick most of the time.”, the item carries a negative influence on acculturation. That is, if the participants chose “Strongly Agree”, which means that they feel homesick most of the time, then this would influence their acculturation highly in a negative way as previous research confirms this (Asfahani, 2017; Berry, 2003; Church, 1982; Mesidor and Sly, 2016; Zhang and Goodson, 2011). This item then deserves five points, which means that culture shock is a high influence on these participants. However, if the participants chose “Strongly Disagree”, which means that they are not highly influenced by culture shock, then their degree of culture shock deserves only one point because it does not have a high effect on their acculturation in the U.S. The same is carried out for all independent variables in Appendix F.

On the other hand, if the item in Appendix F is worded in a way that would have a positive influence on acculturation, the item’s value would be reversed. This means that the Likert-scale answers, which were (Strongly Agree, Agree, Somewhat Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree), would be given a reversed value from 1-5. For example, the second item in the fifth independent variable “Lack of Language Ability” in Appendix F, which is “I use English to communicate and share my opinions and thoughts without being afraid if others laugh at me.”,
the item carries a positive influence on acculturation. That is, if the participants chose “Strongly Agree”, which means that they do use English to communicate and share their opinions and thoughts without being afraid if others laugh at them., then this influence on the degree of acculturation deserves one point because it means that the participants do not lack language ability which should not hinder their acculturation. However, if the participants were to answer “Strongly Disagree” to that item, this would mean that their lack of language ability should be hindering their acculturation in which case the item deserves 5 points because it has an influence on acculturation. Similar to what is found in Table 3 above, the independent variables were assigned values.

For the purposes of modelling and analysis, as shown below in Table 5, the researcher computed the means and standard deviation values for the total of acculturation, which is the sum value of the eight items in Appendix E. The researcher also computed the means and standard deviation values for the total of the influences on acculturation separately. Each independent variable, as specified earlier in Appendix F, was calculated separately to establish means and standard deviations, which is the sum value of the three items for each independent variable.
Chapter 4: Results

This thesis sought to measure the extent of acculturation of the international Saudi students studying in tertiary institutions in the U.S. By reporting the raw percentages of the descriptive data, the researcher found the following:

Participants’ background information

**Gender.**

Table 4

*Gender Distribution of Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>*Accul.</th>
<th>*Accul.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>59.11</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>40.89</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Total of acculturation

The participants in the present study were 146 male international Saudi students studying in U.S. tertiary educational institutions. The present study also included 101 female international Saudi students studying in U.S. tertiary educational institutions. This large number is among the highest numbers of the studies in the literature that investigated female Saudi international students studying in the U.S. Also, most studies that included or only investigated female Saudi international students studying abroad were qualitative in their methodology, as mentioned above in the literature review (Arafeh, 2017; Davis, 2014, and Lefdahl-Davis & Perrone-McGovern, 2015, and Young, & Clark, 2017).
Marital status

Table 4.1

Marital Status Distribution of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>*Accul. Mean</th>
<th>*Accul. SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>**4.38</td>
<td>**.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Total of acculturation

** These are not of significance because they are for 3 participants only

The population of international Saudi students who participated in the present study were mostly single (132 participants). However, married Saudi students represented a significant number as well among the participants (112). However, the number of divorced and/or widowed was low to nonexistent respectively.

Age

The sample of participants in the present study were of varying ages. The minimum age of participants was 18 years old and the maximum age was 48 years old. The age mean for the participants was 28 years. This shows a wide range in the different age groups in the current study which could be beneficial in establishing the acculturation differences among these age groups.
Grade Point Average

The participants were encouraged to share their GPAs in the U.S. The GPA were out of 4.00, and 221 participants shared their GPAs. The minimum GPA reported was 1.83 and the maximum was 4.00. The mean GPA of the participants was 3.45. GPA was included because many studies that investigated acculturation of international students found out that the issues they face such as these issues mentioned in the literature review above (e.g., discrimination, cultural shock, lack of English language ability, lack of institutional support, etc.) affect their acculturation as well as their academic success (Berry, Kim, 1987; Berry, 1997; Li, Chen & Duanmu, 2009; Chen, Rubin and Li, 1997; Misra, Crist & Burant, 2003; Poyrazli, et al 2004; Sümer, Poyrazlı & Grahame, 2008; Ward & Kennedy, 1995; Ye, 2006, and Yeh & Inose, 2003). As mentioned in the literature review above, Nasir (2012) conducted a study to investigate the effect of cultural adjustment on the academic achievement of international students, where he conducted a correlation analysis that revealed a “significant correlation between cultural adjustment and academic achievement.” Nasir, then continued to state that there were significant differences in the academic performance of the international students between high and low level of cultural adjustment, as already mentioned above. On a similar note, George, Dixon, Stansal, Gelb, and Pheri, (2008), found that students’ GPAs are negatively related to passive leisure time, such as watching television, surfing the web, or spending time with friends. Nasir, 2012 also found that cultural adjustment was a significant predictor of academic achievement for international students. The Grade Point Average of the international Saudi participants in the present study shows that the majority is above 3.00.
Residence in the U.S. by state

Table 4.2

State Distribution of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MI</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OH</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AZ</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TX</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 4.2 we see that the distribution of the 247 international Saudi students who were participants in the present study in the U.S. is divided among 37 out of 50 U.S. states, which could be argued to be a geographically representative sample of the population of Saudi students studying in the U.S. These numbers also show that the majority of students in the study resided in...
Michigan (30 participants), Pennsylvania (21 participants), Florida (17 participants), California (16 participants), Maryland and Ohio (each 14 participants), Illinois (13 participants), Virginia, Texas, Oregon, and Arizona (each 11 participants), in addition to 62 other participants (6 or lower) who were living in North Carolina, Washington State, Colorado, Indiana, Connecticut, Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, Missouri, New Jersey, Oklahoma, West Virginia, Kansas, Minnesota, Arkansas, Idaho, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, South Carolina, Tennessee, Wisconsin, and Wyoming, as shown in Table 4.2 above.

**Occupation in Saudi Arabia**

Table 4.3

*Distribution of Occupation in Saudi Arabia of Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>*Accul.</th>
<th>*Accul.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Total of acculturation

The data collected in Table 4.3 was also collected in Jammaz’s (1972) study of Saudi sojourners’ adjustment as discussed in the literature above. From the data collected, we can see in Table 4.3 that the majority of participants (170 out of 247) were not employed in Saudi Arabia. However, 77 participants reported having current employment in Saudi Arabia. It is necessary to mention that the Saudi Arabia government provides scholarship opportunities on three levels. The first level is for those individuals who seek to continue their study abroad in specific fields.
deemed by the Saudi Ministry of Education as needed and necessary to the Saudi labor market. The second level is for those who are already employed by the Saudi government and want to pursue higher education abroad to be more efficient in their career in the Saudi government. The third level is for those individuals who go abroad to study on their parents’ or their own expense, but are still supervised by SACM (the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission). In addition, these third level individuals can be included in SACM’s scholarship program if they meet specific conditions set by SACM (e.g. complete at least 30+ hours of their academic program in case of a bachelor’s degree) as specified on the Saudi Ministry of Education website Safeer (Conditions of the Scholarship Program of the Custodian of the Two Holly Mosques, 2011).

Urbanization background in Saudi Arabia

Table 4.4

Distribution of Urbanization in Saudi Arabia of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urbanization</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>*Accul.</th>
<th>*Accul.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Total of acculturation

The majority of the international Saudi students who were participants in the present study were mostly residing in a city in Saudi Arabia. However, there was a considerable number of participants who reported that they were living in a town and a village in Saudi Arabia.
**Type of academic program**

Table 4.5

_Distribution of Type of Academic Program in the U.S. of the Participants_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Academic Program</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>*Accul. Mean</th>
<th>*Accul. SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Arts</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Science</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Arts</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Science</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Total of acculturation

The majority of the international Saudi students who were participants in the present study reported that they were studying in graduate academic programs, mostly studying in scientific programs. Similarly, the majority of the participants who reported studying in bachelor programs were students in scientific fields.

**Length of stay in the U.S.**

The minimum of the participants’ length of stay in the U.S. reported was 6 months and the maximum were 121 months with a mean average of 33 months. A Pearson’s correlation analysis value was of $r(0.089), p = .164$ showed no statistical significance in terms of the relationship between length of stay and acculturation for the participants in the present study.
Participation in official orientation programs

Table 4.6

Distribution of Participants who Joined Official Orientation Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation in Official Orientation Program</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>*Accul. Mean</th>
<th>*Accul. SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joined in Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not join in Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joined in U.S.</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not join in U.S.</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Total of acculturation

Official orientation programs are defined in the present study as those programs that are initiated by official private or academic or government institutions to provide information, help, resources, and guidance to international students to learn about the new host environment they plan to join as sojourners for an educational purpose.

From Table 4.6 above, it is clear that the majority of international Saudi students who were participants in the present study did not participate in any official orientation programs. It is also important to mention that from the data received, it is found that the participants who reported to have participated in an official orientation program in Saudi Arabia before arriving to the U.S. are the same participants who also reported participating in official orientation programs in the U.S. except for 1 participant who reported only participating in an official orientation program in the U.S. only.
Extent of Acculturation and Influences on Acculturation

Quantitative data

Reliability of acculturation and influences

The SCC at GVSU was consulted to perform a factor analysis on the items used in the survey of the present study to measure acculturation and its influences. The test reported that the items were not collapsible due to the relatively small number of participants. The SCC stated that the sample required to conduct a factor analysis check for the items in the survey should be approximately 800 participants. However, for the present study, the number of participants is 247.

Table 5 Descriptive Statistics of Total of Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total of</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>.595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture Shock</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>.825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Institutional Support</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>.855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of Other Saudi Students</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>1.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality Traits</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>.899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Identity</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>.569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Distance</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>.802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude towards Gender Mixed Classrooms</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>.866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>.917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Language Ability</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>.746</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Then, a Cronbach’s Alpha test was conducted for the total of acculturation as shown below in Table 5.1. The influences on acculturation were collapsed into one total of influences before conducting a Cronbach’s Alpha test as shown below in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1

*Cronbach’s Alpha of Total of Acculturation and Total of Influences*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total of</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variables that influence acculturation</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before the researcher conducted the correlation analysis of the data, assumptions for Pearson’s correlation were checked. The Histogram graph shown in Figure 3 below reveals a relatively normal distribution of data.
As shown in Table 5.2, a Pearson's product-moment correlation statistical test was run to measure the relationship between the acculturation of the 247 international Saudi students and the influences on their acculturation. The preliminary analyses showed the relationship to be linear with the independent variables normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p > .05$), and there were no outliers. There was a statistically significant, moderate to strong correlation between acculturation and cultural distance, $r(0.36)$, $p < 0.00$, acculturation and culture shock, $r(-$
.32), p < 0.00, acculturation and personality traits, lack of institutional support, r(−.24), p < 0.00, and lack of language ability, r(−0.24), p < 0.00.

There was a weak effect (and not statistically significant) between acculturation and discrimination, r(−.16), p = .017 attitude towards gender mixed classrooms, r(−.13), p = .042, influence of other Saudi students, r(−.9), p = .157, and no clear relationship with cultural identity, r(0.02), p = .820.

Table 5.2

*Pearson’s Correlation for Acculturation and Influences of Acculturation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total of Acculturation</th>
<th>Culture Shock</th>
<th>Personality Traits</th>
<th>Cultural Distance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.32**</td>
<td>-.29**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5.2

*Pearson’s Correlation for Acculturation and Influences of Acculturation Cont’d*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total of Acculturation</th>
<th>Cultural Identity</th>
<th>Influence of Other Saudi Students</th>
<th>Lack of Institutional Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation Pearson Correlation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>Lack of Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.820</td>
<td>.157</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5.2

*Pearson’s Correlation for Acculturation and Influences of Acculturation Cont’d*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total of Acculturation</th>
<th>Attitudes</th>
<th>Lack of Language</th>
<th>Discrimination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>towards</td>
<td>Gender Ability</td>
<td>Mixed Classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation Pearson</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.13*</td>
<td>-.24**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
Groups’ effect sizes

One of the most common statistical methods to measure effect size is Cohen’s $d$. Cohen’s $d$ can be used when comparing two means of two groups to establish the amount of difference between them. It is simply the difference in the means of two groups divided by the average of their standard deviation values. Cohen suggested that of the value of $d = 0.2$, then it should be considered “a small effect size”, and if it the $d$ value equals 0.5 then it is a “medium effect size.” However, if the $d$ value is 0.8 then the effect size is “large.” This means that if the means of two groups don't differ by 0.2 standard deviations or more, then the difference is trivial, even if it is statistically significant. In the tables below, the total of acculturation is measured between different groups of the participants. This is done to understand the differences between the acculturation total values of each group.

Gender

As shown below in Table 6, Cohen’s $d$ value in the effect size difference between the acculturation total of both gender of the international Saudi students is 0.08. According to Cohen’s $d$, the difference in the total amount of acculturation is trivial. According to the data given below, male and female international Saudi students do not have large differences in their acculturation total value.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total of Acculturation</th>
<th>Lower Bound*</th>
<th>Upper Bound</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std</th>
<th>Cohen’s d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>0.613</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These refer to 95%
Marital status

As shown below in Table 6.1, Cohen’s d value in the effect size difference between the acculturation total of single and married international Saudi students is 0.21, which is low. However, this is not what Jammaz (1972) found in his study. He found that there was a high degree of association between marital status and adjustment as married students with their wives living with them were “significantly less adjusted” than those who were unmarried. It is necessary to mention here that in the qualitative data section below, one participant reported that one of the reasons that influenced his acculturation was that he had to spend time with his wife because she did not have friends in the city where they were located.

Nonetheless, according to the data presented below, single and married international Saudi students have low difference between their acculturation value. Only 3 participants reported that they were divorced as shown above in Table 4.1. Due to the small number, their results were not included in this Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1

Total of Acculturation and Cohen’s d between Marital Status Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total of Acculturation</th>
<th>Lower Bound</th>
<th>Upper Bound</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Cohen’s d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>.576</td>
<td>0.207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>.583</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These refer to 95%

** Participants who reported that they were divorced were excluded due to the small number
**Qualitative data**

**Suggestions for orientation programs**

The present study had two open ended questions stipulated at the end of Appendices E and F. These two questions were in Part 2 on the survey. The participants were asked in the first open ended question to provide suggestions they have for improving the official orientation programs they received for studying in the U.S. It was made clear that the official orientation programs include the official orientation programs they received in Saudi Arabia before coming to the U.S. and the official orientation programs in the U.S., after arriving. If the participants had not participated in any official orientation programs to prepare for study in the U.S. (in Saudi Arabia or in the U.S.), they could simply write this sentence “I had no official orientation programs.” in Arabic.

Table 4.6 above shows the number of participants who reported participation in orientation program. In Table 7 below, the data received from the participants were tallied, grouped, and counted based on common themes of suggestions.

Table 7

*Descriptive Analysis of the Responses for the First Open Ended Question*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appoint well-informed previous international Saudi students in official orientation programs in Saudi Arabia who have enough prior experience living and studying in the U.S.</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise awareness regarding the U.S. different states, cultures, climate, geography, and society.</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise awareness on how to get social security numbers, driver license, bank accounts, and living accommodation.</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise awareness regarding U.S. social life.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage and help Saudi students in participating in student organizations.</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have an official body to always answer students’ questions abroad.</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online orientation programs.</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise awareness of the academic differences and faculty expectations in the U.S.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging Saudis to build strong friendships among each other.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging engagement with the opposite sex in ways beneficial to learning.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tallied themes in Table 7 reveal a high number of international Saudi students suggest that official orientation programs should appoint well-informed previous international Saudi students in official orientation programs in Saudi Arabia who have enough prior experience living and studying in the U.S. The second majority of participants suggested that raising awareness regarding the differences between U.S. states, cultures, climate, geography, and society is one important aspect that should be available in official orientation programs. Others suggested that encouraging and helping international Saudi students in participating in student organizations available in U.S. tertiary educational institutions as well as providing online orientation programs.
Other participants suggested appointing a Saudi official office dedicated to answering students’ questions. However, it is necessary to mention here that SACM does provide such services online and through an ‘emergency call center’ for all international Saudi students, but the participants suggestions could be because they were not aware of the existence of such programs.

Quotes in response to open ended question number one

The first open ended question in the survey was “What suggestions do you have for improving the official orientation programs you received for studying in the U.S.? (This can include the official orientation programs you received in Saudi Arabia before coming to the U.S. and the official orientation programs in the U.S., after you arrived.) If you had no official orientation programs to prepare for study in the U.S. (in Saudi Arabia or in the U.S.), please write “I had no official orientation programs.” The international Saudi participants were encouraged to provide their suggestions in Arabic. This was done to help the participants express their suggestions freely without any linguistic barriers. The suggestions that were selected were chosen due to the issues they raise that were relevant to the context and line of the present study, according to the researcher’s judgment. Those suggestions were translated into English for the purposes of this analysis and present study. However, some of the participants provided their suggestions in English, which were quoted as they were and were neither translated nor edited. Gender of participant, state, where the participants were at the time of participating in the present study as well as the approximate length of stay in U.S. (LoS) are given as follows.

The quotes below show some great examples as specified in Table 7 above:

Female studying in Kansas, LoS 49 months  (not translated)
“Instead of letting some educators do the presentation. Let previous students [do] because they lived it and they faxed the struggles and have solved it too. I don't need someone tell me about cultural shock and information I can find in the Internet as a new student I need someone to tell me the reality.”

**Male studying in New York, LoS 48 months (not translated)**

“Provide appropriate acceptable definitions of culture and permissible appropriate mixing with the opposite gender. This could be done through encouraging [Saudi] students to participate in students’ clubs [in America] and supporting the establishment of Saudi students’ clubs in order to help spread truth about our [Saudi] culture in comparison to their [American] culture. This will lead to ease and impact our integration to their society positively.”

**Male studying in Oregon, LoS 24 months (translated)**

“...in the U.S. would be a lot better for us. The private English language centers here are not enough and they create pressure for us with all the requirements. It feels sometimes that we are studying endlessly, and we don’t have time to mix with the society.”

**Male studying in Maryland, LoS 63 months (translated)**

“I remember that the orientation program I had in Saudi Arabia was very insufficient. The orientation (for international Saudi students) was 2-3 days long. Honestly, I did not get anything of substance from it. However, the Saudi club here in America had a very positive role in keeping me informed and aware. Even the center [the ELS center] was relying on the Saudi club.”

**Male studying in New Jersey, LoS 23 (translated)**

“I think that we [Saudi students] should contact the ELS centers here [in the U.S.] before joining their classes to get an approximate estimation of the number of Arab students they have. I think that a high percentage of Arab students in one ELS center will have a negative impact on students.”

**Female studying in Oregon, LoS 6 months (translated)**
“Regarding the orientation programs in Saudi Arabia, I think that American laws and regulations beyond the academic context should be discussed thoroughly. I mean the guidelines relevant to [the American] society that would be of great value to us [Saudi students] such as how to rent a house, the laws that international students should know before getting themselves into trouble with landlords. In addition, Saudi students should be educated about hospitals and using their health insurance because most of them did not ever use that before. The way Americans drive, and their traffic rules are very different from what we have in Saudi Arabia. We need to know that. We should also be informed about the spam emails and the malicious phone calls that asks for personal information and money because many Saudi students may fall victims for these things because they would think they would be in trouble if they don’t. I hope you [the researcher] take my answer seriously because I don’t want others [Saudi students] to have the same problems I had.”

**Other influences on acculturation according to the Saudi participants**

The second open ended question in the survey was “Are there any other influences that you believe may be affecting your socializing in the U.S? This question asked the international Saudi students, who participated in the present study, to mention other influences, which are not included in the survey, that they perceive to have an effect on their acculturation. 94 participants’ (38%) responses and answers were tallied and categorized into themes according to what they reported as negative influences as shown in Table 7.1.

Some influences such as lack of English language ability, cultural distance, etc., that were included in the survey resurfaced again in the qualitative data that were tallied and categorized. In addition, the participants mentioned that parties that were organized by non-Islamic institutions for religious purposes as one participant was quoted that “Some parties and events -especially the religious ones- that contradict with Islam.” were among the influences that affected his acculturation negatively. Also, a number of participants mentioned that the amount of assignments they were dealing with was affecting their socialization rhythm. Some of them said
that they had too much work to do because the Saudi international students are expected to be full
time students, which means that they must register for the minimum credits each semester that is
allowed by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services and by SACM. The Saudi
students do not have a choice in being full-time students as it is a requirement if they were F1
visa type students or if they were studying in the U.S. on a scholarship from SACM.

Other participants mentioned that being married was also affecting their will to socialize
in the U.S. community. This was due to their feelings that their souse and family should not be
left alone. Examples of this in the responses are included in the quotes in response to the open
ended question below.

Table 7.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Influence</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religion and religious events</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much School Work</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of English skills</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Distance</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of Arab and Saudi students.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi conservatism</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following Islam &amp; Hijab</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American’s unawareness of Arab and Saudi cultures</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of Islamophobia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some other participants mentioned some influences that they perceived as positive influences as shown in Table 7.2. These positive influences include great ideas and suggestions that could in fact benefit the Saudi students’ acculturation such as participating in students’ clubs. This actually could give the Saudi students in the U.S. a place to interact with other American and international students, which could increase the positive effects on their acculturation.

Other positive influences the participants mentioned was their exposure to American and English television and media content. As they reported, these media sources helped them in understanding the culture of the U.S., although media content may not be representative of the real American society. Some participants also mentioned that receiving help from their faculty and neighbors was a positive influence on their acculturation and socialization process. Table 7.2 below shows these positive influences and a count of how many times they were mentioned in the qualitative data.

Table 7.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Influence</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering and Participation in Student Clubs</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching American movies, T.V. content, Series, etc.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty and Neighbors</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quotes in response to open ended question number two

The second open ended question in the survey was “Are there any other influences that you believe may be affecting your socializing in the U.S? Please explain.” The international Saudi participants were encouraged to provide their suggestions in Arabic. The replies that revealed the
most descriptive responses were quoted below. The importance of these qualitative responses will be discussed in more detail in the discussion chapter.

The following quotes reveal the issues Saudi students face when attempting to socialize because of religious constraints, language barriers, and cultural taboos:

**Female studying in Kansas, LoS 49 months (not translated)**

“When I came to the US I didn't get engaged with Arab students because I had my siblings so most of my friends were Americans and international students from other countries. Now I know few people from the Middle East because of my job they always tell me that my English is better than them but they don't try because they are always together group of our people the problems I faced spending time with Americans is when they want to party and drink all the time because I would not go to a nightclub or a drinking party at someone's house this is not I think I will do a following my religion and my beliefs.”

**Male studying in Ohio, LoS 72 months (translated)**

“It was hard to mix with American and Saudi students at the same time because Saudi students would only speak in Arabic even though there were American students standing with us. This put me in an uncomfortable situation with the American students because they didn’t understand what we were talking about. Also, this could lead them to misunderstand us because they knew we could speak English. I didn’t like that at all.”

**Male studying in Ohio, LoS 39 months (translated)**

“Some parties and events -especially the religious ones- that contradict with Islam. I think the nature of the individuals of the American society, especially in the state where I live (Ohio). It is easy to have a casual conversation with them (Americans) for 5-30 minutes in the cafeteria, the university library, etc. However, it’s really hard to make friendships not until they really get to know you well. For example, if you were both classmates and you see them daily. One of the important things that influenced me at the beginning of my journey here in the U.S. was all the negative things I used to hear about America from other Saudis before coming here. I did not face any of the bad things these Saudis used to tell me about and I’ve been living here for three years now (maybe in other states, some Saudis
face these things, but I do not think it is fair to overgeneralize these things on all American states.)”

The next quotes reveal the Saudi students’ expectations regarding discrimination in the American society before arriving and some of their experiences after they have arrived:

Male studying in Florida, LoS 11 months (translated)

“Negative impression I used to have for the American society whether from my personal experiences or from what I read online from other Saudi students on social media applications.”

Female participant from Pennsylvania, LoS 64 months (translated)

“I was afraid of hate crimes against Muslims. I was very worried from the political issues. My fear lead me to avoid leaving my house. There was an American teacher in the ELS center who used to ridicule me and bully me in front of other students by the political events, my religion, and women rights. He used to tell other students that I was oppressed because I got engaged at a young age. He used to bring a newspaper with him to the class and talk about ISIS news, etc. I filed a complaint against the center, but no one did anything.”

Male participant from North Carolina, LoS 12 months (translated)

“Yes, I think that the American society does not accept the other. I feel like they are unreasonably terrified of strangers.”

The next two quotes reveal that Saudi students face issues related to their marital status and expectations regarding what they perceive as their personality treats:

Male participant from Illinois, LoS 75 months (not translated)

“My tolerance and liberal views towards others helped me positively to form friendships with americans.”
Male participant from Montana, LoS 40 months (translated)

“I am an introverted person in general. So, I think that this is the reason why I didn’t mix directly more with Americans. It’s hard for me to reconcile between making friends and studying in the same time. I also have to spend time with my wife because she also doesn’t have friends here in the city where I am studying.”

The following quote reoccurred a small number of times in the responses which was surprising as this could be the basis behind SACM’s cap:

Female participant from Michigan, LoS 72 months (translated)

“I think there is a lot of Arab students at the educational institution where I am currently studying. I don’t believe that there is a real solution that SACM could implement to fix this problem, although we collectively [Saudi students] have filed many complaints about this before.”
Chapter 5: Discussion

Quantitative Data

This thesis intended to measure the acculturation of the international Saudi students who were studying in U.S. tertiary educational institutions and to investigate the influences on their acculturation. According to the data analysis, the results of the responses of the 247 international Saudi students who participated in the present study suggest that the Saudi students face more issues with culture in the sense of cultural distance and culture shock than they do with other issues international students may face in the U.S. However, issues with cultural identity seems to have the least significance on Saudi students’ acculturation in the U.S.

The influences on the acculturation of Saudi students in the U.S. are summarized in Table 8 below. These influences are sorted in their order of highest influence on acculturation, as determined by a Pearson’s correlation analysis. Contents of Table 8 were discussed and divided into factors that are most influential and least influential on acculturation below.

Table 8

Summary of Main Findings by Significance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influences</th>
<th>r Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Distance</td>
<td>-.36 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture Shock</td>
<td>-.32 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality Treats</td>
<td>-.29 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Support</td>
<td>-.24**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Language Ability</td>
<td>-.24**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>-.16*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude towards gender mixed classrooms</td>
<td>-.13*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of Other Saudi Students</td>
<td>-.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Identity</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Issues of personality traits also seem to be of higher negative significance as well on the acculturation of international Saudi students. Lack of institutional support and orientation programs to prepare international Saudi students before joining U.S. tertiary educational institutions seems to have some significant relationship with the acculturation process of Saudi international students as well. This issue seems to be of similar significance to lack of English language ability. As shown in Table 8 above, these two influences have a significant relationship on acculturation. Issues of discrimination seems to have a negative influence on the acculturation of Saudi international students as well. However, discrimination influence seems to be of lower significance in comparison to other influences. Pearson’s correlation also shows that the influence of international Saudi students’ attitudes towards gender mixed classrooms to be of low significance on acculturation. The results will be discussed in comparison with previous findings in the literature.

**Most influential factors**

**Cultural influences**

Culture differences can extend beyond the superficial issues that we can count. The cultural issues go beyond food, social manners, language, and religion, as can be seen in the Iceberg
Model of Hanley in Figure 2 in chapter three above. Cultural difficulties and issues have been the most dominant issues that face almost all international students studying in the U.S. as both the literature and the results of the present study suggest. One of the main issues, however, appears to be the great cultural distance between the Saudi and the American cultures. This was discussed earlier in the literature review under the sub heading of International Saudi Students’ Sojourner Acculturation. The gap between the Saudi Arabian culture and the American culture is vastly great. The differences transcend food, language, religion, and societal constructs as well. Moreover, it was mentioned earlier in the literature section that Otlu (2010) concluded that in most of the studies that investigated cultural distance and adjustment, it was established that the higher the cultural distance and cultural differences between the cultures of the host and home countries, the lower the adjustment or greater the difficulties that international students faced in the adjustment process (Rosenthal, Russell & Thomson, 2007; Suanet & de Vuver, 2009; Yeh & Inose, 2003). The Saudi students in the U.S., according to the present study, seem to be struggling with this issue as well.

One of the issues that seems to reoccur in almost every study investigating the issues that face international students is the issue of culture shock or culture adjustment as termed interchangeably in the literature. This issue seems to be of high significance for the Saudi students and overlaps with their lack of acculturation.

On the other hand, the data suggest that cultural identity has the lowest relationship with the acculturation of international Saudi students. This was also confirmed in a study of international Saudi students’ sojourner culture shock and intrapersonal identity conflict, Asfahani (2017), which found the majority of respondents did not feel that they were experiencing intrapersonal identity conflict. Similar results were found in the present study as
the majority of Saudi participants did not report having issues with cultural identity. The lack of issues with cultural identity could be investigated separately as suggested below in the limitations for future research.

**Personality Traits**

Table 8 above shows that personality traits of Saudi participants in the present study seemed to have a higher significant negative relationship with their acculturation. The personality traits were measured in the survey by three items as specified in Appendix F. These items asked students whether their lack of acculturation was due to their introverted personalities. This was explained by providing an example to illustrate, asking if they would rather “spend time at home or on the Internet than go out and socialize with others.” Also, participants were asked if it was hard for them to make new friends. In addition, they were asked if they defined themselves as shy. As mentioned above, a Pearson’s correlation analysis of responses from this variable with the total of acculturation showed statistical significance, \( r(-0.29), p < 0.00 \). In an investigation of the qualitative data received from the second open ended question, which asked about the participants’ other acculturation influences, as specified at the end of Appendix F, the data showed that a Saudi student in the present study reported that their introversion was a negative influence on their socialization. This participant was quoted above under *Quotes in response to open ended question number two, “Male participant from Montana, LoS 40 months.”*

**Institutional support**

Lack of institutional support had a strong relationship on the acculturation of Saudi students in the U.S. This institutional support is defined as having official orientation programs that aid and support the international students before they start their journey in U.S. tertiary
educational institutions. Also, university and faculty support are considered to be part of this variable for the purposes of the present study. 68% of the international Saudi students who participated in the present study (n = 166) reported not participating in any official program for orientation in Saudi Arabia or in the U.S. as shown in Table 4.6 in chapter four above. This could contribute to their challenges with culture shock and cultural distance as well which had significant relationships with their acculturation. Asfahani (2017) states that the potential conflicts that face acculturation are believed to be able to be alleviated by cultural acclimation programs, such as providing orientations for Saudi students in the United States. Meyer (2001) also suggested that orientation should be provided for international students in their home countries before they leave to the host country. Garza (2015), in a study for orientation needs and international students concluded in her study that international students reported having a need for orientation program. She also stated that many participants in her study, among whom were a number of Saudi international students, prefer an online orientation that starts in their countries and continue over a period of several weeks or months after their arrival in the U.S. Garza continued to explain the types of information that the international students in her study found to be important and “urgent”, which are regarding accommodation, transportation, weather, food, clothing, health care systems, regulations for visa and work, academic writing, plagiarism, and an introduction to basic ideals such as the need for independence and for physical space in the U.S.

As reported in the present study, when comparing both quantitative and qualitative data, the Saudi students are in an “urgent” need as well for orientation programs that focus on their needs and help them understand the host culture with details before arriving. This could have great positive effects on lowering their
culture shock, and perhaps decrease the perceived deep cultural distance between the Saudi Arabian culture and the American culture.

Language ability

The English language barrier was among the issues almost all international students face when visiting the U.S. It is not a surprise to be among the issues that showed some relationship with a negative relationship with the acculturation process of the international Saudi students. Previous research studies as discussed in the literature review, suggest that international students face linguistics barriers that could harm their adjustment in the U.S. (Bentley, 2008, and Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002). Bentley (2008) also suggests that among the difficult issues international students face is adapting to the new host country social life. Bentley continued to say that this difficulty is due to the linguistic barriers, as well as lack of experience with cultural references, idioms, sarcasm, slang, and limited knowledge of culturally specific cues such as verbal and non-verbal messages about personal space, the end of a conversation, etc. The Saudi students appear to have similar problems with English to the point where it showed significance r( -.24) on their acculturation process.

Least influential factors

Discrimination

Although discrimination was reported to be one of the issues that international students usually face while studying abroad as mentioned in the literature above, the issue of discrimination showed a weak (but statistically significant) relationship with acculturation r(-.16). However, only two participants reported in the responses of the open ended question to have experienced some sort of discrimination, such as “fear of Islamophobia” as shown in Table 7.1 in chapter four.
above. These two students were both females and reported that they were “harassed” because of wearing the Muslim’s headcover known as Hijab. One of the participants stated that she was in the mall with her American classmates shopping and then she was asked by a “passerby” to “leave the United States and go back to Pakistan.”, although she was from Saudi Arabia. The participant continued to say that her classmates “stood up” for her and even attempted to contact the authorities to report a “hate crime”, but she “begged them” not to “make a big deal out of it” because she “did not want to cause a scene.” In addition, the other participant mentioned that she felt “fear” leaving her house because of the “political issues.” She also claimed that an American teacher at her ELS center mistreated her in front of her classmates which made her experience more difficult.

In summary, it is still intriguing that discrimination did not appear as a major issue in the reported data of the present study, although former studies as mentioned in the literature that international students who come from the Middle East reported considerable negative experiences of discrimination in America more than those who come from Europe, Canada, and New Zealand who did not report any direct negative experiences with discrimination with regard to their race or culture (Lee and Rice, 2007). In fact, 35% of the Saudi participants actually answered (Strongly Agree), and 29% answered (Agree) to the survey item regarding discrimination which is “Since my arrival to the U.S., I have found less discrimination than I expected.” And only 9% answered (Disagree) and 5% (Strongly Disagree) to the item with 22% who answered (Somewhat Agree). This could be attributed to the length of stay of participants in the present study in the U.S. as the data show that the mean of the length of stay of participants is 33 months, which could suggest that they have been accustomed or integrated as mentioned above under participants’ background information in chapter 4. Also, this could be attributed to
the Mastery stage in Lysgaard’s U-Curve Theory of Adjustment, as specified in Figure 1 in chapter two above.

**Attitudes towards gender mixed classrooms**

The small number of participants (n = 12) of international Saudi students who participated in the Exploratory Study (AlAsiri, 2018) mentioned in the literature review above reported having issues with the presence of the opposite Saudi gender in gender mixed classrooms in the U.S. However, this issue seems to have statistically low significance in this present study on the acculturation of Saudi students. Previous studies (Al Hazmi, 2010, and Alhazmi and Nyland, 2012, and Shaw, 2012) that investigated gender mixed classrooms suggest that international Saudi students may face issues with gender mixed classrooms that could negatively affect their progress academically, which by itself could possibly lead to struggles in their overall acculturation in the U.S. However, this showed no statistical significance relative to the acculturation of the majority of Saudi students who were participants in the present study. This could be because the majority of the Saudi participants in the present study have been in the U.S. for a long period as the mean score for the length of stay for Saudi students in the U.S. is 33 months which could suggest that they have been accustomed or more integrated to the U.S. society over time, as specified above under participants’ background information in chapter 4.

**Influence of other Saudi students**

The Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission’s (SACM) cap that was set on the number of international Saudi students in U.S. tertiary educational institutions based on the claim that a high number of Saudi students in one program (25+ in one bachelor program, 15+ in one master program, and +5 in one PhD program), could limit their English language learning and lower their “scholarship
benefits” was a motivation for the present study. The present study investigated this claim as a potential influence on acculturation. Findings based on the results and data gathered from the Saudi participants suggest there was no statistically significant correlation between acculturation and influence of other Saudi students.

The intention behind this cap was to help Saudi students gain the most benefit from their scholarships. As mentioned above in the introduction, Dr. Abdulghani AlHarbi, the Assistant Cultural Attaché of Academic Affairs at SACM, was quoted saying that the purpose of the current quota is to prevent Saudi students from overcrowding a certain program. Dr. AlHarbi continued to state that this overcrowding as defined in the introduction “will negatively affect the quality of the academic subject taught and the variety and diversity of completing academic assignments because of the lack of the diversity of students.” (SACMMEDIA). Hence, the cap policy was executed. However, although the present study cannot measure the success or need for SACM’s cap (which would require gathering data before and after the implementation of the cap), it could be that this issue was never a serious problem, at least in the service of maximizing acculturation. However, a second possibility is that the cap is effective. This study might be demonstrating success of the program because perhaps if more Saudi students were here in the same institutions, the influence of other Saudi students might have revealed a stronger influence. So, both of these possibilities deserve to be discussed, but in the end, this issue appears not to currently have a significant relationship with acculturation, and so resources and attention should be aimed at other factors to help these students be successful in their host countries.
Qualitative Data

In general, participants stressed that they were in need for orientation programs that are relevant to their experiences in the U.S. They also stressed the lack of such programs in Saudi Arabia before their departure to the U.S. The participants also were given a chance to talk about what they think should be included in these programs. Most of their suggestions were sorted and combined into general themes as is shown in Table 7 in chapter four above. However, some of their suggestions and recommendations that the researcher thought were essential were translated into English above. Other participants said that the Internet provided a great wealth of information regarding life in America in general and what to expect when going there although some information was exaggerated and inaccurate.

Some participants claimed that the ELS centers provided vital information and orientation programs. One of the participants for example said: “Communication with the teachers and staff at my old ELS center was much more convenient. I felt more comfortable and at ease talking to them about my problems and asking them for help. They were very helpful, and I felt welcomed each time I had a question, problem or inquiry unlike the university where I felt lost and overwhelmed.” Clearly, a helpful faculty can help make the difference in the acculturation of an international student who feels accepted and ‘welcomed’ and another who does not feel so. To have a supportive faculty could be the decisive positive influence for some international students as they would normally feel stressed about the new educational system in this new host country. International students usually spend a lot of time with their faculty, especially if these students were full time students on an F1 visa that expects them to seek no employment as are the rules of the U.S. immigration. In addition, Saudi students are expected to have no employment and to
only focus on studying as these are SACM’s rules for the scholarship program. The helpful open
door communication for international students could be very beneficial in so many ways.

One other participant said that she was shy to interact with people even when she felt like
she needed help. This was a reason for her to look for answers and solutions online as she
claimed. She also stated that she acknowledged that this perhaps affected her in a negative way in
which she did not interact with people directly, but it was the way she felt she could ask for help.
A number of other female participants agreed with her and recommended an online chat service
where they can ask for help instead of voicing their problems in person. It is necessary to mention
that these participants reported in the survey that they do not feel confident in using English.
These requests are reasonable and could be met easily by most of educational institutions as it
only requires an online chat service or an email reply. These services could help international
students who are shy in expressing their needs or feel like their communicative skills are yet to be
developed.

Few participants suggested that SACM should have an online ‘mandatory’ orientation
program for international students that informs them of what they need to know before mixing
properly into the U.S. social life. This idea could actually be efficient and effective as an online
course before, during or after completing an online file or finishing a request could be beneficial
for Saudi students to learn about the U.S. culture or the help available for them. This also could
help SACM in making sure that their Saudi students are receiving some of the information
necessary for their socialization and acculturation needs. These information could include, but are
not limited to, using public transportation in the U.S. (buying a bus pass? Knowing the bus
schedules? Reading bus maps?), how to purchase a car, or find an apartment, who to contact
when having a problem in the U.S., understanding insurance regulations in the U.S., etc.
The participants mentioned that these programs should be “relevant”, “more serious”, “provide factual information”, “address real world issues”, “be continuously updated and carefully redesigned to fulfill actual needs”, “be inclusive of what to expect and how to deal with U.S. immigration”, “less formal”, and “discuss religious differences openly.” Other participants expressed the importance and need for “explaining the social guidelines and American laws with enough details. This is very important and dangerous because we did not know anything, and we had to learn by ourselves.” Others also suggested making an orientational movie or short film that mimics the situation at the airport with the U.S. immigration, U.S. educational and academic institutions, and other important social differences, like not kissing their children or touching their pets.” This is also an important social and cultural aspect that most participants were not aware of in the present study. Such knowledge could be integral to acculturation and integration into the new host community. Otherwise, the Saudi international students could find themselves confused and in more trouble than they would think.

Awareness of some general laws could also be extremely beneficial. SACM or the educational institution could provide some printed material that could help educate the Saudi international students of what to do and what not to do when out in public or when engaging with other individuals in the community.

Moreover, in answering the second open ended question, participants stressed that there were other unique influences on their acculturation process as mentioned in Table 7.1 in chapter four above. The participants reported that differences in religions and religious events to which they were invited were among the issues of significance to negatively affect their acculturation. These issues are to be expected since the differences between the two cultures are quite
significant. However, as mentioned above, orientation programs could provide informative content that could help in solving such issues.

The international Saudi students are among the top ten origin countries of international students in the U.S. since the 1970s as mentioned earlier in the literature review in a report by Zong and Batalova (2018) from the Migration Policy Institute. According to the same report, since 2016, the U.S. has more international Saudi students than it has Canadian students. This is very surprising since the U.S. is renowned worldwide by its prestigious universities and colleges and since Canada is its very close neighbor to the north, but Saudi Arabia is thousands of miles away across many seas and lands and still the U.S. has more Saudi students, which means that they are a very important demographic for the future and prosperity of the academic environment of the U.S.

The U.S. educational institutions should work more on improving the learning environment conditions for the Saudi international students. This will help the Saudi international students feel more accepted and welcomed which would likely lead them to be more successful in their acculturation and their academic endeavors.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to measure the extent of acculturation of international Saudi students who are considered sojourners studying in the U.S. The thesis also investigated the influences on their acculturation. In this aim, quantitative and qualitative data were gathered using an online survey designed by adopting, adapting, and developing new items operationalized to measure the extent of acculturation and its influences. The findings as discussed above in the discussion section suggest that the international Saudi students face more issues of a cultural nature than they do with any other issues. Other findings suggest that language ability, as well as lack of institutional support in the form of official orientation programs also play a minor role. Solutions to these issues are discussed below in the suggestions section.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Previous studies and research emphasized the importance of orientation programs for international students before departure and after arrival to host countries. This could not be emphasized more for the international Saudi students as well. SACM should consider the benefits of providing orientation programs that are designed to engage the real-life issues and difficulties that face the Saudi students in the U.S., according to the data presented here. This could help strengthen confidence levels of the Saudi international students as well as ensure and reinforce their positive energy towards embracing the new educational and cultural environment with proper, accurate, dependable, reliable knowledge and information. Specifically, following the majority of open-ended responses, the orientations should involve returning students who have experience into SACM’s orientation programs due to their real-life experience in living in the
Some of the participants suggested that the orientation program should be short (not longer than two days in general) due to transportation reasons. Also, these orientation programs should provide substantial and adequate information regarding managing life in the U.S., such as housing contracts as well as the best means to buy, rent or sell vehicles in the U.S. with sufficient examples. Other participants stressed that they were not given enough information regarding their health insurance providers or how to use their insurance policies in the best way they can when they visit a hospital or face a health issue.

These programs should also provide an appropriate description of the U.S. states that the students would be living with regards to weather, terrains, laws, society, social norms, culture, religious affiliations, food, etc. Also, it is suggested that these programs should provide an online version where the participants could go through at their own pace and take their time to explore and learn. These programs should also rely more on visual orientation as well to give the participants a feel of the new environment and community. Saudi students should also be familiarized with different student clubs in the host country as well. They should be encouraged as well to participate in these clubs where they get a chance to socialize with other students and participate in activities that would encourage them to engage in the host country’s communities and socialize with everyone.

SACM should also be encouraged to cooperate and communicate with ELS centers, undergraduate, graduate programs, and other relevant institutions to best serve the needs and requirements of Saudi students to ease their integration in their new environments. This will actually help SACM in meeting its expectations of the Saudi students studying in the U.S. SACM also should be encouraged to send regular text messages and emails to the Saudi students to remind them of the help and assistance available for them at any time.
Finally, the researcher suggests that SACM should be encouraged to raise awareness about the already available orientations and suggestions on a regular basis in the form of emails, personal phone calls, as well as texts messages. This would help in keeping the international Saudi students aware of the help that is available for them.

**Limitations and Future Research Suggestions**

For the sake of validity and replication, the limitations of this thesis must be acknowledged. Various attempts to contact the Saudi Ministry of Education were made prior to data collection. However, due to time constraints, the researcher decided to contact SACM and ask for their cooperation to post the survey link and participation invitation message on their social media pages. The survey was posted on SACM’s Facebook page, (see Appendix C). This could be an issue because the majority of Saudis do not use Facebook as their daily or active means of communication. Instead, Saudis prefer the use of social applications such as WhatsApp, and Snapchat. Also, Twitter is one of the biggest social hubs of the Saudi people as reported by a BBC news article by Hebblethwaite (2014). This is why the researcher also posted the survey link on several messaging applications such as WhatsApp and Telegram, as specified in the procedures section above.

Moreover, the limited collection of qualitative data (only two open ended questions were included) can be viewed as a limitation to the present study as it would have been helpful to have more data on the participants’ opinions for various topics in the study. Future research could possibly illicit more data and suggestions from Saudi participants on the topics of the present study. Further research could also focus on needs analysis to build better and effective orientation programs for Saudi international students in order to help them cope with the U.S. cultural
differences and other needs to have a successful acculturation experience. For example, further research could target needs analyses to develop successful orientation programs that could limit the cultural challenges that research has shown time and again to be a great obstacle for international students and a burden to their successful acculturation in host countries.

In addition, the number of graduate students in the present study was higher than undergraduates, which can be an issue as well because graduate students tend to be older and more mature. This could also be the reason why the acculturation total of the participants of the present study showed to be higher. However, the focus should be geared more towards the younger students in undergraduate programs in order to explore their issues in depth as they could be the population with less experience and more difficulties. The researcher also suggests for future research to contact the Saudi Ministry of Education to be able to secure a wider range of the emails of potential participants. This could also help in targeting undergraduates and a younger population for research.

The influences investigated in the present study were among the issues that the literature suggested that international students and Saudi students struggle with the most. However, a qualitative study that explores these issues for undergraduate Saudi students specifically could be very helpful before replicating the present study. This could help in refining these influences better for the Saudi students’ population in the U.S. and put their issues under focus.

Open ended questions should be utilized in future research to illicit the reasons behind the low significance for cultural identity on the acculturation of Saudi international students in the U.S. In addition to the present study, Asfahani’s (2017) study showed no relationship between intercultural exposure and cultural identity of the Saudi sojourners in the U.S. Perhaps an open ended question asking Saudi sojourners studying in the U.S. of their opinions and reasons behind
these findings could prove very useful for the literature and the field of sojourners’ acculturation and culture adjustment issues.

The influences on Saudi students’ sojourner acculturation investigated in the present study that showed no or low significance should not be excluded from further investigation. In fact, qualitative investigation could help in understanding why these influences showed low or no significance for Saudi students in the present study. Future researchers should also keep in mind that these influences may not be exclusive to Saudi students, but could include students coming from the Gulf Cooperation Council countries (e.g. Oman, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, etc.) as these countries are known for their shared cultural ideas, customs, and religious beliefs.
Appendices
Appendix A
Influences on International Saudi Students' Sojourner Acculturation in the U.S.

Informed Consent Form for Participation in the Study of the Influences on International Saudi Students' Sojourner Acculturation in the U.S.

1. TITLE:
   Influences on International Saudi Students' Sojourner Acculturation in the U.S.

2. RESEARCHERS:
   The principal investigator for this study is Abdullah AlAaeri. The project coordinator is professor Dan Brown, from the Department of English.

3. PURPOSE:
   This is a research study. Its purpose is to investigate the social adjustment and sojourner acculturation issues facing Saudi students in the U.S. A survey of 35 statements and 2 open-ended questions adapted and borrowed from earlier research on the topic exploring the extent to which international students are acculturating in host countries and the factors preventing them from engagement with host national peers.

4. REASON FOR INVITATION:
   You are invited to be part of this study because you are holding the Saudi nationality and are a student in a postgraduate educational institutions in the U.S. under the supervision of the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission.

5. HOW PARTICIPANTS WILL BE SELECTED:
   You are eligible to join this study if you are:
   1. Holding the Saudi nationality.
   2. An international student studying in a U.S. postgraduate educational institutions.
   3. 18-50 years old.
   4. Supervised by the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission in Washington D.C.

   If you do not meet all these conditions, then you will be omitted from this study.

6. PROCEDURES:
   - You will receive an email from the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission in Washington D.C. This email will contain an online survey where you will be prompted with a series of statements and questions. You are encouraged to answer all these questions with the choice that best represents your answer.
   - The survey will have 3 sections, which are A, B, and C. Section A consists of 35 statements. This section should not be longer than 20 minutes. Section B consists of only 2 open-ended questions and it should not take more than 5 minutes. Section C has background information about you and it should not take longer than 5-6 minutes. The background information will not in any way risk your identity or personal information. You will not be identified in any way. The survey does not ask for your personal information at any point. This will all be free and will not cost you any kind of payment whatsoever.

7. RISKS:
   This study has no risks to your or to your health. Electronic data will be collected and/or stored for this research project. As with any use of electronic means to store data, there exists a minimal risk that data could be lost or stolen. However, the data will not in any way lead back to you or identify you in any way.

8. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO YOU:
   There are no direct or indirect benefits to you if you participate in this research study.

9. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SOCIETY:
   This study could help benefit the Saudi Arabian Cultural Missions around the world in understanding the difficulties the Saudi international students could be facing when studying abroad. It also could shed more light on the issues international students from different cultural backgrounds face in the U.S. which could help the educational institutions in the U.S. stay informed.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ZWY7Omx-s2ZJ0NfMCW5EJ887ARCEWtTQxGxJUkS/edit
10. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:
Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate. You may quit at any time without any penalty to you. If you withdraw from this study or not finish it, your data will not be used and will be dismissed.

11. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY:
Your name or any other information that could identify you will not be collected. All other information collected from you or about you is for the sole purpose of this research study and will be kept confidential to the fullest extent allowed by law. In very rare circumstances specialty authorized university or government officials may be given access to our research records for purposes of protecting your rights and welfare or to make sure the research was done properly.

12. AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE.
By clicking NEXT below, you are agreeing to the following:
• The details of this research study have been explained to me, including what I am being asked to do and the anticipated risks and benefits;
• I have had an opportunity to have my questions answered;
• I am voluntarily agreeing to participate in the research as described on this form;
• I am voluntarily agreeing to have my personal data used for this study and agree the data can be transferred to the United States if originally collected outside of the United States;
• I may ask more questions or opt participating at any time without penalty.

13. CONTACT INFORMATION:
If you have any questions about the study you may contact
E-MAIL: ALASIRI@WMAIL.GVSU.EDU.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Office of Research Compliance & Integrity at Grand Valley State University, 1 Campus Drive, Allendale, MI. Phone: 616-331-3197. E-mail: rc@gvsu.edu.

This study has been approved by the Grand Valley State University Human Research Review Committee (Protocol #XX-XXX-H).

* Required

1. By clicking Next below, you agree to participate in this survey.

Mark only one oval.

☐ Next

Skip to question 2.

Section A
Please take your time to read each statement carefully and then select the appropriate answer that represents your choice to each statement.

2. Since arriving to the U.S. I feel like I have transitioned successfully into the community.

Mark only one oval:

☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Somewhat Agree
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Wy77xOmx-s02JHtYX0d3j_8StTARCEW6pT9t0CJUL6Sldt
3. I feel that the orientation I had after arrival in the U.S. was sufficient. *
   Mark only one oval.
   [ ] Strongly Agree
   [ ] Agree
   [ ] Somewhat Agree
   [ ] Disagree
   [ ] Strongly Disagree

4. I feel that the pre-departure orientation I had in Saudi Arabia was sufficient. *
   Mark only one oval.
   [ ] Strongly Agree
   [ ] Agree
   [ ] Somewhat Agree
   [ ] Disagree
   [ ] Strongly Disagree

5. I can express myself and my needs with my current English skills. *
   Mark only one oval.
   [ ] Strongly Agree
   [ ] Agree
   [ ] Somewhat Agree
   [ ] Disagree
   [ ] Strongly Disagree

6. I feel that other Saudi students here affect my progress in English learning in a negative way. *
   Mark only one oval.
   [ ] Strongly Agree
   [ ] Agree
   [ ] Somewhat Agree
   [ ] Disagree
   [ ] Strongly Disagree

7. I feel that other Saudi students here negatively affect my progress to mix in the community. *
   Mark only one oval.
   [ ] Strongly Agree
   [ ] Agree
   [ ] Somewhat Agree
   [ ] Disagree
   [ ] Strongly Disagree
8. Please select "somewhat disagree" for this statement to show you are paying attention.*
   *Mark only one oval.
   ○ Strongly Agree
   ○ Agree
   ○ Somewhat Agree
   ○ Disagree
   ○ Strongly Disagree

9. Generally speaking, I’m an introverted person; I’d rather spend time at home or on the internet than go out and socialize with others.*
   *Mark only one oval.
   ○ Strongly Agree
   ○ Agree
   ○ Somewhat Agree
   ○ Disagree
   ○ Strongly Disagree

10. I have American friends who I visit, talk to, and go out with almost every day.*
    *Mark only one oval.
    ○ Strongly Agree
    ○ Agree
    ○ Somewhat Agree
    ○ Disagree
    ○ Strongly Disagree

11. I feel that other Saudi students here affect my ability to make friends in a negative way.*
    *Mark only one oval.
    ○ Strongly Agree
    ○ Agree
    ○ Somewhat Agree
    ○ Disagree
    ○ Strongly Disagree

12. Since my arrival to the U.S., I have found less discrimination than I expected.*
    *Mark only one oval.
    ○ Strongly Agree
    ○ Agree
    ○ Somewhat Agree
    ○ Disagree
    ○ Strongly Disagree
13. I feel that the university and/or faculty members in the U.S. help me with my adjustment here. *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

14. The harassment I have experienced in the U.S. has limited my integration into the U.S. community. *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

15. I feel homesick most of the time. *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

16. In general, it is hard for me to make new friends. *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

17. I am equally at ease socializing with Arabs and Americans. *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ZvR70mx-g9TZ9DlXGdX56sJ_887AROEwTPGkCxJls/edit 5/12
10. I have difficulties fitting into the wider society because of my cultural background. *
   Mark only one oval.
   [ ] Strongly Agree
   [ ] Agree
   [ ] Somewhat Agree
   [ ] Disagree
   [ ] Strongly Disagree

19. I feel that gender-mixed classrooms are negatively affecting my progress in the academic environment.*
   Mark only one oval.
   [ ] Strongly Agree
   [ ] Agree
   [ ] Somewhat Agree
   [ ] Disagree
   [ ] Strongly Disagree
   [ ] Not Applicable

20. I don't socialize with others because of the type of social events and parties they have.*
   Mark only one oval.
   [ ] Strongly Agree
   [ ] Agree
   [ ] Somewhat Agree
   [ ] Disagree
   [ ] Strongly Disagree

21. I am a shy person.*
   Mark only one oval.
   [ ] Strongly Agree
   [ ] Agree
   [ ] Somewhat Agree
   [ ] Disagree
   [ ] Strongly Disagree

22. I have experienced unkind remarks concerning my racial, cultural, or religious background.*
   Mark only one oval.
   [ ] Strongly Agree
   [ ] Agree
   [ ] Somewhat Agree
   [ ] Disagree
   [ ] Strongly Disagree
23. The food in the U.S. causes problems for me.
   Mark only one oval.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

24. I find it easy to maintain my traditional culture and to be part of the U.S. society in the same time.
   Mark only one oval.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

25. I feel confident in my English-speaking skills while living in the U.S.
   Mark only one oval.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

26. Select "Strongly Disagree" for this statement to show you are reading the questions carefully.
   Mark only one oval.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

27. Having Saudi students of the opposite gender in my classes affects my ability to integrate in the learning environment.
   Mark only one oval.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
28. I use English to communicate and share my opinions and thoughts without being afraid if others laugh at me. *
Mark only one oval.
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

29. I felt that the opposite Saudi gender in my classroom is affecting my progress in English learning in a negative way. *
Mark only one oval.
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

30. I feel satisfied with my adjustment to the U.S. society. *
Mark only one oval.
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

31. I sometimes question my Saudi cultural identity living in the U.S. *
Mark only one oval.
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

32. I spend more time online on social media websites and applications with my family and friends from Saudi Arabia than I do with Americans I know here. *
Mark only one oval.
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
33. I spend more time with other Saudi students than I do with native speakers of English. *
   Mark only one oval.
   ☐ Strongly Agree
   ☐ Agree
   ☐ Somewhat Agree
   ☐ Disagree
   ☐ Strongly Disagree

34. Americans' carefulness with money creates a cultural and social barrier between us. *
   Mark only one oval.
   ☐ Strongly Agree
   ☐ Agree
   ☐ Somewhat Agree
   ☐ Disagree
   ☐ Strongly Disagree

35. I find it hard to maintain my cultural values in everyday life in the U.S. *
   Mark only one oval.
   ☐ Strongly Agree
   ☐ Agree
   ☐ Somewhat Agree
   ☐ Disagree
   ☐ Strongly Disagree

36. I feel that I have borrowed a lot of traits from the U.S. culture and was affected by it. *
   Mark only one oval.
   ☐ Strongly Agree
   ☐ Agree
   ☐ Somewhat Agree
   ☐ Disagree
   ☐ Strongly Disagree

37. I feel that my lack of knowledge of American social manners and customs prevents me from socializing with Americans. *
   Mark only one oval.
   ☐ Strongly Agree
   ☐ Agree
   ☐ Somewhat Agree
   ☐ Disagree
   ☐ Strongly Disagree
38. I feel that I have integrated to the American culture. *
Mark only one oval:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Section B - Open-ended questions
Please take your time to read each question carefully and then write the appropriate answer to each statement.

39. What suggestions do you have for improving the official orientation programs you received for studying in the U.S.? (This can include the official orientation programs you received in Saudi Arabia before coming to the U.S. and the official orientation programs in the U.S., after you arrived.) If you had no official orientation programs to prepare for study in the U.S. (in Saudi Arabia or in the U.S.), please write “I had no official orientation programs.” *


40. Are there any other influences that you believe may be affecting your socializing in the U.S.? Please explain. *


Final Section - Personal Information
Please fill in the correct answers to the following questions.

41. What are you studying in the U.S. exactly? (e.g. Biology, Medicine, Business Management, Language, etc) *


42. How long have you been in the U.S.? (In months) *


43. Your academic GPA: *
44. How many times have you returned to Saudi Arabia? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Only once.
   - Twice.
   - More than 3 times.

45. How many times do you usually return to Saudi Arabia per year? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Only once.
   - Twice.
   - More than 3 times.

46. What is your educational background? (e.g.,
    High-school, or BA/BS in Science, Math,
    History, Language, Engineering, Medicine, etc)

47. Your age: *

48. What is your academic program in the U.S.? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Bachelor in Arts
   - Bachelor in Science
   - Masters in Arts
   - Masters in Science

49. What state do you currently live in? (Please use English) *

50. Do you currently hold a job in Saudi Arabia? (If you don’t have a job or if your scholarship program is linked to your job (Job with Scholarship Program), please select NO for this question)
   Mark only one oval.
   - Yes
   - No

51. Your gender *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Male
   - Female
52. What is the name of the educational institution you are currently enrolled in, in the U.S.? *

53. How much longer do you intend to stay in the U.S. to finish your study? (in months) *

54. Are you from a city, town, or village in Saudi Arabia?
   Mark only one oval.
   ○ I come from a city
   ○ I come from a town
   ○ I come from a village

55. Did you have any kind of orientation for coming to the U.S. in Saudi Arabia? *
   Mark only one oval.
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

56. How long have you been studying English in the U.S.? (in months) *

57. Marital status *
   Mark only one oval.
   ○ Single
   ○ Married

58. Have you been back to Saudi Arabia since you began studying in the U.S.? *
   Mark only one oval.
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

59. Did you have any kind of orientation for coming to the U.S. after arriving in the U.S.? *
   Mark only one oval.
   ○ Yes
   ○ No
Appendix B
دراسة العوامل المؤثرة على التفاوت الاجتماعي للطلاب السعوديين المبتعثين في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية

اضبط على (الثنائي) المشاركة في الأسئلة.

1. التحليل والتحليل:
   - الهجرة والتنقل:
   - التحليل والتنقل:

2. التحليل والتنقل:
   - الهجرة والتنقل:
   - التحليل والتنقل:

3. التحليل والتنقل:
   - الهجرة والتنقل:
   - التحليل والتنقل:

4. التحليل والتنقل:
   - الهجرة والتنقل:
   - التحليل والتنقل:

5. التحليل والتنقل:
   - الهجرة والتنقل:
   - التحليل والتنقل:

6. التحليل والتنقل:
   - الهجرة والتنقل:
   - التحليل والتنقل:

7. التحليل والتنقل:
   - الهجرة والتنقل:
   - التحليل والتنقل:

8. التحليل والتنقل:
   - الهجرة والتنقل:
   - التحليل والتنقل:

9. التحليل والتنقل:
   - الهجرة والتنقل:
   - التحليل والتنقل:

10. التحليل والتنقل:
    - الهجرة والتنقل:
    - التحليل والتنقل:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1EAFDcWll12_v3n_3Z9nGm5n0R/teq/jynAZVqelh7VAG/edit
دراسة مراقبة جراحيّة على اتفاقية الاحتكار للطالب السمة المثلى في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية

كذلك التعويضات ومستجبيها.

المراجعة الأوليّة

بأمكانك في هذه الدراسة في محاولة أن تحدد ما إذا كان هناك علاقة بين الأمراض نمط السلاب، والمرض في المريض، والمرض في الأغذية، أو فقدان الدم عن طريق الاحتكار في الدراسة في حال استمتعت بها، أو عدم الحاجة إلى ذلك.

المراجعة الثانية

هذه الدراسة تن عليهم ملاحظة على أسفل وتحظى أن المعلومات قد كان هناك، والمعلومات التي تتأثر بها. والمعلومات التي تؤثر بها. والمعلومات التي تتأثر بها. والمعلومات التي تتأثر بها. والمعلومات التي تتأثر بها. والمعلومات التي تتأثر بها.

المراجعة الثالثة

في حال وجود أي سؤال أو استفسار يمكن مراعاة الاتصال بالبحث على:

الاسم: وليدovi
رقم الهوية: 616-516
البريد الإلكتروني: ALSIRIA@MAIL.GVSU.EDU

1. في قلّة من الصور على رصّاتنة"بالدّة"، أي توافق على المشارك في هذه الدراسة.

Mark only one oval

لا تتم

Skip to question 2.

القسم الأول

أرجو أن تكون الأفكار التالية في هيئة الاحتكار الموجودة في الأسلك، أو في النموذج المستخدم.

2. أجريت على اتفاقية الاحتكار الشامل التي مرت بها من وصول إلى أمريكا كانت ناجحة.

Mark only one oval

ورشة

لأي نشاط

لا تحصل

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1E8FDW12_v2n_3zr9mGn6RhtcpzynAZ5Veh7JAG/edit
3. أسمع بأن البرامج التدريبية الرسمية التي تلقينها في السعودية قبل الوصول إلى أميركا كانت كالية. 

Mark only one oval

أوافق بنده  
أوافق  
أوافق إلى حد ما  
لا أوافق  
لا أوافق إضافة

4. أسمع بأن البرامج التدريبية الرسمية التي تلقينها في السعودية قبل الوصول إلى أميركا كانت كالية. 

Mark only one oval

أوافق بنده  
أوافق  
أوافق إلى حد ما  
لا أوافق  
لا أوافق إضافة

5. أستطيع أن أعبر عن نفسي وعن احتياجاتي بطرق متاحة في اللغة الإنجليزية.

Mark only one oval

أوافق بنده  
أوافق  
أوافق إلى حد ما  
لا أوافق  
لا أوافق إضافة

6. أسمع بأن السعوديين المهرجانين ما بينهم على تنسيق في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية بشكل سليم.

Mark only one oval

أوافق بنده  
أوافق  
أوافق إلى حد ما  
لا أوافق  
لا أوافق إضافة

7. أسمع بأن السعوديين المهرجانين ما بينهم على اقتناع في المجتمع.

Mark only one oval

أوافق بنده  
أوافق  
أوافق إلى حد ما  
لا أوافق  
لا أوافق إضافة
10. لا أستطيع أو لا يوجد أزرار أو أحداث معهم وأخرج معهم بشكل مريح.

11. أشعر بأن السعوديين العاملين هنا يسعون على تجنب أي تكون صداقات بشكل سلبي.

12. غات المصرية التي واجهتها منذ وصولي إلى أمريكا أقل مما توقعت.
13. أشعر بأن المهمة وراء أوصي بها، هي تنفيذ سياسة في أمريكا تساهم في التغلب على الوضع في أمريكا.

Mark only one oval

- أوافق بشدة
- أوافق
- أوافق إلى حد ما
- لا أوافق
- لا أوافق بحالة

14. نشأة غيبي في المجتمع الأمريكي بسبب التحديات الخاصة، التي تواجه في أمريكا في السياق.

Mark only one oval

- أوافق بشدة
- أوافق
- أوافق إلى حد ما
- لا أوافق
- لا أوافق بحالة

15. أشعر عاطفياً بالحنين إلى الوطن.

Mark only one oval

- أوافق بشدة
- أوافق
- أوافق إلى حد ما
- لا أوافق
- لا أوافق بحالة

16. يصف على، بشكل عام، توجهات صداقات جديدة.

Mark only one oval

- أوافق بشدة
- أوافق
- أوافق إلى حد ما
- لا أوافق
- لا أوافق بحالة

17. أشعر بالإرهاق نفسه سواء عند اتخاذ بناء أو للأمريكيين.

Mark only one oval

- أوافق بشدة
- أوافق
- أوافق إلى حد ما
- لا أوافق
- لا أوافق بحالة
18. 
أعدم بن الحضور في قبول المحتوى الشاذ بخلاف الطريقة. 
Mark only one oval
- أوقف بحجة
- أوقف
- أوقف إلى حد ما
- لا أوقف
- لا أوقف بحجة

19. 
أعدم بن الحضور المحتوى بين الجنسين توتر سلبياً على مستوى في الحقيقة الإدارية.
Mark only one oval
- أوقف بحجة
- أوقف
- أوقف إلى حد ما
- لا أوقف
- لا أوقف بحجة

20. 
لا أضطر البالغين بحضور نزاعات وتنظيمات الاجتماعية التي يتبعونها.
Mark only one oval
- أوقف بحجة
- أوقف
- أوقف إلى حد ما
- لا أوقف
- لا أوقف بحجة

21. 
أما شخص خليج.
Mark only one oval
- أوقف بحجة
- أوقف
- أوقف إلى حد ما
- لا أوقف
- لا أوقف بحجة

22. 
واحدة بعض الخلاصات المصرية تجاه عرقي أو تشذب أو ديني.
Mark only one oval
- أوقف بحجة
- أوقف
- أوقف إلى حد ما
- لا أوقف
- لا أوقف بحجة
23. تشكل الأنظمة المحورية في أمريكا مشكلة في:
* أولاً بعد
* أولاً
* أولاً إلى حد ما
* لا أغلق
* لا أغلق إرادًا

24. من السلبي على المعتنٍ عن عادات الثقافية والاجتماعية مع المجتمع الأمريكي في نفس الوقت:
* أولاً بعد
* أولاً
* أولاً إلى حد ما
* لا أغلق
* لا أغلق إرادًا

25. أن يكون مفترض في معتنٍ عادات الثقافية وأنما في أمريكا:
* أولاً بعد
* أولاً
* أولاً إلى حد ما
* لا أغلق
* لا أغلق إرادًا

26. نظرًا لوجود الفحص المبكر، لا تُقرأ الأسئلة بالحروف:
* أولاً بعد
* أولاً
* أولاً إلى حد ما
* لا أغلق
* لا أغلق إرادًا

27. أغلب الأشخاص اللذين وضعوا الأكواس التالية يؤثر سلبًا على العملية في البيئة التعليمية:
* أولاً بعد
* أولاً
* أولاً إلى حد ما
* لا أغلق
* لا أغلق إرادًا
استخدم اللغة الإنجليزية في التواصل مع الآخرين ومعرفة أوضاع وأفكارهم دون أن تشعر بالخوف من أن يتفهم أحد على.

أحسم أن تفهم الجزء السعودي الآخر معي في الثقافة يوفر على نقد أم مفهوم في نقد اللغة الإنجليزية بشكل مثلى.

أضمن ممارسة تناول الصناعات الأمريكية.

أنقل أيضاً في هويتي الثقافية السعودية مما أعطي في أمريكا.

أحسن أغلب وفكر على هوية الإ튜ت وكيفية التواصل الاجتماعي مع عناصر وأصدقاء في السعودية أكثر من الأمريكيين الذين أعطتهم هذا.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/E8FDw1lZ_v3m_3q9n8m3n0RmseqymrAZDVe77jAG/edit
33. **لتفتيح أغلب رضي عن مسلمين وليس من المسلمين في الساحة الإسلامية.**

Mark only one oval

أوافق بشدة ☐
أوافق ☐
أوافق إلى حد ما ☐
لا أوافق ☐
لا أوافق إيذاءاً ☐

34. **هل الأمريكيين على المدى البعيد حاجز ثقافي واجتماعي بينا؟**

Mark only one oval

أوافق بشدة ☐
أوافق ☐
أوافق إلى حد ما ☐
لا أوافق ☐
لا أوافق إيذاءاً ☐

35. **لا丘رة في المحافظة على البيع الثقافي في حياتي اليومية في أمريكا.**

Mark only one oval

أوافق بشدة ☐
أوافق ☐
أوافق إلى حد ما ☐
لا أوافق ☐
لا أوافق إيذاءاً ☐

36. **يُعرّض لأنَّ نغش التغير من السمات الخاصة بالثقافة الأمريكية ومتكلم بها.**

Mark only one oval

أوافق بشدة ☐
أوافق ☐
أوافق إلى حد ما ☐
لا أوافق ☐
لا أوافق إيذاءاً ☐

37. **يُعرّض بأن عدم معرفة بالعادات والتقاليد الاجتماعية الأمريكية تمتص من الاختلاف الأمريكيين.**

Mark only one oval

أوافق بشدة ☐
أوافق ☐
أوافق إلى حد ما ☐
لا أوافق ☐
لا أوافق إيذاءاً ☐
38. **القسم الثاني**

أرجو أن تأخذ الوقت الكافي في قراءة الجمل الموجودة في الأسئلة، ومن ثم التأكد من الإجابة المناسبة.

ما هو الالتزام الذي يقوم به النظام؟ يشمل البرنامج التوجيهي الرسمية التي تتطلب للدراسة في أميركا؟ (بما أن تلك البرامج الرسمية التي تنتمى إلى الجامعة علاج بالنسبة إلى أميركا، ولكن يجب أن تتطلب في أميركا بعد الوصول إلى أميركا). وأرجو الإجابة، لا *لم أنسى أن* برامج توجيهية رسمية في حالة عدم نجاح أي برنامج توجيهي في أميركا من الناحية.

---

40. **القسم الأخير**

أرجو بالذات أن تكون على الأسئلة التالية بما يتناسب مع متطلباتك:

ما هو نوع البرنامج الجامعي الذي تم استلامه من جامعة في أميركا؟ مثلاً: بكالوريوس إدارة أعمال أو معهد معين للدراسة. (الجواب: *(الجواب*)

---

42. كم مدة على رحيلك في أميركا؟ (إذا كنت قد المدة بالأشهر).

---

43. متطلبات الحساب الحالي: *
44. ما هو اسم البرنامج التعليمي الذي تدرس فيه في أمريكا؟
Mark only one oval
[ ] مادة واحدة فقط
[ ] مادة الوحيدة
[ ] أكثر من ثلاث مرات

45. لم تكن هناك تجربة تتعلق بinded المستحيل في أمرك؟
Mark only one oval
[ ] لم تكن تجربة
[ ] مادة واحدة فقط
[ ] خيال
[ ] أكثر من ثلاث مرات

46. ما هي حفظة الكلمات الخاصة باللغة العربية؟
Mark only one oval
[ ] تحدث تعلم عامة أو تحدث مدرسة إدارية أو تحدث في المدرسة أو
[ ] تحدث مدرسة عامة أو تحدث مدرسة إدارية أو تحدث في المدرسة أو
[ ] تحدث في المدرسة أو تحدث مدرسة إدارية

47. عمرك:

48. ما هو اسم الوالدة التي تدرس فيها حالياً؟ (الرجاء تقديم اسم بالإنجليزية)
Mark only one oval
[ ] مدرسة في الأدب
[ ] مدرسة في العلوم
[ ] مدرسة في الأدب والتعليم باللغة العربية

49. هل لديك وظيفة حاليا في السعودية؟ (إذا لم تكن تعلم باللغة العربية في السعودية في حال كنت بيئة من نوع "والأ/black تعلم" أنب بـ (1).)
Mark only one oval
[ ] نعم
[ ] لا

https://docs.google.com/form/s/1E8FDii12_v5n_3ziri3tn3nFkneq6mAZI0Veh7JAc9/edit
1. ما هو اسم الجامعة التي اخترتها للدراسة فيها في أمريكا؟

2. ما هي العقد المتفق عليها للاكتمال بالرسوم؟ (العقد المتفق عليه)

3. هل تعيش في مدينة أو محافظة قريبة من السعودية؟
   - أمكن في مدينة في السعودية
   - أمكن في محافظة في السعودية

4. هل شارك في أي برنامج توجيهي في السعودية لتحسين التعليم قبل رحلته إلى أمريكا؟

5. كيف استغلت دراستك للغة الإنجليزية في أمريكا؟ (تاريخ كلمة العدة بالاشتراك)

6. الحالة الاجتماعية
   - أعزب
   - متزوج
   - مطلق
   - أربعم

7. هل رجعت للسعودية منذ بداية دراستك في أمريكا؟
نوع الدرجات التي تخدم في أمريكا: 

1. نعم  
2. لا

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1EItFDWI112_v3in_3qiri8m3Srf0RmeqyrsAz10Veh7JAQ/edit
Appendix C

The Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission’s Facebook page and it shows the post of the survey link dated January 17, 2019.
Appendix D

IRB Approval obtained on January 14, 2019.

DATE: January 14, 2019
TO: Daniel Brown
FROM: HRRC
STUDY TITLE: Influences on International Saudi Students’ Sojourner Acculturation in the U.S. REFERENCE #: 19-183-H
SUBMISSION TYPE: IRB Initial Submission
ACTION: Exempt Determination
EFFECTIVE DATE: January 14, 2019
REVIEW TYPE: Exempt Review

Thank you for your submission of materials for your planned scholarly activity. It has been determined that this project is human subjects research* according to current federal regulations and MEETS eligibility for exempt determination under Exempt Category 2, 45 CFR 46.101. You may now proceed with your research.

Exempt protocols do not require formal approval, renewal or closure by the Human Research Review Committee (HRRC). While not required, it is highly recommended that this research by closed when it is completed by submitting the HRRC Closure Form. Any revision to exempt research that alters the risk/benefit ratio or affects eligibility for exempt review must be submitted to the HRRC using the Change in Approved Protocol form before changes are implemented.

Any research-related problem or event resulting in a fatality or hospitalization requires immediate notification to the Office of Research Compliance and Integrity (rci@gvsu.edu or
616-331-3197) and the Research Integrity Officer Jeffrey Potteiger at 616-331-7207. (See HRRC policy 1020, Unanticipated problems and adverse events.)

Exempt research studies are eligible for audits and will remain eligible for these reviews until the research has been closed.

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Research Compliance and Integrity at 616-331-3197 or rci@gvsu.edu. Please include your study title and protocol number in all correspondence with our office.

Sincerely,

Office of Research Compliance and Integrity

*Research is a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge (45 CFR 46.102 (d)).

*Human subject means a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research obtains data through intervention or interaction with the individual, or identifiable private information (45 CFR 46.102 (f)).
# Appendix E

Table 1  
**RQ1 Extent of Sojourn Acculturation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub Variable</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General attitude about one’s own acculturation</strong></td>
<td>I feel that I have integrated to the American culture.</td>
<td>Adapted from Laubscher, 1996, Appendix, Section A, Page number160, Question number 33.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I feel satisfied with my adjustment to the U.S. society.</td>
<td>Adapted from Lee’s (2006) adjustment measure and Laubscher Appendix, Section A, Page number 157, Question number 22.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Since arriving to the U.S. I feel like I have transitioned successfully into the community.</td>
<td>Adapted from Jammaz, 1972, p. 124, number 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I feel that I have borrowed a lot of traits from the U.S. culture and was affected by it.</td>
<td>Adapted from the definition of sojourner adjustment in the <em>Merriam Webster Dictionary</em>; Noyongoyo, 2011; Sorrells, 2013, and Padilla and Perez, 2003.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am equally at ease socializing with Arabs and Americans.</td>
<td>Adopted from Barry, 2005, p. 180, Table 1, number four.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I spend more time with other Saudi students than I do with native speakers of English.</td>
<td>New</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integration/marginalization (Berry, 1997)</strong></td>
<td>I have American friends who I visit, talk to, and go out with almost every day.</td>
<td>Adapted from Jammaz, 1972, p. 124, number 14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I spend more time online on social media websites and applications with my family.</td>
<td>Adapted from Barry, 2005, p. 180, Table 1, number six.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Variable</td>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-ended question</td>
<td>What suggestions do you have for improving the official orientation programs you received for studying in the U.S.? (This can include the official orientation programs you received in Saudi Arabia before coming to the U.S. and the official orientation programs in the U.S., after you arrived.) If you had no official orientation programs to prepare for study in the U.S. (in Saudi Arabia or in the U.S.), please write “I had no official orientation programs.”</td>
<td>Akinniyi, 1992; Jammaz, 1972; and Yakunina, Weigold, Weigold, Hercegovac &amp; Elsayed, 2013.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix F

### Table 2

*RQ2 Factors Influencing Sojourn Acculturation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub Variable</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture shock</td>
<td>I feel homesick most of the time.</td>
<td>Adapted from Jammaz Appendix B, Page number 126, Question number 21.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The food in the U.S. causes problems for me.</td>
<td>Adapted Jammaz Appendix B, Page number 126, Question number 21.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I don’t socialize with others because of the type of social events and parties they have.</td>
<td>Adapted from Jammaz, Page 65.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Generally speaking, I’m an introverted person; I’d rather spend time at home or on the Internet than go out and socialize with others.</td>
<td>New.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality traits</td>
<td>In general, it is hard for me to make new friends.</td>
<td>New.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am a shy person.</td>
<td>Adapted from Jean-Paul, 2015.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I feel that my lack of knowledge of American social manners and customs prevents me from socializing with Americans.</td>
<td>Adapted Jammaz Appendix B, Page number 126, Question number 21.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural distance</td>
<td>Americans’ carefulness with money creates a cultural and social barrier between us.</td>
<td>Exploratory study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have difficulties fitting into the wider society because of my cultural background.</td>
<td>Adopted Asfahani, 2017. Table number two, Page number 17, Question number two.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I find it hard to maintain my cultural values in everyday life in the U.S.</td>
<td>Adapted from Asfahani, 2017. Table number two, Page number 17, Question number 13.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural identity</td>
<td>I find it easy to maintain my traditional culture and to be part of the U.S. society in the same time.</td>
<td>Adapted from Asfahani, 2017. Table number two, Page number 17, Question number 17.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I sometimes question my Saudi cultural identity living in the U.S.

Exploratory study

Lack of language ability

I feel confident in my English-speaking skills while living in the U.S.

I use English to communicate and share my opinions and thoughts without being afraid if others laugh at me.

I can express myself and my needs with my current English skills.

Exploratory study

Attitudes towards gender-mixed classrooms

I feel that gender-mixed classrooms are negatively affecting my progress in the academic environment.

Having Saudi students of the opposite gender in my classes negatively affects my ability to integrate in the learning environment.

I felt that the opposite Saudi gender in my classroom is affecting my progress in English learning in a negative way.

Exploratory study

Discrimination

I have experienced unkind remarks concerning my racial, cultural, or religious background.

The harassment I have experienced in the U.S. has limited my integration into the U.S. community.

Since my arrival to the U.S., I have found less discrimination than I expected.

I feel that other Saudi students here affect my progress in

Adapted from Jammaz Appendix B, Page number 125, Question number 16

Adapted from Laubscher Appendix, Section A, Page number 155, Question number 16.

Adapted from Laubscher Appendix, Section A, Page number 156, Question number 17.

New.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Influence of other Saudi students</td>
<td>English learning in a negative way. I feel that other Saudi students here affect my ability to make friends in a negative way. New.</td>
<td>New.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I feel that other Saudi students here negatively affect my progress to mix in the community. New</td>
<td>New.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Institutional Support</td>
<td>I feel that the university and/or faculty members in the U.S. help me with my adjustment here. Adapted from Jammaz, 1972, p. 123, number 10.</td>
<td>Adapted from (Garza, 2015, and Jammaz 1972.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I feel that the pre-departure orientation I had in Saudi Arabia was sufficient. Adapted from (Garza, 2015, and Jammaz 1972.)</td>
<td>Adapted from (Garza 2015, and Jammaz, 1972.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I feel that the orientation I had after arrival in the U.S. was sufficient. Adapted from (Garza 2015, and Jammaz, 1972.)</td>
<td>Adapted from (Garza 2015, and Jammaz, 1972.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-ended questions</td>
<td>Are there any other influences that you believe may be affecting your socializing in the U.S? Please explain. --</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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References


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