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Saudi Arabian Students' Perceptions of Teacher Care in the United States

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IN THE UNITED STATES

by

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B.S., Imam University, 1999
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A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial

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for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the field of Communication Studies

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

ABDULLAH S. ALASMARI, for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in COMMUNICATION STUDIES, presented on APRIL 4th, 2018 at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: SAUDI ARABIAN STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER CARE IN THE UNITED STATES

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Bryan Crow

Care is an essential need for human beings, especially students who spend extensive time at school. The goal of this study is to qualitatively explore Saudi university students' perceptions of teacher care in the US. Fourteen male and female Saudi students at a large Midwestern US university were interviewed. This study offers a literature review about Saudi students' cultural backgrounds, which make studying their educational experiences more understandable. Several themes emerged from the research data including cultural differences, learning a new language, help and support, making connections, and caring teachers as role models. Recommendations for US American teachers, Saudi Ministry of Education, and future research are offered.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to those who taught me, helped me, and inspired me throughout this colorful journey. I am utterly grateful to my mother and father. No one's care and support could ever surpass the unconditional love they show me. I cannot thank them enough. I will never forget the gifts that they bestowed upon me for as long as I am alive. I will forever be appreciative of the unending care my mom showed me, and the tears of longing that I felt in my dad's voice when he would call to inquire about when I was returning home. To both of you, I say, "I am coming home soon from this long journey, and I hope that I will make you proud of me".

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

International students' experience in the United States has been researched

intensively. Most international students who come from all over the world prefer the United

States as an educational destination (Institute of International Education, IIE, 2011). Research

on international students has looked at the reasons why international students study in the

United States. On the other hand, some studies focus on several challenges that international

students encounter during their experience in the US. Diversity represents a significant

challenge in US American educational institutions. Researchers seem to agree that when

there is less cultural dissonance, more learning takes place (Bennett, 1995). More research is

needed on students from specific cultures who study at US universities. Perkins (1977)

identifies significant differences in adjustment from different groups of international students

enrolled in a US American university. Taking this into account makes it clear that

international students, in general, need a lot of assistance, support, and care during their time

in the US.

Care is an essential need for human beings, especially students who spend extensive

time at school. Understanding the huge responsibility on teachers' shoulders toward their

students should make teachers value highly the importance of caring for their students, so that

they can treat their students not just as empty vases, but as human beings who need not just

knowledge, but also respect and understanding. Burwash and Miller (1967) argue that caring

is a central issue when taking into account the student as a whole person, not just "from the

neck up" (as cited in Thayer-Bacon & Bacon, 1996).

Awareness of the importance of care is a first step toward practicing it. Research on

teacher-student issues confirms that teachers in higher education value the importance of

caring for their students (Fitzmaurice 2008; Lincoln 2000; Murray 2006; O'Brien 2010;

Walker, Gleaves, & Grey 2006). Research has also found that students place value in caring as well (Bandura & Lyons 2012; Lee & Ravizza 2008; Rossiter 1999), Yet, it seems that some professors do not practice good quality of care with their students. According to Meyers (2009), teachers in higher education do not prioritize the issue of care in education as much as students do. If care is needed with students from the US, communicating care with international students is even more needed. Teachers and students' understanding of care may vary. Culture differences may play a role in making it more complicated. Thayer-Bacon, Arnold, and Stoots (1998) note that both teachers and students believe caring and being cared for are important, but they show and understand caring in different ways. The cultural differences between US American culture and other cultures may play a role in the challenge of US American teachers communicating care with their international students. Hamlin, Mahajan, Liberman, and Wynn (2013) state that people tend to like individuals who are similar to themselves. So, we can assume that communicating care with international students in the US is a challenge for both teachers and students.

Communicating care in educational environments is essential for balancing several elements of teaching. Heikkinen, Syrjatat, Huttunen, and Estola (2004) suggest that making space to care and love is essential for the balance between the cognitive-rational, ethical-political, and affective-personal elements of teaching and learning.

The definition of care, as previously indicated, is not specific. There are several dimensions that affect defining care. Care often is described as ethical, feminine, natural, relational, and contextual. Care has been defined differently, and cultural differences could make it even more complicated. Care in education has been also defined morally by exploring its ethical elements that include, for example, teacher's confidence with regard to students, respect, honesty, trust, sincerity, and attention. According to several studies, (e.g. Mayeroff, 1971; Noddings, 1984, 1988,1992, 2002; O'Brien, 2010; Thayer-Bacon & Bacon,

1996), the definition of care explains that care occurs in relationships in educational contexts in which students are the central component. We will review several proposed definitions in chapter 2.

Typically, research has been conducted on international students as a single population. Since Saudi students represent the largest number of international students at some educational institutions in the United States (e.g., Southern Illinois University for several years), and because they encounter a culture very different from their own, it is worth developing a deeper understanding of how these students, in particular, perceive their academic experience. Research is needed to understand their academic experience in general and to learn how they perceive their teachers' care in particular. Such research could help Saudi students adjust better to life in US American universities and could help US American universities adjust to better serve one of the largest groups of international students on their campuses.

My own educational journey has shaped the teacher I am and want to become. It has become the foundation of my desire to practice and research care in the classroom. This research explores care in the lived experiences of Saudi university students in the United States within the context of their relationships with teachers. My goal, in this study, is to qualitatively explore Saudi university students' perceptions of teacher care in the US by interviewing some of the Saudi students. I offer an extensive literature review about Saudi students' cultural backgrounds, which will make studying their educational experiences more understandable. This study will explore the literature about the experience of international students, particularly Saudi students in the United States and their perception of teacher care.

After this chapter's introduction of the study, chapter 2 is a literature review consisting of three main sections meant to explore literature about definitions of care and the experience of international students in the United States, particularly Saudi students, and their

need of teacher care. First, I review the literature defining care in educational contexts. Second, I review what researchers have learned about teacher care in US higher education. Finally, I write about international students' perceptions of teacher care, in particular Saudi students' perceptions.

Chapter 3 will propose the methodology for the study. To present the methodological approach for studying the experiences of Saudi students in the United States and their perception of teacher care, this chapter will discuss the proposed research method. Also, I provide a brief description of the anticipated research participants. Then, I provide an explanation of the research data collecting and analyzing methods, including the use of interviewing for collecting data, and I explain my use of the grounded theory approach for analyzing the data.

Chapter 4 will discuss the results. It includes data analysis where I pose the major themes found in the interview data and how I analyzed it using grounded theory. Chapter 5 will be the discussion chapter where I link the results to the previous literature that I reviewed.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Researchers have studied the experiences of international students in the United States for decades. Araujo (2011) notes that an increased number of international students traveling to the United States to pursue education in the 1950s spurred research on the experiences of international students in U. S. American schools (as cited in Heyn, 2013). The United States was a unique place for most of the international students, who came from all over the world. Yet, most of the research in this field concerns international students' reasons for studying in the United States. On the other hand, there are several challenges that international students encounter during their experience in the US. Heyn (2013) summarized a study by Pedersen (1994) and described international students' experiences in the following way:

> International students are expected to learn a new language, new rules for interpersonal behavior, and a new set of rules that all the other students on campus have spent their whole life learning . . . they [international students] are expected to "adjust" to a relatively narrowly defined set of behaviors in order for them to succeed. (p. 3)

Under these circumstances that international students live in, caring teachers can be the delicate hands that alleviate their pain of adjustment. International students need caring teachers to face their challenges while studying in the US. Teachers communicating care with international students should enrich their educational and intercultural experience as well.

Due to the large Saudi scholarship program during the last decade, the United States has received a large number of Saudi students. Saudi students represent the majority of international students at several universities in the US (e.g., Saudi students are the largest group of international students at Southern Illinois University). The experiences of Saudi students in the United States have not been exhaustively theorized and should be explored in

greater detail. I will offer an extensive literature review about Saudi students' cultural backgrounds, which will make studying their educational experiences more understandable, especially considering their perception of teacher care.

Care is a significant issue in international students' experiences and is a topic that has not been explored extensively. Communicating care is an essential pedagogical practice in general, though it is even more urgent for international students. Thayer-Bacon, Arnold, and Stoots (1998) note that both teachers and students believe caring and being cared for are important, but they show and understand caring in different ways. In general, it seems the cultural differences between US American culture and other cultures play a significant role in the challenge of US American instructors communicating care with their international students.

The purpose of this study is to explore the literature about the experience of international students, particularly Saudi students in the United States and their perception of teacher care. This chapter consists of three main sections. First, I will review the literature defining care in educational contexts. Second, I will review what researchers have learned about teacher care in US higher education. Finally, I will write about international students' perceptions of teacher care, including perceptions of teacher care by Saudi students.

Defining Care

When it comes to students' perceptions, scholars find that students (including ourselves when we were at school) cannot remember many caring teachers (Thayer-Bacon & Bacon, 1996). Teachers and students may develop different definitions when they define care. Adding the cultural difference factor to the definition of care may increase the complication of this issue.

As teachers, we may think we practice care with our students, but is that the truth? In general, as cited in Thayer-Bacon and Bacon (1996), Mayeroff (1971) describes caring in

terms of "recognizing the intrinsic worth of the 'other' and being committed to promoting its growth for its own sake" (p. 256). Lambert (1995) identifies some elements in the process of care including confidence in students, respect, honesty, trust, sincerity, and attention. Lambert (1995) also points out that researchers should explore the elements and ethics of care. There is no one correct way of communicating care. Several studies indicate that "teachers who convey genuine interest in students' success cultivate more productive learners, but there are many ways for professors to show that they care about their students" (O'Brien, 2010, p. 111).

Nel Noddings, a scholar I will cite frequently, is well known for her research concentrated on care in the teacher-student relationships. Noddings (1992) provides a relational framework for thinking about caring in education. As a professor, she describes caring as a relational act between the one who cares and the one cared-for. O'Brien (2010) clarifies that this relational quality of caring supposes that caring is not just an individual personality trait of the one caring, but that the one caring is in direct relation to another who receives the caring, the one cared for. Care also has been defined as an ethical practice. Rabin and Smith (2013) summarized a study by Gilligan (1982). They state that care is an ethic focused on responding to others' needs in relationships: "The logic underlying an ethic of care is a psychological logic of relationships, which contrasts with the formal logic of fairness that informs the justice approach" (p. 165). Some scholars go even further and explain the difference between caring for and caring about. Noddings (1984, 2002) distinguishes between caring about and caring for, pointing out that *caring for* requires reciprocity, so we can *care about* those with whom we do not have relationships, while we can *care for* only those with whom we have built relationships. *Caring for* requires the person who practices it to understand the needs of another.

Students are a very important element in the process of teacher-student relationships. Pedagogical care sees students as active members in their relationships with teachers, so teachers need to appear as knowledge seekers in front of their students. According to Thayer-Bacon and Bacon (1996),

Viewing learning as a process, and learners as fallible, limited, social beings, brings a humble perspective to a caring professor's role as a teacher. Caring professors must assume that they do not have a complete understanding of what they are trying to teach. They are researchers, in the true sense of the word. They are people who are in search of knowledge and better understanding themselves. (p. 259)

Communicating care needs an educational environment in which teachers can build relationships with their students so they can understand themselves, as well as their students. Several studies also have defined care as a central issue to moral education. Noddings (2002) explains, "We need to understand our own capacities and how we are likely to react in various situations . . . Hence . . . much of [care-based] moral education is devoted to the understanding of self and others" (p. 15).

As we can see, care has been defined differently, and cultural differences could make it even more complicated. Care in education has been also defined morally by exploring its ethical elements that include, for example, teacher's confidence in students, respect, honesty, trust, sincerity, and attention. The definition of care explains that care occurs in relationships in educational contexts in which students are the central component.

Care Definition Issues

There are several dimensions that affect defining care, which has often been viewed as a feminine characteristic. Care is described as ethical, feminine, natural, relational, and contextual. Dimensions mentioned previously are correlated. "As an ethical orientation, caring has often been characterized as feminine because it seems to arise more naturally out

of woman's experience than man's" (Noddings, 1988, p. 215). According to Mariskind (2014), much of the discussion of care in education is related to schools (i.e. K-12) or early childhood centers. Such educational care is gendered, with teaching in the United States historically seen as women's work (O'Neill, 2005) involving nurturing and care (Noddings, 1984). According to Noddings (1988), "A relational ethics is rooted in and dependent on natural caring" (p. 219). She also explains that the ethic of care originates from a universal desire to be cared for and to share positive relationships with at least some other beings. Therefore, as Nodding states, "If we value such relations, then we ought to act so as to create, maintain, and enhance them" (Noddings, 2002, p. 21).

Care has been defined as a relational practice. Relationships are very important for creating a caring environment. Care is not a program or strategy, but is a way to relate with students and their families characterized by respect, understanding, compassion and interest (Noddings 1988). Care cannot be taught as an educational curriculum. Instead, it is obtained through a hidden educational context. Noddings (1988) states,

> If teachers approach their responsibility for moral education from a caring orientation
> rather than an ethic of principle, they cannot teach moral education as one might teach
> geometry or European history or English; that is, moral education cannot be
> formulated into a course of study or set of principles to be learned. (pp. 221-222)

According to Mayeroff (1971), caring for students requires teachers to know their students enough so they can understand students' unique motivations and needs. Several studies have suggested teachers should stay with their students for long periods of time to develop strong relationships. Noddings (1988) states, "To be responsible participants in the construction of ethical ideals, teachers need more time with students than we currently allow them. If we cared deeply about fostering growth and shaping both acceptable and caring people, we could surely find ways to extend contact between teachers and students" (p. 224-225). Although

creating good relationships with students is essential for the caring environment, it is not a goal that is easily achieved. O'Brien (2010), states that it is hard to create strong relationships with your students in a short period of time. She suggests meeting individually with students at the beginning of the semester. After inviting her students to visit her at her office, she says:

> I was pleasantly surprised by how many students responded and how positive the response was. Of the 29 students in the class, 24 came to meet with me. In addition, in their anonymous initial course feedback, many cited this beginning-of-the-semester meeting as evidence of my caring. Further, in their end-of-semester formal evaluations they made some [positive] comments specific to the meetings … course feedback was positive and the class seemed to work better overall than previous versions of the same course. I attribute this in large part to the one-to-one meetings: I know students better and so can be more responsive; they seem to understand that I care about them and their course work and so are more responsive as well. (p. 112)

Since researchers confirm the importance of caring as an essential practice in education, it seems that the need for caring teachers to deal with international students is also essential. Wan (2001) indicates that teachers can help their international students by making friendship relationships with them and encouraging other students to be friends with them. This helps them to know the new culture sooner and better. International students need understanding from their teachers and fellow students and also time to get used to the ways of learning in the United States, in order to become successful learners.

Applying care in education is a process that consists of some components. Noddings (1988) explains these components when suggesting a new approach for applying care in a moral education. She states, "What is needed … is not a new assumption but a more appropriate conception of morality. An ethic of caring arising out of both ancient notions of agapism and contemporary feminism will be suggested as an alternative approach" (p. 215).

She also explains, "To approach moral education from the perspective of caring, teachers, teacher-educators, students, and researchers need time to engage in modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation" (Noddings, 1988, p. 228-229). These four components, according to Noddings (1988), "are not unique to ethics of caring … but their combination and interpretation are central to this view of moral education" (p. 222). Communicating care through listening is a step forward toward modeling it. Bandura and Lyons (2012) state, "When instructors listen carefully, are attentive, invite students' comments and feedback on what classroom practices are working well, when we respond carefully to students' requests, and to their suggestions regarding improving classroom practices, we are modeling care and respect" (p. 526). There are some missions that are essential and help with adopting care in education. Noddings (2002) offers some strategies (e.g., cooperative learning, non-competitive grading, service-learning) to adopt the ethic of care in the learning environment; however, she emphasizes that strategies alone will not suffice, because every implementation depends on the actors and the content involved. Strategies must be embedded in a classroom where care is promoted through modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation, rather than employed in a hierarchical environment (Freire, 1970). Noddings (2002) explains,

> The result of academic coercion . . . is often frustration and a pervasive feeling of 'being dumb.' . . . If a youth's own legitimate interests and talents are not admired and encouraged, he or she may never really learn what it means to be cared for.
> (p. 31)

It seems clear that communicating care in educational environments is a valuable mission that should offer cooperative learning, non-competitive grading, and service learning. Communicating care in educational environments is a process that is relevant to teacher-student relationships.

Here we can see the correlation between care and emotion. Showing and understanding care are associated with people's emotions. Thayer-Bacon and Bacon (1996) state, "Caring is a personal, subjective topic full of feelings" (p. 255). de Guzman et al. (2008) refer to care in education as teaching with a heart and describe it as double-loop caring, or caring presence. They state that "to teach with a heart is the essence that makes teaching a form of caring. When teaching is viewed as a form of caring, teachers become relational geniuses in their own right" (p. 487).

The context plays a significant role in how to communicate care. Care is determined by a context, "which means good, bad, right, and wrong depend on the needs of the participants in particular relationships in specific situations" (Goralnik, Millenbah, Nelson, & Thorp, 2012, p. 420). According to Goralnik et al. (2012),

> Implementing the ethic of care in educational contexts relies on the development of attentive relationships between a carer and a cared-for (student-student, student-instructor, student-content, participants–learning environment). The goal is to integrate it as a guiding morality in the classroom and as a bridge to the beyond-school world, where it can lead students to right action on behalf of the beings, places, and ideas they value in relationship. (p. 420)

Care is researched as a critical act, which means, according to Cummins (2014), the care that is underscored by critical pedagogy and critical communication pedagogy. The critical perspective questions power relations with regard to issues such as race, ethnicity, and gender. Cummins (2014) says that hope lies in our capabilities as teachers to move toward a future where people are treated equitably at every level of society.

Importance of Pedagogical Care

All human beings need care, especially students who spend extensive time at schools. Watson (1985) notice that there is possibility of a caring occasion in every human encounter. According to O'Brien (2010), "Much has been written about the importance and impact of caring in education. . . [and] about seeing our students as whole persons and not just contributors to the coffers or empty vessels to be filled with our accumulated wisdom" (p. 114). Understanding the huge responsibility on teachers' shoulders toward their students should make them value highly the importance of caring for them. Several studies suggest dealing with students as human beings instead of simply empty vessels seeking some piece of information. de Guzman et al. (2008) state, "Today, more than ever, the ability of the teacher to see his or her students not as material to work on but as individuals to work with, lies in his [or her] caring behavior" (p. 498). Teacher- student relationships are full of caring occasions. Noddings (1988) states,

> In every caring occasion, the parties involved must decide how they will respond to each other. Each such occasion involves negotiation of a sort: an initiation, a response, a decision to elaborate or terminate. Clearly, teaching is filled with caring occasions or, quite often, with attempts to avoid such occasions. (p. 222)

Communicating care in educational environments is essential for striking a balance between several elements of teaching. Heikkinen et al. (2004) suggest if we are to realize a balance between the cognitive-rational, ethical-political, and affective-personal elements of teaching and learning, we need teacher education curricula that provide space to work, communicate, and think, as well as space to care and love. Communicating care is reflected positively in educational environments. Meyers, Bender, Hill, and Thomas (2006) state that when teachers communicate sensitively and show care toward their students by respecting and engaging them, they support individual relationships, as well as add positive atmosphere and reduce

classroom conflict. Students, as the central element of the pedagogical care, are the primary beneficiary. On the other hand, they are the big losers if they are not treated with care. Bandura and Lyons (2012) summarized a study by Buttner (2004) as the following:

> When students are not treated with care or respect, many of them report accounts of how their self-esteem suffered and how their behavior toward the course and instructor changed. Many said they declined to participate in class discussions, came to class late or left early, missed class, dropped the class, or engaged in a combination of all of these behaviors. (p. 524)

Communicating care is a central pedagogical issue when we look to its association with relationships and emotions. Goralnik et al. (2012) state, "Relationships, emotion, and particular attention to the learning environment as a meaningful place for content and personal development unite the scholarships of experiential and place-based education, emotional engagement, and the ethic of care" (p. 424). They also state, "Experiential education's focus on relationships and emotional connections to content and learning community. . . permeates educational psychology research on student engagement" (p. 414), and "This same focus characterizes the ethic of care—a theoretical philosophical ethic derived from feminist environmental ethics with direct application to classroom learning" (pp. 414-415). The relations and emotions in educational contexts create an environment for caring to occur. Noddings (1988) states,

> Relations may be characterized by love or hate, anger or sorrow, admiration or envy; or, of course, they may reveal mixed affects—one party feeling, say, love and the other revulsion. One who is concerned with behaving ethically strives always to preserve or convert a given relation into a caring relation. (pp. 218-219)

Previous studies make it clear that care should be a part of educational practice as it is expressed through relations and emotions.

Several scholars have studied the creation of relationships between teachers and their students. Rabin and Smith (2013) state, "An ethic of care acknowledges the centrality of the role of caring relationships in moral education" (p. 164). Care is an essential practice in teacher-student relationships in primary, secondary, and colleges as well. Goralnik et al. (2012) discussed a study by Robbins, Allen, Calillas, Peterson, and Le (2006) and explained that "although most research on emotional engagement and classroom care ethics involves younger students, the social dynamic of the learning environment—including the teacher-student relationship—also matters for college-aged students" (p. 421). Furthermore, de Guzman et al. (2008) state that "maintaining personal interactions with students and creating a caring atmosphere is central to college teaching" (p. 498). The interpersonal connection is important in the educational context and is not easy to achieve without communicating care. Meyers (2009) reports, "Some studies have confirmed the importance of the interpersonal role in the teacher-student relationship" (pp. 205-206). Moreover, Liston and Garrison (2004) argue that if we are to make relationships central to our teaching, we educators must care about students' lives and stories. There are a lot of ideas about what care can positively change, but it needs relationships to happen. O'Brien (2010) states,

> [Classrooms] ought to resound with the voices of articulate young people in dialogues always incomplete because there is always more to be discovered and more to be said. We must want our students to achieve friendship as each one stirs to wide-awakeness, to imaginative action, and to renewed consciousness of possibility. (p. 109)

The relational dimension can be challenging for US American teachers because of their Western cultural view. Noddings (2005) explains why the relational view is difficult for many US American educators. She states,

The relational view is hard for some American thinkers to accept because the Western

tradition puts such great emphasis on individualism. In that tradition, it is almost

instinctive to regard virtues as personal possessions, hard-won through a grueling

process of character building. (p. 3)

As relationships allow teachers to care in educational settings, they are important for creating

the environment for achieving friendship among students as well. On the other hand,

relationships need care to be achieved.

Care is among the major themes emergent through my own research data about

teachers' perceptions of the importance of nonverbal immediacy (Alasmari, 2014). Meyers

(2009) states that research about teacher immediacy has provided a firm foundation for the

idea that caring makes a difference in students' educational experiences. He also states,

"Despite the fact that students are acutely aware of whether their professors care about them,

professors do not necessarily prioritize this aspect of teaching to the same extent" (p. 205). de

Guzman et al. (2008) state, "The extent to which teachers' caring behavior is felt and

experienced by the students positively shapes their orientations as cared-for individuals" (p.

487). According to de Guzman et al. (2008), "The caring relationship between the teacher

and the learner has a direct impact on both parties but more directly on students" (p. 489).

Moreover, Thayer-Bacon, Arnold, and Stoots (1998) said that a caring teacher has a

significant impact on his/her students' lives. Goralnik et al. (2012) state, "Observations about

the student-teacher relationship might seem simplistic: Students enjoy relating to their

teachers and they enjoy school when they relate to their teachers. But psychological

engagement is more than enjoyment" (p. 421). Furrer and Skinner (2003) have studied

teacher-student relationships as a factor in academic motivation for elementary students (3rd-

6th grades). They explain,

Children who felt appreciated by teachers were more likely to report that involvement

in academic activities was interesting and . . . they felt happy . . . in the classroom. In

contrast, children who felt . . . ignored by teachers reported more boredom,

unhappiness, and anger while participating in learning activities. (p. 159)

As we can see, research confirms the importance of caring relationships between teachers and

their students and how much impact it has on both parties, especially students, who are the

target of the pedagogical care.

Care affects the success of both teachers and students. Thayer-Bacon and Bacon

(1996) claim that all college teachers like to think of themselves as caring, and this is true

even if it is just to improve their evaluation scores. Meyers (2009) states, "Caring affects

more than students' evaluations of their professors. Rapport impacts students' attitudes

toward the class, their academic behavior, and the extent of their learning" (p. 206). O'Brien

(2010) summarized a study by Jacobsen, Eggen, and Kauchak (2006). O'Brien states, "It is

virtually impossible to succeed in any part of teaching without genuinely caring about

students and their learning" (p. 111). According to O'Brien (2010),

Teachers who care about their students are remembered, effect change, stimulate

growth, and are more likely to be successful at teaching their students. In sum, they

maintain that caring is central to any model of teaching that tries to take into account

the student as a whole person. (p. 110)

Teacher educators who deliberately create and nurture caring teacher-student relationships,

"despite the many challenges, benefit both themselves and their students in several ways"

(O'Brien, 2010, p. 109). Teachers who care about their students, according to Thayer-Bacon

and Bacon (1996), "are remembered, effect change, stimulate growth, and are more likely to

be successful at teaching their students" (p. 255). Haman, Donald and Birt (2010) conclude

that the perception of students regarding their learning environment can assist teachers to

improve their pedagogical practices and enhance the education quality. Students' perceptions, which shape their attitudes and beliefs, may affect the reputation of a teacher or a program and students' learning as well. In sum, previous studies confirm the significant role of care in education. Studies also focus on the important role of relations in care. Communicating care in education is a win-win strategy. By communicating care, teachers contribute to their success and to their students' success as well.

Pedagogical Care in US Higher Education

The teaching profession is the choice for people who care about others and their future. O'Connor (2006) states that teaching has long been considered a "caring profession." In higher education, it seems that some professors do not communicate enough care with their students for several reasons. Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007) point out that it is because care is often conceptualized in maternal terms, while the field of higher education emphasizes autonomous, self-directed adult learners. Several studies, however, (Fitzmaurice 2008; Lincoln 2000; Murray 2006; O'Brien 2010; Walker, Gleaves, and Grey 2006) confirm that teachers in higher education consider caring to be important. Other studies (Bandura & Lyons, 2012; Lee & Ravizza, 2008; Rossiter, 1999) confirm that students also place value in caring. Walker, Gleaves, and Grey (2006) studied the difficulties of care and support in new university teachers' work. They conclude that the teachers "suggest that care is an overlooked aspect of university teachers' work, yet it plays an important part in maintaining their and their students' sense of scholarly endeavor" (p. 347).

Pedagogical care has not been fully studied. As Hawk and Lyons (2008) report, under the broad umbrella of ethics of care, there is less literature on an ethic of care within the learning/teaching context, referred to as pedagogical caring. There is little research available concerning caring teachers from the student's point of view. According to Hawk and Lyons (2008), several hundred MBA students at a US American university participated in their

study over a period of several semesters. A large proportion of the students reported at least one episode of an instructor who lacked care and respect directed towards the student, which influenced the student's learning. Some students reported several episodes of disrespectful behavior on the part of instructors. The issues and questions examined by Hawk and Lyons (2008) are broad and are not limited to investigation in any single discipline; rather, they relate to higher education in general. In the Hawk and Lyons (2008) study, issues and themes concerning care and respect emerge from inquiry into the negative perceptions identified by students regarding some of the treatment they received in classrooms. In general, many effective teachers build positive, helpful relationships with their students, but some teachers do not.

International Students' Perceptions of Teacher Care

Several challenges face international students in the United States. Over three decades ago, academic difficulties, personal concerns, and health issues were identified as the three primary challenges among international students (Leong, 1984). A few years later, researchers identified another area of challenge — culture shock (Adler, 1986). Heikinheimo and Shute (1986) conducted a qualitative study and found language skills, academic issues, and social interaction were the most difficult adjustment areas for international students.

Diversity presents a significant challenge in US American educational institutions. Researchers seem to agree that when there is less cultural dissonance, more learning takes place (Bennett, 1995). International students do not always receive enough care from their teachers. Perkins (1977) called for more sophisticated analyses in research concerning international students after identifying significant differences in adjustment from different groups of international students enrolled in a US American university. Wan (2001) points out it is hard to be a cross-cultural learner. It requires a lot of courage, determination and persistence to succeed in doing so. The process of learning involves "blood and tears." He

indicates there are many cultural elements that the learners need to adjust to, get used to, learn or unlearn. But in general, the experience is very rewarding.

Students identified being able to approach professors as a very important element of care. Previous research on international students' cross-cultural adjustment supports this finding. Zimmerman (1995), for instance, argued that international students' academic success depends to a great extent on their interactions with their US instructors. However, intercultural communication is inherently problematic and thereby can often be dysfunctional. Yan and Berliner (2009) identified four problems as factors handicapping Chinese students' effective interactions with American faculty. They are language insufficiency, lack of initiative and autonomy, verbal passiveness, and indirect modes of communication. For example, Chinese and Saudi students come from high-context cultures where people use indirect modes of communication. Chinese students' indirect communication style also influences the degree of their acceptance of direct criticism. Most of them associate explicit criticism with low capability, insufficient effort, or failure. Yan and Berliner (2009) asked Chinese students about the reason for their unwillingness to present problems to their advisors. They found that Chinese students attribute that to their culture norms. Chinese workers, in general, are more valued when they express fewer problems. Moreover, they are considered intelligent and hardworking. So, Chinese students' willingness to show their effort can affect how their supervisors understand them.

It is also not easy to be an instructor who teaches diverse classes. Instructors need extensive knowledge and skills so they can communicate care for their international students. Wan (2001) indicates that educators can assist international students by understanding their home cultures, different learning styles, as well as frustrations in adjusting to school life and in overcoming cultural shocks. When educators are aware of the difficulties these students experience in cross-cultural learning, they can help them build a bridge between

their home and school. This understanding can help teachers tailor instruction in ways to support the culturally different learners and provide students with a variety of ways to learn so that their learning is in harmony with their cultural background.

Some scholars suggest recommendations for professors when dealing with international students. Although several of these recommendations were intended to be for dealing with particular groups, it seems they also apply to the majority of international students. Lin (1998) suggests American professors who work with Chinese international students might be encouraged to develop some knowledge of Chinese students' special problems and needs so they can be more attentive to Chinese students' difficulties. Wilson (1996) argues that advisors are not expected to counsel Chinese international students, but familiarity with the student's personal life could be helpful. Also, periodically checking on a student's wellbeing could be beneficial in preventing a student from developing problems. Yan and Berliner (2009) suggest that advisors should make an effort to assist Chinese international students in successfully completing their programs of study. Advisors should be familiar with resources available to international students and direct Chinese students to take advantage of appropriate resources when students need such help.

In general, there are several suggestions for instructors for communicating care when dealing with their students. These suggestions can also apply to international students if instructors take into account the student's cultural differences. Bandura and Lyons (2012) suggest that professors should make sure course performance expectations and learning requirements are clear. Also, it is important to provide an encouraging and supportive environment so students will risk their ideas and questions, offer their voices, listen carefully, and reflect on what is happening in class and in their own learning. They also suggest that professors should get to know their individual students. It is important for instructors to recognize that it is likely necessary to provide different approaches to instruction because

students do not all learn in the same way. They also suggest that faculty provide constructive feedback on students' performance and that instructors can model caring and respectful behavior to all students.

The Educational System in Saudi Arabia

Saudi citizens have a number of different opportunities for schooling, since education is free in all public schools, including universities (Alamri, 2011). Before students are six years old (and sometimes age four and even younger), they may attend pre-school and kindergarten. At this level, education is optional and most schools are coeducational. The majority of these schools were under the administration of the General Presidency of Girls' Education, 1960-2000, and now all are under the Education Ministry (Hamdan, 2005). Elementary education (a six-year program intended for students ages six through 12) is compulsory for all Saudi students. Upon successful completion of elementary school, students can be admitted to a three-year intermediate school, housing grades seven through nine. Those who successfully complete the intermediate school level can enter a three-year secondary school, during which students attend either an academic school (to study arts and sciences) or a vocational school to learn a trade (Heyn, 2013). The curriculum is the same for males and females with the exception of home economics being offered for females and physical education offered for males (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, 1993).

The traditional educational system in Saudi Arabia is not coeducational. From first grade and above, boys and girls attend separate schools where female teachers teach the girls while male teachers teach the boys. For female students in the first through 12th grades, all of their education is now supervised by the Ministry of Education. (Until 2002, female schools were supervised by the General Presidency of Girls' Education for almost three decades). Most of the boys attend schools operated by the Ministry of Education. There are private schools, and their curricula and general rules are also supervised by government agencies to

ensure uniformity. Private-school directors can add to the government-approved curriculum, but never exclude any of its original content. A choice is offered to male and female students in the 11th and 12th grades of the regular schools, when they select either a literary or a scientific track. This determines the emphasis in their curriculum. It also tends to predetermine the course of specialization a student can take in college (Rugh, 2002).

Some students elect to attend secondary schools run by Islamic University or the Imam Muhammad ibn Saud University, in which students are majoring in the Islamic studies and Arabic. Male Saudi students can also elect to enter secondary vocational and technical schools operated by a government agency called the General Organization for Technical Education and Vocational Training. Male students may also enroll in secondary military schools operated by the Ministry of Defense and other military institutions (Rugh, 2002).

Saudi Students' Experience in Higher Education

Many students have taken advantage of opportunities in higher education in Saudi Arabia. According to the official statistics of 2016 on the website of the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, there are 28 public universities, 28 private universities, and four other public educational institutions. The university system contains about 770 individual colleges total. In addition, there are 15 specialty and advisory institutions associated with some of the universities and colleges (Ministry of Education, 2017).

The Saudi universities and colleges differ in the programs they offer. Some of the universities tend to offer courses with the most "secular" or non-religious content in their curricula. Two universities, the Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University and the Islamic University of Medina, offer extensive courses in Islamic and related subjects; a third, Umm Al-Qura University, also has a curriculum that places heavy emphasis on teaching Islamic studies (Alamri, 2011).

Female students in Saudi Arabia are allowed admission to most of the colleges. Only two universities (the Islamic University and King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals) do not admit women--and with rare exceptions do not employ female faculty members. The other universities do admit women, but they are physically segregated in separate college campuses. In addition, there is a university that only admits women, Prince Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University. According to the official website of the university, it is the world's largest all-women university (Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University, 2017). In 2000, female students constituted 45% of Saudi Arabian university students, 55% of all students in higher education in Saudi Arabia, and 58 % of higher education of all Saudi graduates (Ministry of Education, 2017).

A Glance at Saudi Students' Experience in the US

Despite the increasing presence of Saudi students in US American higher education, the literature regarding the experience of Saudi students in the United States is limited. The number of Saudi students who come to study in the United States often oscillates due to some political issues. Among the most important issues that have played a significant role in the number of Saudi students was the destruction of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City and the attack on the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., on September 11, 2001 (Institute of International Education, 2011). According to Batterjee (2009), 9/11 had several negative effects on Saudi students in the US, and it led to discrimination, social anxiety, verbal and physical assault, and bad feelings in response to negative media representations. Saudi students started to come to the US again a few years after 9/11. Heyn (2013) states that after an agreement between the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 2005, Saudi students traveled to the US for education. Saudi students may come with negative ideas about the American people or American culture based on media representations that followed 9/11.

According to Heyn (2013), Saudi Arabia's educational system has distinct differences from the educational system in the US. Al-Sallom (1994), for example, noted that the Saudi Arabian educational system is unique in the following three ways: (a) its emphasis on Islam; (b) the segregated female and male education; and (c) the free education in schools at all levels to all Saudi citizens and residents (as cited in Heyn, 2013, p 44). Heyn (2013) notes, "There is little information related to the needs of Saudi Arabian international students that might aid in the success of their academics, health, and well-being while they matriculate in the United States" (p. 42). She also identifies four categories of challenges that Saudi students face while studying in the US, including perceptions of achievement, adjustment problems, values conflicts, and other problems.

Heyn (2013) summarized a study by Leong and Chou (1996) in the following way: Saudi students who travel to study in the US are often successful among their school peers in their home country. Thus, they usually have high expectations about achievement in the United States as well. The new Saudi scholarship program (King Abdullah Scholarship Program, KASP) that started in 2005 has sent thousands of students to the US for undergraduate and graduate degrees in several majors. The standards of the new program may affect the generalization of the previous perception of Saudi students. Saudi students know that their family and government place high expectations upon them, and this could increase the potential stress and anxiety.

In general, Saudi students' intercultural experiences in the U.S. are almost always likely to be stressful, because they come from a country that is fundamentally different in language, culture, social structure, and political ideology. Research indicates that international students who come from non-European backgrounds, Third-World countries, and/or Eastern countries tend to suffer more stress while adjusting to US American campus life (Lin, 1998; Perkins, 1977). Thus, Saudi students can be expected to encounter

challenges linked to at least two of the reasons mentioned previously. They are from non-European backgrounds and from an under-developed country. With so many potential difficulties, Saudi students are expected to experience some adjustment problems. Saudi Arabia has managed to maintain a balance between conservative Islamic values, cultural norms, and rapid modern advances (Long & Maisel, 2010). Saudi students who study abroad in the West, in general, obtain an education that is different from the education in their country. Not only are pedagogical methods different from most Saudi institutions, but also the whole culture in the West (including individuality, authority, and religions) makes Saudi students live a total new experience.

The transition Saudi students experience while coming to the United States may cause some culture shock, making it harder to acclimate to the new place and making care, especially at colleges, an essential and central issue in their educational experience. I cannot remember caring teachers very much when I was in school in Saudi Arabia. I needed care at times during elementary, middle, and even high school. All my teachers were male. It was not easy to find teachers who communicate care. Although caring teachers are like rare coins, I have very good memories with some teachers who cared, encouraged, and supported me. Speaking as a student who came from this educational environment (who also experienced a culture shock in coming to the US to study), caring teachers are badly needed in the US to help reduce that stress and generally support international students.

Culture shock is a significant adjustment problem in Saudi students' experience in the US. Heyn (2013) notes that "Saudi Arabian students in the United States experience adjustment problems due to having to adapt to the new host culture, being in a different educational system, not seeing people that look like them, and feeling other aspects of culture shock" (p. 48). Beyond the culture shock experience international students encounter in general, Saudi students face language challenges, as nearly all of the arriving students speak

Arabic as their first language. The consequential language barrier leads to difficulty navigating the educational system and everyday living experiences. The educational experience of Saudi students in the US is very different from their educational experience in Saudi Arabia. In Saudi Arabian classrooms, teachers are highly respected and students must raise their hands to ask or answer questions (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, 1993). Having spent years in teacher-centered classrooms, Saudi Arabian students may find the loose discussion style of many classrooms in the United States somewhat shocking. Saudi students, therefore, may feel shy or scared to share their opinions in class, especially in front of their professors because this is not what they have been accustomed to during their formative educational experiences in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi students may stay silent because of this different new culture. They can fall under one or more of the eight causes of silence that Verschueren (1985) lists, when studying speech acts and introducing a cross-linguistic perspective comparing two European languages (English and Dutch). The eight different possible causes of silence, according to him, are (1) the speaker is unwilling to talk; (2) the speaker does not know what to say next; (3) the speaker cannot speak due to surprise, sadness, or other emotions; (4) the speaker has nothing to say; (5) the speaker forgets what s/he has to say; (6) the speaker is silent because other people are talking; (7) the speaker is hiding something; (8) the speaker is unconcerned. These causes could apply to US students as well, but in the international students' new experience in the US, these causes are more highly expected. In my previous experience of studying in the US, I have experienced all of these cases. In addition, language proficiency is another reason for silence in the case of international students. Caring teachers have helped me by understanding my case and not embarrassing me. They have also tried to reduce my silence when they encouraged me to participate in the topics that I can talk about (i.e. cultural

differences between Saudi Arabia and the US). Caring teachers have helped reduce my silence by having group discussions and helping me join friendly students.

Typically, research has been conducted on international students as a single population. But because Saudi students represent the largest number of international students at some educational institutions in the United States and because they encounter a culture very different from their own, it is worth developing a deeper understanding of how these students, in particular, perceive their academic experience. Research is needed to understand their academic experience in general and to learn how they perceive their teachers' care. Such research could help Saudi students adjust better to life in US American universities and could help US American universities adjust to better serve one of the largest groups of international students on their campuses.

Although there is limited research on Saudi students in the US, Heyn (2013) has studied their experiences. Among the broad areas identified from her phenomenological data analysis, she highlights participants' experiences seeking and receiving support, along with the barriers experienced in terms of receiving support, while studying in the United States. What emerged in the data was the participants' recognition that having sources of support was crucial to their success in cross-cultural experiences (Heyn, 2013). Participants in this study reported that they received support from their professors, religion, other Saudi students, and their families. In the Middle East, there is an expectation that individuals should turn to their family, friends, and social resources (e.g., relatives, neighbors) whenever help is needed (Adeyemi, 1985; Al-Qasem, 1987; Ali, Liu, & Humedian, 2004). To ask for help outside the family, including financial assistance, is often taken as an offense to the family and may stigmatize the family and the individual (Adeyemi, 1985; Al-Issa, 2000; Al-Qasem, 1987; Ali et al., 2004). In one study of help-seeking behaviors among Muslims, Lowenthal, Cinnirella, Evdoka, & Murphy (2001) found that Muslims believed in using Islam and social support to

cope with depression rather than mental health services, and they believed in using the religious networks for helping more than people in other religious groups. Heyn (2013) argues that if Saudi students are to realize the potential benefits professional services have to offer, then understanding what services and sources of support they seek while studying in the United States is crucial. Shaw (2010) studies the experience of Saudi students and found that personal adaptation resilience and intercultural competence are the most significant characteristics for Saudi students to have a successful experience in the US. Shaw recommended supporting resilience and intercultural competence by helping Saudi Arabian students improve their skills and providing assistance that increases intercultural competence. I argue that Saudi students need extensive care from their professors offered in the classroom, while professors need to learn more about the unique experience and features of their Saudi students' culture that can make offering care to them different from offering care to other students.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter consisted of three main sections meant to explore literature about the experience of international students in the United States, particularly Saudi students, and their perception of teacher care. First, I reviewed the literature defining care in educational contexts. Second, I reviewed what researchers have learned about pedagogical care in US higher education. Finally, I wrote about international students' perceptions of teacher care, in particular including Saudi students' perceptions.

Although there may be some historical, political, and cultural dimensions that control and affect the relationship between international students and their teachers, teachers should deal with their students honestly without ignorance for their needs as humans. When we care about others, we should respect them as independent people that deserve our care (Thayer-Bacon, Arnold, & Stoots, 1998). Although people agree about the importance of care,

communicating care in the educational context is a very complicated and sensitive issue. Care may not be practiced appropriately by teachers or may not be perceived positively by students. Meyers (2009) summarizes some cautions about caring as the following:

> Caring for students is not necessarily an easy task. Some faculty members do care, but feel as though their students do not notice or appreciate their efforts. Other professors feel that it can be too difficult to create caring relationships in large classes or fear that they will be too permissive if they connect with their students. Still others believe that caring is not part of their job and that focusing on interpersonal relationships at the college level is "soft" or gratuitous. (p. 206)

There is limited research about care in the classroom from the perspective of students, so conducting research on international students' perceptions of care and taking into account their psychological, social, and educational needs will enhance the research results and provide US American universities with information they need to support students from different cultures.

The cultural gaps between international students and their US American professors makes communicating care inefficient. Communicating care by a professor can be misunderstood sometimes because of cultural differences. Among the major cultural differences is the gender role. For instance, how female students need and understand care may vary from culture to culture, placing responsibility on US American professors regarding communicating care with their international students. Communicating care also depends on whether the professor is male or female. For example, offering hugs by the other sex is considered taboo in Saudi Arabia, unless the person is a very close relative.

By exploring international students' perceptions regarding pedagogical care through their educational experience in the United States, specifically perceptions and experiences of Saudi students, I will provide a foundation for understanding some of their needs. As a result,

teachers in the United States can have a better understanding of how to adjust their

relationship with Saudi students to better provide care.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

My own educational journey has shaped the teacher I am and want to be. It has become the foundation of my desire to practice and research care in the classroom. I have generated ideas, questions, and assumptions about researching care in the classroom through careful consideration of the limitations and future research sections of existing research on classroom care. In this chapter, I will discuss the issue of care in the educational context. I plan to study care in the lived experiences of Saudi university students in the United States within the context of their relationships with teachers. My goal is to qualitatively explore Saudi university students' perceptions of teacher care in the US by interviewing some of the Saudi students at a large Midwestern US university. The research question is:

RQ. How do Saudi international students at a large Midwestern US university perceive care within their teacher-student relationships?

I have also created sub-questions of the research question, which include:

(a). How do Saudi students define teacher care?

(b). How do Saudi students perceive teacher care through their educational experience in the United States?

(c). What are Saudi students' perceptions of changes in their experiences of teacher care coming from Saudi Arabia to the US?

Although Saudi students represent the majority of international students at several universities in the US (e. g., SIU), very few scholars have studied their educational experiences. This project seeks to contribute to studying perceptions of care, as care is an essential need for international students (e.g. Heyn, 2013). Additionally, care is one of the most important issues that has been studied in communication pedagogy (e.g. Freire, 1970; Noddings, 1988).

To present the methodological approach for studying the experience of Saudi students in the United States and their perceptions of teacher care, first, I review the existing literature on the qualitative methods previously used in researching care in teacher-student relationships and explain its usefulness for collecting data using interviews. Second, I provide a description of the proposed research participants and procedure including the research questions, and interview questions. Finally, I explain the use of a grounded theory approach for collecting and analyzing the data.

Research Method

As qualitative researchers, we need to link our work to the society. Social justice is a key word used when discussing how qualitative researchers see the purpose of seeking knowledge. Social theory and analyses should not isolate a group, rather they must bridge gaps and present visible connections to the other groups, as much as possible. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), "Our notion and practice of qualitative work suggests that *no* one group can be understood as if outside the relational and structural aspects of identity formation" (p. 66). Qualitative researchers need to support "the growing body of literature that questions traditional approaches to researching on/for/with minoritized peoples by placing the culture of an ethnic group at the center of the inquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.110). As qualitative researchers, we need to separate our perceptions of other groups from the process of collecting, analyzing, and discussing the results. We need to make an effort to remain objective throughout the whole process of qualitative research. A researcher who has inside knowledge of the indigenous setting can think, act, and understand as do the members of the researched group. Researchers who are group members have knowledge of the group, thus they can most likely interact better with those being researched. Developing a good relationship between the researcher and the researched is one of the strategies that qualitative scholars have suggested to free qualitative research and translate it among communities.

Sprague and Hayes (2000) explain that such relationships are mutual, saying that it should be mutual to the

> degree to which each party negotiates a balance between commitment to the other's and to one's own journey of self-determination. In mutual relationships, each strives to recognize the other's unique and changing needs and abilities, [and] takes the other's perspectives and interests into account. (p. 684)

In general, scholars are encouraging researchers to use qualitative methods to study care in education. According to Nel Noddings, one of the leading scholars to study care in the educational context, "Qualitative researchers may suppose that their methods are more compatible with research *for* teaching than the usual quantitative methods" (Noddings, 1988, p. 228). However, Noddings (1988) reminds us not to put methods before people by saying "Researchers can forget that they are part of an educational enterprise that should support a caring community" (p. 228).

Research Participants

Saudi students at SIU are distributed among most of SIU's colleges and departments, though, according to the Center for International Education at SIU, the majority of them are in Education, Business, Applied Sciences and Arts, and Engineering. There are also a large number of Saudi students who study English at the Center for English as a Second Language (CESL). My plan was to interview Saudi male and female students using a snowball approach of recruiting the research participants. I took into account the variety of students' sex, level of study, and their departments. The total number of students I interviewed was 14, starting with 5 males and females, and increasing the number to assure the consistency of the response themes during the interviewing process.

Research Procedures

I began the research process by applying for Human Subjects Committee approval (see Appendix A for Human Subjects Committee Approval). IRB approves all research with human participation. As soon as I received their approval, I started recruiting and interviewing the students (see Appendix B for interview protocol). The interview questions were asked in the Arabic language (see Appendix C for interview protocol in Arabic). I conducted the interviews with the students in Arabic, so I also had my translation of the interview questions checked by a native Arabic-speaking doctoral student who is currently teaching in the Center for English as a Second Language (see Appendix D for English check letter).

In order to answer the research questions, I used a qualitative research measure, a semi-structured interview. Qualitative interviewers are interested in how meanings are produced and reproduced within particular social, cultural, and relational contexts. They recognize the interview itself as one such context of interactive meaning-making (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011).

All interviews were in Arabic, so I did not see a need to do a full transcription of the research data. Instead, I did a partial transcription and translation into English, and focused on the most important portions of the data that would reflect the research results. I used a grounded theory approach to collect and analyze the research data. According to Charmaz (2005), grounded theory refers to a dual concept, both the method of inquiry and the product of inquiry. Charmaz (2005) states that methods of grounded theory in the previous century have provided rich possibilities for improving qualitative research in the 21st century.

Nonverbal Behaviors

There are some nonverbal behaviors that are considered indicators of caring teachers and they fall under the principle of immediacy, especially nonverbal immediacy. Mehrabian

(1971) based the immediacy principle on the belief that "people are drawn toward persons and things they like, evaluate highly, and prefer; and they avoid or move away from things they dislike, evaluate negatively, or do not prefer" (p. 1). Richmond and McCroskey (2000) offered a revised version of this principle by saying,

> The more communicators employ immediate behaviors, the more others will like, evaluate highly, and prefer such communicators, and the less communicators employ immediate behaviors, the more others will dislike, evaluate negatively, and reject such communicators. We prefer to call this idea the "principle of immediate communication." (p. 191)

Nonverbal immediacy, therefore, is the level of affection, liking, or esteem shown by people through nonverbal cues.

Several nonverbal cues are associated with the immediacy principle. Mehrabian (1971) listed some nonverbal immediacy behaviors such as standing close to a person, leaning toward another, touching, and eye contact. Anderson, Anderson, and Jensen (1979) describe additional immediacy behaviors such as reduction in proxemic distance, increases in touch, increases in eye contact, positive facial expressions, increases in gestures, bodily relaxation, purposeful body movements, positioning of head and body toward others, head nodding, and vocal expressiveness. Verbal and nonverbal immediacy behaviors affect communication differently. McCroskey, Fayer, Richmond, Sallinen, & Barraclough (1996) argue that, "while verbal messages are generally thought to have their major impact on the cognitive aspects of communication, nonverbal messages are believed to be the stimuli which are primarily responsible for affective communication" (p. 200). Kelley and Gorham (1988) stated that the presence of close physical distance, leaning forward, head nodding, and increased eye contact are classified as high immediacy conditions and the absence of these behaviors is low immediacy conditions. Andersen (1999) asserted that spending time with

another person signals immediacy because of the closeness and availability that is communicated.

Immediacy behaviors correlate with positive interactions in human communication. Mehrabian (1971) reported that immediacy behaviors in communication "involve an increase in the sensory stimulation between two persons" (p. 3). According to Rocca (2007), immediacy is positively correlated with some dimensions including perceived instructor competence, caring and trustworthiness.

Interviews

I interviewed 14 Saudi male and female students. I recruited the participants using a snowball method. I started with one of my friends. Then I asked him to suggest another student who is not in the same level or department. I contacted each potential participant by a solicitation email (see appendix E for email solicitation script). I asked male students for their participation until a total of 7 were interviewed. When a male student agreed to participate in the research, I scheduled a time to visit him in a place of his convenience on or off campus (e.g. Student Center, home, etc.). I began the meeting by giving each student a copy of the interview cover letter and also a copy of the consent form to sign (see appendices F, G, & H for interview script/schedule, cover letter for students, and consent form for students). I asked the participants for permission to record the interviews and let them know that the interview would last between 30 to 60 minutes. I used a smart phone recording app (Voice Record) for recording the interviews. To adjust the interview questions, I did a pretest interview with a Saudi male friend who was studying in Business. I interviewed the male students myself. For cultural reasons, a Saudi female PhD student agreed to interview the female participants to facilitate self-disclosure by the participants. Saudi females may feel too shy to disclose about such an issue, especially with a Saudi male researcher. Fontana and Frey (2005) state that researchers have strongly confirmed the importance of removing the barriers between the

interviewer and the interviewee when interviewing women. So, the female research assistant interviewed the female students following the same steps I mentioned earlier for interviewing male students. So, she asked female students for their participation until a total of 7 were interviewed.

Generally, there are many reasons for choosing interviews as a research instrument. Lindlof and Taylor (2011) state the following:

> Qualitative researchers interview people for several reasons: to understand their perspectives on a scene, to retrieve their experiences from the past, to gain expert insight or information, to obtain description of events that are normally unavailable for observation, to foster trust, to understand sensitive relationships, and to create a record of communication that can subsequently be analyzed. (p. 3)

They also state, "The ability of the qualitative interview to go deeply and broadly into subjective realities has earned it a place as one of the preeminent methods in communication studies" (p. 172). Lindlof and Taylor (2011) said, "Qualitative interviews can be vehicles for exploring people's explanation" (p. 174). Lindlof and Taylor (2011) note, "Interviews are particularly well suited to understanding the social actor's experience, knowledge, and worldviews" (p. 173). They also explain that "respondent interviews are conducted to find out how people express their views, how they construe their actions, how they conceptualize their life world" (p. 179). According to Paget (1983), "What distinguishes in-depth interviewing is that the answers given continually inform the evolving conversation" (p. 78).

Qualitative methods are particularly suitable for probing emotional responses. McCroskey (1994) acknowledged that quantitative methods have limited value for measuring effective assessment, stating that "The best way to find out how someone feels about something is to ask them" (p. 58). Qualitative interviews help researchers to more deeply investigate the behaviors, feelings, and attitudes of research participants. Intensive interviews

are an especially effective tool for studying emotions and attitudes (Rubin, Rubin, Haridakis, & Piele, 2010). Generally, there are many reasons for choosing interviews as a research instrument. Lindlof and Taylor (2011) state that qualitative researchers use the methodology of interviewing people to learn more about their perspectives and past experiences and to build trust.

According to Rubin et al. (2010), the respondent interview process allows for more intimate interpersonal contact between the researcher and participant for a longer period of time than survey questionnaires. Lindlof and Taylor (2011) said that "An interview does provide some of the same enjoyment—and the same sense of connection—as an intimate conversation" (p. 172). The researcher conducts the interview in an open-ended way to allow the participants to express their viewpoint, define their actions and say how they conceptualize their own lives. As cited in Lindlof and Taylor (2011), Lazarsfeld (1944) outlined the goals of respondent interviews as the following:

(1) To clarify the meanings of common concepts and opinions, (2) to distinguish the decisive elements of an expressed opinion, (3) to determine what influenced a person to form an opinion or to act in a certain way, (4) to classify complex attitude patterns and (5) to understand the interpretations that people attribute to their motivations. (p. 179)

Scholars differentiate between structured and unstructured interviews. Rubin et al. (2010) explained that a structured interview "uses a prepared schedule of questions, which are presented in planned and predetermined order" (p. 221). Fontana and Frey (2005) state that structured interviewing does not have enough flexibility, favoring unstructured interviewing. However, I think semi-structured interviews will demonstrate the positives of both methods of interviewing when used appropriately.

Data Analysis: Grounded Theory Approach

While adopting the interview as the research method for data collecting, I use a grounded theory approach to analyze the data. Lindlof and Taylor (2011) say grounded theory is one of the most important methods for analyzing qualitative data. It is a continuous process of coding and categorizing data. Charmaz (2005) suggests, "Grounded theory, in its essential form, consists of systematic inductive guidelines for collecting and analyzing empirical materials to build middle-range theoretical frameworks that explain collected empirical materials" (p. 382). According to Charmaz (2005), grounded theory refers to a dual concept, both the method of inquiry and the product of inquiry. Charmaz (2005) states that, in the previous century, grounded theory has provided rich possibilities for improving qualitative research. Grounded theorists have the tools to describe situations that need more social justice.

The late position of grounded theory, according to Bishop (2005), suggests establishing a thematic "coding" procedure that is developed by the research participants as a process of storying and re-storying through a sequence of interviews. In other words, it is an attempt to co-construct a mutual understanding by means of sharing experiences and meanings through a series of in-depth semi-structured interviews.

Chapter Conclusion

To present the methodological approach for studying the experiences of Saudi students in the United States and their perception of teacher care, this chapter consisted of three main sections. First, I wrote about the research methods, including the qualitative method and reflexivity. Second, I provided a brief review of the anticipated research participants. Finally, I provided an explanation of the research methods, including data collection using interviewing, and explained the use of the grounded theory approach for analyzing the data.

Although Saudi students represent the majority of international students at several universities in the US (e.g., SIU), very few scholars have studied their educational experiences. I think studying the pedagogical care experiences of Saudi students using qualitative methods will contribute to their international education by giving international students and their US American faculty members knowledge about the nature of their educational relationship.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this chapter, results of the current research are presented. In interviews with 14 Saudi Arabian students (seven males and seven females), the participants of the study were able to individually express their views on how they perceive teachers' care in the US. Using the snowball method to recruit the participants of the study eventually led to the interviewing process. Students' various majors and academic levels were taken into account. Interviewing students from different majors and academic levels could provide a wider view of the students' perceptions regarding caring teachers in the US.

In this chapter, I will begin by providing a brief summary of the research participants with consideration for their anonymity, by using alias names instead of their original names. The results will be presented first by an initial overview of the participants' responses, retrieved via the interview process. Second, the grounded theory will be applied to identify the major themes in this study. The themes will be presented including some direct quotes from the transcripts (in translation) that match the emergent themes related to Saudi students' perceptions of caring teachers in the US.

Research Participants

The participants in this research study are male and female students from Saudi Arabia. Participants are currently studying in different majors or are still students in the English language learning program. They are either undergraduate or graduate students who are working on their master's or doctoral degrees. They are studying about 13 different majors in six different colleges. Their ages range between 20 and 35 years. Participants have been in the US from 1-13 years, with an average of six years. Interviews lasted from 10 to 40 minutes. Participants will be referred to by names that are not their real names.

Research Data Overview

In this section, the research data will be presented by an initial overview of the participants' responses throughout the interview. The data will be presented in the same order that was done during the interviewing process. First, I will present the caring behaviors that demonstrate the participants' general perceptions of care. Second, I will present the participants' responses regarding their perception of caring teachers. Third, I will compare participants' experiences with caring and non-caring teacher in Saudi Arabia versus the US. Fourth, I will present the unique needs for Saudi students in the US that require them to interact with caring teachers. Fifth, I will present the participants' experiences with caring and non-caring teachers in the US. Finally, I will present participants' perceptions of the role of gender in caring teachers.

Care Behaviors

The participants were asked about the behaviors that indicate how a family member or friend cares. The most important and prevalent indicator that most participants mentioned was the ask-me-about-me approach. To elaborate, some of the participants expressed that if someone does not ask, it could be an indicator to them whether someone does or does not care. Interaction in happy or sad situations is another indicator of care from a family member or friend. Some male and female students also value the importance of certain verbal behaviors. These participants also perceive that eye contact and listening are very important indicators of caring behaviors. They value verbal communication as the method for successfully transmitting caring messages. Advising is another indicator of care that was mentioned by the research participants during the interview process. By advising, they refer to providing advice and guidance, such as in registering for classes, choosing majors, etc.

When the focus of the question was on the behaviors that display care from teachers, participants mentioned several varied behaviors. They expressed the importance for good

preparation of the subject material, demonstrating enthusiasm, and being passionate about teaching. The participants claim that caring teachers should treat students as human beings, for instance, by attentively paying attention to their students' educational needs. Participants also mentioned the importance of participation in class. They expressed wanting teachers to give them the opportunity to participate and ask questions during the class. They want their teachers to answer their questions and thoroughly explain difficult concepts or subject material that they do not understand. They value the teachers who comment on their assignments and also give them constructive feedback, with the opportunity to improve their work. They value the teacher who encourages them and offers additional support when needed, particularly when they are aware of the drive to learn in their students. They additionally seemed to value the more flexible teachers who understand their circumstances such as health and social issues. Talking with students outside the classroom is another indicator of caring teachers that participants mentioned during the interview sessions. They also value teachers who propose visiting them during office hours to discuss the subject material further, or for some students, when teachers invite them to their home for lessons.

Who is a Caring Teacher?

One of the interview questions is about what caring teachers mean to students and how they value them. The participants value highly caring teachers in several ways. Some participants described a caring teacher as the teacher who is sincere, devoted, trustworthy, and has good manners. The participants believed that caring is an innate ability, and stems from within, meaning teachers do not necessarily gain a sense of caring from external factors or incentives such as financial gain, or pleasing school management. According to the research participants, a caring teacher is one who is vested in the well-being of their students, and not just interested in what they seek to gain for themselves merely from displaying care. A caring teacher is classified as one who does not understand the relationship with students

as just delivering the subject and leaving, but rather they focus on the personal growth that is exchanged in student-teacher relationships. From the participants' perspective, a caring teacher looks for the best in his or her students, aims to improve their understanding of the subject material, and helps them to overcome any obstacles they may encounter. Based on the participants' responses, a caring teacher is the one whom students need more than he or she needs the students. In other words, students typically do not care for teachers who show a lack of care or concern towards them. Some of these students claim that non-caring teachers will not help students to accept the knowledge from them. The participants also mentioned that they respect and highly value caring teachers and considered them as role-models, particularly those participants who plan to follow paths of teaching post-graduation. One of the male participants shared that a caring teacher is like a rare coin, while another male student said that a caring teacher reminds him of his father. A female participant said that caring teachers are the building blocks in the path to success in the educational process and can predict whether a student will fail or succeed.

Teachers' Care between Two Cultures

The interviewees were asked about the nature of their student-teacher relationships in Saudi Arabia. Most of them expressed that they had formal relationships with their teachers. Some of the male participants said that they had good relationships with some of their teachers in high school, especially during school activities that occurred outside the classroom. Activities included sporting clubs, excursions, or trips etc. One of the male students admitted to having very good relationships with the teachers he liked but owned up to being purposefully bothersome to teachers he did not like. A female student in the research study said that the relationships with her teachers were extremely bad. She described her experience with teachers as one where the teachers always felt like they had more favor over her, whereby, when teachers were asked questions, they would intentionally respond in a

condescending way that made students feel incompetent or unintelligent. Although some students said that their relationships with their teachers do not pass the classroom door, a very small number of students, especially male students, say that they still have very good relationships with their teachers until now.

When internalizing the question to observe how these Saudi students described their relationships in comparison to the perception of their student-teacher relationships in the United States, most of the participants gave contrasting responses. Although most of the students attested that their relationships with teachers in the US are formal, most of them say that it was certainly less formal in the US than it was in Saudi Arabia. They mentioned that teachers are more flexible in the US and there are minimal boundaries between teachers and their students, especially when students need help. Some participants said that the classroom atmosphere is more open than it is in Saudi Arabia's school classrooms. Some students mentioned that teachers in the US express their feelings and emotions which is not the case in Saudi Arabia. Other participants talked about how meeting their teachers outside the classroom can improve their future relationships with them. Some participants indicated that within the English language program itself, there are numerous model teachers that display care and support to the students. In contrast, some students complained about the tough policies and atmosphere presented in these English programs and described it as inhumane. One of the students in the English program was actually amazed by being met with smiles from the teachers he crossed paths with in the English program. He described them as friendly and approachable. Although he was amazed by their smiley faces, another doctoral student described the teachers' smiles as yellow smiles, explaining that these smiles do not reflect any care or interest.

Most of the participants viewed the student-teacher relationships in Saudi Arabia as drastically different when they compared it with their student-teacher relationships in the US.

Their interpretation of the teachers' behaviors in Saudi Arabia is that they conduct themselves in a more authoritative and strict manner. They explained that this made most of them understand that the teachers' role was to primarily be a source of knowledge for students or learners. In contrast, participants said that the teachers in the US are more friendly and do not enforce their authority upon students, rather they interact with you as if you are their equal or peer, especially at the master and doctoral level. In Saudi Arabia, teachers cannot express their feelings or emotions with ease, while teachers in the US are more expressive. In fact, in the US, expressing yourself and sharing your thoughts is encouraged in the US American school system. Some participants said that teachers in Saudi Arabia focus on following the academic program plan, while teachers in the US are more focused on the delivery of the subject matter and making sure that their students understand the material. A doctoral student from the research study said that the education policy in Saudi Arabia does not offer flexibility in the firing of incompetent teachers. Whereas, it is much easier for teachers in the US to face the consequences of their incompetencies across educational institutions in the US if they are not performing their job as it should be done.

There were a few students who stated that they had good relationships with their teachers in Saudi Arabia. However, most of them valued their experiences with their US teachers more, and they still felt that there were some justified reasons for the differences they witnessed between teachers from the two cultures. Another student said that teachers in Saudi Arabia typically assist students with finding a university to study in, and in most cases help students throughout the admission process as far as the selection of a major. He suggested that the US is a do-it-yourself culture, and that is perhaps the reason he believes teachers in the US do not necessarily partake in such endeavors. Another student talked about smiling and explains how "not smiling, in Saudi Arabia does not mean not caring, especially for men." An undergraduate female student added that her teachers in Saudi Arabia respected

her because she was a hard-working student, whereas her teachers in the US cared about her mainly because they were aware of the fact that she is an international student and wanted to make sure that she understood the subject matter.

New and Specific Needs

Participants were asked if their need for help, support, or care had changed since they came to the US, and if so, how. All participants confirmed that their need for care had in fact changed since they came to the US. They stated that being far away from their homeland and families created new needs for them. Some participants claimed that the amount of help they received from teachers in both Saudi Arabia and the US, was more or less the same. These students, in particular, did not feel as though they needed as much help in Saudi Arabia as they found they needed upon coming to the US. There was a student studying in the English program who said when he came to the US for the first time, he would reminisce on childhood memories, specifically on memories he had of his experience in the first grade, and how his parents used to help him with his homework. The differences in culture, race, and religious faith form a huge challenge for most Saudi students, especially at the beginning of their transition into schooling in the US. A male doctoral student in the study said that Saudis, as international students, tend to feel that they are under pressure and on academic and governmental probation, which makes them feel as if they need more care from their teachers. Another male doctoral student shared that he needed care during the time when he was almost at risk of losing his legal student visa status and found himself helpless, but said his issue was solved at the end. Married male students say that they support their spouses and get support from them. Finding good food is another issue faced by many Saudis in the early stages of their transition to school in the US. A doctoral student says that some international students come from nations that do not function as a democracy, and so it is hard for them to understand the lifestyle in the US, and that their laws here are centered upon granting its

people social rights. It was the general consensus among the participants that international students need someone there to let them know that "it's OK. We understand you."

Most students consider the language issue as the most significant part of their educational experience in the US. One of the students in the study said that poor English skills make it hard to find academic resources easily when doing research. Another student admitted that when she became proficient in English, she did not need much care because she could fully understand the university's policies better. A doctoral student suggested that Saudi students attaining higher professional degrees need teachers that are patient and can ably assist students with any differences and needs. A female student said that Saudi female students need more respect and care from their teachers.

One of the interview questions was about whether or not Saudi students have different needs from other international students. Few students said that there is no difference between Saudi students and other international students. Most participants mentioned Saudi students studying in the US as having certain needs. For several Saudi students, their lack of proficiency in the English language is a significant issue when talking about care. Saudi students need caring teachers, especially at the beginning of their transition into the US, to help them improve their English. A student from the study said that other international students that come to the US usually have better English skills than Saudi students. A male doctoral student also added that Saudi female students need more care when it comes to their English language issues. Actually, four out of the seven female participants mentioned the language issue. Two male students, on the other hand, said that it is not the responsibility of professors at the college level to help students with their language proficiency.

Most participants also made it a point to mention the cultural issues. They said that Saudi students need caring teachers who understand the specifics of their culture. They added that some teachers do not understand some taboos in their culture such as shaking hands or

hugging persons of the opposite sex. A doctoral student said that a teacher played a video in the classroom and asked students to analyze it. The video contained some taboos like nudity, and he said he could not watch it. The participant asked, "How can I analyze something that I cannot see?" He also mentioned that another teacher stated in the classroom that there is oppression against women in Saudi Arabia. This statement was rejected even by female Saudi students in the classroom. In another instance, while working in groups, a Saudi female student asked the teacher if she could switch from a co-ed group to an all-girls group, but the teacher refused and told her to remain in her current group where she was the only female. A doctoral female student said that "it's hard to stop in each situation and explain to our teachers what works and what doesn't work." A doctoral male student said that female Saudi students have more of a cultural shock than male Saudi students. He suggested that Saudi female students need more care from teachers, and teachers should understand them and know that they have broken a lot of barriers just by leaving their home country to study abroad, so they should be a little more sympathetic. There were more opinions and suggestions from female students as well. One female student said that using social media and creating groups for students from each department will help new and academically lower performing students. Another female student suggested that the students themselves should make a lot of efforts to help him or herself by organizing their time, and by using the technology to search for information.

Caring and Non-Caring Teachers in the US

Most participants gave examples of situations in the US where teachers cared for them and impacted them positively. A student from the English program talked about a US American teacher who speaks English and Arabic. He said that this teacher had given him some tips for learning English quickly, and he says that he benefited from them a lot. More than one student said that there are some teachers who explain the topics to them several

times until they can understand. They said that this helped them a lot. A male student who studies Aviation said that a teacher adopted one of his ideas and implemented it into the program. Now, all students in the department use his idea today. He said that applying his idea has encouraged him and gives him a newfound confidence. Another master's student who is studying management said that the best teacher who taught him is very rich, but she continues to teach just because she likes teaching. He says that he took two classes with this teacher. He added that, although she teaches master's students, she uses fun interactive activities such as games and brings prizes to motivate her students to learn in a different way. He described this teacher as caring. Some students talked about teachers who express care and understanding about their personal health, or family issues including sickness, pregnancy, or other stressors. Another undergraduate student among the participants talked about how she visited her professor during office hours in her first semester to understand some assignments and topics, which led to her passing the class with flying colors.

When the participants were asked about the contributions that add to students' achievements, they all were in agreement about their teachers' behaviors and gave some details to explain themselves further. Some participants said that caring teachers are scarce, but they leave impressionable footprints in their students' lives. Two of the participants said that if the role of teachers in the classroom is to present some information, they can do so via visual aids like YouTube, for example, to show that they care about offering a better understanding for their students. They think that the role of teachers should exceed delivering the information to motivating and supporting students so they can achieve their goals. Several students say that caring teachers make them, subsequently, want to meet their teachers' level of care by trying harder on assigned work. One of the students said that when a teacher appreciates their students, it encourages them to strive and perform to the best of their ability. Another student described a caring teacher as one who encourages students to further their

education by enrolling in a master's or doctoral program upon completing their undergraduate studies. Another undergraduate student from the research study said that a caring teacher is one who helps you when you are working on a challenging project by guiding you throughout the process, and by offering essential tips.

Participants were also asked whether they ever had the feeling that a teacher had 'given up' on them and their ability to learn well in a given course, and if so, what the teacher did or did not do to give them that feeling, and what their interactions were. Most female students felt that they had not experienced this form of neglect with any of their teachers. There was only one female student who said that she experienced injustice with one female teacher. She said at the time she was pregnant and asked her teacher if she could submit her homework late due to setbacks from her pregnancy. The teacher agreed at first, but at the end of the semester, she gave her a very low grade for late submissions. One of the doctoral female students added that teacher evaluation in the US is more effective and reduces the probability of incompetent behaviors from some teachers. Most of the male students, on the other hand, added that they had experienced uncaring teachers who gave up on them and their learning except two students. A doctoral student, majoring in Engineering, shared that he does only have problems with the international teachers who teach in the US, and he prefers not to take classes with international teachers as much as he can. There was one other student among the participants, who is currently in the English program, that said that he has not experienced any major or bad experiences with about fifteen teachers who have taught him since joining the program two years ago. On the other hand, a male master's student talked negatively about his experience when he was in the English program. He mentioned that when he first arrived in the states, the people in the program placed him at a lower English level than what he felt he was capable of achieving. He included that he did not even study for the exams because he knew everything and was surprised at his placement. He further

went on to add that the teachers in his classes knew that he deserved to go to a higher level, but they did not support his case by vouching for him to the program's administration which refused to advance him to the next level. A master's student in the study said that he took a class with the head of his department. He said that this teacher was the worst he has had in his entire educational experience in the US. He revealed that this teacher ignored international students in general and not just Saudi Arabian students. The student offered an example stating that he would sometimes leave his home to go to the class but would turn around and leave the campus parking lot, missing the class. He said that the problem was that there was nobody else in the department who taught this class, so he could not make a switch even though he was uncomfortable. The participant said that at times this professor would tell the students, "if you fail this semester, you will take this course with me again next semester. I don't care." Another doctoral student confirmed having a similar experience by saying that he felt bad when some teachers ignored him and did not answer his questions in class, or even comment on his statements, but managed to respond to other students freely and with ease. He said that he appreciates teachers who cannot respond instantly but put in the effort to look for the information and bring it to the next class. An undergraduate student studying Aviation said that some teachers do not care, and they fail some Saudi students who need their help in explaining some concepts, but they do not care to help them along the way before it gets to that point. He said that when he would go to the teacher during office hours to ask for an explanation on something he did not understand, he felt that they were saying in their mind, "someone's kid."

Teacher's Sex and Care

One of the interview questions is about the differences students have observed between male and female professors in communicating care. Most of the female students did not discuss any differences, while one of the male students saw no differences as well. The

majority of the participants perceived that male professors focused more on general issues when dealing with students, while female professors focused on the details more. Participants viewed that male professors care more in the classroom and are much easier to deal with, while female professors are harder to deal with in the classroom but are more sympathetic outside of the classroom. Most participants said that female professors are more emotional with their approach when it comes to helping students. A student added that female professors possess a higher level of emotional intelligence and empathy than male professors. A female student said that female teachers are more sympathetic to female students because they understand their circumstances better than male professors. On the other hand, another female student said that male professors care more for female students than female professors do. A doctoral female student added that she prefers to deal with female professors because of the Saudi culture that does not allow women to deal openly with men unless it is under absolutely necessary circumstances. A male student discussed bad experiences that he had with female professors and described them as bossy. In general, participants viewed male professors as more flexible. Although they acknowledged that there were apparent gender differences between male and female professors, nevertheless, some students said that there was no clear difference in the care efficiency.

Participants were asked about how they perceive care from male teachers versus female teachers. A male student and two female students did not think that the teachers from the opposite sex treated them differently. Most students said that female teachers are more emotional, and they do not accept your excuse for absence as easily because they want you to succeed with discipline being your anchor. A female student said that female teachers typically provide advice on how to approach their class and other classes as well. On the other hand, the participants felt that male teachers were more accepting of the students' excuses for absence because they assume that male teachers do not care as much as the

female teachers do. Several male students said that female teachers surpass male teachers in contacting their students after class, asking about their health, congratulating them on their happy occasions, and giving gifts. A male student said that female teachers have motherly characteristics, and this is what makes them more giving, nurturing, and patient. A doctoral female student said that most of her teachers are females, but she did have a male teacher once who cared about her. An undergraduate male student added that male teachers treat female students better and even exaggeratedly show care sometimes. He also said that female teachers do not care much about female students. In contrast, a female student said that female teachers sympathized more with her. According to the majority of the research participants, it seems that female teachers are seen as more caring than male teachers.

Major Themes in Research Data

Five major themes emerged from the research data that represent the main perspectives of the interviewed participants in totality. The major themes include cultural differences, learning a new language, help and support, making connections, and caring teachers as role models. In the next five sections, I write about what was said regarding each theme.

Cultural Differences

It is apparent that there is a huge difference between the US culture and Saudi Arabian culture. Participants referred to several main differences between the two cultures, based on their own personal experiences living in both countries. These differences included religious, social, educational systems, and language differences. The language issue will be presented in the next section, as the second theme for the research results.

All participants agreed that being far away from their original culture makes it so much more important for them to be treated with care by their teachers. Saudi students come from a collectivist culture, so living in an individualistic society, such as the one in the US,

while away from home for schooling can be a challenge. Some participants clarified that when they came to the US, they learned very quickly that they had to become self-sufficient and depend on themselves irrespective of their gender. In Saudi Arabia, females mostly depend on the men to handle important duties outside the home, and males depend on females to handle matters within the home. These house duties include jobs such as cooking, doing laundry, and cleaning the house, to say the least. The participants come from a culture where they are served in several ways by their family members, relatives, and housemaids. The do-it-yourself culture is a new concept to a lot of these students. Experiencing culture shock seemed to be a major issue when talking to the students about studying abroad. Meshal said that some international students come from non-democratic countries and so they generally have some preconceived negative stereotypes or perceptions about the US culture that makes them very anxious. Meshal suggested that Saudi students need a teacher who accepts them and says "It's OK. We understand your differences." Disclosure differences are among the cultural issues that some participants raised through the interviewing process. They said that people in the US express their ideas and emotions more than people in Saudi Arabia. The participants in the study believe that since freedom of expression is encouraged, there should be a sense of openness to all kinds of people from various cultural backgrounds, but that is not necessarily the case in all situations.

Some of the male and female participants talked about some taboos and issues that make them angry or embarrassed such as shaking hands or hugging people of the opposite sex. There are also other taboos that some of the participants mentioned. For example, Ameer said that a teacher in one of his classes spoke about the oppression of women in Saudi Arabia. Saudi students, both males, and females did not like that at all. In fact, a Saudi female student replied to the remark, telling the teacher that she personally did not feel oppressed, as, for example, she is not forced to wear a Niqab (i.e. a face cover worn by Muslim women that

only has an opening in the eye area for vision purposes). She said that she even lives in the US by herself, and nobody forces her to wear it in the US. Ameer also gave another example where a teacher displayed a video in class and asked students to analyze it. Ameer said that the video included some taboos such as nudity. He said, "How can I analyze something that I cannot watch?!" Ameer explains that some US American teachers try to present their culture features as the absolute norm, that all of mankind should follow. Ayah, a doctoral female student, said that "it's hard to spend our time explaining in every situation what is right and what is wrong." Another female student, Leena, a doctoral student, said that "there is a gap between Saudi students and their teachers." She attributes that to the cultural differences.

Most female students mentioned that they, as Saudi women, need more respect and care. More than one Saudi male confirmed that Saudi female students need more understanding and care, too. Meshal, a male doctoral student, said that "Saudi women who live in the US tend to face more of a cultural shock than Saudi male students do, and therefore have broken a lot of cultural barriers." Based on that simple fact alone, he feels that US American teachers should know that and appreciate them more. He also added that this does not mean that teachers have to give them higher grades than they deserve, but teachers should help and support them before they critique and evaluate them.

Learning a New Language

Learning a new language is not an easy job for everyone. The participants, whether they are males or females, claim that learning the English language is a challenge, as they consider it as the most significant barrier that requires understanding and care from their teachers. Leena, a female doctoral student, says that "Saudi students are eager to gain knowledge, but the English language stands as a barrier in front of them." The role of teachers towards English as a second language students goes beyond the language. According to the participants, teachers in English language programs should offer support, help, and

encouragement towards Saudi students throughout the initial stages of their experiences in the US. Muhammed, a male undergraduate student, said that his experience in the early stages of learning English was wonderful. He said that the teachers in the English language program, where he studied, were selected carefully. On the other hand, Ameer, who studied in a different English program, said that he had a bad experience and that the English program he studied in reminds him of "the slavery times." He said that "they [English program staff and faculty] just care about collecting money."

Some participants say that Saudi students, in particular, need more care in learning English because of their weak background in English, in comparison to other international students. Some male participants said that Saudi female students need even more support and care than male Saudis when learning the English language. Meshal and Ameer, who are male doctoral students, think that how Saudi female students look, by wearing their Hijab or Niqab could make some boundaries between them and their teachers that are not present for other male and female students.

Two male students mentioned that in a regular academic program, where the focus is not language, it is not the job of the professor to help students with their English skills. These two students possess a high proficiency in the English language and they may not have the same needs as other students from Saudi Arabia. It is important to present what Leena, the female doctoral student said, which is "there is another responsibility on the shoulders of students to care for themselves and seek to improve themselves through the technology such as the internet and social media."

Help and Support

Participants agree that their needs have changed since they came to the US. They believe in part, that absence of family and being homesick affected them. On the other hand, there are some participants who admitted that they still receive support from their families

and teachers on occasion. Participants in this study believe that the provision of support from any person is considered to be attributes of a caring behavior. Based on their feedback, when a person feels happy to see you happy, or sad when something bad happens to you, it shows empathy which ultimately is an indicator of someone who cares about you.

Most of the participants are in unison that US American teachers, in comparison to Saudi teachers, show more support towards their students. On the other hand, Haithem, a male undergraduate student, said that "some teachers seek to overthrow you at the earliest opportunity."

All participants agreed that motivated teachers help them improve in general. A student points out the importance of incorporeal support. A female student said "appreciating me pushes me to the achievement." Other participants in the study mentioned that several indicators of help and support exist, that can help one determine whether a teacher cares or not. Encouraging students and cultivation of confidence is a caring behavior. Muhammed greatly appreciated his professor who supported one of his ideas and applied it, so everyone in the department could use and benefit from it. The teachers who naturally solve students' issues and understand students' circumstances and sympathize with them are considered to be caring teachers by the participants. Ayah, a female doctoral student, said, "Staying at home two months when I was pregnant made me appreciate my professor understanding. It made me to work more in return." Helping in choosing the right major and advising students are other ways that teachers display caring behaviors. Some participants say that there is a growing need to find the information resources, and no one does this unless he or she is a caring teacher. Samar, a female undergraduate student, said that she was lucky in her first semester at college. She said although she faced some difficulties in one of her classes, she kept visiting her professor during office hours to clarify information she did not comprehend in class. She said her professor's help made her pass the class with a high grade. She also

appreciated teachers who reminded their students about exam times and reviewed with them before exams.

A teacher being readily available to provide help to students in need is an important caring behavior that some participants mentioned as being key to their academic success. Since the aforementioned point relates to the theme of making connections, it will be presented in the next section. Some students mentioned that a consistent supply of help and support is also an important behavioral characteristic of caring teachers.

Making Connections

Making connections is the way to create and keep relationships. When participants were asked about their perceptions of care in general, most of them said that people communicating with them and constantly asking about them and their well-being shows a caring nature. Another indicator of care is the interaction during both happy and sad occasions. Providing help and initiating communication is also an indicator of care. Keeping lines of communication open is another important indicator of care. When talking about families and friends, two participants said that if a family member or friend does not call or ask, it does not necessarily display signs of not caring. For instance, Meshal stated that "It's not necessary that if someone does not contact you, he or she does not care. This is not an accurate measure of care or love."

Participants mentioned several behaviors as indicators for care from teachers. For example, the behaviors they noticed as forms of caring included smiling, listening, eye contact, and engaging in conversation with students outside of the classroom. More than one participant said that eye contact is the initial and most significant behavior that shows care from a teacher. Some participants say that listening is another important behavior for showing that you care as a teacher. Smiling is another indicator that shows care by teachers. Jalal, who is still studying in the English program, says that he has had a good experience for

two years with his teachers, whom he considers to be caring for the most part. The most important feature he likes about them is their smiles. More than one participant said that quick responses to their emails are an important behavior of care by teachers. Another student says that not forgetting a student's name is an indicator of care. Most participants focused on nonverbal behaviors when it comes to making connections. Some participants added that verbal behaviors like speaking with students, especially outside of the classroom, is a very important behavior for showing care. Muna, a female undergraduate student, said "most teachers understand that I am an international student, and English is my second language, so I visit them during office hours or email them. This makes my relationships with some of them as friendship, not just a teacher-student relationship."

Caring Teachers as Role Models

Not every teacher is a caring teacher. Some of the research participants said that being a caring teacher to a degree is almost as good as perfection. Muhammed, a male undergraduate student, said that "a caring teacher is like a rare coin." Another participant said that "A caring teacher can educate and improve me." All the characteristics that participants relate to caring teachers can classify teachers as role models. Honesty and sincerity are among the major values that participants associate with caring teachers. A participant indicated that good manners distinguish caring teachers from other teachers. Caring teachers have the enthusiasm and eagerness to teach, which sets them apart from the rest. Khaleel, a male master's student, said that his most caring teacher was a very rich person and did not teach for a regular job, so it showed that she was there by choice. According to the participant, "She just wants to teach because she loves teaching."

Caring teachers, according to the research participants, are role models. Ameer says that "a caring teacher is like my father or mother." Jalal, who is going to practice teaching after finishing his studies in the US, says that "caring teachers are role models for me that

make me imitate them when I go back to Saudi Arabia." In addition, several participants said that a caring teacher's actions go beyond teaching the subject. Instead, they also implied that this means that teachers focus their efforts on the student as a human being who deserves care and respect, and not just on delivering the information to fulfill a job requirement. Rather, a caring teacher of this sort tries to understand their students. The teacher who treats students as human beings and not just as seat fillers, according to the participants, does not expect the same level of language proficiency from international students as their fellow US American classmates, simply because of the language differences. On that note, teachers' flexibility is an important behavioral characteristic that is appreciated by Saudi students. Khaleel, a male master's student, defined flexibility as "giving students opportunities for making up and improve their assignments."

Chapter Conclusion

In chapter 4, the results of the research data were displayed by providing an overview of the participants' responses during the interview process. Also, the results were presented by the identified major themes of the research data. These themes represent the most important ideas and thoughts that formed the participants' total perceptions.

The participants, in general, value highly the importance of care in their life and academic experience as well. Although most of the research participants thought that their US American teachers show more care than their Saudi teachers, according to their experiences, they do not think that US American teachers show enough care for several reasons. Cultural differences including language issues are considered among the important reasons for the lack of caring, according to the participants. Participants mentioned their needs of connection and help as well. They also mentioned some non-caring behaviors such as teachers not replying to email quickly, not answering questions, and showing negative facial expressions when asked for help.

Participants' experiences of teachers' care vary. Several dimensions including gender roles were presented in the results chapter. Chapter 5 will discuss the research results by linking them to the previous literature and explaining these links in more detail.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The discussion chapter consists of five sections. First is an introduction to international students' need for care, primarily at the college level. Second, research questions are posed to understand students' perceptions of and need for care from their teachers. Third, a discussion of the current study's results is presented and compared to previous research. Fourth, recommendations for teachers and future research are disclosed. Finally, a conclusion of the research is offered.

Students' Need for Care

Over three decades ago, academic difficulties, personal concerns, and health issues were identified as the three primary challenges among international students (Leong, 1984). A few years later, researchers identified an additional challenge, referred to as culture shock (Adler, 1986). A qualitative study by Heikinheimo and Shute (1986) found language skills, academic issues, and social interaction were the most difficult adjustment areas for international students. In support of these findings, each of the participants in the current study has experienced at least one or more of the aforementioned issues.

The major findings of the current research indicate that Saudi students expressed an extremely urgent need for caring teachers. Research has found that students place value in caring (Bandura & Lyons 2012; Lee & Ravizza 2008; Rossiter 1999). Research on teacher-student relationship issues also confirms that teachers in higher education value the importance of caring for their students as well (Fitzmaurice 2008; Lincoln 2000; Murray 2006; O'Brien 2010; Walker, Gleaves, and Grey 2006). According to de Guzman et al. (2008), "The caring relationship between the teacher and the learner has a direct impact on both parties but more directly on students" (p. 489). Yet, it appears that some professors fail

to practice sufficient quality of care with their own students. Walker, Gleaves, and Grey (2006) studied the difficulties with identifying care and support in new university teachers' work. They conclude that teachers "suggest that care is an overlooked aspect of university teachers' work, yet it plays an important part in maintaining their students' sense of scholarly endeavor" (p. 347). According to Meyers (2009), teachers in higher education do not prioritize providing care throughout the educational system as much as their students do. His research demonstrates that offering care is not always an easy job to accomplish. Meyers (2009) summarizes some cautions about caring as the following:

> Some faculty members do care, but feel as though their students do not notice or appreciate their efforts. Other professors feel that it can be too difficult to create caring relationships in large classes or fear that they will be too permissive if they connect with their students. Still others believe that caring is not part of their job and that focusing on interpersonal relationships at the college level is "soft" or gratuitous. (p. 206)

The results of this research indicate that younger students are not the only students that need caring teachers. In fact, college students, especially international students, need care as well. Goralnik et al. (2012) discussed a study by Robbins, Allen, Calillas, Peterson, and Le (2006) and explained that "although most research on emotional engagement and classroom care ethics involves younger students, the social dynamic of the learning environment— including the teacher-student relationship—also matters for college-aged students" (p. 421). Researcher de Guzman et al. (2008) stated that "maintaining personal interactions with students and creating a caring atmosphere is central to college teaching" (p. 498). In support of this claim, Meyers (2009) stated that research about teacher immediacy has provided a firm foundation for the idea that caring makes a difference in students' educational experiences.

Heikkinen, Syrjatat, Huttunen, and Estola (2004) suggest that making space to care and love is essential for achieving and maintaining the balance between the cognitive-rational, ethical-political, and affective-personal elements of teaching and learning. Additionally, de Guzman et al. (2008) state that, "The extent to which teachers' caring behavior is felt and experienced by the students positively shapes their orientations as cared-for individuals" (p. 487). When the student-participants in the current study were asked about how they determine whether someone cares, some participants said that they can usually tell when they feel it. A number of specific verbal, nonverbal, and behavioral indicators of caring and non-caring were reported in the interviews, and they will be summarized later in this chapter.

Research Inquiry

For the purpose of presenting an interpretation of the results in light of the research study's literature review, the major research question and sub-questions are shown below once again:

RQ. How do Saudi international students at a large Midwestern US university perceive care within their teacher-student relationships?

The sub-questions of the research study are as follows:

(a). How do Saudi students define teacher care?

(b). How do Saudi students perceive teacher care through their educational experience in the United States?

(c). What are Saudi students' perceptions of changes in their experiences of teacher care coming from Saudi Arabia to the US?

The interview protocol consisted of several sections. Each section consisted of some questions that sought to find answers to one of the study's sub-questions. The answers across all questions led to the overall perception of the research participants regarding teacher care

in the US. Although these findings cannot be generalized to the whole population of Saudi students in the US, it gives important indicators that should be taken into account when dealing with Saudi students and conducting more research on their community. The next section will discuss the major findings of the study and link them to the previous literature on teacher care.

Discussion Issues

Cultural Issues

According to the previous studies and the current research results, cultural differences can play a significant role in making the practice of care more complicated. Thayer-Bacon, Arnold, and Stoots (1998) note that both teachers and students believe caring and being cared for are important, but they also show and understand caring in varying ways. Thus, the cultural differences between American culture and other cultures may play a vital role in the challenges faced by American teachers when it comes to communicating care with their international students in general. Hamlin, Mahajan, Liberman, and Wynn (2013) state that people tend to like individuals who are similar to themselves. So, we can assume that communicating care with international students in the US is a challenge for both the teachers and students.

The presence of numerous cultural differences can affect the education environment negatively. Researchers seem to agree that when there is less cultural dissonance, more learning takes place (Bennett, 1995). The research participants referred to several main differences between the two cultures, based on their own personal experiences living in both countries. These differences included religious, social, educational, and language differences. Cultural differences can play a significant role in the challenge of understanding care from Saudi students and their American teachers. For instance, female doctoral student Leena said that "there is a gap between Saudi students and their teachers." She attributes the gap to

existing cultural differences. Heyn (2013) notes that "Saudi Arabian students in the United States experience adjustment problems due to having to adapt to the new host culture, being in a different educational system, not seeing people that look like them, and feeling other aspects of culture shock" (p. 48).

The differences in the educational system of Saudi Arabia and the US are evident. According to Heyn (2013), Saudi Arabia's educational system has distinct differences from the educational system in the US. Al-Sallom (1994), for example, noted that the Saudi Arabian educational system is unique in that its emphasis is on Islam, there is gender segregation at educational institutions between male and female students, and education is free for all Saudi citizens or residents and at all levels (as cited in Heyn, 2013, p. 44). Furthermore, having spent years in teacher-centered traditional classrooms, Saudi Arabian students may find the two-way interactive discussion style of many classrooms in the United States somewhat shocking.

American culture is different from Saudi culture in many ways, as mentioned in the research literature and by the participants in this study. The do-it-yourself culture, for example, is a new concept to a lot of Saudi students. Disclosure differences are among the cultural issues that some participants raised through the interviewing process. They said that people in America express their ideas and emotions more than people in Saudi Arabia. This indicates the direct modes of communication in the US. Some research on Chinese students, for example, shows some differences they have in comparison to US American students that can also be applied to Saudi students. Yan and Berliner (2009), for example, identified four problems as factors that are responsible for handicapping Chinese students' effective interactions with American faculty. The four factors or problems include language insufficiency, lack of initiative and autonomy, verbal passiveness, and indirect modes of communication. In Saudi Arabia, as in the Middle East in general, there is an expectation that

individuals should turn to their family, friends, and social resources (e.g., relatives, neighbors) whenever help is needed (Adeyemi, 1985; Al-Qasem, 1987; Ali, Liu, & Humedian, 2004). To ask for help outside of the family, particularly for financial assistance, is often taken as an offense to the family and may even go as far as to stigmatize the family and the individual (Adeyemi, 1985; Al-Issa, 2000; Al-Qasem, 1987; Ali et al., 2004). In one study that analyzed the help-seeking behaviors among Muslims, Lowenthal, Cinnirella, Evdoka, and Murphy (2001) found that Muslims believed in using Islam and social support to cope with depression rather than mental health services and believed that using the religious networks to extend their help to people from other religious groups is beneficial. Saudi students come from a collectivist culture, so living in an individualistic society such as the one in the US while away from home for schooling can be a challenge. Noddings (2005) explains why the relational view is difficult for many US American teachers. In fact, Noddings' (2005) study found that:

> The relational view is hard for some American thinkers to accept because the Western tradition puts such great emphasis on individualism. In that tradition, it is almost instinctive to regard virtues as personal possessions, hard-won through a grueling process of character building. (p. 3)

Language Issues

The participants, irrespective of their gender, claim that learning the English language is a challenge. Further, they consider it to be the most significant communication barrier that requires understanding and care from their teachers. Leena, a female doctoral student, says that "Saudi students are eager to gain knowledge, but the English language stands as a barrier in front of them." Proficiency in the English language is key for pursuing one's educational career or plan of study in the US. Academic difficulties were among the primary challenges that were identified by international students (Leong, 1984). Heikinheimo and Shute (1986)

conducted a qualitative study and found some difficult adjustment areas for international students including language skills, academic issues, and social interaction. Saudi students face language challenges, as nearly all of the arriving students speak Arabic as their first language. The consequential language barrier leads to difficulty navigating the educational system and everyday living experiences across the US. (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, 1993).

In a study by Pedersen (as cited in Heyn, 2013), international students' experiences are described as they "are expected to learn a new language. . . [which] all the other students on campus have spent their whole life learning" (p. 3). In most cases, Saudi students, as some of the research participants expressed, cannot even be compared to other international students in their English proficiency because they come to the US. with minimal knowledge of the English language, whereas most of the other international students come with a more thorough understanding of the English language. In general, language issues can affect the students' interaction with their teachers and may even result in them being silent during class sessions. It is a given that poor language proficiency can result in international students being quiet during class discussions. Indeed, it is essential that caring teachers understand how to identify and tackle such circumstances when dealing with their Saudi students. The Saudi Ministry of Education, at the same time, should prepare Saudi students in the English language by improving the English teachers and curriculum in Saudi Arabia. Also, the Education Ministry can require Saudi students to get a specific grade on the English standard exams such as the TOEFL exam before they can apply for studying abroad.

Help Issues

Cultural differences and language difficulties, as mentioned earlier, can create stress. Thus, this information serves as a segué for discussing the help and support needed by students from their teachers, which will be addressed in this section. Research indicates that

international students who come from non-European backgrounds, Third-World countries, and/or Eastern countries tend to suffer more stress while adjusting to campus life on American soil (Lin, 1998; Perkins, 1977). All participants were in consensus that being far away from their original culture makes them require more help and support from their teachers. Participants of this study believe that the provision of support from any person is considered to be an attribute of a caring behavior. Heyn (2013) has studied Saudi students' experiences and discovered that among the broad areas identified (from her phenomenological data analysis), participants' experiences with seeking and receiving support, along with the barriers experienced in terms of receiving support while studying in the United States, influence how they view care in teachers. Results that emerged from the data showed participants' recognition of the fact that having sources of support was crucial to their success in cross-cultural experiences. The participants in this study also reported that they received support from their professors, religious community members, other Saudi students, and their families.

Saudi students typically come to the US to achieve higher education. Understanding their needs and helping them to achieve their goals is imperative. Saudi students are fully aware that their family and government place high expectations on them to complete their schooling, which may very well be another contributor to the potential increase of stress and anxiety witnessed in students. Furthermore, in a study conducted by Leong and Chou in the 1990s (as cited in Heyn, 2013), Saudi students who traveled to the US. to further their studies were often found to be successful among their school peers in their home country. Thus, such students usually had high expectations for achievement in the United States as well. Moreover, among the stressors mentioned by one of the participants is the feeling of being suspected and watched. According to Batterjee (2009), the 9/11 attacks had several negative

effects on Saudi students in the US, and it also led to discrimination, social anxiety, verbal and physical assault, and bad feelings in response to negative media representations.

A teacher being readily available to provide help to students in need is an important caring behavior that some participants mentioned as being key to their academic success. All participants agreed that motivated teachers help them improve in general. A student points out the importance of incorporeal support. Randah, a female doctoral student, said, "appreciating me pushes me to the achievement." Hence, encouraging students and the cultivation of confidence is perceived as a caring behavior. Muhammed greatly appreciated his professor, who supported one of his ideas and applied it so that everyone in the department could use and benefit from it. Several studies indicate that "teachers who convey genuine interest in students' success cultivate more productive learners, but there are many ways for professors to show that they care about their students" (O'Brien, 2010, p. 111). Understanding the special needs of Saudi students can lead to a more effective educational experience. Noddings (2002) offers some strategies that are more of a necessity for international students as well (e.g., cooperative learning, non-competitive grading, service-learning) to adopt the notion of care in the learning environment; however, she emphasizes that strategies alone will not suffice, because every implementation depends on the parties and the content involved. Bandura and Lyons (2012) suggest that professors should make sure that course performance expectations and learning requirements are clear. They also suggest that it is important to provide an encouraging and supportive environment so students will be brave enough to express their ideas and questions, offer their voices, listen carefully, and reflect on what is happening in class and when they are learning independently. Teachers can find several ways to help and support their students, even by sending them to the available sources of support, on or off campus. Some students mentioned that a consistent supply of help and support is also an important behavioral characteristic of caring teachers.

Most of the participants view US American teachers, in comparison to Saudi teachers, as more supportive towards their students. The teachers who naturally solve students' issues, understand students' circumstances, and sympathize with them are considered to be caring teachers by the participants. Ayah, a female doctoral student, said, "Staying at home two months when I was pregnant made me appreciate my professor understanding. It made me to work more in return." On the other hand, Haithem, a male undergraduate student, said that "some teachers in the US seek to overthrow you at the earliest opportunity." The female and male participants pointed out that female students as a whole need more help than male students. Most female students mentioned that they, as Saudi women, need more respect and care from their teachers. More than one Saudi male confirmed that Saudi female students need more understanding and care, too. Meshal, a male doctoral student said that "Saudi women who live in the US tend to face more of a cultural shock than Saudi male students do, and therefore have broken a lot of cultural barriers." Based on that simple fact alone, he feels that US American teachers should know that and appreciate them more. He also added that this does not mean that teachers have to give them higher grades than they deserve, but teachers should help and support them before they critique and evaluate them. Saudi female students wear Niqab and modest clothes so their identity as Muslim women are more clear than Saudi male students. This could make them more anxious than Saudi male students.

Relational Issues

Saudi students come from a collective culture where forming relationships and connecting with others is an important characteristic. Facilitating and satisfying this need should be a part of teachers' jobs. Rabin and Smith (2013), in summarizing a study by Gilligan (1982), explained care as an ethic that focuses on responding to others' needs in relationships. In other words, they state, "The logic underlying an ethic of care is a psychological logic of relationships, which contrasts with the formal logic of fairness that

informs the justice approach" (p. 165). Thus, care is determined by a context, "which means good, bad, right, and wrong depends on the needs of the participants in particular relationships in specific situations" (Goralnik et al., 2012, p. 420).

Connecting with students by forming relationships with them is necessary for care to be established. Zimmerman (1995) argued that international students' academic success depends, to a great extent, on their interactions with their US instructors. Bandura and Lyons (2012) also suggest that professors should get to know their students individually. It is also important for instructors to recognize that it is likely necessary to provide different approaches to instruction because students do not all learn in the same way. Ghazi appreciates the teachers who talk with him and understand his abilities. Muna, a female undergraduate student, said "Most teachers understand that I am an international student, and English is my second language, so I visit them during office hours or email them. This makes my relationships with some of them as friendship, not just a teacher-student relationship." Hence, her quote clarifies how connecting with students is important for showing care and affecting students' experience. According to several studies, (e.g. Mayeroff, 1971; Noddings, 1984, 1988,1992, 2002; O'Brien, 2010; Thyer-Bacon & Bacon, 1996), the definition of care explains that care occurs in relationships within educational contexts in which students are the central component. Noddings (1992) provides a relational framework for thinking about caring in education. As a professor, she describes caring as a relational act between the one who cares and the one being cared for. O'Brien (2010) clarifies that this relational quality of caring implies that caring is not just an individualized personality trait displayed by the one caring, but rather, the one caring is in direct relation to another who receives the caring, the one cared for.

It seems that initiating the relationship falls on the shoulders of teachers. It is not a simple task to create relationships with students, and in a short time. In the case of

international students, it could be harder because there are a lot of cultural barriers to overcome. O'Brien's research (2010) confirms that it is in fact hard to create strong relationships with your students in a short period of time. On that note, she suggests meeting individually with students at the beginning of the semester to facilitate the process or break the ice.

Wan (2001) indicates that teachers can help their international students by initiating friendly relationships with them and encouraging other students to be friends with them. This is because a warm and friendly environment typically helps students get up to speed on adapting to the new culture sooner and more seamlessly as a state of comfort within the classroom is established. International students need understanding from their teachers and fellow students, inclusive of ample time to get used to the teaching styles that they are exposed to in the United States, in order to become successful or interactive learners.

There are some behaviors participants noticed as forms of caring which included smiling, listening, eye contact, and engaging in conversation with students outside of the classroom. More than one participant said that quick responses to their emails are an important symbol of care by teachers. Another student said that not forgetting a student's name is another indicator of care. In Meyers, Bender, Hill, and Thomas' study (2006, as cited in Meyers, 2009), they stated that, "Expressing care toward their students, communicating respect, behaving sensitively, and remaining warm and engaged not only enhance individual relationships, but also affect the broader climate and reduce classroom conflicts" (p. 206). Most participants focus on nonverbal behaviors when it comes to making connections. Some participants added that verbal behaviors like speaking with students, especially outside of the classroom are also very important qualities for showing care.

Role Model Issues

Not every teacher is a caring teacher. Thayer-Bacon and Bacon (1996) claim that all college teachers like to think of themselves as caring. Moreover, they found this to be true even if the teachers' goals are just to merely improve their evaluation scores. Some of the research participants said that being a caring teacher to a degree is almost as good as achieving perfection as an educator. Muhammed, a male graduate student, said that "a caring teacher is like a rare coin." Caring teachers, according to the research participants, are considered as role models. Ameer says that "a caring teacher is like my father or mother." Jalal, who is going to practice teaching after finishing his studies in the US, says that "caring teachers are role models for me that make me imitate them when I go back to Saudi Arabia." Meshal said that "a caring teacher is the one who has good manners."

All of the characteristics that the participants link with caring teachers can qualify teachers as role models. Additionally, honesty and sincerity are among the major values that participants also associated with caring teachers. Care in education has been defined morally by exploring its ethical elements that include teacher's confidence with regard to students, respect, honesty, trust, sincerity, and attention. Lambert (1995) identifies some elements in the process of care including confidence in students, respect, honesty, trust, sincerity, and attention. According to Thayer-Bacon and Bacon's (1996) findings,

> Viewing leading learning as a process, and learners as fallible, limited, social beings, brings a humble perspective to a caring professor's role as a teacher. Caring professors must assume that they do not have a complete understanding of what they are trying to teach. They are researchers, in the true sense of the word. They are people who are in search of knowledge and better understanding themselves. (p. 259)

Caring teachers possess the enthusiasm and eagerness to teach, which sets them apart from the rest. When teachers love teaching, they do their best to support their students.

Mayeroff (1971) describes caring in terms of recognizing the value of the 'other' and supporting his or her growth for their sake. This implies that a teacher's motives must be selfless and geared towards the betterment of their students alone, and not for the fulfillment of their own personal gains.

Teachers who generally make it a priority to adopt the previously mentioned values tend to be able to practice care for students more easily. Thayer-Bacon and Bacon (1996) state, "Caring is a personal, subjective topic full of feelings" (p. 255). In fact, de Guzman et al. (2008) refer to care in education as teaching with a heart and describe it as double-loop caring, or caring presence. They state that "to teach with a heart is the essence that makes teaching a form of caring. When teaching is viewed as a form of caring, teachers become relational geniuses in their own right" (p. 487).

Practicing care in education needs skillful teachers to do so. The research participants insinuated that enthusiasm and eagerness to teach is an indicator of being a caring teacher. They claimed that care is not a program or strategy but is instead a way to relate to students and their families characterized by respect, understanding, compassion, and interest (Noddings 1988). Care cannot be taught as an educational curriculum. Instead, it is obtained through a hidden educational context. Noddings (1988) states, "To approach moral education from the perspective of caring, teachers, teacher-educators, students, and researchers need time to engage in modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation" (p. 228-229). Communicating care through the act of listening is also a crucial step forward toward modeling it. Bandura and Lyons (2012) state, "When instructors listen carefully, are attentive, invite students' comments and feedback on what classroom practices are working well, when we respond carefully to students' requests, and to their suggestions regarding improving classroom practices, we are modeling care and respect" (p. 526). Bandura and

Lyons (2012) also suggest that faculty members provide constructive feedback on students' performance and that instructors can model caring and respectful behavior to all students.

Several participants said that a caring teacher's actions go beyond teaching the subject. In actuality, they also implied that this means that teachers focus their efforts on the student as a human being who deserves care and respect, and not just on delivering the information to fulfill a job requirement. The teacher who treats students as human beings and not just as seat fillers, according to the participants, does not expect the same level of language proficiency from international students as their fellow US American classmates, simply because of the language differences. Teachers' flexibility is an important behavioral characteristic that is appreciated by Saudi students. Khaleel, a male master's student, defined flexibility as "giving students opportunities for making up and improving their assignments." According to O'Brien (2010), "Much has been written about the importance and impact of caring in education. . . [and] about seeing our students as whole persons and not just contributors to the coffers or empty vessels to be filled with our accumulated wisdom" (p. 114). Several studies suggest dealing with students as human beings instead of simply empty vessels seeking some piece of information. de Guzman et al. (2008) state, "Today, more than ever, the ability of the teacher, to see his or her students not as material to work on but as individuals to work with, lies in his [or her] caring behavior" (p. 498). Teacher-student relationships are full of caring occasions. According to O'Brien (2010),

> Teachers who care about their students are remembered, effect change, stimulate growth, and are more likely to be successful at teaching their students. In sum, they maintain that caring is central to any model of teaching that tries to take into account the student as a whole person. (p. 110)

When we care about others, we should respect them as independent people that deserve our care (Thayer-Bacon, Arnold, & Stoots, 1998). Ameer, who studied in a different

English program, said that he had a bad experience and that the English program he studied

in reminds him of "the slavery times." He said that "they (referring to the English program

staff and faculty) just care about collecting money." Bandura and Lyons (2012) summarized

a study by Buttner (2004) as the following:

> When students are not treated with care or respect, many of them report accounts of
>
> how their self-esteem suffered and how their behavior toward the course and
>
> instructor changed. Many said they declined to participate in class discussions, came
>
> to class late or left early, missed class, dropped the class, or engaged in a combination
>
> of all of these behaviors. (p. 524)

All of the characteristics that the participants link with caring teachers including honesty,

sincerity, confidence with regard to students, respect, trust, and attention, can qualify teachers

as role models.

Gender Roles

One of the most obvious cultural differences that stands out between Saudi Arabia

and the US is gender roles. For instance, the nature of female students' needs and

understanding of care may vary from culture-to-culture, which places responsibility on US

American professors in terms of how they effectively communicate care towards the

international student body. The methods of communicating care also depend on whether the

professor is male or female. Most of the research participants claimed to notice some

differences between male and female teachers in US American university systems. The male

participants made mention of the innate care or nurturing ability of female teachers. Care

often is described as ethical, feminine, natural, relational, and contextual. To elaborate

further, Noddings (1988) attests that "As an ethical orientation, caring has often been

characterized as feminine because it seems to arise more naturally out of woman's experience

than man's" (p. 215). According to Mariskind (2014), much of the discussion of care in

education is related to care witnessed in elementary schools all the way up to high schools (i.e. K-12), or even early childhood centers. Such educational care is gender-driven, with teaching in the United States historically seen as women's work (O'Neill, 2005) involving nurturing and care (Noddings, 1984). Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007) point out that it is because care is often conceptualized in maternal terms, while the field of higher education emphasizes autonomous, self-directed adult learners. Several studies, however, (Fitzmaurice 2008; Lincoln 2000; Murray 2006; O'Brien 2010; Walker, Gleaves, and Grey 2006) confirm that teachers in higher education also consider caring to be important. Although the research participants mentioned some differences of caring behaviors among male and female teachers, some of them do not seem to think that these differences play a role in describing teachers as caring based on whether they are male or female. Female teachers in general show more care than male teachers. On the other hand, it seems here that the personality and experience of a teacher or a student plays an important role when it comes to truly understanding and practicing care. The culture reflects on both teachers and students and contributes in forming their experiences and personalities. In Saudi Arabia, for example, it is not just the educational system that is not coeducational, most of the public activities are based on separation between men and women. This can explain preferring female teachers from one of the female participants and preferring male teaches from one of the male participants.

Recommendations

There is limited research about care in the classroom from the perspective of students. Therefore, conducting research on international students' perceptions of care and taking into account their psychological, social, and educational needs will enhance the research results and provide universities across the US with the information they need to support students from different cultures.

Saudi students need extensive care from their professors, that is offered both in the classroom and outside of the classroom. Professors need to learn more about the unique experiences and features of their Saudi students' culture that can make offering care to them different from offering care to other students. Wan (2001) indicates that educators can assist international students by taking the time and effort to understand their home cultures, different learning styles, as well as frustrations in adjusting to school life and in overcoming cultural shocks. This level of understanding can help teachers tailor instruction in ways to support the culturally different learners and provide students with a variety of ways to learn so that their learning is in harmony with their cultural background. One of the good resources is the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM) in the US, which is the place where all Saudi students in the US have files. SACM is a reference and distributor for a lot of publications about Saudi Arabia. I suggest that teachers in the US who work with Saudi international students should be encouraged to develop some background knowledge on Saudi students' unique problems and needs so that they can truly understand their Saudi students more, and care for them effectively. I suggest that US American teachers should encourage their Saudi students to visit them at their offices to initiate the relationships with them and understand their needs more. One of the important roles of teachers should also be to guide their Saudi students to the appropriate departments or facilities in-and-around the university campus, that can help them deal with their more sensitive issues that may require the aid of an expert. Heyn (2013) argues that if Saudi students are to truly realize the potential benefits professional services have to offer, then understanding what services and sources of support they seek while studying in the United States are crucial.

The nature of the relationship between men and women from Saudi Arabia should be more understood. US American teachers could notice that Saudi male and female students do not contact each other like other students. This reflects a mix of religious and cultural norms

that make a separation between men and women. This is the case with other Muslim groups as well, to some extent. I suggest that US American teachers should be aware of some of the taboos in Saudi and Islamic culture as well, such as hugging or shaking hands with a student of the other sex. I suggest also that US American teachers alert their Saudi students before showing any pictures or videos in class that contain nudity or other content that might be considered offensive.

On the other hand, it is important to present what Leena, a female doctoral student, said, which is "There is another responsibility on the shoulders of students to care for themselves and seek to improve themselves through the technology such as the internet and social media." This further indicates that Saudi students should also make it a point to try to adapt to the new culture as soon as they can. Shaw (2010) studied the study-abroad experience of Saudi students and found that personal adaptation resilience and intercultural competence are the most significant characteristics seen in Saudi students for having a successful experience in the states.

There were some difficulties finding and recording Saudi female students who agreed with this perspective during the interview. Moreover, despite hiring a Saudi female graduate student to conduct the interviews with the female participants, it seems that they did not freely disclose as many details as male students disclosed in their responses. For future research on Saudi female students, performing the research by a female Saudi researcher, with refined questioning, could help in achieving more disclosure from Saudi female students.

In discussing the current research, the results show that further research is needed to further understand Saudi students' academic experiences in general and to learn how they perceive their teachers' care in particular. Such research could prove to be beneficial in preparing Saudi students and enabling them to adjust better to life in US universities.

Inevitably, this measure could also help teachers in US universities adjust and better serve one of the largest groups of international students at several US campuses.

Conclusion

The research shows that the need for care exists among foreign students from Saudi Arabia who come to the US to pursue their educational goals. There is significant evidence proving that care is a very important feature in the educational process. O'Brien (2010) summarized a study by Jacobsen, Eggen, and Kauchak (2006) as follows: "It is virtually impossible to succeed in any part of teaching without genuinely caring about students and their learning" (p. 111). Thus, both teachers and students highly value the importance of care.

Although teachers should put forth the effort to better understand their students' cultures so they can understand them and show more care, Saudi students, on the other hand, should take the initiative to help their teachers assist them by asking for help if needed. In addition, Saudi students must also learn to adapt to the new culture to reduce the intercultural gaps and unnecessary misunderstandings. Wan (2001) points out that it is hard to be a successful cross-cultural learner. This is because it requires a lot of courage, determination, and persistence. Wan adds that the process of learning involves "blood and tears." He implies that there are many cultural elements that the learners need to adjust to, get used to, to learn and unlearn. But in general, Wan claims the experience is very rewarding. Also, as I mentioned earlier when discussing the language issue, The Saudi Ministry of Education has a huge responsibility in preparing Saudi students in the English language by improving the English teachers and curriculum. Also, the Education Ministry can require Saudi students to get a specific grade on the English standard exams such as the TOEFL exam before they can apply for studying abroad.

By exploring international students' perceptions regarding pedagogical care through their educational experience in the United States, specifically perceptions and experiences of

Saudi students, this research provides a foundational guide for understanding some of their

needs. As a result, teachers in the United States can gain a better understanding of how to

adjust their relationships when interacting with Saudi students to efficiently and more ably

provide the care they need.

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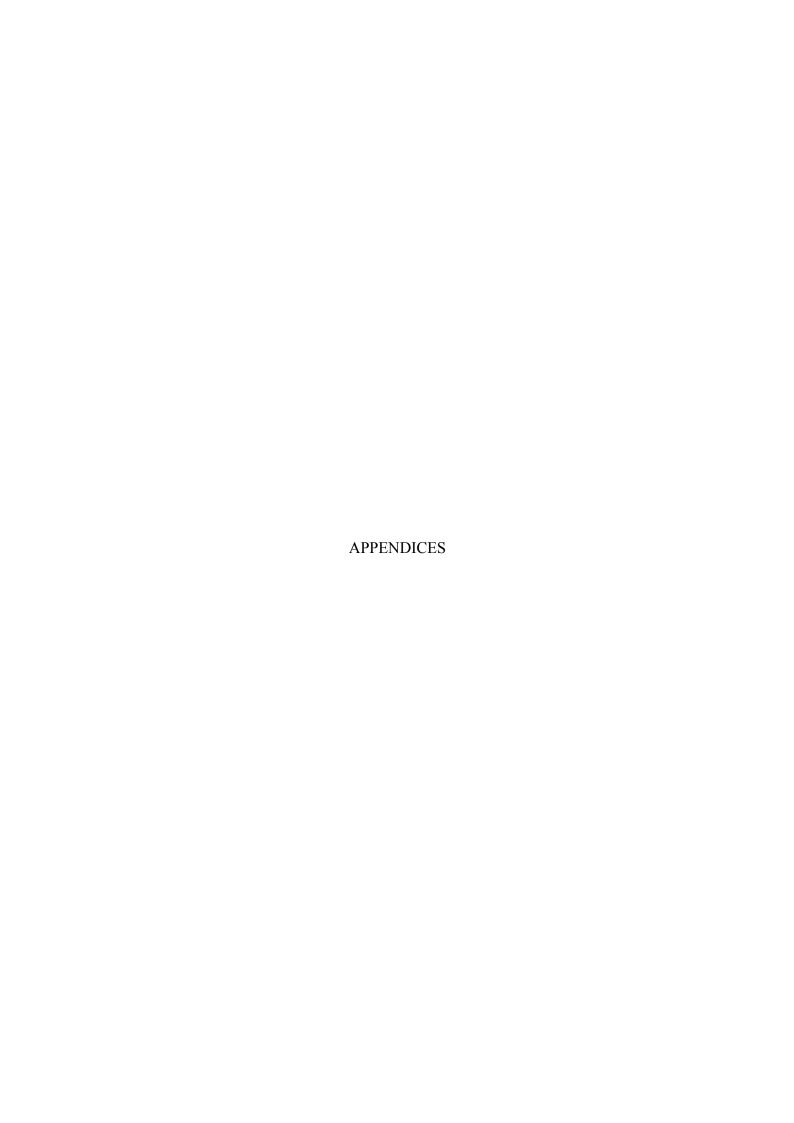
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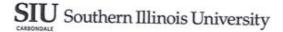Noddings, N. (2002). *Educating moral people*. New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

SIU Southern Illinois University
CARBONDALE

HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE   siuhsc@siu.edu
OFFICE OF SPONSORED PROJECTS   618/453-4533
ADMINISTRATION   618/453-8038 FAX
WOODY HALL – MAIL CODE 4709
900 SOUTH NORMAL AVENUE
CARBONDALE, ILLINOIS 62901

ospa.siu.edu/compliance/human-subjects

HSC Approval letter (exempt)

To: Abdullah Alasmari

From: Kimberly K. Asner-Self
        Chair, Human Subjects Committee

Date: November 17, 2017

Subject: *Saudi Students' Perceptions of Teacher Care in the United States*

Protocol Number: 17287

The above referenced study have been approved by the SIUC Human Subjects Committee. The study is determined to be exempt according to 45 CFR 46.101(b)2. This approval does not have an expiration date; however, any future modifications to your protocol must be submitted to the Committee for review and approval prior to their implementation.

Your Form A approval is enclosed.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the USDHHS Office of Human Research Protection. The Assurance number is FWA00005334.

KAS:kr

Cc: Bryan Crow

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. How long have you been in the US?

2. What are the important signs or behaviors that make you feel that a family member or friend cares about you? (This question will give me a baseline for each interviewee's expectations based on experiences of care).

3. What are the important signs or behaviors that make you feel that a teacher cares about you? How would you describe a caring teacher?

4. What does a caring teacher mean to you?

5. Tell me about your relationships with some of your teachers in Saudi Arabia.

6. How would you describe your relationships with your teachers in the US?

7. How would you describe the difference between your relationships with your teachers in Saudi Arabia and in the US?

8. Do you think your need for help, support, or care has changed since you came to the US? If so, how?

9. Can you tell me about a situation in the US where a teacher cared for you and affected you positively?

10. Tell me about how a caring teacher contributed to your academic achievement.

11. Have you ever had the feeling that a teacher had 'given up' on you and your learning in a course? If so, what did the teacher do or not do to give you that feeling? What did you do as a result of that feeling or perception?

12. What are the differences you have observed between male and female professors in communicating care with you and other students?

13. What are your perception of any differences between Saudi Arabian students and other international students as for their need for care from their teachers?

14. (For male students) As a male student from Saudi Arabia, how can you describe your experience of care with female professors in the US?

15. (For female students) As a female student from Saudi Arabia, how can you describe your experience of care with male professors in the US?

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (ARABIC-عربي)

١. منذ متى وأنتَ/(أنتِ) تدرس(ين) في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية؟

٢. ما هي أهم المؤشرات السلوكية التي تعرف(ين) من خلالها أن فرداً من أسرتك أو صديقاً/(صديقةً) يـ(تـ)ـهتم بك؟

٣. ما هي أهم المؤشرات السلوكية التي تعرف(ين) من خلالها أن الأستاذ(ة) يـ(تـ)ـهتم بك؟ كيف يمكنك وصف الأستاذ(ة) المهتم(ة)؟

٤. ماذا يـ(تـ)ـعني لك الأستاذ(ة) المهتم(ة)؟

٥. حدث(ي)ـني عن علاقاتك بأساتذتك/(أستاذاتك) عندما كنت في السعودية؟

٦. حدث(ي)ـني عن علاقاتك بأساتذتك/(أستاذاتك) في الولايات المتحدة؟

٧. كيف يمكنك وصف الفرق بين علاقاتك بأساتذتك/(أستاذاتك) في السعودية والولايات المتحدة؟

٨. هل تعتقد(ين) أن حاجتك للدعم والمساعدة والاهتمام تغيرت منذ مجيئك للولايات المتحدة؟ إذا كانت إجابتك نعم، فكيف تغيرت؟

٩. هل يمكنك أن تحدث(ي)ـني عن مرة تعامل(ت) معك فيها أستاذ(تـ)ك في الولايات المتحدة باهتمام وأثر فيك ذلك إيجابياً؟

١٠. هل تعتقد(ين) أن الأستاذ(ة) المهتم(ة) يـ(تـ)ـسهم في إنجازك الأكاديمي؟ إذا كانت إجابتك بنعم، فكيف؟

١١. هل سبق وأن شعرت بأن أستاذاً(ةً) تخلى/(تخلت) عنك وعن تدريسك؟ إذا كانت إجابتك بنعم، فماذا فعل(ت) الأستاذ(ة) ليصلك هذا الشعور؟ ماذا فعلت أنت كنتيجة لهذا الشعور أو التصور؟

١٢. ما الفرق بين الأستاذ والأستاذة في الاهتمام بك أو بالطلاب والطالبات الآخرين؟

١٣. ما الذي يحتاجه الطالب(ة) السعودي(ة) في الولايات المتحدة أكثر من أي طالب دولي آخر؟

١٤. (سؤال للطلاب) كطالب سعودي كيف يمكنك وصف تجربتك المتعلقة بالاهتمام مع الأستاذة الأنثى في الولايات المتحدة؟

١٥. (سؤال للطالبات) كطالبة سعودية كيف يمكنك وصف تجربتك المتعلقة بالاهتمام مع الأستاذ الذكر في الولايات المتحدة؟

APPENDIX D

TRANSLATION CHECK LETTER

Verification of Translation

November 17th, 2017

To: Committee Chairperson, Office of Sponsored Projects Administration

    SIUC, Carbondale, IL 62901-4709.

Subject: Verification of Translation

Abdullah Alasmari, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Communication Studies at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, has asked me to review the translation of the following document from English into Arabic: Interview protocol.
Having carefully examined the mentioned document, I confirm that the Arabic translation of the English original contains the same content as the English version. The content is accurately and precisely conveyed in the Arabic language.

Most respectfully,

Abdulsamad Humaidan
Doctoral Student
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Graduate Teaching Assistant
Center for English as a Second Language (CESL)
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
humaidanabdulsamad@siu.edu
(202)–815-5503

APPENDIX E

EMAIL SOLICITATION SCRIPT TO STUDENTS

From: Abdullah Alasmari
Subject: Research Request

Hello,

My name is Abdullah Alasmari, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Communication Studies at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale. I study communication pedagogy. I am conducting research on Saudi students' educational experience in the US. I want to do a face-to-face interview with you. Your participation will be highly appreciated.

Your email was obtained from Saudi Students Organization. The reason you are receiving this email is because of your current experiences in studying in the US. I am hoping that you are willing to share your experiences, understandings, and views about your teachers. I would like to schedule a face-to-face interview with you if you are willing to participate in this research (female students will be interviewed by a female graduate student from Saudi Arabia).

I will do all I can to protect your identity. A pseudonym will be assigned to you. The collected data will be kept in a secure location. Only my research advisor, Dr. Bryan Crow, and I have access to them. Data will be kept by the researcher for future follow-up studies.

The only foreseeable risk I anticipate would include discomfort associated with the often sensitive topics of personality, culture, and education. If you agree to let me interview you, the estimated time should last from 30 to 60 minutes.

Your participation is completely voluntary. If you give me permission to interview you, I would like to audiotape the interview session. My research advisor and I are the only ones who use and have access to the recorded files. At any time, you can talk off-record (say something that I won't record or use); you can refuse to answer a question or talk about a topic; you can ask me any questions; and/or you can stop participating. None of this will affect you. If you do not respond to this email, I will take it as you have no interest in participating in this research.

Thank you for the consideration! Please reply to this email if you are willing to participate in this research.

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact me, Abdullah Alasmari (618-453-1890, asalasmari@siu.edu). Or, my research advisor: Dr. Bryan Crow (618- 453-1884, bcrow@siu.edu).

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW SCRIPT/SCHEDULE FOR STUDENTS

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this interview. Before we begin, I'd like you to read the research cover letter and ask you to sign an informed consent form. Please ask if you have any questions about the research and interview process.

(Provide the cover letter and informed consent form in Arabic.)

(Turn on an audio-recorder.)

The purpose of this study is to learn how Saudi students perceive teacher care in the US. I am eager to learn your experiences, views, and perspectives on this topic. Overall, I am interested in hearing your personal stories about and experiences of these topics within your educational experience in the US. I will be asking you some questions regarding this subject; however, this interview session will take the form of a conversation and discussion. This means that there is no right or wrong answer, and you may ask questions at any time during this interview. It also means that, although there are some general themes I would like to discuss, I will be very focused on your own interests in this subject. All of the data will be kept confidential.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

(Answer any questions.)

Let's begin.

(Interview)

We are done at this time with our interview.

If you know anyone who might be interested in participating in this research, please let me know.

Thank you very much for your participation.

APPENDIX G

COVER LETTER FOR STUDENTS INTERVIEW

Hello,

My name is Abdullah Alasmari, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Communication Studies at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale. I study communication pedagogy. I am conducting research on Saudi students' perceptions of caring teachers in the US. I would like to ask you to participate in this research by giving me permission to interview you.

I will do all I can to protect your identity. A pseudonym will be assigned to you. The pseudonym will be recorded on the voluntary informed consent form you are about to receive. I will develop a code list for identification purposes. I will keep this code list in a safe and secure location. I will take all reasonable steps to protect your identity. The collected data will be kept in separate locations. Only my research advisor, Dr. Bryan Crow, and I will have access to them. Data will be kept by the researcher for future follow-up studies.

The only foreseeable risk I anticipate would include discomfort associated with the often sensitive topics of personality, culture, and education. The interview session should last from 30 to 60 minutes.

Your participation is completely voluntary. If you give permission, I would like to audio-record this interview session. My research advisor and I are the only ones who will use and have access to the recording files. I will transcribe the recorded files for my data analysis. At any time, you can talk off-record (say something that I won't record or use); you can refuse to answer a question or talk about a topic; you can ask me any questions; and/or you can stop participating. None of this will affect you.

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to ask them now or contact me or my research advisor.

Primary investigator:
Abdullah Alasmari
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Research advisor:
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This project has been reviewed and approved by the SIUC Human Subjects Committee. Questions concerning your rights as a participant in this research may be addressed to the Committee Chairperson, Office or Sponsored Projects Administration, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901. Phone (618) 453-4533. E-mail siuhsc@siu.edu

APPENDIX H

CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS

Informed Consent Form

Researcher's Name: Abdullah Alasmari (Ph.D. candidate, Southern Illinois University Carbondale)

In agreeing to participate in Abdullah's research, I, the participant (further known as "I"), feel that I have a clear understanding of the following matters based on my discussion with Abdullah, or the research cover letter he provided.
- The purpose of this research in general is to study my perception of caring teachers in the US.
- The research does not involve any experimental procedures and should not place me under severe stress or at risk.
- My participation in the study is voluntary. My decision not to participate and/or to withdraw from this research at any time will involve no penalty.
- Abdullah will change personal names and other identifying data to protect my confidentiality. Data will be kept by the researcher for future follow-up studies.

I, _____ (print your name), give my permission to Abdullah (or his assistant) to interview me. I understand that what I say will be used only for research purposes, and that my identity will be protected in Abdullah's research. I place the following restrictions on my participation:

_____
_____
_____

- I agree to participate in this research and know that my participation will be recorded (unless I write otherwise as a restriction on the above lines). My signature gives Abdullah (or his assistant) permission to interview me.

- I agree _____ / I disagree _____ that Abdullah may quote me in his presentations and papers. (Please mark an X in the given space.)

- I agree _____ / I disagree _____ that Abdullah may use my interview answers in his presentations and papers. (Please mark an X in the given space.)

- I welcome _____ / do not want to participate in _____ a follow-up interview with Abdullah (or his assistant). (Please mark an X in the given space.)

Participant _____   Date _____

Researcher _____   Date _____

This project has been reviewed and approved by the SIUC Human Subjects Committee. Questions concerning your rights as a participant in this research may be addressed to the Committee Chairperson, Office or Sponsored Projects Administration, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901. Phone (618) 453-4533. E-mail siuhsc@siu.edu

VITA

Graduate School

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Dissertation Title:

Saudi Arabian Students' Perceptions of Teacher Care in The United States

Major Professor: Bryan Crow