PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT OF SAUDI ARABIAN POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

ALSHAMMARI MAJID KHALAF A

UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

2023

PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT OF SAUDI ARABIAN POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

by

ALSHAMMARI MAJID KHALAF A

**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

March 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

LIST OF APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A   THE QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX B   INTERVIEW OUTLINE

APPENDIX C   THE QUESTIONNAIRE (ARABIC VERSION)

APPENDIX D   INTERVIEW OUTLINE (ARABIC VERSION)

PENYESUAIAN PSIKOLOGI PELAJAR PASCASISWAZAH

ARAB SAUDI DI MALAYSIA

ABSTRAK

Malaysia telah membina sistem pendidikan yang membuatkan ramai pelajar antarabangsa termasuk mereka yang dari Arab Saudi tertarik untuk mengikuti pengajian di sana. Sistem pendidikan dan latar belakang budaya Arab Saudi berbeza berbanding dengan negara asing, oleh itu, ini boleh mengakibatkan kesukaran untuk pelajar Arab untuk beradaptasi secara psikologikal di negara asing. Perbezaan dari segi sistem pendidikan Arab Saudi dan negara asing adalah oleh kerana secara tradisinya, sistem pendidikan Arab dalam kesemua tahap pendidikan memberi fokus kepada topik-topik Arabik dan keagamaan, ketidak serataan jantina. Dengan ini, pelajar Saudi perlukan bantuan untuk adaptasi secara psikologikal di negara asing. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji tahap pelarasan psikologi dan faktor yang menyumbang kepada pelarasan ini dalam kalangan pelajar Saudi Arabia di beberapa universiti di Malaysia. Kajian ini menggunakan instrumen sedia ada seperti Rosenberg self-esteem scale, state the instruments, Multidimensional scale of Perceived Social Support, Hofmann instrument for language and culture difficulties, dan Satisfaction with Life Scale untuk menguji faktor-faktor ini terhadap 400 pelajar pascasiswazah Arab Saudi yang melanjutkan pengajian pascasiswazah di universiti-universiti Malaysia. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa kedua-dua harga diri dan sokongan sosial adalah ramalan penting terhadap sampel pelarasan psikologi. Selanjutnya, kesukaran bahasa dan budaya didapati tiada perhubungan yang signifikan. Penemuan kualitatif lebih lanjut didapati untuk menjelaskan dapatan kajian ini.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT OF SAUDI ARABIAN POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

ABSTRACT

Malaysia has developed an educational system that attracted many international students, including those from Saudi Arabia to join the Malaysian educational programs. There are differences in Saudi Arabian educational system and cultural background compared to others, thus this may cause difficulties for Saudi students to adjust psychologically in foreign countries . The Saudi Arabian educational system is different than many other countries because of the traditions that are applied in this system, such as focusing on Arabic and religious topics, and the gender segregation over all the educational levels. Thus, Saudi students, especially postgraduate students, need help to psychologically adjust in foreign colleges. The purpose of the present study is to investigate the psychological adjustment of Saudi Arabian Students in Malaysian universities and what are the contributed factors that affect it. In related studies, self-esteem, social support and language and cultural difficulties were the most suggested factors that affect the psychological adjustment of the international postgraduate students. The present study using mixed-method and well-known instruments (Rosenberg self-esteem scale, state the instruments, Multidimensional scale of Perceived Social Support, Hofmann instrument for language and culture difficulties, and Satisfaction with Life Scale) to test these factors among 400 Saudi Arabian postgraduate student who pursue their postgraduate studies in Malaysian universities. Linear regressions were used to find out these relations and thematic analysis was used to find out qualitative supporting data. The finding showed

that both of self-esteem and social support were significant predictors of psychological adjustment. Further, language and culture difficulties were found not significant contributing factors. In Summary, improving the self-esteem of the Saudi Arabian students and providing social support to them will enhance their psychological adjustment.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

International migration occurs for a variety of reasons, including education, work, and asylum (Al-Jasir, 1994; Tidwell & Hanassab, 2007; Schrooten et al., 2016). The phenomena of worldwide migration, particularly in this era of globalization, has a significant influence on education (Yeasmeen, 2008). The growing number of institutions across the world provides students the opportunity to study abroad as a method to extend their education and respect for cultural and ethnic diversity. Both commercially and socially, host nations benefit greatly. There has been an upsurge in student exchange across nations in recent decades. The ultimate educational worth to students of spending at least some of their college years living and learning in another nation is no longer arguable at the turn of the twenty-first century, in a world that is growing increasingly interdependent every year. Not only is the global competence and awareness gained through such an experience critical to national and international interests, but many educators now believe that students who graduate from college without having had a significant 'globalizing' experience as part of their undergraduate education will be viewed as under-prepared for the professional world they will enter.

In February 2019, The Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education has announced that there are around ninety three thousand Saudi Arabian students pursue studies abroad. Sixty six per cent of them are male students and thirty four percent are female students. Fifty two thousand from them are sponsored by the Saudi Arabian government. These numbers reflect the awareness of the Saudi Arabian government in the positive gain from being studying abroad.

A well-rounded education in preparation for successful living and working in the twenty-first century must be not only "higher," but also "deeper," "broader," and "less nationalistic and mono-cultural" than previous generations. For different reasons, an increasing number of students come in a foreign nation and pursue education at all levels. The neoliberal notion that the market can best solve today's issues influences the educational sector, just as it does politics and economics. Today, it is frequently stated that education must be driven into the market model in order to become more efficient, therefore departing from the traditional notion of education as a publicly supplied social benefit.

The neoliberal educational model consists of three components: making education more cost-effective by co-modifying the product, measuring performance by standardizing the experience in such a way that multiple-choice assessment of results is possible, and emphasis on marketable skills. The three elements are combined in different policies-cutbacks in the public sector, the closure of "inefficient" programs that don't explicitly meet business needs for an educated staff, and the use of computers and distance education, in which for-profit corporations package courses and degrees for delivery over the Internet.

Malaysia has developed an educational system based on her unique demands, which differs slightly from that of Western countries. The Malaysian parliament approved an educational reform bill in 1996 to increase the quality of university-level education while broadening its reach. It liberalized the higher-education system by enabling international universities to establish branch campuses in Malaysia and permitting the Malaysian private sector to enter the area, resulting in a significant

increase in the number of university spaces accessible locally. It also sought to showcase Malaysia as a regional educational hub by attracting international students.

The government has continued to encourage the construction and growth of private institutions of higher learning in order to accommodate the increasing demand for seats in institutions of higher education and to complement the existing public universities. There were less than 50 private institutes of higher learning in 1986, but by 2006, that number had risen to 539 (Badawi, 2006). One of the key goals of the private education sector's rapid expansion is to enable local students to acquire high-quality education in Malaysia without incurring the exorbitant expenditures of pursuing identical courses abroad. The second goal is to entice more international students to pursue tertiary education in Malaysia. This, in turn, helps to develop the Malaysian economy. In 2006, there were around 39,577 international students in Malaysia (Badawi, 2006). This number is grown to 135,502 by 2015 (The Sun Daily, 2015). More than 2000 students from this number are Saudi Arabian Students (Khan, 2013) which justify the aim of this study.

Being an international student is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. It teaches pupils how to distinguish between portions of themselves that are specific to their period and place in society and parts that are universal to all humans. This level of personal and national self-awareness is simply not possible to achieve at home. Students' perceptions are constrained by the blinders of being only in their own culture, regardless of their institution or university's resources or purpose.

However, International communities are struggling to adapt to a new culture. This applies in particular to international students who need to adapt to a new country

and meet academic standards simultaneously. Research has investigated many elements affecting overseas students' psychological adaptation and demonstrated the influence of self-appreciation and social support. Language and cultural barriers have also been demonstrated to have an impact on psychological well-being. While important study has been done, there is a gap in the literature regarding particular groups, such as Saudi Arabian students in Malaysia. There are few studies that were concerned about the Saudi Arabian students' psychological support. For example, Rundles (2013) has studied the psychological adjustment of Saudi Arabian international students in the United States, and found that self-esteem, social support, and discrimination were the main factors that affect the students' psychological adjustment.

This chapter begins by outlining the study's background, including an overview of psychological adjustment as well as the factors that contributed to its creation and effect on Saudi Arabian postgraduate students in Malaysia's learning practices. The chapter then provides a description of the topic, followed by a presentation and discussion of significant gaps in the research addressing psychological adjustment and its factors. Following that, study aims, and research questions are presented. The importance of the study is presented in this chapter, which is separated into two sections: theoretical significance and practical significance. After that, the chapter is summarized. The next section discusses the study's background.

1.2 Research Background

For starters, studying abroad broadens and diversifies education by providing access to courses, programs, and academic learning opportunities not available on home turf.

Second, studying abroad gives international students a global perspective, emphasizing the present inter-connectedness of nations and cultures, the universality of human ideals, and the importance of collaboration. Third, through internships and other hands-on experiences, studying abroad improves career preparation by imparting cross-cultural and work-place skills that are valued by today's employers. Finally, studying abroad enhances academic and moral maturity, encourages independent thinking, and increases self-confidence.

Despite these gains, foreign students appear to be having more difficulties interacting with their hosts, the local students. Foreign students, on average, experience higher psychological and social discomfort than local students, according to research (Ward, 2001). Foreign students have higher psychological, social, and health concerns than local students, according to a study of foreign students in Canada (Chataway & Berry, 1989). Culture shock, social isolation, home country circumstances, cross-cultural relationships, financial challenges, immigration laws and associated anxiety, self-employment and spouse employment, stress, and depression are examples of issues. Although Malaysian students are a heterogeneous bunch, several issues they confront may be generalized: one of them is the cultural gap.

International students, like other international groups, will most certainly need to adjust to living in a new country. In a foreign nation, this can be viewed as a "...transitional process that develops over time as students learn to cope with the demands of the academic environment..." (Al-Sharideh & Goe, 1998, p. 701; Lyken-Segosebe, 2017). International students may adjust socially and psychologically to their new situation in life, and a number of factors, such as self-esteem, social support, and prejudice, may influence this process (Rundles, 2013). Feelings of well-being in a

new situation might be viewed as psychological adjustment (Ward & Kennedy, 1996; Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Diener et al., 2017). Listening to the experiences of international students can illuminate the factors that contribute to and take away from these feelings. These students confront numerous hurdles throughout their time abroad, including those that come with studying in a different country (Al-Jasir, 1994; Al-Sharideh & Goe, 1998; Johnson & Sandhu, 2007; Wang, 2009; Wu et al., 2015). They may also be forced to maintain many identities or roles in specific instances. International students, for example, may wish to maintain their native cultural identity in order to facilitate a smooth transition back home. Nonetheless, while studying abroad, individuals may establish a new identity to adapt with or fit in with the society of the host country. Maintaining several roles can be exhausting, and these identities often clash (Pedersen, 1991).

Furthermore, studying in a language other than one's native tongue is one of the most difficult challenges that international students face. Fluency in the chosen language is a critical aspect in their academic success and cultural adaptation. In his research, Stoynoff (1997) explores the major factors that influence overseas students' academic success and discovers a link between academic performance and language proficiency. According to another study by Lewthwaite (1996), one of the biggest disappointments that overseas students and their contributions inside the classroom may confront is a lack of confidence in the teaching language. Previous research has revealed a number of features of academic language difficulties that international students face (Robertson et al., 2000; Wong, 2004; Shin, 2011; Wu, 2011). For example, Wu (2011) looks into the challenges that Taiwanese students encounter at an American university and discovers that the primary issues include written assignments,

tests, language use, comprehension of a second language, taking notes, participation in class discussions, and oral presentation. In her case study, Bifuh-Ambe (2009) divides the primary challenges experienced by overseas students into four categories: expressive and receptive language, written language (writing assignments and taking notes), comprehension (understanding texts), and difficulties with the host country's teaching and evaluation systems.

Language obstacles also have an impact on international students in social situations, since they aid in their socio-cultural integration. International students must learn the social language in addition to the academic language. They must be able to communicate effectively in both academic and non-academic settings. Some international students may have adequate language skills, which contributes to their academic performance, but they may avoid social connection due to a lack of social language (Lewthwaite, 1996). Likewise, Trice (2007) blames overseas students' lack of language abilities for their separation from domestic people. Furthermore, even inside classrooms, a lack of social language may have an impact on overseas pupils. One of the challenges faced by international students, according to Robertson et al. (2000), is comprehending everyday language, idioms, slang, and the various accents employed by their professors..

In addition to language skills, international students must develop cultural awareness. Cultural differences have a significant impact on overseas students' social and academic lives. As a result, Borland and Pearce (2002) concluded that language knowledge alone, without cultural awareness, is insufficient for international students to succeed in both academic and social circumstances. One component of differences in culture is disparities in teaching and learning methods, which make it difficult for

most international students to adjust to their new academic environment. International students faced significant obstacles in the academic setting due to their unfamiliarity with the host country's learning methodologies (Borland & Pearce, 2002; Shin, 2011).

One of the issues that has been cited as having the greatest impact on international students' acclimation is loneliness. Cultural loneliness, according to Sawir et al. (2008), is caused by being away from one's usual surroundings. Those who isolate themselves from the new culture, according to Berry (1997), are more likely to experience high levels of cultural stress. Cultural stress arises when the native culture and the foreign culture are substantially dissimilar (Thomson et al., 2006). Most overseas students face difficulties befriending students from the local culture (Sun & Chen, 1999; Sawir et al., 2008). Making friends can be difficult, which can lead to feelings of homesickness, which is a common issue among international students (Kegel, 2009).

International students will most likely have to adjust not just to new geographical conditions, languages, and social and cultural standards, but also to a new educational system (Wang, 2009; Mughal, 2016). The system of education in Malaysia may vary considerably from that of an international student's native country, which may have an impact on how a student approach and succeed in the classroom. International students experience the same obstacles as most migrant groups, but they also confront the added, specific pressures of student life, and they must adjust quickly in order to benefit from their education (Johnson & Sandhu, 2007; Mughal, 2016). In addition to coping with the regular academic strain, it becomes vital to swiftly master abilities that persons from the new country have mastered over a lifetime (Pedersen, 1991; Deb et al., 2015). Some students face extra challenges, such as cultural and

linguistic obstacles. Any form of impediment encountered during this potentially difficult transition might have a significant impact on the international student's overall experience. Psychological adjustment, according to, Ward and Kennedy (1996, p. 291), is a condition of mental well-being that "is predicted by personality, life changes, and social support variables." These are the sorts of variables that this research looks into: Language and cultural barriers, as well as low self-esteem and social support.

Saudi students' educational and cultural backgrounds can't help them succeed at foreign colleges anymore. In this context, Shabeeb (1997) discovered that the biggest challenge influencing Saudi and Arabian Gulf students' adjustment was the language barrier. Furthermore, Saudi students are accustomed to teaching and learning methodologies that are distinct from those used in foreign culture (Kampman, 2011). The gender segregation feature of Saudi culture is another cultural aspect that may have a significant impact on Saudi international students. In schools and universities, male and female students are separated. They are taught by teachers of the same gender in distinct schools and institutions. Being in a non-segregated culture is a novel experience for Saudi students who must adjust. According to Shaw (2010), Saudi students in the United States are exposed to a different culture and learning approaches. The key differences highlighted were mixed gender courses, the negotiation culture of American classrooms, and the availability of many resources, and they used tactics such as goal-setting, building study skills, studying in groups, and time management to overcome these discrepancies. Religion, the mixed gender component of American culture, and dietary restrictions are among the factors that limit Saudi students' participation in social life in America, according to Abdel Razek (2012). The effect of Saudi gender separation culture on Saudi students in Australia was studied by Alhazmi

and Nyland (2010). According to the findings, being raised in a mixed-gender culture has an effect on Saudi students' cultural identities.

1.3   Research Problem Statement

To say the least, the new milieu of culture, material commodities, and bureaucratic systems is perilous. Differentiation is a universal experience. New international students are more likely to feel lonely, have reduced self-esteem, and experience psychological disorders as a result of these situations. All of this may have an impact on their academic achievement.

International students are in a unique position of navigating new social networks that may be affected by cultural and language barriers that local students often do not have to face. Several studies have indicated the importance of social support for international students' adjustment. These studies have demonstrated that higher perceived social support is associated with fewer depressive and anxiety-related symptoms, better sociocultural adjustment, and lower levels of acculturative and academic stress (Dao et al., 2007; Misra et al., 2003; Sümer et al., 2008). In addition, Bektaş and colleagues (2009) found that maintaining a connection to the home community was essential in psychological adjustment in the new environment. Social support appears to play a significant role in international students' mental health outcomes and adjustment, and should be included when studying international students. Zhai (2002) argued that providing effective social support for these student will help them to adjust in their new academic environment. However, he argued that if academic and social support mechanisms available to international students is not as relevant this will not be helpful for them. One of the goals of this study look into social

support provided to the Saudi students' in Malaysia and how it affect their psychological adjustment.

Saudi Arabian students especially in their first year in Malaysia facing language and culture difficulties. Alqahtani (2011, 2015) argued that Saudi Arabian students facing a number of difficulties that experienced by international students, including problems with language and cultural issues. He argued that a great deal of the literature stresses that English language proficiency is vital to the success of Saudi Arabian international students. a lack of English proficiency may be the single greatest barrier experienced by international students, since it affects both their ability to academically succeed (which itself influences their psychological adjustment) but also it impacts their ability to engage socially with other students (Yeh & Inose 2003). In addition, the literature highlights the ways in which a University environment, and a local community, can be more (or less) receptive and welcoming to international students. As a result, a questions about the effect of the culture and the language difficulties on the psychological adjustment of the students was added to the present study. The present study questioned about the experiences of Saudi Arabian postgraduates students in Malaysia, to see how much of a cultural divide they face when enrolling in Malaysian colleges, how that impacts their psychological adjustment, and what tactics they use to deal with it. Educational psychologists, college counsellors, and student affairs administrators are hoped to use the findings to better understand how to care for this vulnerable group.

Furthermore, there are significant gaps in the current literature on overseas students' psychological adjustment (Rundles, 2013). While studies have looked into the effects of social support and self-esteem or self-efficacy on overseas students'

adjustment (Al-Sharideh & Goe, 1998; Yeh & Inose, 2003; Gong & Fan, 2006; Johnson & Sandhu, 2007; Danielsen et al., 2009; Wu et al., 2015), several factors such as the language and the cultural differences have have received insufficient consideration in the literature. Bronfenbrenner (1979, p. 18) claims that, "...environmental events and conditions outside any immediate setting including the person can have a substantial influence on behavior and development within that setting" (Allen, 2016). Whether or not some groups are directly affected, the cultural atmosphere can have a significant impact on how individuals psychologically adjust to new events.

Moreover, certain groups of overseas students have received significantly more attention in the literature than others. Asian communities, in particular, have been understudied in previous study (Searle & Ward, 1990; Kashima & Loh, 2006; Amer & Hovey, 2007; Dao et al. 2007; Rudmin, 2009; Wang, 2009; Wu et al., 2015). Arab overseas students are one demographic that has been almost completely ignored in past study (Rundles, 2013). This could be due to a variety of causes, including the stigma that mental health services have in many Arab societies, as well as the need to involve others outside of one's immediate family (Elzubeir, et al., 2010). This is all the more incentive to dig deeper into the experiences of Arab overseas students so that stronger outreach and intervention services may be developed. According to studies, Arab immigrants, particularly Muslim Arabs, have a tough difficulty adjusting to life in non-Arab countries (Rundles, 2013). Arabs have their specific culture and habits, and likely have specific qualities and attitudes about self-esteem and social support affecting their psychological adjustment that need to be attended to (Johnson, 2004; Gaudet et al., 2005; Abu-Ras & Abu-Bader, 2008; Awad, 2010; Padela & Heisler, 2010).

Researchers in the past have advocated for a more thorough investigation of the psychological components of overseas students' transition (as well as the effect of discrimination). (Gao & Gudykunst, 1990; Tseng & Newton, 2002; Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Sümer et al., 2008). This research intends to promote this process and add to the literature on the topic of the language and the cultural difficulties among a group of Arab international students in which social support, self-esteem, and linguistic and cultural barriers influence the psychological adjustment of a particular group of Arab overseas students. Particularly, the goal of this research is to look into Saudi Arabian postgraduate students' psychological adjustment in Malaysia.

Malaysian recruiters have broadened their pursuit for overseas students by focusing on a number of Middle Eastern nations, including the UAE, Oman, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanon (Sedgwick, 2004). The number of Arab students enrolled in Malaysian institutions of higher education has increased as a result of these efforts (Sirat, 2008). Arab overseas students generally, and Saudi Arabian students particularly, have been under-represented in the literature despite their lengthy presence. Furthermore, studies on social support, discrimination and psychological adjustment in Arab communities have occasionally neglected to provide materials in Arabic, which may be far more accessible and understandable to respondents than English equivalents.

The research in this study tries to determine what needs to be added to the present understanding of psychological adjustment in general (and that of Saudi Arabian overseas students in particular) through an exploratory look into the literature as well as quantitative data gathering. Furthermore, the study investigates the effects of characteristics such as self-esteem, social support, and linguistic and cultural

problems on the psychological adjustment of Saudi Arabian overseas students in Malaysia. To improve the possibility that questions will be completely understood, all materials and surveys will be available in both English and Arabic.

1.4 Research Objectives

The study is directed by the following objectives

1. To examine contribution of the self-esteem in psychological adjustment of Saudi Arabian postgraduate students in the Malaysian universities.

2. To examine contribution of social-support in psychological adjustment of the Saudi Arabian postgraduate students in the Malaysian universities.

3. To examine contribution of language and culture difficulties in the psychological adjustment of Saudi Arabian postgraduate students in the Malaysian universities.

4. To identify main methods that Saudi Arabian postgraduate students used to improve their psychological adjustment in their life in Malaysia.

1.5 Research Questions

1. Is self-esteem significantly contributed to psychological adjustment of Saudi Arabian postgraduate students in Malaysian universities?

2. Is social support significantly contributed to psychological adjustment of Saudi Arabian postgraduate students in Malaysian universities?

3. Are language and culture difficulties significantly contributed to psychological adjustment of Saudi Arabian postgraduate students in Malaysian universities?

4. What are the main methods that Saudi Arabian postgraduate students used to improve their psychological adjustment in their life in Malaysia?

1.6   Research Significant

International education is a fantastic experience that allows students to gain a variety of useful advantages. However, research shows that overseas students encounter cultural disparities between their native culture and the new culture, which can have a significant impact on their academic performance. International students encounter a new study setting, a foreign language, financial and housing challenges, as well as cultural differences and traditions (Borland & Pearce, 2002; Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007; Trice, 2007). If the pupils' home culture differs significantly from the new culture, the issues become even more complex. Although adjusting to a new study setting is not simple, past research has shown that international students often take a positive attitude toward overcoming obstacles and have the ability to adapt to their new surroundings (Vole & Renshaw, 1996; Wu, 2011). Therefore, this study is believed to be highly significant to the new students in Malaysia, specifically the new Saudi Arabian students.

Since the inception of the King Abdullah Scholarships Program in 2005, the number of Saudi students enrolled in Malaysian colleges has increased significantly in recent years, with approximately 2000 Saudi government-sponsored students in 2011 (Ministry of Higher Education, 2012). Saudi students may not encounter financial hardships because they are financially sponsored by the government, but they will be exposed to a new atmosphere that is drastically different from their home country,

which may have a substantial impact on their studies. Therefore, this study is believed to be highly significant to the Saudi Arabian authorities in the scholarship programs.

Despite the considerable growth in Saudi students enrolled in Malaysian colleges, little study has been conducted to understand their experiences and how they bridge cultural gaps. As a result, the purpose of this study was to look at the language and cultural challenges that Saudi Arabian students face, as well as the coping techniques they employ to adjust to their new surroundings. The outcomes of this study will considerably improve international students' educational experiences in general, and Saudi international students' educational experiences in particular. The data will also assist Malaysian education providers in developing a stronger foreign education strategy.

In addition to that, the study also deployed a well-known and qualified models and theories to be used in determining and measuring the influencing factor of the psychological adjustments of the Saudi Arabian students in Malaysia. As a result, the current research is thought to be both theoretically and practically significant.

1.7   Research Conceptual and Operational Definitions

The following are the definitions of the operational terminology used in this study:

1.7.1   Psychological Adjustment

Conceptually, Adjustment is frequently ambiguously defined in the available literature. The phrase can be applied to a wide range of topics and has historically been difficult to quantify. Adaptation, acclimation, and acculturation are common

synonyms in the literature, and many studies also emphasize the "cultural shock" or acculturative stress that migratory communities encounter. These terms can refer to a variety of topics in life, including psychology, culture, and physical health, all of which can have an impact on a person's ability to adjust to new circumstances (Ward & Kennedy, 1996). While prior definitions of acculturation or adjustment described a one-way process in which international populations must adapt to the host culture's characteristics, Berry (2006) characterizes acculturation as a complicated process that occurs when two or more cultures are in continuous touch. Adjustment is more complex and difficult than two cultures colliding and the minority adopting the majority's characteristics (Padilla & Perez, 2003).

Operationally, this research follow Berry, (2005) and Searle & Ward (1990) who defined psychological adjustment as feelings of well-being and life satisfaction in the host culture. The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) was used to measure the psychological adjustment.

1.7.2 Self-esteem

Conceptually, Mruk (2006) says that overall self-esteem, is the combination of sentiments of competence and worthiness, as well as the ability to face life's challenges. In their study, Satir and Baldwin (1983) consider healthy self-esteem to be a crucial component of mental health. These researchers claim that low self-esteem is one of the most harmful human aspects in the world, and that it causes issues in people's lives. In his study, Mruk (2006) points out that poor self-esteem is included as a symptom in around 24 disorders in the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Psychological Disorders. Although high self-esteem has been

linked to negative impacts such as defensiveness and narcissism, the majority of studies supports higher self-positive esteem's effects on psychological well-being (Mruk, 2006; Wetzel, 2007).

Operationally, Self-esteem refers to experiences of self-respect and self-love that are generated by individuals based on self-evaluation, and it requires perceived respect from others, collective support, and societal approval to function. Student's self-esteem reflects their perceived self-worth and belief in their abilities; related studies showed that high self-esteem played an important role in improving psychological adjustment, whereas low self-esteem was closely related to various issues in interpersonal relationships, adaptation, and psychosomatic problems (Korrelboom et al., 2012).

1.7.3   Social Support

Conceptually, Social support is the provision of both psychological and tangible resources to satisfy an individual's need for concern, approval, belonging, and security (Cohen, 2004; Kaplan et al., 1977).

Operationally, Social-Support is the support that provided by the Malaysia universities to the Saudi Arabian postgraduate students to adjust psychologically in the new educational environment in Malaysia.

1.7.4   Language and culture difficulties

Conceptually, Language and culture difficulties are the difficulties that face international student when they move to new environment that are related to the

differences in language and culture between the new and the home environments (Sherry et al., 2010).

Operationally, this study follow the conceptual definition, and consider it as the difficulties that face Saudi students and related to the differences of language and culture between Saudi Arabia and Malaysia.

1.8 Research Conceptual Framework

A conceptual model is constructed as indicated in Figure 1.1 to place these theoretical foundations and the selected model onto the ground of this investigation. Constructing a conceptual framework to connect these elements will result in more effective and successful practice (Ravitch & Riggan, 2016). As shown in Figure 1.1, this study looks at four elements that influence the psychological adjustment of Saudi Arabian postgraduate students in Malaysia: self-esteem, social support, and linguistic and cultural problems. Tinto's model was judged to be the most applicable for this study's theoretical background.

Figure 1.1

Research Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables

| Self-Esteem |

| Social Support |

| Language and Culture Difficulties |

Tinto's Model of Students Retention

Dependent Variable

| Psychological Adjucement of the Saudi Arabian Postgraduate Students in Malaysia |
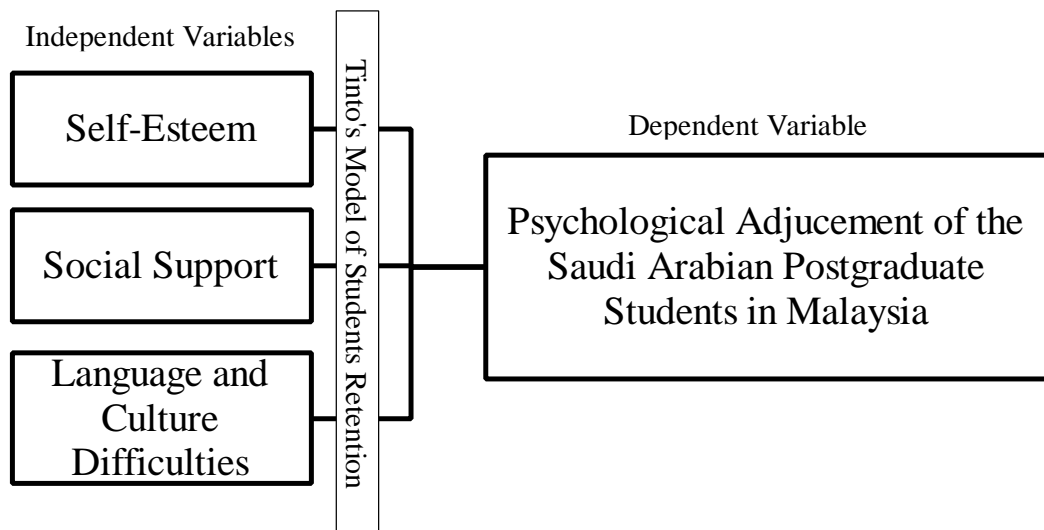
1.9 Chapter Summary

The primary goal of research is to look into the elements that influence the psychological adjustment among the Saudi Arabian postgraduate students who are studying in Malaysian universities. Another goal the study investigates is the strategies that are used by the Saudi Arabian postgraduate students in Malaysia to overcome the language and the cultural difficulties. This chapter was written in such a way that it responds to these objectives. The chapter began with outlining the study's background, including an introduction of UDL and the variables that contributed to its acceptability and influence in teaching practices for students with ID around the world, including in Saudi Arabia. The chapter then went on to offer the issue statement, which included certain gaps in the research surrounding the implementation of UDL and its impact on teaching practices for students with ID in Saudi Arabia. Then came the research objectives and research questions. The significance of the study was presented in the next chapter, which was separated into two sections: theoretical significance and

practical significance. After that, the chapter is summarized. The literature review in the theories used in the study is addressed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Introduction

To achieve the objectives of this study, this chapter was designed to give an overview on the related literature of these objectives. The chapter gives an introduction of international students and their relevance, as well as providing further information about Saudi international students in Malaysia. Followed by an overview on the psychological adjustment and the psychological adjustment of the international students. Next to that, the chapter is discussing the contributing factors to the psychological adjustment of the Saudi students in Malaysia. Furthermore, a number of theories and models are deployed in this study. This chapter provides an overview of the models and theories that made up the study's theoretical framework. The conceptual framework that evokes the variables of this study, as well as the relationships between them, is also described. The following section provides an overview about international students.

2.2   International Students

International students play a crucial role in the internationalization of higher education institutions. They enrich institutions and local communities through influencing faculty research interests and, over time, bringing about curricular change (Peterson et al., 1999). However, higher education was not always as inclusive as it is today. International students were not always the sought-after commodity they are today. The

historical foundations of higher education suggest that the academy was not as representative as one would imagine. In fact, one of the colonial institutions' principal goals was to "identify and confirm a colonial elite" (Thelin, 2007, p. 25).

It was not until the beginning of the twentieth century that international education in terms of recruiting international students and sending students abroad was identified as being critical to countries interests (De Wit, 2002). Even then, the number of international students as a percentage of the total enrolment in the institutions, remained relatively insignificant until the end1949. In 1941, for example, there were approximately 10,000 international students in the United States (Open Doors Report, 1948-49), a nominal 0.8% of the approximately 1.3 million students enrolled in America's colleges and universities (Thelin, 2007).

Following World War II, there was a newfound understanding that educational and cultural exchanges were critical to developing mutual understanding between the nations. This, coupled with the fact that some higher education institutions had acquired a higher international profile (Brubacher, 2017), resulted in the becoming a globally recognized educational destination. The decades that followed World War II saw an expansion of higher education, in both the number and types of institutions, and explosion in enrolment, which included a drastic increase in the number of international students studying abroad. It was also during this time that the colleges and universities began experiencing a fundamental shift in views regarding the benefits of diversity and the need to be more inclusive. It was through this recognition that inclusiveness and diversity bring numerous benefits to society and the academic community that the modern institution of higher education began to emerge.

Today there is renewed vigour on the part of the institutions to recruit international students, evidenced by the more than 671,000 international students enrolled in the nation's colleges and universities during the fall 2008 semester (Bhandari & Chow, 2009). The rationale for international student recruitment has evolved to include the educational, cultural, and economic benefits these students bring to campus and the nation as a whole.

The numerous academic benefits of international students are undeniable. International students make significant contributions to campus learning by contributing to the overall diversity of the campus (Peterson et al., 1999). They provide an opportunity for local students to interact with individuals from other cultures and contribute to the teaching and research agendas of the institutions of higher education by filling many of the graduate assistant, post-doc, and research positions in the colleges and universities. Without the contributions of international students many institutions academic and research programs would be significantly compromised.

From a cultural perspective, higher education represents the best opportunity to bridge differences by exporting knowledge, values, and culture via the international and exchange programs established by this country's institutions of higher education (Eggspuehler, 2005). Given the reality that the world is becoming increasingly smaller and contact between different cultures is now commonplace, multicultural and global understanding are no longer viewed as added value outcomes of internationalized academic programs. They have become intentional outcomes designed to prepare students to compete in a global marketplace.