ACADEMIC AND LIVING EXPERIENCES OF INTERNATIONAL FEMALE STUDENTS AT A SAUDI HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

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ABSTRACT:
The current study aims to explore the living and educational experiences of international female students at a public university in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This study employed a descriptive methodology, utilizing a questionnaire to collect data. A total of 120 international female students participated in the research. The results indicated that the university experiences of the students were largely positive, with many expressing high levels of satisfaction regarding the services provided by the university. Additionally, the educational experiences of the international female students were reported to be favorable, with significant satisfaction reported for various academic services. However, the study identified financial challenges as one of the most significant difficulties faced by the participants. Notably, no differences in the results were observed based on demographic variables. The study concludes with several recommendations aimed at enhancing student services for non-local students at Saudi universities.

Keywords: Higher education in Saudi Arabia, international students, foreign students, university services, educational challenges

Introduction:

With the increasing trend of internationalizing higher education, institutions worldwide are striving to attract international students as part of their strategies to enhance cultural diversity, foster academic cooperation, and achieve educational excellence (Albeshir, 2020; Al-Mutairi). Recent decades have witnessed a significant increase in the number of international students, with the global number projected to reach approximately 7 million by 2023 (UNESCO, 2024). The largest host countries for international students are the English-speaking countries: the United States, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom. Middle Eastern universities have also experienced a surge in the number of international students in recent years, and Saudi Arabia is among the countries that have made significant efforts to host international students in its educational institutions (Albeshir et al., 2025; Al-Mutairi, 2025). Since the launch of higher education in the second half of the twentieth century, international students have represented a significant percentage of the student body(Al-Salman, 1999; Al-Zahrani, 2007). According to statistics from the Saudi Ministry of Education (2024), approximately 64,000 international students are studying at Saudi universities. Prestigious universities are committed to providing comprehensive, high-quality academic and university services.

Total quality is essential in modern educational organizations, mainly when higher education institutions serve a large number of international students. Although international and local students study the same majors and courses, researchers have found that international students face experiences and challenges that differ significantly from those of local students. International students face cultural, economic, and academic challenges that differ significantly from those of local students. Studies have found that international students face challenges in adapting to the host community and struggle to build friendships and social relationships. International students also experience varying degrees of culture shock. Furthermore, linguistic challenges for international students who do not speak the official language of instruction, and the host community are among the greatest academic and social obstacles(Akanwa, 2015;Khanal, J., & Gaulee, 2019;Mahmud et al., 2010; Habib et al., 2014;Oduwaye et al., 2023).

Statement of Problem:

The Saudi government has an ambitious vision for the higher education sector as part of Saudi Vision 2030, which aims to attract more international students to study at Saudi colleges and universities. International students in different countries encounter substantial challenges, including adaptation, social barriers, economic pressures, and academic difficulties(Akanwa, 2015;Khanal, J., & Gaulee, 2019;Mahmud et al., 2010; Habib et al., 2014;Oduwaye et al., 2023). Therefore, for the Saudi experience to succeed in transforming Saudi universities into multicultural educational organizations by attracting non-local students, it is necessary to conduct a study of the reality, experiences, and expertise of international students in Saudi Arabia. This study aims to assess the current situation at these universities, address weaknesses, and enhance positive aspects. There is a significant lack of scholarly literature on the experiences of non-local students in Saudi higher education institutions, calling for further research to fill this gap. The current study

seeks to explore the experiences of female international students at a public university in Riyadh. It is worth noting that education in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia is segregated *by* gender, with males studying in separate buildings from females due to cultural reasons. Therefore, the study focused on examining the experiences of female international students. The importance of this study lies in the scarcity of research on the educational experiences of international female students attending a Saudi university.

Research Question

What are the living and educational experiences of international female students at a public university in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?

Research Objectives:

- To explore the educational experiences of international female students at university.
- To analyze the challenges and difficulties facing international female students in their academic and living lives.
- To identify the factors that facilitate or hinder international female students' adaptation to the university environment.
- To provide recommendations for improving the quality of the educational and living experience of international female students in Saudi higher education.

Theoretical framework ;

The role of education services in higher education institutions:

Educational services are a primary mission of higher education. Its importance is certainly not limited to promoting academic achievement, but it is also necessary for enhancing the overall quality of school life for students. Furthermore, they help students adjust to university and succeed, enabling them to remain in their studies. In the competitive higher education environment of the 21st century, whether at the regional or global level, universities must provide comprehensive educational services tailored to the diverse needs of students, arising from both academic and cultural challenges. Education services accreditation and bodies in higher education need to require such education in order to evaluate the quality of institutions and their programs. Educational services encompass various components, the most important of which include the quality and methodology of teaching, educational materials, academic support both in and out of class, educational guidance, the use of technology for educational purposes, flexibility in course delivery, research, and applied activities. These services significantly contribute to supporting effective learning outcomes, student satisfaction, and a sense of belonging to the institution. Ensuring the overall quality of educational services is particularly important for non-native speakers of the language in which the university teaches, as they are likely to encounter numerous difficulties with a new language, a different culture, new teaching methods, the demand for additional time to understand academic concepts, and academic language. Thus, the provision of educational support services tailored to these specificities — for example, the use of plain language, the promotion of a positive faculty relationship, and/or

the provision of alternative or complementary academic resources — enables this group of students to succeed or excel in their academic life.

International students at higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia :

The number of non-citizen students in higher education institutions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 2021 amounted to approximately 64,874 students , of whom approximately 46,723 students enrolled in public universities, while the remainder enrolled in private educational institutions. According to data from the Ministry of Education, public universities accounted for the largest proportion of international students, constituting approximately 3.82 % of the total number of enrollments at these universities, which amounted to more than 1.2 One million students . The percentage of female international students at public universities reached 37% of the total international student population, with 17,417 female students (Ministry of Education, 2022; UNESCO, 2024).

Literature review;

Al-Awlaqi (2018) studied service quality at Ibb University in the Republic of Yemen. The study aimed to explore the relationship between the quality of educational services and enhancing student satisfaction at the university under study. Three hundred seventy-five male and female students studying at university colleges participated in the study. The researcher adopted a descriptive-analytical approach and used a questionnaire as a tool for collecting information. The researcher found that student satisfaction with educational services was low at this Yemeni university. The study also found weak positivity in the dimensions of educational quality measured in the study—tangible aspects, reliability, responsiveness, safety, assurance, and empathy—as the results indicated that these dimensions did not meet the students' expectations. The study found no differences in student satisfaction with educational services and sample variables, namely gender, academic specialization, and academic level.

Mahrez and Al-Khalil (2019) examined the impact of knowledge application requirements on improving educational services at Tishreen University in Syria. The researchers used a questionnaire as the primary tool for collecting data in the study. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: the first section addressed knowledge application requirements, and the second section addressed the quality of educational services at Tishreen University. The questionnaire consisted of 32 paragraphs. The study sample consisted of 319 faculty members at the university. The study demonstrated a direct relationship between reliance on knowledge application requirements and the improvement of educational services at the university. The study also found a statistically significant relationship between organizational culture and the improvement of educational services. The study also found that faculty members' sharing of their knowledge and values contributes to improving the quality of services they provide, thus integrating the work of all departments and colleges of the university under study. The study recommended that

the university administration focus on researching student satisfaction with educational services by activating a complaints box and conducting student opinion polls.

Almutairi (2020) conducted a study to explore the experiences of international students at a Saudi university, aiming to understand the challenges they face during their studies.. The study employed a qualitative methodology, involving interviews with 16 international students and 10 academic leaders. The study found that some international students experienced more culture shock than others, particularly non-Arab international students who faced language barriers. Additionally, female students encountered greater challenges than their male counterparts.. At the same time, the academic leaders and faculty members in this study seemed to understand the experiences of international students.

Al-Qarni (2021) conducted a study to evaluate the student housing services provided by Umm Al-Qura University and propose a vision for improving them based on international experiences. The research utilized a descriptive and analytical method, focusing on a sample of 104 undergraduate students who received scholarships at Umm Al-Qura University in western Saudi Arabia. The findings indicated that student satisfaction with housing management was high. Additionally, the research identified a need for open dialogue meetings between students and housing management. It highlighted the importance of sharing experiences, transferring expertise, and incorporating different viewpoints through recreational trips and tours.. The study also revealed the availability of spaces in the housing for various student activities. Among the most important findings was the need to build additional housing units, consider increasing the size of apartments and rooms when designing, and establish public gardens around student housing to increase the oxygen level and provide an outlet for students' leisure time. The study also recommended establishing communication channels between students and the student housing management after they graduate from the university, to benefit from cultural diversity through language courses and cultural exchange programs.

Albeshir (2023) conducted a study to evaluate the quality of university services at King Saud University from the perspective of international students in the College of Education. The research utilized a descriptive and analytical method, focusing on a sample of 104 undergraduate students who received scholarships at Umm Al-Qura University in western Saudi Arabia. The findings indicated that student satisfaction with housing management was high. Additionally, the research identified a need for open dialogue meetings between students and housing management. It highlighted the importance of sharing experiences, transferring expertise, and incorporating different viewpoints through recreational trips and tours. The study employed a descriptive-analytical approach as its methodology and a questionnaire as a tool for collecting information. The study sample consisted of 93 male international students from various academic levels and specializations in the College of Education. Among the most significant findings of the study was a high level of international student satisfaction with university services prior to arrival in the Kingdom. The results also indicated a high level of international student satisfaction with the quality of public facilities and the quality of services provided by the International Student Administration. The study results also indicate a high level of international student satisfaction with the quality of the educational environment and facilities, as well as with

academic services. The study found that international students are delighted with the university services at King Saud University.

Commentary on previous studies:

 The researchers relied on previous studies to develop the study tool, the questionnaire, to answer the research questions. They also relied on the recommendations of previous studies to add phrases to some dimensions to measure service quality in certain aspects. This study differs from previous studies in its focus on the undergraduate and academic experiences of female international students at a Saudi university. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, there is a dearth of studies on the subject of female international students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which distinguishes this study from other previous studies.

Study methodology:

The research employed a descriptive-analytical approach, which involves identifying variables related to the study and analyzing data obtained through the study tool using statistical methods and techniques to achieve results that support the study objectives.

Study community and sample:

The current study population consists of all female students. In one of the Saudi universities, a study was conducted in 2007. Due to the difficulty of conducting a comprehensive census of all members of the study community, which comprises 2115 international students, the study employed a simple random sampling method.

Statistical methods:

The research used the SPSS statistical program to analyze the study data using a set of statistical methods as follows:

- Cronbach's alpha coefficient is used to calculate the reliability level of the study tool

- Pearson's correlation coefficient is used to determine the level of internal consistency and validity of the study tool

- Ratios and frequencies to describe the characteristics of the study sample

- The arithmetic meaning and standard deviation describe the level of response of the study sample members to the study tool statements.

- Differences test (t) ANOVA) to identify the differences in the response of the study sample individuals that are attributed to demographic variables.

Study tool

The study tool consisted of three parts:

Part One: Demographic Information of Participants

Part Two: The first axis, which concerns general university experiences, contains 44 statements divided into six dimensions:

● **Services before arriving in the Kingdom**
● **General University Services**
● **International Student Management**
● **Daily Life**
● **Financial Status**
● **Social, Psychological, and Health Factors**

Part Three: The second axis, which concerns academic experiences, contains 49 statements divided into ten dimensions:

● **General Academic Experiences**
● **Arabic Reading Skills**
● **Arabic Writing**
● **Arabic Listening**
● **Arabic Speaking**
● **Exams**
● **Professors, Teaching Methods, and Assessment**
● **University References and Libraries**
● **Distance Education**
● **Relationships with Local Students**

Table (1) Likert scale correction method

Gradual	I strongly disagree	I disagree	I agree	I strongly agree
the weight	1	2	3	4
arithmetic mean value	1-1.750	1.751 – 2.500	2.501 -3.250	3,251 – 4,000
Impact Level	very low	low	high	very high

Validity and reliability of the study tool

The researcher presented the questionnaire to several faculty members from the College of Education at King Saud University, who serve as arbitrators. They made some comments on specific phrases. The comments were taken into account, and the questionnaire was produced in its final form. The internal consistency validity was also calculated to ensure the reliability of the study tool used using Pearson's correlation coefficient. It was found that all correlation coefficients for all questions of the study tool were statistically significant at a significance level of (0.01). This indicates that the tool possesses internal consistency validity and is suitable for the study's purposes. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was also calculated for the study tool, and it was found that the value of the reliability coefficient Alpha was greater than 0.7, reaching 0.9 39, which confirms the validity and correlation of the study tool phrases and the high level of reliability of the tool used in the study.

Results:

Characteristics of the study sample

1.   **Distribution of study sample members according to mother tongue**

Table of distribution of the study sample according to the mother tongue variable

Category	ratio	repetition
Arabic	37.5 %	45
Non-Arabic	62.5%	75
the total	100%	120

It is clear from the table that there are 45 students from the group. The study sample represents (37.5%) of the total study sample whose mother tongue is Arabic, while there are (75) students among them, representing (62.5%) whose mother tongue is not Arabic.

2.   Distribution of study sample members according to years of residence in the Kingdom

Table of distribution of the study sample according to the variable of years of residence in the Kingdom

Category	ratio	repetition
Less than 5 years	87.5%	105
From 5 to 10 years	4.2%	5
More than 10 years	8.3%	10
the total	100%	120

It is clear from the table that there are 105 students in total. The study sample represents (87.5%) of the total study sample; their residence in the Kingdom is less than 5 years, while there are (5) students among them, representing (4.2%), of their residence in the Kingdom from 5 to 10 years. Finally, there are (10) teachers, representing (8.3%), whose residence in the Kingdom is more than 10 years.

3.   Distribution of study sample members according to the educational qualification variable

Table of distribution of the study sample according to the educational qualification variable

Category	ratio	repetition
Bachelor's degree	45.8%	55
Master's	50%	60
Other	4.2%	5
the total	100%	120

It is clear from the table that there are 55 students from the group. The study sample represents (45.8%) of the total study sample; their educational qualification is a bachelor's degree, while there are (60) students, representing (50%), whose educational qualification is a master's degree. Finally, there are (5) teachers, representing (4.2%), whose educational qualification is other.

4. **Distribution of study sample members according to the academic evaluation variable**

Table of distribution of the study sample according to the academic evaluation variable

Category	ratio	repetition
excellent	70.8%	85
very good	29.2%	35
the total	100%	120

It is clear from the table that there are 85 students from the group. The study sample represents (70.8%) of the total study sample, and their academic evaluation is excellent, while there are (35) students among them, representing (29.2%), whose academic evaluation is excellent.

Analysis and interpretation of results

To answer this question and understand university experiences, the arithmetic mean of these dimensions was calculated to reveal the general university experiences. The table shows the results for this axis.

Responses of the study sample members on the first axis: General university experiences

Table of arithmetic mean, standard deviation, rank, and level of agreement on the dimensions of service quality

Dimension	items	standard deviation	arithmetic mean	Level of approval
Services before arriving in the Kingdom	1	0.65	3.28	strongly agree
General University Services	2	0.61	3.24	agree
International Student Administration	3	0.68	3.21	agree
Daily life	5	0.92	2.68	agree
Financial situation	6	0.81	2.1	Disagree
Social, psychological, and health factors	4	0.73	2.99	agree

The table shows students' satisfaction levels with six key dimensions of student services and experience in the Kingdom. The dimension "Services before arriving in the Kingdom" tops the list with the highest mean (3.28) and a relatively low standard deviation (0.65), indicating a high level of agreement among students regarding the effectiveness of the pre-arrival preparations and procedures to facilitate their transition. This complete satisfaction reflects their confidence in the information and support they received prior to travel.

This was followed by "General University Services," with a mean of 3.24 and a standard deviation of 0.61, indicating reasonable satisfaction and stability in students' evaluations of the quality of academic facilities and educational activities. The "Scholarship Management" dimension ranked third, with a mean of 3.21 and a standard deviation of 0.68. Students generally accepted the procedures for obtaining and disbursing scholarships, although there was some variation in opinions, indicating a need to improve certain aspects of administrative procedures.

Regarding "social, psychological, and health factors," the average score was 2.99 with a standard deviation of 0.73, indicating an average level of satisfaction and variation in students' impressions of the psychological, social, and health support provided to them. At the same time, "daily life" came with an average of 2.68 and a relatively high standard deviation (0.92), indicating a wide variation in students' daily experience and their adaptation to the new environment.

The lowest level of satisfaction was recorded in the "Financial Situation" dimension, with a mean of 2.10 and a standard deviation of 0.81. Most students expressed disagreement about the adequacy of the financial support allocated to them. Therefore, it is recommended to take immediate action to enhance grants and financial aid and to reevaluate existing policies to ensure student comfort and enable them to focus on their studies without financial pressure.

First dimension: Quality of services before arriving in the Kingdom
The quality of services before arriving in the Kingdom was ranked in terms of relative importance (arithmetic mean value) from the perspective of the study sample. The results revealed an apparent disparity in student satisfaction with the scholarship stages and associated procedures. The clarity of application instructions received the highest satisfaction rate (mean 3.71, standard deviation 0.45), followed by the clarity of visa procedures at the university (3.58), the adequacy of the time allowed to obtain the visa (3.34), and the ease of completing paperwork after acceptance (3.25). Most students also considered the College of Education's admission requirements fair, and the reception by university representatives at the airport was good, with averages of approximately 3.13 and 3.34, respectively. However, there was some dispersion in opinions regarding the latter (standard deviation 0.86). Conversely, the difficulty of obtaining a scholarship from King Saud University emerged as the lowest satisfaction point (mean 2.34, standard deviation 0.63), indicating a need to simplify scholarship procedures and enhance the support provided to applicants.

The second dimension is general university services

The general university services were ranked in terms of relative importance (mean value) from the perspective of the study sample. The results showed that academic and educational facilities ranked first in terms of satisfaction, with a very high average (3.92, standard deviation 0.28), with 91.7% of students fully agreeing with the quality of the libraries, computer labs, and other facilities. Adequate university housing also received high satisfaction, with an average rating of 3.75 (standard deviation 0.43), with 75% fully agreeing and 25% agreeing.

On the other hand, students' opinions about public transportation between their residence and their study location varied, with an average of 2.71 (SD 0.94). A significant percentage of students (37.5%) were undecided or neutral, indicating an opportunity to improve comfort and efficiency. The lowest levels of satisfaction were related to sports and recreational facilities (2.58, SD 1.08), with 30% of students disagreeing with the adequacy of these facilities, suggesting a need for enhancement of recreational and physical activity services on campus.

The third dimension: International Student Administration

International Student Administration dimension was ranked in terms of relative importance (mean value). From the study sample's perspective, students expressed high satisfaction with the International Students Office's handling of their applications. 62.5% of them praised the office's treatment with complete respect and agreement, with an average of 3.63 (standard deviation 0.49). They also found communication with officials to be easy at all times, with an average rating of 3.54. The opportunities to learn about their local culture were widely appreciated by 75% of students, with an average of 3.71, reflecting the scholarship administration's interest in promoting cultural exchange. Nearly half of the respondents expressed complete satisfaction with the services provided in general, with an average rating of 3.50. In addition, students showed reasonable acceptance of education about Saudi laws and regulations (average 2.96) and information programs about available services (2.83). However, these aspects witnessed a relatively greater dispersion, which calls for enhancing the content of information sessions and diversifying communication mechanisms. The organization of implemented recreational activities received moderate attention, with an average rating of 2.83, as did the level of general awareness of academic and non-academic services and facilities (2.71), indicating an opportunity to improve recreational programs and increase information campaigns to meet students' expectations.

The Fourth Dimension: Daily Life

The phrases after daily life were arranged in terms of relative importance (arithmetic mean value) from the perspective of the study sample. The results showed that students benefit from the educational facilities available at the university, as this category recorded an average of 3.38 (standard deviation 0.64). Most of them also participate in university activities, such as meetings and training courses, with an average of 2.75, albeit with a noticeable degree of dispersion (standard deviation 1.09), which reflects a reasonable interest and a need to encourage greater participation. On the other hand, students' satisfaction with access to stores to purchase basic needs was average, with a mean of 2.71 (SD 0.98). At the same time, they expressed dissatisfaction with university restaurant

meals (2.17, SD 0.99) and with sports and recreational facilities (2.37, SD 1.08), highlighting the need to improve food options and enhance sports and recreational facilities to meet their needs better.

The fifth dimension: financial status

The financial status statements were arranged in terms of relative importance (arithmetic mean value) from the perspective of the study sample.

The financial dimension reveals that the majority of students are heavily dependent on the university's financial allowance to complete their studies, with 58.3% completely agreeing and 29.2% agreeing (mean 3.41, SD 0.81). However, 41.7% considered the allowance insufficient to provide a decent standard of living, with an average of 2.41 and a dispersion of opinions of 1.26, reflecting significant dissatisfaction and varying expectations. Students also indicated that most of them were forced to seek other external sources of funding or part-time work but that they often did not do so: 58.3% did not receive financial support from their families or entities outside the Kingdom (mean 1.58), and a similar percentage did not work part-time in Saudi Arabia (mean 1.50). Seventy-five percent indicated extreme difficulty in obtaining part-time work within the university (mean 1.41, SD 0.57), underscoring the urgent need to increase financial support and facilitate job opportunities for students.

The sixth dimension: social, psychological, and health factors

The social, psychological, and health factors were ranked in terms of relative importance (mean value) from the perspective of the study sample. The results showed variations in the psychological and physical adaptation aspects of the incoming students, as the feeling of missing their family and friends increased sharply (mean 3.75, SD 0.43), while their independence increased to a moderate extent (2.83, 0.95). Despite a significant percentage experiencing loneliness (3.12, 1.01) and psychological stress (3.08, 0.91), a large number reported an improvement in their general health after arriving (3.00, 0.71), and they noticed an increase in weight as a result of the new lifestyle (3.29, 0.89).

On the social and cultural level, neither the contrast with Saudi culture nor the exposure to discrimination constituted significant hardship, with the average agreement with embracing cultural differences being 2.50 (0.71) and with exposure to racism being 2.08 (1.12), indicating little significant hardship. However, friendships with Saudi students were moderate (2.79, 0.70), with weaker attachment to the local community (2.67, 0.74) and moderate cultural knowledge (2.70, 0.54), indicating an opportunity to enhance cultural and social interaction.

The academic environment received the highest levels of satisfaction, as 75% of students found it completely comfortable (3.75, 0.43), and they enjoyed high motivation to complete their studies (3.41, 0.81). They considered Saudi students to be friendly and easy to deal with (3.12, 0.83). They expressed a moderate desire to continue studying and living in Saudi Arabia (2.87, 0.93), reflecting the impact of a supportive academic environment on their motivation despite some personal challenges.

Axis II: Educational Experiences

Responses of the study sample members on the second axis: academic experiences

To answer this question and identify cultural, social, and economic experiences, the arithmetic mean of these dimensions was calculated to reveal academic experiences. The table shows the results for this axis.

Dimension	items	standard deviation	arithmetic mean	Degree of approval
General academic experiences	3	0.54	3.1	agree
Arabic reading skills	7	0.71	2.88	agree
Writing in Arabic	5	0.66	3.19	agree
Listening in Arabic	2	0.59	3.39	strongly agree
speaking Arabic	6	0.62	2.89	agree
Tests	10	1.08	2.34	Disagree
Professors, teaching methods, and assessment	1	0.68	3.46	strongly agree
University libraries	8	0.74	2.5	Disagree
Distance education	9	0.76	2.43	Disagree
local students	4	0.73	3.2	agree

The results showed that the students were most satisfied with the quality of professors, teaching methods, and assessment, with an average of 3.46 (standard deviation 0.68), followed by the Arabic listening skill, with an average of 3.39 (0.59), as the students expressed their complete agreement on these two dimensions.

In the middle rank, general academic experiences were rated as acceptable, with a mean of 3.10 (0.54). Students also rated their interaction with local students as good, with a mean of 3.20 (0.73), and Arabic writing was rated with a mean of 3.19 (0.66). Speaking and reading skills had similar means (2.89 and 2.88, respectively) with a standard deviation of around 0.70, indicating general satisfaction but less stability.

On the other hand, the tests recorded the lowest level of satisfaction with an average of 2.34 (SD 1.08), and students considered that distance education (2.43, 0.76) and university references and libraries (2.50, 0.74) did not live up to their expectations, which calls for reconsidering electronic assessment methods and improving the structure of research support and available literature

The results in the table show that the most important perceptions related to the services and procedures for joining and residing at King Saud University were ranked in descending order according to the arithmetic mean of agreement among the study sample members as follows :

First dimension: General Academic Experiences
Students demonstrated high satisfaction with the university's academic environment, with 75% stating that the environment was positive and conducive to learning (mean 3.75, SD 0.43) and 70.8% believing that educational services and facilities contributed to their academic success (mean 3.70, SD 0.45). The majority of students also reported acquiring important scientific information (mean 3.50, SD 0.58) and various skills (mean 3.54, SD 0.58), including scientific research skills (mean 3.58, SD 0.49). They were also delighted with their academic achievement (mean 3.58, SD 0.49) and with the encouragement of their supervisors (mean 3.62, SD 0.49). Although 58.3% of students felt that studying was somewhat challenging (mean 3.00, SD 0.64), they maintained strong motivation to complete the program (mean 3.41, SD 0.86). They also found that the university's regulations, procedures, and policies related to course registration were largely clear, with averages ranging from 3.33 to 3.54. The lowest point of satisfaction was the number of courses—60% of students disagreed with the large number of semester courses (mean = 2.17, SD = 0.85)—which calls for reconsidering the distribution of courses to enhance the quality of learning without placing an excessive burden on students.

The second dimension: Arabic reading skills
The results showed high confidence among students in their basic language abilities. The average rating for the statement "I have good language abilities that enable me to understand the content of university courses" was 3.41 (±0.49) on a scale of 1 to 4, with the entire sample either fully or partially agreeing. This suggests that they believe they possess the necessary linguistic skills to comprehend university material without significant difficulty. Their critical reading skills were also evident. The statement "I can read Arabic texts accurately and critically" received a mean of 3.33 (±0.47), with all students agreeing to varying degrees. This reflects their ability to analyze texts and understand their deeper meanings, which enhances the effectiveness of their academic learning.
In contrast, it was found that students did not find the content of university textbooks to be too difficult. The mean score for the statement "The content of university textbooks is too difficult" was 2.04 (±0.79), with 75% disagreeing or disagreeing. This indicates that the curriculum does not constitute an insurmountable cognitive burden for them. Regarding the use of the dictionary to learn the meanings of new words, the statement "I use the

dictionary to learn the meanings of some new words" yielded a mean of 2.58 (±1.11), indicating that about half of the sample regularly practices this habit. In contrast, others may prefer to rely on context or other learning methods. Finally, students perceived the extent of the reading requirements required to prepare for lectures and tests. The mean score for the statement "The reading requirements required to prepare for lectures and tests are high" was 3.04 (±0.67), with 79.2% agreeing. This reflects their perception of a relatively high reading load, although it does not negate their ability to handle it effectively.

The third dimension: writing in Arabic
The results showed that presenting written information on slides or a smart board contributes to enhancing understanding. The average rating for the statement "presenting lesson information in written form on educational slides or a smart board makes it easier to understand the lesson more than just listening to the professors' explanation" was 3.25 (±0.66), and 87.5% of the students agreed (37.5% completely agreed and 50% agreed). In comparison, 12.5% were neutral, indicating a preference for the visual voucher in addition to the oral explanation. As for writing skills in Arabic, the phrase "I have good writing skills in Arabic" achieved the highest mean (3.50 ± 0.50), with all students unanimously agreeing (50% completely agree and 50% agree), which reflects their confidence in their basic abilities in written expression. Regarding the independent writing of research and projects, the mean was 2.71 (±0.98), with 66.6% of respondents agreeing (20.8% completely agreeing and 45.8% agreeing). In comparison, the rest were divided between neutral (16.7%) and disagreeing (16.7%), indicating that approximately a third of students may require support when completing university research work. Finally, students showed confidence in achieving high grades in writing assignments, with the mean score for the statement "I can achieve high grades in assignments that require writing" being 3.33 (±0.62), with 91.7% agreeing (41.7% strongly agreeing and 50% agreeing), and 8.3% being neutral, indicating overall satisfaction with their academic writing performance.

The fourth dimension: listening in Arabic
The results showed that the students had a good understanding of the content of the oral academic explanation. In the statement "I can understand most of what the professors say," the mean was 3.50 (±0.64), with 91.6% of them agreeing (58.3% completely agreeing and 33.3% agreeing). In comparison, 8.3% were neutral, indicating a high ability to comprehend the lesson presented orally. Regarding colloquial dialects, the mean for the statement "I have difficulty understanding some colloquial words used by professors and students" was 2.83 (±0.75), with 66.6% agreeing (20.8% completely agreeing and 45.8% agreeing) and 33.3% being neutral. This suggests that there are some challenges in understanding colloquial vocabulary, but it is not very common. When it came to communicating with peers, the statement "I understand what my Saudi fellow students say with ease" had a mean of 3.54 (±0.50), with 70.9% agreeing (16.7% completely agreeing and 54.2% agreeing).

In comparison, 25% were neutral, and 4.2% disagreed. This reflects a good ability to communicate with students who speak both Modern Standard Arabic and the Saudi dialect. Finally, students indicated the ease of note-taking during the lesson in the statement, "It is easy to take notes and write down points during the lesson," where the mean was 3.71

(±0.54), with 100% of them agreeing (33.3% completely agree and 66.7% agree), which reflects their confidence in their ability to record important information during lectures.

The Fifth Dimension: Speaking Arabic
The results showed reasonable confidence among students in their Arabic speaking skills, as the average rating for the statement "I have good Arabic speaking skills" was 3.41 (±0.57), and 95.8% of them agreed with it (45.8% completely agreed and 50% agreed). In comparison, 4.2% were neutral, indicating their feelings about their ability to express themselves orally. Regarding the understanding of professors and colleagues of their comments and questions, the statement "Professors and students can easily understand my questions and comments" recorded a mean of 3.04 (±0.61), with 83.3% of them agreeing (20.8% completely agree and 62.5% agree), and 16.7% being neutral, indicating an acceptable level of clarity in verbal communication in the classroom. The statement "I avoid some class discussions and asking questions because of my weak language skills" had a low mean of 2.21 (±0.64), with 75% of students disagreeing with this statement (66.7% disagreed and 8.3% completely disagreed). In comparison, 25% agreed wholly or partially. This suggests that the majority of students do not feel that their language skills prevent them from participating or asking questions in class.

The Sixth Dimension: Examinations
The results showed that students did not feel they needed more time than their local counterparts to complete tests. The mean rating for the statement "I need more time than local students to complete tests" was 2.20 (±1.12) on a scale of 1 to 4, with 58.3% of them disagreeing with this claim (20.8% disagreed and 37.5% strongly disagreed), compared to 41.7% who agreed or strongly agreed. It was also found that they do not face significant difficulties in understanding the wording of the test questions. The statement "I face difficulties in understanding the content of some questions in the tests" received a mean of 2.37 (±1.04), and 62.5% of respondents rejected this statement (41.7% disagreed and 20.8% completely disagreed). In comparison, 37.5% expressed agreement or partial agreement. Regarding the preference for short objective test questions over essay questions, the mean for the statement "short objective test questions are better than essay questions" was 2.50 (±1.12), with opinions being relatively divided: 58.3% expressed a preference for objectivity (20.8% strongly agreed and 37.5% agreed), and 41.7% preferred essay questions or were neutral, indicating that there was no firm consensus on which type of questions was better.

The Seventh Dimension: Professors, Teaching Methods, and Assessment
The results showed a high level of consensus that professors provide a clear and organized learning environment. The score for the statement "Professors provide me with a clear study plan and assessment methods at the beginning of each course" was 3.54 (±0.58), with nearly 96% agreeing. Ninety-two percent of students also agreed that professors have sufficient skills to teach international students (3.41 ± 0.76), and 87.5% noted their diversity in teaching methods (3.38 ± 0.69). However, 91.6% felt they needed additional training to understand better the challenges facing international students (3.37 ± 0.64). Regarding the interactive and human aspect, the rating for the phrase "Professors show humility in their dealings with all learners and treat them with respect" was high (3.58 ±

0.49) with absolute agreement, and their encouragement of students to advance in their academic field exceeded an average of 3.67 (± 0.47) with consensus. Students' satisfaction with the quality of feedback reached 3.46 (± 0.50), and their ease of communication outside of lecture hours reached 3.62 (± 0.49), reflecting the continuous support from professors. In terms of evaluation and fairness, approximately 92% agreed that professors give grades fairly (3.37 ± 0.63). Regarding the language of instruction, the mean score for the statement "Professors avoid using colloquial language during lectures as much as possible" was 3.25 (± 0.78), with 87.5% agreeing, indicating their commitment to using classical Arabic to facilitate understanding.

The eighth dimension: university references and libraries

The results showed a split regarding the cost of academic references. Fifty percent of students agreed (12.5% strongly agreed and 37.5% agreed) that the references requested by professors were expensive, compared to approximately 50% (41.7% disagreed and 8.3% strongly disagreed), indicating a difference in perception regarding the cost of the required books. When asked whether the number of references and books required was excessive, 70.8% disagreed (58.3% disagreed and 12.5% strongly disagreed), while 29.2% agreed. This indicates that the majority of students believe the number of references required is appropriate and not excessive. Regarding the availability of references in the university library, the overwhelming majority of students were positive, with 75% agreeing (4.2% strongly agreeing and 70.8% agreeing) that the library provides most of the references they need, compared to 25% who were neutral or disagreed. This reflects students' satisfaction with the library's ability to meet their needs without requiring them to purchase all the books they need.

Ninth Dimension: Distance Education

The results showed that students did not prefer distance learning courses over in-person courses. The mean rating for the statement "I prefer distance learning or online courses over in-person courses" was low (2.13 ± 1.02), with 54% of respondents rejecting this option (33.3% disagreed and 20.8% strongly disagreed), compared to 33.3% who agreed or strongly agreed. In contrast, it was found that more than three-quarters of students (95.9%) face financial difficulties in securing the necessary technologies for online courses, as the phrase "I find it financially difficult to provide the technologies required for distance learning courses, such as providing a computer and a communication network" recorded a high mean (3.37 ± 0.57) with almost complete consensus on full agreement. Finally, students showed reasonable confidence in their skills in dealing with e-learning platforms, as the statement "I have good skills that enable me to deal with e-learning platforms with ease" received a mean of 2.79 ± 0.65, and 87.5% of them agreed (33.3% agreed and 54.2% completely agreed), indicating good technical readiness despite financial challenges.

Dimension 10: Local Students

Students indicated in their results that the level of social interaction with local peers is acceptable but faces some challenges. The average rating for the statement "It is easy to communicate and form social relationships with local students inside and outside the classroom" was 2.87 (±0.84), with 66.7% agreeing (25% strongly agree and 41.7% agree). In comparison, approximately 29% remained neutral, and 4.2% disagreed. This suggests

that a third of students may require additional support to facilitate integration and establish relationships beyond lectures. In terms of personal treatment, students appeared more satisfied. The statement "Local students treat me with kindness and respect during my university courses with them" received a high average rating of 3.54 (±0.58), with 95.8% agreeing (58.3% strongly agreeing and 37.5% agreeing) and 4.2% remaining neutral. This reflects a positive environment in which international students feel valued and respected by their local peers.

The study results indicate that the university experiences of the international female students participating in this research were positive. The results of the first axis, which consists of six dimensions, indicate positive experiences among the study sample. This result is consistent with the results of the studies (Al-Qarni, 2021; Albeshir, 2023), but the participants face financial challenges. The results of the second axis, related to academic experiences, also indicate that the educational experiences of international female students were largely positive, and that they did not face severe academic problems. This result differs from that of the study by Al-Mutairi (2020).

The results of the analysis of variance showed that all the examined variables—mother tongue, years of residence in the Kingdom, study at a language institute, educational qualification, and academic grade—did not produce significant differences across the sample locations in either the first or second axis. This indicates the independence of the latent constructs and factors discovered across these two axes from the demographic and academic characteristics of the participants, thereby strengthening the researchers' confidence that the extracted dimensions represent objective criteria independent of the demographic diversity in the study sample.

Recommendations:
Developing a feedback system that allows students to express their needs and suggestions.
• The study recommends continuing to modernize and develop educational facilities, such as libraries, laboratories, and computer labs, to enhance the effectiveness of the educational process and provide a stimulating and supportive environment for academic achievement.
• The study recommends simplifying registration procedures and administrative services by expanding automation and providing guidance in multiple languages to facilitate understanding of the university system and expedite transaction processing.

Future Studies:
• Conduct qualitative studies on diverse student groups, both male and female, from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, to deepen understanding of the experiences of international students at Saudi universities.
• Expanding the scope of the research to include multiple Saudi universities in different regions of the Kingdom, which would contribute to comparing university environments and identifying disparities or similarities in the quality of services and perceptions.
• Using a mixed methodology (qualitative and quantitative) in future studies to measure international student satisfaction on the one hand, and analyze the depth of their experiences on the other, providing comprehensive results that support decision-makers.

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