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An Inquiry Into the Alignment Between the Theoretical Assumptions of Self-determination Theory and the Cultural Assumptions of Saudi Arabian Educators The purpose of this study is to explore the extent to which there is an alignment between the theoretical assumptions of self-determination theory and the cultural practices and beliefs of preservice special education teachers in Saudi Arabia. The cultural practices and beliefs of twenty-six Saudi preservice special education teachers compared with national, university, and local school documents to further assess their alignment, allowing the researcher to triangulate data across data sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A sequential exploratory case investigation was used to interpret and understand preservice teachers' perceptions of their nation's culture, their relationship to educational practices, and alignment with stated national policies from the Minister of Education (Ward et al., 2018). By analyzing the participants' interviews and archival data, findings revealed Saudi preservice special education teachers preferred collectivism orientation over individualism; consequently, the adoption of self-determination theory by Saudi Arabia would require modifications relative to the cultural collectivist orientation.

Keywords: Saudi Arabia, self-determination, culture, qualitative research

AN INQUIRY INTO THE ALIGNMENT BETWEEN THE THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS
OF SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY AND THE CULTURAL ASSUMPTIONS OF
SAUDI ARABIAN EDUCATORS

by

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Non-western countries often look to the United States for ideas to improve their educational systems and its practices. Saudi Arabia is no exception, in that they have modeled many aspects of their education system based on those requirements and practices which are found in the United States (Guan & Li, 2017). Saudi Arabia has split their grades by elementary, middle, and secondary schools and their listing of curricular topics mirrors what is found in the United States, (e.g., literacy, reading, science, mathematics, and social studies/history) (Al Gelban, 2009). Additionally, in special education, much of the terminology is the same and new practices are gradually introduced based on what they see in the United States. Special education identification categories are similar and they recently implemented individualized education plans (Alqurashi et al., 2017).

Underneath the surface of daily practices, however, lies a set of beliefs regarding why a particular idea or practice is beneficial. Quite often, the assumptions regarding a set of particular ideas or practices are not examined closely during the adoption process (Ellis & Bond, 2016; Hofstede, 1980). For example, despite similarities between the educational systems in the United States and Saudi Arabia lie important differences related to religious and cultural expectations, which define what parents expect from schools and, in turn, what schools expect from parents. Recognition of these cultural differences are starting to cause educators and researchers in non-Western countries to proceed with caution when adopting practices (Shogren, 2011; Whymeyer, 2007). Stated differently, the adoption of educational practices across any two countries often occurs without adequate consideration of how a particular country's values might promote or impede its introduction and operation (Ellis & Bond, 2016). This study will examine the extent to which the cultural assumptions regarding a popular educational theory (i.e., self-

determination) from the United States for promoting students' engagement and learning aligns with the cultural assumptions of Saudi educators and implications of this alignment (or lack thereof) on the adoption of this theory and its practices.

Statement of the Problem

Self-determination theory (Deci, & Ryan, 1971) has gained popularity in non-Western cultures due to educators' admiration of its intended outcomes--the need for individuals to become independent by taking greater responsibility for the direction of their actions. The main underlying question regarding the possible adoption of its educational practices is whether its cultural assumptions are consistent with the values found in countries where a priority is placed on different values. In other words, why independence is valued may differ across cultures and this difference may become problematic if educators adopt a program without first evaluating its underlying cultural assumptions. Therefore, if educators want to adopt a particular set of educational practices, they need to first understand its theoretical foundations and whether they align with their cultural goals. Otherwise, expected and intended results may conflict, to the detriment of students, particularly those with special needs.

Sensitivity to possible mismatches in cultural expectations did not surface immediately following the introduction of self-determination theory into educational practice in the 1970's. In fact, initially, a flurry of studies by researchers documented self-determination's popularity across a variety of educational settings, leading to an increase in interest regarding its practices (Alsuhaibani, 2018). Over a twenty-five-year period, a library search of its application to education resulted in the identification of 197,086 studies in general education and 25,785 in special education since its introduction. Such numbers underscore this theory's wide-spread use. A major spokesperson for its application to special populations is Dr. Michael L.

Wehmeyer, a professor in special education and chairperson of the Department of Special Education at the University of Kansas. He has authored at least 195 refereed articles and book chapters. His research centered on theoretical and practical views of self-determination, especially for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (Wehmeyer, 2007). Consistent with the theory's main recommendations, he recommends that providing ample opportunities to individuals with disabilities will allow them to have the power to control as much of their lives as possible, thereby, increasing their intrinsic motivation, the main outcome of self-determination theory. Whether or not this recommendation was applicable across non-Western cultures was not questioned at this time.

Wehmeyer and Kelchner developed the Attachment, Regulation and Competency (ARC) survey, a self-determination scale for individuals, whose ages ranged from 12 to 18 years old, to measure the concepts behind self-determination theory (1995). This survey was recently translated into Arabic by Alsuhaibani (2018). With this survey, educators can now evaluate the extent to which self-determination theory is being applied in classrooms. Its implementation by researchers to non-Western countries occurred during the same time in which researchers slowly started to raise concerns about the feasibility of such actions to nations with different cultural backgrounds and expectations.

Wehmeyer (2007) himself, and then Shogren (2011) raised questions regarding the blanket adoption of educational practices without first evaluating the cultural practices and beliefs of the adopting country. Shogren (2011) synthesis of research studies about cultural differences support concerns regarding the lack of an adequate evaluation of cultural variables prior to an adoption. She found six non-empirical and four empirical articles where obvious cultural differences between Western and non-Western cultures would suggest closer

examination of values prior to an adoption. Ohtake and Wehmeyer (2004) subsequently suggested a series of steps for researchers to follow when examining cross cultural differences.

Dr. Hazel Markus, professor at Stanford University, and her colleagues' research provides a theoretical framework to help educators understand how cultural differences between Western and non-Western cultures relate to everyday practices. They compared Western nations, where a greater value is placed on the need for students to "become independent from others and to discover and express one's unique attributes" (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p.226), to non-Western nations where a greater value is placed on a sense of belongingness with each other, where the expectation is that "the nail that stands out should get pounded down" (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p.224). Such differences were found to permeate the cultural practices and beliefs of people across different countries.

Additionally, Hofstede's first of three editions of *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* in 1991 cautioned against judging other cultures without first developing an understanding of their cultural practices. Across all three of these publications, considered to be seminal works in the study of national business cultures, are overall themes which focus on differences between cultures based on their emphasis of a collectivist versus individualistic perspectives, a finding similar to those espoused by Markus.

Consistent with Markus' and Hofstede's perspectives on an underlying cultural framework for individual nations, Dr. Sheena Iyengar's, the S. T. Lee Professor at the Columbia Business School, research on the cultural reasons behind everyday decisions provides further evidence for the need to examine how certain cultural values and practice might impede or promote the attainment of an educational program's intended goals. These more recent

explorations of cultural practices between nations support the need to examine such differences when considering the adoption of a particular educational innovation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the extent to which there is an alignment between the theoretical assumptions of self-determination theory and the cultural practices and beliefs of special education teachers in Saudi Arabia. The cultural practices and beliefs of Saudi pre-service special education teachers will be compared with national, university, and local school documents to further assess their alignment, allowing the researcher to triangulate data across data sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Regarding this question of alignment, we presently know that there is an overwhelming amount of evidence to support a strong focus on the promotion of an individual's achievement in the United States. No studies have questioned this finding; however, what we don't know is how it applies to Middle Eastern countries. Markus's studies have focused mainly on Japan and China. Hofstede's studies recently involved Middle Eastern countries, Saudi Arabia included, and while they found support for a collectivist perspective, their findings relate primarily to the business world and not education. When researchers have conducted research in education in the Saudi Arabia, they have asked special education students to complete the ARC survey: teachers, who might be in a better position to evaluate their nation's cultural practices, were not included. Moreover, Saudi Arabia's special education students' responses are questionable given this study's focus because the participating students failed to answer a high number of ARC items. Additionally, its items are at best understood as non-theoretical in nature, limiting their interpretation to actual cultural practices. This study hopes to address these questions by using interviews with prospective pre-service special education teachers in Saudi Arabia regarding their country's national cultural goals and their

application to specific educational practices and official policy statements regarding the country's expectations for classroom teachers.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical perspective of this study is socioculturalism, which views individuals as constructing views of realities through their perceptions based on their interactions with others with a particular context (Miller, 2016). Key to this theoretical framework is the perspective that individuals are embedded in a sociocultural matrix and their behavior cannot be understood independent of a context, within which they construct a meaning of an activity as opposed to discovering it as a permanent artifact of a particular reality (Markus, & Kitayama, 1991). Culture defines what counts as knowledge within a particular context; privileging what knowledge and skills students need to be successful within a particular setting; consequently, it represents shared beliefs, values, knowledge, customs (ways of doing things), social settings, shared symbols, and images of value, each of which are transmitted, independently and through interactions in schools, the major purveyor of a nation's cultural values (Miller, 2016). As a result, educators endorse particular forms of knowledge with students based on what is valued within their culture. Within this study, preservice teachers acquire an understanding of their roles and responsibilities as educators based on their nation's practices and beliefs (Fang, 1996).

Sociocultural theory is appropriate for this study as its main assumptions are aligned with this study's proposed research questions and methodology, each of which promotes a focus where the researcher is attempting to discover the dimensions of how a particular cultural phenomenon functions and therefore influences educators' views of their nation's cultural values and its related educational practices.

This focus on understanding why individuals develop certain perspectives makes it an appropriate theory to support the use of a one-by-one sequential exploratory case investigation. Such an investigation views each participant's understanding as functioning, or in this case situated, within a particular context, which offers the participant a unique cultural perspective based on prior interactions with others. Participants, in this case, the preservice teachers in Saudi Arabia, are viewed as best situated to provide insights into their country's goals and describe the reasons why educators will act as they do in a particular situation. It also assumes a lack of consensus among participants due to various experiences across particular contexts, making it possible to discern the extent to which pre-service teachers share particular beliefs and expectations.

Sociocultural theory will allow for an evaluation of the integration or connection between Saudi educators' knowledge and experiences and their expected roles and responsibilities as future teachers. Consequently, it will allow for a study of how their knowledge of their country's national goals and educational practices align with the underlying assumptions of self-determination, a theory based in Western culture, with a strong emphasis on autonomy and individual decision-making. Participants' responses toward the interview questions will help Saudi officials to adopt appropriate educational models while questioning any undesired practices (Beck, & Kosnik, 2006).

Significance

Critical to the adoption of an educational intervention is a thorough examination of its theoretical assumptions and how they align with the educational practices and beliefs of the host country. Adoptions could be more beneficial if researchers studied, prior to implementation, the extent to which alignment existed between the host country's educational goals and the

theoretical assumptions of an intended adoption (Ellis & Bond, 2016; Hofstede, 1980). This possibility is especially important when considering a family's expectations for their children's education.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to study the extent to which self-determination theory's theoretical assumptions are consistent with the beliefs and values of pre-service special education teachers in a non-Western culture, in this case, Saudi Arabia.

This study will evaluate the one overall research question followed by two sub-questions:

1. Research question #1:

How do preservice special education teachers' understanding of their country's cultural goals align with the theoretical assumptions which guided the development of self-determination theory?

a. Research question 1a:

How do special education teachers' understanding of their nation's cultural priorities align with a collectivist or individualistic cultural orientations?

b. Research Question 1b:

How do special education teachers' understanding of various educational problems align with a collectivist or individualistic cultural orientations?

2. How do special education teachers' understanding of their country's cultural goals align with national and regional policy statements?

Definition of Key Terms

Culture-- There are a variety of definitions of cultures. Middleton (2002) defined culture as "a set of norms that create powerful precedents for acceptable behavior within the

organization.” He then claimed culture determined the behaviors of a particular group. While Hofstede (2010) states “it (culture) is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the member of one group or category of people from others” (p.6). He emphasized that learning about acceptable behavior started within the family and it continued through the person’s lifetime. This includes his neighborhood school, workplace, and living community. In other words, the individual gains information from the surrounding environment, such as language, dealing with problems, making decisions, or acting towards particular events. The most common definition of culture was by Edgar Schein (Middleton, 2002). He defined culture as “learned patterns of beliefs, values, assumptions, and behavioral norms that manifest themselves at different levels of observability” (Schein, & Schein, 2017).

Inquiry--inquiry is a systematic judgment to provide explanation for outcomes. The produced explanation or information can be useful for the interest of improvement or effectiveness of something (Green & South, 2006).

Pre-service teachers--An individual who is in the undergraduate program in school of education in order to pursue teaching credentials in general or special education programs.

Self-determination--self-determination defined as “determination of one’s fate or course of action without compulsion”. In other words, “freedom of the people of a given area to determine their own political status; independence” (Wehmeyer, 1998, p. 5). It is based on the idea of choice free from excessive influence.

self-determination theory- “the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a theory of human motivation which emphasizes the psychological aspects of health and personality as well as social development”. “The SDT includes three innate psychological needs (relatedness,

competence, and autonomy) that are essential for optimal functioning” (Shackleford et al., 2019, p. 63).

Special education teachers--An individual that completed an undergraduate program or higher in school of education and certified to teach special education students a academic or/ and functional curriculum within different settings (e.g., resource or self-contained classrooms) The Graduate School is fairly flexible with formatting, but we do require use of our templates to help guide candidates in the right direction. The highest priorities of formatting are self-consistency and disciplinary norms. Text should be formatted into a single column using US Letter paper with portrait orientation. If necessary, tables may be formatted onto a page with landscape orientation.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In the next section, I first will look at Saudi Arabian schools because it is in such institutions that citizens learn their cultural values and thus come to see certain alternative choices as valuable or not (Zuhur, 2011). Additionally, this section should provide an overview of how Saudi schools are similar to yet different from US schools in subtle but important ways. Next, I will look at how self-determination developed in the United States and how special educators subsequently adopted its practices. I will next look at how these adoptions led to questions related to the cultural appropriateness of adopting a set of beliefs and practices by another country with a different culture. In particular, I will use the research by Drs. Markus, Hofstede, and Iyengar who have studied the role of culture in defining parameters for the choices we make. The supporting literature on choices is also reviewed.

Saudi Arabia & Its Education

Saudi Arabia was founded in 1932 by King Abdalaziz Al-Saud (Al-Rasheed, 2013). The name of the country “Saudi” was retrieved from the founder's last name “Al-Saud.” From 1932 to today, Al-Saud descendants ruled the country with a centralized government directed by a king who is the main authority for the daily operations of the country (Temple, 2008). It is called an absolute monarchy, governed along Islamist lines, based on the Sharia law and religious tenets as outlined in the Qur’an (Abou El Fadl, 2001; Bradley, 2005). Educational officials are located in the 6 regions of the country, each of which has between 2 and 14 designated officials. The Minister of Education as well as his regional representatives are appointed by the King and serve as at-will designees (Prokop, 2003). Unlike the United States, none of the regions have the power to influence national education policy. Instead, policy decisions are made centrally in the capital, Riyadh, which then dictates its decisions to each area (Hamdan, 2015).

The country has a total area of 2,149,690 sq km; slightly more than one-fifth the size of the US. Saudi Arabia takes the 41st place of the population in the world (i.e., 34,173,498) and as of 2020, 38.3% of them were immigrants. The Arab ethnicity makes up 90% of the population and 10% is Afro-Asian Muslim. Between 90% and 100% of the population is Muslim. There are three holy places in Islam, one of which is located in Palestine, and two are in Saudi Arabia, Makkah and Medina (Aboul-Enein & Zuhur, 2004; The World Factbook, 2020). The presence of these two locations underscores the importance of Saudi Arabia for Muslims. For example, every Muslim must make a visit during his or her life, called a Hajj, to Makkah. Each year millions of people visit this site for this pilgrimage (Bradley, 2005). Additionally, Medina is important because its mosque was the Prophet Mohammed's religious home. Thus, it is considered by Muslims to be the birth site of Islam (Prokop, 2003). These facts underscore the high degree of homogeneity in the population, the vast majority of whom have the same religious beliefs, in a country ruled by a monarch, factors which make it easy for a central government to develop policies for the entire country (BaHammam et al., 2008).

Sixteen percent of the world's oil and natural gas is possessed by Saudi Arabia. Oil prices affect Saudi economy (The World Factbook, 2020) in that availability of oil revenues serves as a financial base from which the country runs its educational and government policies. When the oil prices were high, the government fully supported new projects in various fields, including education (Alnahdi, 2014b). In contrast, the low price of oil during 2015 and 2016 impacted the government negatively (Bradley, 2005). It was only until quite recently when revenues from oil decreased that the government had to cut subsidies on water, electricity, gasoline, and apply on the disposal of real estate at a rate of 5% of tax for the first time in Saudi history. At this point, the government decided to diversify its economy by supporting individuals who intended to start

their own businesses (The World Factbook, 2020). This support was offered to any citizen, male or female, who had or could start a business. An idea for a business would be reviewed by government officials and a loan was provided. This new initiative differs from when oil mainly supported most of society's individuals and activities (Hamdan, 2015).

Regular education in Saudi Arabia consists of a year of kindergarten, six years of elementary school, three years of middle school, and three years of high school (Roy, 1992). Schools are separated by gender at the middle and high school levels; male and female school buildings also are separated. Typically, class sizes range from 15 to 25 students (Smith, & Abū ‘Ammuh, 2013). Each neighborhood has its own elementary, middle, and high schools. Students from other neighborhoods can go to a school that is not in their neighborhood, but the priority is for students from the neighborhood to attend the same school. The school year typically starts in August and finishes in May (Hamdan, 2015). There is a two to three week break between the first and second semester. During this time, consistent with the country's emphasis on family, parents and children visit relatives, plan to spend time together or travel. Traveling with grandparents is common practice in Saudi culture (Al Gelban, 2009).

Boys are taught by male teachers and girls receive education from female teachers. For elementary level, girls and boys are educated together, taught by female teachers (Abdulmonem et al., 2014). The public schools start at 7 am and over at 12 pm for elementary. Middle and high schools typically are over at 1 pm or 2 pm (Ramadan, 2011). The number of public kindergartens is very limited and they are not required; consequently, not all citizens enroll in one. In 2019/2020, there were 2,115 public kindergartens in Saudi Arabia and the number of public elementary schools were 11,596. There were 146072 kindergarten students enrolled in this academic year and they had 12,237 kindergartens teachers (Roy, 1992). Young students can

enroll in first grade without a kindergarten certificate. If children did not enroll in public kindergarten, parents are expected to teach them Arabic letters, numbers, and simple words (Broberg, 2003). The minimum legal age of eligibility for first grade is five years and ten months. You must reach this age prior to the start of the school year to be eligible to become a first grader. Citizen and non-citizen students can enroll in free public education. Teacher salaries are set by the Ministry of Education and increase based on years of experience and level of university education (Hamdan, 2015).

Saudi families are expected to support their children educationally in ways that differ from practices in the United States. For example, parents or guardians are responsible for children's school supplies. If family income is impacted by oil prices, schools might provide children with school supplies; otherwise, families are expected to provide them (Broberg, 2003). Consistent with cultural norms, students get their breakfast at home with their families before they go to schools and after school, they get lunch with their families (Roy, 1992). There are parents, guardians, or maids waiting for the children at home when they return back from school to have their meals. Families also are responsible for dropping off and picking up their children (Hamdan, 2015).

Parents are also expected to play significant roles in their children's education. Unlike elementary schools in the United States, teachers send a considerable amount of homework to families each day. Parents or grandparents, guardians, maids, or private tutors who are hired by the family help students complete homework, which can take several hours. This practice exists because families view the elementary years as foundations for later achievements; consequently, teachers assign a considerable amount of work to be completed each day at home (Algraini, & McIntyre-Mills, 2018). It is the family's responsibility, not the school's, to make sure it is

completed. When children go to middle and high school, they become more independent and self-directed, yet parents still have responsibilities to advise, encourage, and support their children as they make career decisions (Ministry of Education-Saudi Arabia, n.d.). These practices, the provision of meals and transportation, completion of additional schoolwork and career advice, falls to families based on cultural norms, which in turn, is consistent with Islamic teachings (Hamdan, 2015). Unlike most Western countries, where citizens who lack the necessary financial resources to meet daily needs turn to the government, Saudis traditionally turn to religious leaders for assistance, underscoring the close relationships between families and religious institutions (Smith, & Abū ‘Ammuh, 2013).

The curriculum for elementary students is divided into two parts. The first part is for students from first to third grades and includes language arts, math, Islamic studies, and Quran. The second part is for fourth to sixth graders and social studies and science added to the previous subject areas. The language arts include reading and writing in Arabic. Instead of standards for each grade level, the Ministry of Education approves what texts are approved across the entire country and each classroom is expected to use them. There are no specific pacing guides; instead teachers are expected to cover the material according to their schedules (Algraini, & McIntyre-Mills, 2018). The education system in Saudi Arabia relies mostly on memorization, especially at elementary level and it becomes less so at middle and high levels (Hamdan, 2015). Islamic studies consist of prophet Muhammed speeches and Islamic religious foundations, such as how to treat people and your parents, or what you say before and after meals. The Quran was revealed to prophet Muhammed. It confirms the faith and includes the Holy Books that were sent to other prophets, such as Moses, Jesus, Abraham, and David. These readings provide a guide for every Muslim regarding social, moral, and family expectations (Algraini, & McIntyre-Mills, 2018).

Unlike the United States, one religion is central to the Saudi curriculum, especially at the elementary level, where it comprises about one-quarter of the available instructional time (Smith, & Abū ‘Ammuh, 2013).

There are no formal assessments by the Ministry of Education at the end of each grade level. The only mandated assessment occurs at the end of high school and is used for university placement. Formal observations of classroom teaching are arranged by the Ministry of Education (Algraini, & McIntyre-Mills, 2018). Unlike the United States, schools are not graded based on test scores or formal observations. Most informal assessments are developed by teachers, including those developed to evaluate students’ understanding of the year’s curriculum. Results are not published publicly.

Special Education Practices in Saudi Arabia

The history of special education in Saudi Arabia started in the 1950s when the Ministry of Education initiated the first discussion of special education (Alnahdi, 2014b). Prior to 1958, individuals with disabilities were home with their parents or guardians and did not receive any type of special education services. In 1958, the first scientific institution for blind individuals was established (Alquraini, 2011). A few years later, the first school teaching students with visual impairment reading and writing through Braille systems was established (Alnahdi, 2014b). In 1962, the Ministry of Education established the Department of Special Learning to serve students with three categories of disabilities: blindness, deafness, and intellectual disabilities (Alquraini, 2011; Altamimi, et al., 2015). These categories of disabilities now increased to five: visual impairment, hearing impairment, intellectual disabilities, autism, and multiple disabilities. In 1970, the first institution for students with intellectual disabilities was established (Alnahdi, 2014b). In 1980, the Ministry of Education established a gifted and talented center for students.

The first legislation for students with disabilities was mandated in 1987. It guaranteed the rights of students with disabilities, defined special education categories and their defining characteristics; identified intervention programs and diagnostic assessments to determine eligibility. Additionally, this legislation required public agencies to offer programs of independent living for students with special needs (Alquraini, 2011). The inclusion of students with special needs into public education schools started to emerge in 1990. Even though the inclusion of students with special needs increased in Saudi schools in the last 15 years, there is a need for school evaluation in terms of its applications, output quality, and continued development (Alnahdi, 2014b). Another legislative mandate was passed in 2000 called the Disability Code, which required public agencies to offer students with special needs free appropriate medical, psychological, social, educational, and rehabilitation services. The Disability Code also added welfare, employment, and complementary services to best meet the needs of students with special needs. After these two legislations, Saudi professionals from the Ministry of Education and Special Education Department at King Saud University reviewed US laws, such as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) of 1975 and Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990 (Alquraini, 2011). As a result, the Regulations of Special Education Programs and Institutes were established to protect the rights and legislation of students with special needs (Altamimi, et al., 2015).

Future Possible Directions in Saudi Educational Practices

There are several issues in Saudi school system that researchers have recommended to improve in its education. Regarding general education, first, unlike the United States, accountability through assessments in Saudi schools is not a common practice. In Saudi Arabia, teachers' performance depend on their sense of responsibility inspired from Islam to be honest in

your work, complete it as it should be, and to do your best. Alnahdi (2014a) suggests that accountability through testing needs to be implemented in Saudi schools. He thinks it would (a) improve teachers' performance, (b) enhance teachers' competence, (c) and motivate them to reach their maximum abilities in teaching.

Second, identifying high quality teachers has not been a common practice in Saudi schools until recent times (Alnahdi, 2014a). The Ministry of Education adopted standardized tests and assessment tools from the United States and United Kingdom (Altamimi, et. al., 2015; Mohammed, 2018). The purpose of these assessments was to examine teachers' preparation and competencies in different subjects based on professional standards and basic skills required for each subject. These tests and tools could be used to assess applicants for teaching jobs in the future (Alnahdi, 2014a, p.3).

Third, students' voices in Saudi Arabia are not really heard because teachers have to follow determined sets of roles and curriculum rather than meeting students' individual needs and aspirations (Alnahdi, 2014a; Au, 2011). Alnahdi (2014a) states that Saudi students have to follow fixed schedules, regardless of their favorite activities. Not only the voices of students are not heard but also the teachers are silent. The Ministry of Education determines the content standard and curriculum for each grade level: teachers are given scripted curricula and they are required to follow it (Alnahdi, 2014a).

Regarding the issues related to special education, related service was one of the biggest trends. Speech and language pathology, physical therapy, and occupational therapy are not offered in Saudi education system (Alquraini, 2011). Alquraini (2011) claims that "Possible causes are a lack of professionals who specialize in these fields or the fact that those professionals with that focus often are employed by hospitals instead of schools" (p.155).

Additionally, Saudi schools lack early interventions and appropriate diagnosis assessment tools. Students with special needs are not diagnosed until they go to first grade at age 6. They also lack a multidisciplinary team, IQ tests, adaptive behavior scales, and academic scales that align with Saudi culture. School psychologists diagnose and determine students' disabilities and eligibility for special education services. Students with special needs diagnoses are not team-based as in the US (Alghamdi, & Riddick, 2011). Moreover, special education teachers usually create students' annual goals without including the family's perspective (Alquraini, 2011).

Additionally, some types of special education categories were not identified, such as students with twice-exceptionality (i.e. students with special needs and gifted in particular skill as well). Mohammed (2018) argues that these students are not defined in Saudi Arabia. In his argument, he wants the Ministry of Education to pay attention to these students with twice-exceptionality. He states, establishing "clear policies and procedures related to twice-exceptionality will help those involved to provide appropriate academic guidance, social/emotional environments, and strategic interventions to help them maximize their potential to the fullest degree possible" (p.398). Altamimi, et. al., (2015) investigation supported this finding. They conducted a synthesis of literature about special education in Saudi Arabia. The purpose of their study was to determine the type/ quality of special education publication in Saudi Arabia, topics, themes, and research types of interest. They found that the topic of twice-disability was not one of the included themes.

This brief summary of Saudi's educational practices underscores critical differences between their schools and those in the United States. Namely, Saudi families are expected to provide children with transportation and meals while providing academic support to complete nightly homework assignments. Additionally, their curriculum is dictated centrally by the

Ministry of Education and religious content makes up a considerable portion of their daily studies at the elementary levels. Such differences are important to remember when comparing education across our two countries and ultimately will influence how new programs are identified and implemented given appropriate cultural differences.

Self-Determination Theory: What does it look like?

Similar to other motivational theories, self-determination, originating from the ideas of Deci and Ryan (1971), makes a set of critical assumptions regarding the nature of human behaviors. Motivation theories range from the mechanistic to the organismic. Mechanistic theories view the nature of human actions as passive, whereas organismic theories perceive the nature of human actions as active, not requiring external reinforcements (Gagne, & Deci, 2005). With self-determination theory, individuals are assumed to have a natural propensity to engage in activities based on their interests, and in doing so seek and conquer optimal challenges (Deci, & Ryan, 1985). This one statement is critical to understanding the theory's original assumptions: optimally, individuals act based on their interests without a need for extrinsic rewards. To understand self-determination's views regarding the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, with the former being the primary goal, one needs to understand five of its supporting theories. Each mini theory was created to explain specific motivational phenomena and to address specific research questions" (Christenson et al., 2012).

The first supporting theory, cognitive evaluation theory, views intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as interrelated processes, with extrinsic negatively affecting intrinsic motivation. Overall (Riley, & English, 2016), it seeks to "explain why some external events support autonomy, competence, and intrinsic motivation, while other events interfere with and thwart these motivations" (Christenson et. al., 2012, p. 153). Extrinsic events are viewed negatively

because they control behaviors by guiding and regulating individuals' actions and behaviors toward a desired goal without necessarily supporting an individual's self-aspirations (Kristjansson, 1993). To promote self-aspirations, events have to be informational in nature to provide effective feedback. Intrinsic motivation assumes that human organisms have needs for competence and self-determination. A person exercises one's interests with an internal tendency in doing it (Riley, & English, 2016). As a result, cognitive evaluation theory posits that the social environment may increase or decrease intrinsic motivation (Kristjansson, 1993). Free choice increases intrinsic motivation; in contrast, evaluations, surveillance, and competition decrease intrinsic motivation. The implementation of these events impacts the individual's perceived causality and perceived competence (Deci, & Ryan, 1985; Deci, & Rayn, 2017).

Intrinsic motivation assumes that human organisms have needs for competence and self-determination (Gagne & Deci, 2005). A person exercises one's interests with an internal tendency in doing it. The amount of time a person spent in an activity measured one's level of intrinsic motivation. A person's intrinsic motivation would not diminish over time of practicing the same activity (Kristjansson, 1993). For example, a person plays a piano because his/her inner tendency to play strengthens his/her engagement. Extrinsic rewards affect a person's level of intrinsic motivation, such as avoidance of punishment, awards, surveillance, deadlines, evaluation, goal imposition, or competition. Several experimental studies investigated the effect of extrinsic rewards on intrinsic motivation (Deci, & Ryan, 1985). These studies compared the level of intrinsic motivation in experimental and the control groups. The experimental group was told to receive one of the extrinsic rewards. The control group had not received extrinsic rewards. Subjects of experimental groups spent significantly less time exercising a target activity than control groups who practiced the activity without extrinsic rewards or environmental

controls. The rationale for avoiding or limiting the use of extrinsic rewards is because it directs a person's attention toward receiving an award rather than engaging in the given activity, thereby decreasing self-determination (Deci, & Ryan, 1985).

There are several ways to promote intrinsic motivation. Free choice and having multiple opportunities allow a person to experience meaningful intrinsic motivation and avoid the external rewards. Perceived competence and intrinsic motivation also are linked with challenging activities and positive feedback (Kristjansson, 1993). Giving students a slightly difficult task would be more enjoyable to achieve than easy or too difficult tasks. Keeping tasks at a moderate level of difficulty strengthens students' intrinsic motivation. Similarly, students perceived positive verbal feedback reported a higher level of intrinsic motivation than students receive no feedback (Deci, & Ryan, 1985).

The second supporting theory of self-determination is organismic integration theory, which focuses on motivation and development (Deci & Ryan, 2017). Whereas the emphasis of previous theory was centered on how events impact intrinsic motivation, the current theory centered on why the individual demonstrates a particular action. There are four types of motivational regulation, ranging from most to least determined: external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

External regulation is the least autonomous extrinsic motivation, which is when an individual acts to avoid punishment or to obtain extrinsic rewards. The individual's intrinsic motivation is very low because his actions are controlled by external events, and he has an external perceived locus of causality (Brophy, 2010). A behavior at the level of external regulation is controlled and depends on extrinsic reward or punishment. The rationale of an individual to act and perform an activity is because of external factors (Wang, 2017). External

regulation of motivation is a common type because an individual responds immediately; unfortunately, however, external regulation may cause poor maintenance, weak performance, and less attention to the quality of an event (Ryan, & Deci, 2017).

The next stage, introjected regulation, is based on self-worth and self-esteem with the individual acting to avoid feelings of guilt or the possibility of being ashamed by one's actions, which is the sense of avoiding feeling guilty or ashamed. At this level of extrinsic motivation, an individual is engaged in some forms of self-satisfaction, feeling of worth, and feeling of pride (Ryan, & Deci, 2017). The third stage is Identified regulation and refers to autonomous extrinsic motivation that is based on a self-endorsement and a willingness to do something because the individual realizes the value and the importance of his/her actions. This level of organismic integration theory is the initial movement to self-determination and internal perceived locus of causality (Brophy, 2010). The individuals at this level identify the importance and the value of the events (Ryan, & Deci, 2017). The final stage, Integrated regulation, is the most autonomous motivation and is related to an internal perceived locus of causality. At this level of organismic integration theory, the individual realized the importance of self-determination; therefore, the individual shapes or controls his/her actions to identify desired goals, decisions, and actions (Brophy, 2010). At this point, the individual is no longer acting under the influences of extrinsic rewards and is the ideal set of actions for a learner.

Causality of orientation theory is the third supporting theory of self-determination theory. The previous two theories centered on how extrinsic transitions to intrinsic motivation whereas this one focuses on the impact of personality on motivation (Turban et al., 2007). Causality of orientation “identifies individual differences in how students motivate and engage themselves. To engage themselves, some students rely on autonomous guides to action while others rely on

controlling and environmental guides” (Christenson et al., 2012, p. 153). The assumption of causality orientation theory is that people interpret events as informational, controlling, and motivating. Therefore, a people's actions are based on these three categories of orientation, which translates into autonomy, control, or impersonal orientations (Turban et al., 2007). Autonomy orientation involves the experience of choice. A person is autonomy-oriented when he or she experiences the sense of choice; in other words, a person uses available information to make choices and to pursue goals that are self-selected. Control orientation involves a sense of pleasure to perform, such as should, have to, ought to, and must. Impersonal orientation involves some level of incompetence and helplessness to determine goals and identify choices (Martinek et al., 2020).

Basic needs theory is the fourth supporting theory of self-determination (Ryan, & Deci, 2017). Previous theory analyzes the influence of personality on motivation where basic needs theory is centered on the concept of essential psychological needs that enhance satisfaction of human functioning and psychological well-being (Garn et al., 2012). The main principle of basic needs theory is to explain why individual actions and interactions in a particular context could be active or passive (Karaarslan et al., 2013). It “elaborates the concept of psychological needs and specifies their relation to intrinsic motivation, high-quality engagement, effective functioning, and psychological well-being” (Christenson et. al., 2012, p. 153). There are three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy is the capacity of the individual to act based on his/her inner desires and motivations and known as between-person variation in need satisfaction (Christenson et al., 2012; Ryan, & Deci, 2017). Competence is the individual ability to interact with the environment and face the challenge successfully and efficiently (Christenson et al., 2012; Ryan, & Deci, 2017). Relatedness is the emotional sense of

being attached and connected with others (Karaarslan et al., 2013). Well-being refers to, as the main focus of this theory, “the presence of positive affect and the absence of negative affect” (Ryan, & Deci, 2017, p.239). All three basic psychological needs are essential to obtain meaningful growth, integrity, and wellness. In contrast, the absence of any of these basic psychological needs may cause ill-being and diminish satisfaction (Karaarslan et al., 2013).

Goal contents theory involves aspirations, life goals, and their consequences. Previous theory emphasizes the concept of essential psychological needs to enhance human satisfaction and well-being, this theory, explains how intrinsic and extrinsic aspirations either strengthen or weaken a learner’s well-being (Vansteenkiste et al., 2006). Goal contents theory “distinguishes intrinsic goals from extrinsic goals to explain how the former supports psychological needs and well-being whereas the latter neglects these needs and fosters ill-being” (Christenson et al., 2012, p. 153). The content and the creation of life goals is the main concern of this theory. Intrinsic aspiration is directly related to basic need satisfaction, such as forming goals to enhance close affiliations or experiencing personal growth. Intrinsic aspiration refers to when an individual is engaged in a behavior that inspires personal values, such as participating in enjoyable activities or games, reading desired novels, or cleaning the house for personal confidence (Vansteenkiste et al., 2006). Individuals who prioritized intrinsic aspiration experienced greater well-being than the individuals who prioritized extrinsic aspirations (Koestner, & Hope, 2014). Extrinsic aspiration is indirectly associated with basic need satisfaction, such as creating goals to gain wealth, fame, or image (Ryan, & Deci, 2017). Extrinsic aspiration refers to when an individual is engaged in a behavior in order to receive a reward to avoid a punishment, such as studying to earn a good grade, working hard to get a better job, or studying hard to avoid failing (Vansteenkiste et al., 2006).

In summary, the goal of self-determination is to move towards integrated regulation through the attainment of intrinsic goals which are facilitated when educators attend to one's needs for autonomy, competency, and relatedness. However, these goals are not promoted if educators use rewards to control rather than inform behaviors. Even if they are used to inform behaviors, the ideal result is for individuals to act without any external influences or rewards. Otherwise, the development of an intrinsic learning orientation can be misdirected if individuals acquire extrinsic aspirations. In such cases, achievement can occur without individuals fulfilling a natural need to act based on an intrinsic orientation.

Self-Determination Theory & Special Education

The term self-determination was first mentioned in 1918 and by the end of World War I, self-determination was used and known as self-government. It was included in Woodrow Wilson's 14 points to develop the proposed League of Nations, referring to rights of individuals with different cultures, races, sexual orientations, or disabilities to demonstrate self-governance.

In the early 1940s, the term was used by psychologists who defined self-determination as the steps and processes used when making a decision. One year later, in 1941, Angyal wrote about the essential features of personal construct of self-determination. There were two essential determinants of behavior: autonomous and heteronomous determination. Autonomous determination is known as self-determination, in which individuals control their own lives. In contrast, heteronomous determination refers to the individuals whose own lives are influenced by outside factors, such as religions or cultural norms directly or indirectly (Wehmeyer, 1998). In 1971, Edward L. Deci, a psychologist, adapted the concept of self-determination to the field of social sciences, with a focus on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Deci (1971) investigated the effect of external rewards on a person's internal motivation. The study compared the level of

internal motivation of experimental and control groups. Experimental group received rewards while the control group had no rewards. The control group demonstrated significant achievement and higher levels of internal motivation (Deci, 1971). Later, in the 1980s, Richard M. Ryan was a co-founder of self-determination theory with Deci (Deci, & Ryan, 1980). The previously presented five supporting theories provide specifics to support this basic finding.

The popularity of self-determination theory is underscored by the number of studies which used it as a theoretical foundation. From 1996 to 2020, there were 197,086 studies in general education when searching for self-determination using the key words self-determination, theory, and self-determination theory. A second library search revealed 25,785 studies from 1996 to 2020 in special education with this theory as its central focus. Both of these searches underscored the influence of self-determination theory on educational practices in the United States.

Its popularity in special education is due to educators' admiration of its' intended outcomes special for students with disabilities (Doll et al., 1996). In 1972, Nirje wrote a chapter about salient features of self-determination. He emphasized three points about the implementation of self-determination in the field of special education. First, all people are entitled to experience self-determination. Second, making choices, asserting oneself, self-management, self-knowledge, decision-making, self-advocacy, self-efficacy, self-regulation, autonomy, and independence are salient features of self-determination, each of which was viewed, regardless of culture, as a critical outcome for all regular and special education students. Third, there was a need to include individuals with significant disabilities who were at this time served in institutions with few, if any, opportunities to practice self-determination (Wehmeyer, 1998).

From 1990 to 1996, the Office of Special Education's self-determination initiative funded five projects for youths with disabilities (Wehmeyer, 1998). Additionally, at this time, the concept of self-determination was written in the Individuals Disabilities Education Act. A major spokesperson for this initiative was Dr. Micheal L. Wehmeyer, a professor in special education and chairperson of the department of special education at the University of Kansas. He is the author of at least 195 refereed articles or book chapters. His research centered on theoretical and practical views of self-determination especially for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (Wehmeyer, 2007). He suggested that providing the individuals with disabilities ample opportunities to have the power and control of their life as much as possible would promote their intrinsic motivation. In 1995, Wehmeyer and Kelchner developed ARC, a self-determination scale for individuals whose age ranged from 12 to 18 years old, to measure autonomy, self-regulation, psychological empowerment, and self-realization. This development is viewed as a major contribution to the promotion of this theory because now educators could evaluate the extent to which it was being applied in classrooms.

The total number of ARD items is 72: 32 items for autonomy, 9 items for self-regulation, 16 items for psychological empowerment, and 15 items for self-realization. With self-care, items ask if the student takes care of his clothes and helps with household chores. If they used the post office and created friendships with other students their age, they were included under the independence construct. For psychological empowerment, items focus on whether goals are reached with hard work and whether the student initiates activities with friends or goes along with their wishes. For autonomy, items ask if the student buys food at the supermarket and decorates his own room.

ARC's self-determination scale has been translated into Arabic and other languages. For example, a Saudi special education doctoral student at George Mason University, Dr. Aseel Alsuhaibani, conducted her dissertation study on Arabic version of Arc's self-determination scale. The purpose of her study was to examine the validity and reliability of translating ARC's self-determination to Arabic. The participants were 364 Saudi females with intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, or multiple disabilities. Their age ranged from 14 to 22 years who were educated in special education centers. The finding supported that students with intellectual disabilities maintained the lowest level of self-determination, high schoolers whose age ranged from 16 to 18 reported a higher score on the self-determination scale, and students who were educated in self-contained classrooms demonstrated higher self-determination scores than students who were educated in special education centers.

Concerns with the Cultural Sensitivity of Self-Determination Theory

While self-determination is a popular topic in the field of special education, initial studies did not consider directly how it applied to countries with cultural and linguistic differences. For example, Ohtake and Wehmeyer (2004) conducted a non-empirical theoretical examination study and then described a four-step model to introduce self-determination theory in other cultures. First, professionals are asked to make efforts to fully understand the nature of the interventions that they want to introduce. In the case of self-determination theory, researchers would need to understand how its focus on individual achievement and its relationship to intrinsic motivation align with Saudi cultural practices. Second, researchers need to understand how these cultural values are then embedded in practices and how these practices might be accepted (or modified) by another country. A word of caution was offered here, in that, quite often the relationship between values and practices are implicit. Third, researchers are asked to

focus on the similarities between the two countries to gain an understanding of how they might be received. Finally, researchers should try to understand why certain practices and values might not be welcomed in another culture based on the values and practices of a particular theory or intervention.

In a similar vein, Shogren (2011) later conducted a synthesis of research about culture and self-determination to explore cultural variables that influence self-determination. She found six nonempirical and four empirical articles when she searched the following key terms: self-determination, culture, and special education. She suggested that “the self-determination construct could have universal value if a flexible framework that considers culture and systems-level variables is utilized to develop individualized interventions” (p.115). The main question here is how culture determines answers to what is an individualized intervention. The following section outlines some of the studies Shogren (2001) covered to document the need to be sensitive to different cultural values.

Trainor (2002) conducted a non-empirical literature review looking at possible conflicts between a theory and the expectations from parents. For example, leaving home is one of the autonomy values listed as a practice for a successful post-secondary transition process. This is true for children from families who value individual achievement, but it may not be as desirable for families who have more collectivist expectations for their children. Trainor (2002) identifies the need for teachers to be introspective and reflective of their own values when interacting with families with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Leake and Boone (2007) supported Trainor’s findings (2002) in their study of eastern cultures. They conducted an empirical study with three focus groups in a qualitative analysis to compare and contrast the perspectives of students with emotional and behavioral disorders, their

parents, and special education teachers of two cultures. The total number of participants were 122 from Hawaiian and American cultures and a total of 20 in a focus group. There were six themes found as they compared the two cultures. Most importantly, however, Hawaiian participants tended to place more value on family relatedness as an important component to promote self-determination, placed less value on higher education, and preferred to have their children live with them or next to them. Such differences were assumed to influence parental expectations for schools.

Zhang (2005) and Zhang, Wehmeyer, and Chen (2005) conducted survey methods and quantitative analyses to provide evidence on the influence of culture in promoting self-determination. In the first survey study by Zhang (2005), he surveyed 136 parents of children with and without disabilities across different ethnicities in the United States of America (i.e., European, Asian, African American, and Hispanic). The study findings found that parents of children without disabilities and European-American parents tended to foster self-determination theory skills more so and provided their children with more opportunities of free choices than parents of children with disabilities and parents who were from collectivist culture. Additionally, parents' socioeconomic status had a positive relationship with the degree of promoting self-determination skills at home. In the second study Zhang et al. (2005) surveyed a total of 293 parents and teachers of students with disabilities from the United States and Taiwan. The study purpose was to investigate the differences and similarities in parents' and teachers' perceptions in fostering self-determination. The study items were adapted from Doll, Sands, Wehmeyer, and Palmer (1996) work. The authors conducted a multiple factorial ANOVA to test parents and teachers' engagement in fostering the self-determination of students with disabilities. The study

findings were similar to the previous survey study: American parents are more likely to foster self-determination at home more than were Taiwanese parents (Zhang, 2005; Zhang et al., 2005).

In summary, once concerns were raised, researchers offered suggestions through literature reviews or data-based studies, pointing out how differences existed between different nations, each of which presented different sets of cultural expectations and goals for students' education. The following section includes suggestions and findings from researchers who are noted for their work with identifying underlying theoretical frameworks which could be used to understand existing cultural practices at home and in schools. Most importantly, their research provides important insights and perspectives, which can be used to understand how educators might proceed when trying to anticipate how the assumptions and cultural values of a particular intervention might be received by a particular country.

Evidence for a Theoretical Framework for Understanding Cultural Differences

Markus and Kitayama (1991) studied the divergent views of the self, which are shaped and influenced by culture. Their research provides a theoretical framework to support Shogren's concerns regarding the application of Western educational programs to other countries. In particular, they compared and contrasted the construct of the self in independent Western and interdependent non-Western cultures based on psychological and anthropological perspectives. Briefly, many interdependent cultures emphasized the importance of relatedness to each other whereas Western cultures encourage the individuals to be independent from each other and discover their unique internal attributes.

Kitayama, Markus, and Kurokawa (2000) conducted an empirical study to examine the interpersonal orientations of pleasantness across cultures. There were two purposes of this study. The first one was to provide evidence of interpersonal orientations and general positive emotions

across United States and Japan cultures. The second one was to investigate the correlation between good feelings and cultures (i.e., individualist and collectivist). The total participants were undergraduate students from both countries for a total of 913 responses (630 in Japan and 283 in the United States). Japanese undergraduate students reported high scores in “friendly feeling” emotion, which is correlated with collectivism culture and the feeling of belonging. In contrast, United States undergraduates scored high in “pride” emotion and reported higher scores in positive emotions than negative emotions, which is correlated with individualism culture.

Kitayama et al. (2004) conducted four experimental studies in the United States and Japan to investigate choice-making and dissonance theory in these two cultures. An individual evaluated or judged his choice based on either his own thinking or other appraisals, such as am I making the right decision vs. how my parents think about my choice. The first experimental study emphasized the social cues and dissonance with fifty-four Japanese undergraduates. The second experimental study included fifty-one American graduates and forty-two Japanese students. The third experimental study centered on considering other opinions of whether they like or dislike personal choices. There were thirty-seven Japanese undergraduate students and twenty-eight Americans for this third experimental study. The fourth experimental study examined the prime social others when undergraduate students asked to think about others. There were twenty-nine Japanese students and thirty-two Americans. Across all four experimental studies, findings showed how Japanese undergraduate students adjusted their choices when others were salient. By contrast, the choices of American undergraduate students were based on their own competence and their own internal attributes regardless of the social-cue manipulations.

Kitayama and colleagues (2015) next tested the correlation between the expression of anger and the biological health risk in the United States and Japan. The study findings supported that the correlation between expressions of anger and biological health risk changed by cultural differences. The study concluded that expression of anger was experienced differently in both countries. In the United States, the expression of anger due to negative events, such as life difficulties, annoyances, or frustrations. In Japanese culture, the expression of anger is associated with empowerment and entitlement.

In summary, according to Markus and colleagues, independent Western cultures place great value to “become independent from others and to discover and express one’s unique attributes” (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p.226) whereas non-Western countries, in this case Japan, are more likely to believe that “the squeaky wheel gets the grease” (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p.224). The interdependence view places greater value on the sense of belongingness to each other and they expect that “the nail that stands out (should) gets pounded down” (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p.224). The individual needs must fit into the social context, namely the family and community cultural norms. The cultural goal of interdependence is based on one’s consideration of others’ thoughts, feelings, and actions. Accordingly, Western cultures list problem-solving ability as the most valuable factor when they were asked to list the most important characteristics of intelligence whereas non-Western interdependent cultures list interpersonal qualities as the most important characteristic. The interpersonal qualities underscores the person's ability to understand and take other’s perspectives (Elliot & Dweck, 2005). Markus’ studies show how cultural differences exist among countries and these differences fit onto a continuum where independent versus interdependent values are expressed.

One caveat exists, however, in that most of the studies referenced by Markus to substantiate differences based on her independent/interdependent continuum, were conducted in East Asian countries, particularly Japan. As a result, we don't know how her continuum applies to other non-Western countries like Saudi Arabia.

The next set of studies come from Iyengar and support the findings from the preceding paragraphs in this section. Iyengar and Lepper (1999) conducted two experimental studies to examine the connection between the provision of choices and intrinsic motivation. The participants of both studies were Anglo American and Asian American school age students from western region of the United States. The findings supported that Anglo American showed higher intrinsic motivation in the personal choice condition. In contrast, Asian American scored higher intrinsic motivation when choices were made for them by trusted in-group members. Therefore, Iyengar and Lepper (1999) showed how personal choices enhance intrinsic motivation in Western versus Eastern countries.

Later in 2000, Iyengar and Lepper conducted another three experimental studies to investigate the correlation between the number of choices and individual satisfaction. The first experimental study was conducted in a grocery store with two conditions: a booth with limited choices and a booth with extensive choices. Customers' behaviors and reactions were compared and contrasted in both conditions. The second experimental study was done in an introductory social psychology class and participants provided a limited or extensive list of essays. The third experimental study was similar to the previous two studies where participants had limited or extensive choices of chocolate. The three experimental studies yielded that people from non-Western countries reported more satisfaction when they had limited choices, were able to manage these choices, and had choices based on their desires.

Iyengar also studied how religion shaped cultural values. Some religions require its followers to obey particular rules, such as what to wear, what to eat, how to respect parents, or how to pray. Iyengar (2010) interviewed 600 worshippers of different fundamental religions: Calvinism, Islam, and Orthodox Judaism. They completed three surveys; the influence of religion on people's daily activity, people's reactions and interpretations of good and bad events, and questions regarding if participants experience any symptoms of depression. Iyengar concluded that the participants from more fundamentalist religions were less likely to experience depression and they see themselves as less likely to have a sense of control over their lives.

Hofstede's three editions of *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* (1991, 2005, 2010) stand as seminal works in the study of managerial differences among the countries of the world. Funded by IBM, Hofstede cautioned against judging other cultures without first developing an understanding of their cultural practices. Based on longitudinal studies, his research demonstrates how an understanding of cultural differences is important when adopting behaviors, traveling, or interacting with individuals from other cultures. Similar to Markus, Hofstede places values on a continuum, ranging from collectivism to individualism, equivalent to Markus' interdependent versus independent continuum. Individualistic cultures place a greater emphasis on self-reliance, independence, and freedom of action whereas collectivist cultures value belonging to a specific group of people and considering the group decision over personal interest (Markus, 2016).

Individualism is more likely to be associated with nuclear family structure and collectivism tends to relate to extended family structure. Nuclear family structure consists of the parents and their children. Extended family structure includes not only immediate family but also other relatives who are close to them by blood or marriage. For example, the oldest son in the

traditional Japanese family is required to take care of his parents and live with them with his wife and children (Hofstede et al., 2010). Individuals from extended families continue to protect their families for their lifetime out of loyalty and belonging. In contrast, in the United States, boys and girls quite often leave their parents' home and live independently by age eighteen. They are also economically separated and find jobs or get student loans to pursue their education (Hofstede et al., 2010).

As a result of living with a nuclear family or extended family, children learn to think of themselves as “I” in individualism and “we” in collectivist cultures (Hofstede et al., 2010). “I” is culturally valued and accepted in individualism. In contrast, it is viewed as a form of selfishness in collectivism. The individual not only thinks of himself but about the people around him. For example, an African student who attended a University in the US, stated that he was living alone in a room by himself for the first time in his life. Moreover, socialization in collectivist societies is important. Missing a relatives 's wedding or funeral is culturally not accepted, and inviting all relatives is commonly practiced whereas in Western culture, “My home is my castle” is an emphasized expression, in which the individual has his own rules, such as he or she could invite who he or she likes to the wedding.

The value of exclusionism and universalism distinguish the cultures of individualism and collectivism. Exclusionism refers to the fact that everyone has unique standards. In contrast, universalism is that everyone has to follow the same standards (Hofstede et al., 2010). For example, the characteristics of individualism are to speak about one's mind and opinion and tell the truth about one's feeling or thinking. Engaging in direct confrontation leads to meaningful conversations. In collectivist cultures, direct confrontation, especially with older people, is not acceptable; instead, harmony should be maintained (Kyunghee et al., 2020).

High-context and low-context communications differentiate between individualism from collectivism. High-context communication refers to the importance of understanding the message that not explicitly explained because the information is culturally understood (Hofstede et al., 2010). For example, in the United States, the marriage contract is much longer than Japanese contract. Understanding the culture is important to understand the contract. Hofstede et. al. (2010) discussed similar examples of high and low context communication between Saudi and Sweden businessmen. The role of personal communication and trust takes place in Saudi business. In contrast, for Swedes, business is done by the company because the contract explicitly explains everything. Similarly, a survey study conducted among employees from individualism and collectivism countries about work goals showed how with individualism, employees emphasized the following work goal items: allowing employees to present themselves, having considerable freedom to implement their own approach, and having challenging work to enhance their sense of accomplishment. On the other hand, collectivism employees prefer having training opportunities, having good physical working conditions, and having jobs that align with their skills and abilities. The differences between individualism and collectivism was the sense of depending on the company or stressing the sense of independence from the organization (Hofstede et al., 2010).

In sum, research by Markus, Iyengar, and Hofstede identified a continuum of values which differentiate how and why individuals make decisions and view the act of making choices in their lives. Values range from the individualistic or independent to an interdependent or collectivist perspective, each of which affected most aspects of daily life. As a result, they support the need to look closely at these differences when considering the adoption of educational practices from a country with different cultural values.

Summary

While it may not have been apparent to many practitioners as they adopted new educational innovations, differences do exist among countries, particularly when a comparison is made between Western and Eastern oriented countries. When looking at these countries, differences appear to be on a continuum with individualistic or independent cultures on one end and collectivist or interdependent cultures on the other end. Regardless, questions remain because most, if not all, of the studies have not focused on educational practices to assess whether schools adopt similar values and what it might mean for the adoption of educational practices. Second, teachers are not usually the primary participants. This study hopes to address these shortcomings. The research questions are listed in the next section.

Research Questions

This study will evaluate the one overall research question followed by two sub-questions:

Research question #1:

How do special education teachers' understanding of their country's cultural goals align with the theoretical assumptions which guided the development of self-determination theory?

a. Research question 1a:

How do special education teachers' understanding of their nation's cultural priorities align with collectivist or individualistic cultural orientations?

b. Research Question 1b:

How do special education teachers' understanding of various educational problems align with a collectivist or individualistic cultural orientations?

Research question #2:

How do special education teachers' understanding of their country's cultural goals align with national and regional policy statements?

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Research Design Overview

Qualitative research is a systematic investigation, occurring in the natural setting of an interesting phenomenon, where the researcher is the primary instrument who gathers data to investigate concepts, hypotheses, or theories (Wutich, & Bernard, 2016). The phenomenon in this study is an evaluation of the natural language and forms of experiences regarding national cultural goals and their potential influence on educational practices as described by future Saudi educators (Wertz, 2014). Its purpose is to explore the extent to which there is an alignment between the theoretical assumptions of self-determination theory and the cultural practices and beliefs of special education teachers in Saudi Arabia and their country's sanctioned educational policy statements. Accordingly, this study used interviews with pre-service special education teachers in Saudi Arabia regarding their country's national cultural goals and their application to specific educational practices to study this phenomenon (Levitt et al., 2018). Their perceptions will be triangulated with national and local policy statements.

Case study was used as the methodology. It is a particular qualitative research approach that is defined as "in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (Merriam, & Tisdell, 2016, p. 37). The rationale for the use of a case study with its descriptive approach to inquiry thus allows the researcher to generate rich views of complex issues in its real-life context (Lincoln, & Guba, 1985). Its ultimate purpose is to answer questions regarding context, relationship, processes, and practices where place, time, and activity form its bounded system (Hamilton et al., 2012). The meanings attributed to the respondent's views are thus determined iteratively as the findings evolve by identifying patterns related to the phenomenon of interest. These patterns are then evaluated to determine the extent to which they are aligned with national

and local policy statements regarding Saudi educational practices (DuBois, 2018). As a result, this study is a one-by-one sequential exploratory case investigation, which aims to interpret and understand preservice teachers' perceptions of their nation's culture, their relationship to educational practices, and alignment with stated national policies from the Minister of Education (Ward et al., 2018). Exploratory cases focus on providing an in-depth explanation of a phenomenon through a combination of how and why questions (Seaton & Schwier, 2014; Yin, 2014).

Study Participants

Researcher Positionality

Regarding researcher's positionality, I am an instructor in the University of Umm Al-Qura University, located in the western region of Saudi Arabia. As an instructor and life-long resident, I understand and am aware of developing broad national trends in teacher education in special education. My professional special education expertise focuses on learning; planning, preparing, and delivering lessons; providing educational and social guidance to students; and preparing them for the rapid development of the work environment (Becirovic, & Akbarov, 2015). Related to this study's focus, as part of my university responsibilities, I noticed many textbooks in special education that were translated from English into Arabic lacked an understanding of our culture. Therefore, the need to understand theoretical foundations of the translated theory/ concept and whether they align with eastern cultural goals is important. As Miller (2016) stated regarding socioculturalism, individuals construct views of their realities through perceptions based on their interactions with others with a particular context. Key to this theoretical framework is the perspective that individuals are embedded in a sociocultural matrix and their behavior cannot be understood independent of a context, within which they construct a

meaning of an activity as opposed to discovering it as a permanent artifact of a particular reality (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Given my experiences in both Saudi Arabia and my nine plus years in the United States, I believe that I can serve as an important conduit between the two countries. What I need to affirm is the extent to which my views of Saudi culture are representative of those of our future educators. This study will allow me to explore these areas as a researcher who will then be able to bring a new understanding to my country as they adopt educational practices from other countries.

Data Sources

Participant Selection & Recruitment Process

The researcher will interview 26 pre-service special education teachers at a university in western Saudi Arabia, Umm Al-Qura University, who are in their final year of the undergraduate program. All of the pre-service special education teachers are female, age ranging from twenty-one to twenty-five years. The participants' ethnicity is Saudi and their mother language is Arabic. Anyone who does not meet these criteria will not be invited to participate (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Non-probability sampling strategy will be used to select participants (Maxwell, 2013), which is a logical approach as long as the researcher expects “to use his data not to answer questions like ‘how much’ and ‘how often’ but to solve qualitative problems, such as discovering what occurs, the implications of what occurs, and the relationships linking occurrences” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.96). The number of participants is based on an expectation that it is adequate to allow the coding to reach a level of redundancy or saturation, where the researcher has gathered enough data to adequately address the study’s research questions (Azungah, 2018). If a saturation point is not reached, additional participants will be recruited. Qualitative data

collection comes in the form of direct quotations of participants' responses, which can be their opinion, feeling, experiences, and knowledge (Merriam, & Tisdell, 2016). Verbal semi-structured interviews are the systematic process of collecting data in this study (Azungah, 2018).

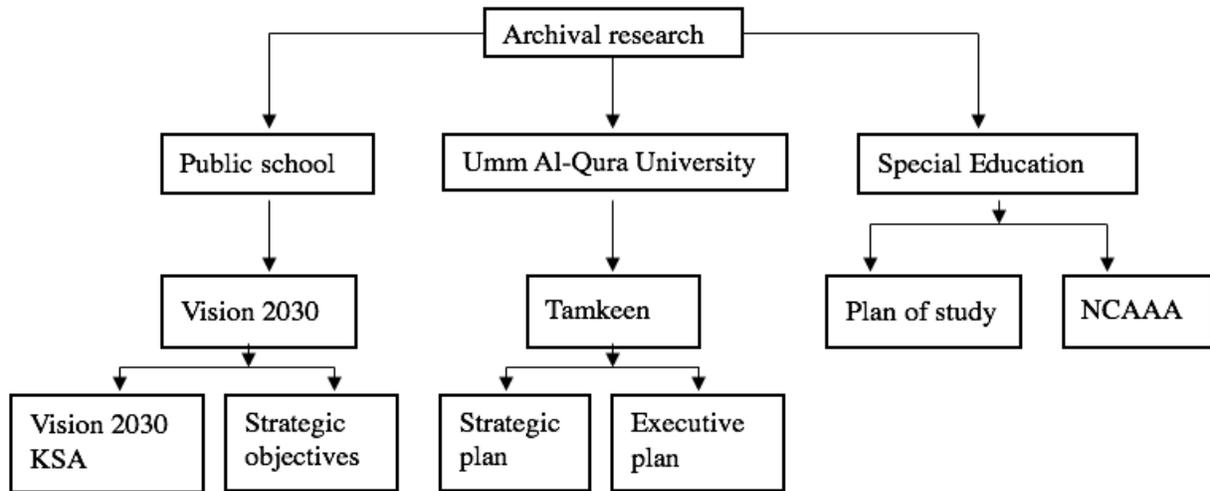
The selection procedure will be as the following: after obtaining the IRP approval from the US and from the education dean of Umm Al-Qura University in Saudi Arabia, the researcher will contact the special education department director to have the pre-service special education teachers' list of emails. The first 25 responders will be the study participants. Asking for the 25 strongest pre-service special education teachers in terms of academic performance is not accepted cultural practice. Students' grade point averages are personal information and could not be shared for any reason. Students will not be compensated financially for their participation. I have no knowledge of who will be selected, nor do I have any input into their grades as a result of my university affiliation.

Archival National and Local Policy Documents

Minister of education policy documents emphasize policy statements regarding the underlying dimensions and goals for pre-K-12 education. The next document was developed by the Ministry of Higher Education. The third document was developed by administrators and faculty in the department of special education at Umm Al-Qura University. Such documents provide for a second method of triangulation as described earlier (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The rationale of collecting this information is to evaluate the extent to which policy statements from influential sources, national, local schools, and university statements, support the underlying cultural continuums as noted in the literature review. Such statements allow the researcher to triangulate across sources by comparing interview data regarding national goals and local educational practices with accepted cultural documents.

Public school education policy centered on preparing and training students to compete on the requirements of the job market, make appropriate career decisions, achieve high scores on global assessments, and change the traditional curriculum to a modern one. To achieve the Vision of 2030 in education, students' progress will be tracked through a centralized student database system from k-12 and beyond to improve education planning, evaluation, monitoring, and outcomes. This vision is 85 pages long and includes all sectors of the country. Tamkeen (i.e., enable) is 71 pages long, Umm Al-Qura University policy statement, emphasizes the values of three levels: individual (e.g., responsibility, good morals, and excellence), groups (e.g., teamwork/ cooperation, planning/ future vision, and efficiency/ effectiveness), and organizational (e.g., adherence to the Islamic doctrine, continuous development/ improvement, and quality/ proficiency). Two policy statements of the special education department will be analyzed: plan of study (i.e., about 10 pages) and the National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA). The following chart demonstrates the names of related documents of each policy statement.

Figure 1. Flowchart of Archival Research Documents



Data Collection

Interviews

The first three semi-structured interview questions are drawn from Hofstede's studies of national culture whereas the second set of four questions are based on Markus and Kitayama (1991) research studies.

1. Tell me three things that Saudi culture values the most?
2. For each of your identified values, describe to me examples of how I would see this value in day-to-day activities?
3. Do you think your three values should influence the national curriculum in our schools? Why or why not?
4. Based on your nation's culture, is it more important for schools and teachers to help students to see how others can help them to understand and fit in with the cultural norms of their family and community or should they help students to see how they must stand up for what they believe even if it means upsetting others in

their social and family circles.

Why or why not?

5. Based on your nation's culture, describe two behaviors which you believe are important for students in your classroom to have if they are to be successful in life? Why will these behaviors have a positive effect?
6. Describe two behaviors that your students might have in your class which you believe would be detrimental to them becoming successful in life? Why will these behaviors have a negative effect?
7. Based on your nation's culture, should parents be relied on to help their children to decide what they should study as they prepare for selecting their life's occupation? Why or why not?

Each interview took from thirty to forty-five minutes. Before the participants respond to the research questions, research read the consent form at the beginning of each meeting to obtain participant's approval. Because this is only one meeting, motivating participants with some general questions to begin the interview was used to encourage them to respond with confidence and provide more detailed information (Harskamp, & House, 2019). During the interview, the researcher recorded on a piece of paper some interpretations and essential information. All interviews were conducted in Arabic and were translated into English after they were transcribed. SONIX software online audio transcription was used for study describing. This software was used in the pilot study and has a high customer rate of four point eight out of five.

The researcher role was to have conversation with the participants at the beginning of the interviews, ask questions; translate, record, and transcribe data; make sure participants answered each part of each question; summarize participants' responses to confirm researcher

understanding as needed; use encouragement words to motivate them to provide as much information as it possible; and code and analyze data (Charmaz, 2000).

Archival Research Documents

The researcher analyzed national documentation from the Minister of Education by investigating the database of public school education, Umm Al-Qura University, and special education department. To measure the alignment of preservice special education teachers' understanding of the nation's cultural priorities and practices with national documents, the researcher coded and followed the following criteria: minister of education expectations from parents, students, and teachers, the general goals, objectives and recommendations, and the educational outcomes. These documents listed and provided brief statements of the educational objectives, goals, and development visions. To triangulate the data, each of these criteria were aligned with five categories of responses offered by the preservice teachers. The researcher compared and contrasted this archival research with the interviews (Heng et al., 2018).

Pilot Study

The researcher conducted three informal interviews to examine the effectiveness of the interview questions (Krishnaswamy et al., 2006; Porta, 2008). The interviews were in written forms. For the three questions of the first stage, the first informal interview, the researcher asked five Saudi educators and parents. The five participants were from Saudi Arabia, they either live in Saudi Arabia or the US, write, and spoke English. Dr. Miller and the researcher analyzed the data and we found all the participants placed great importance on religion and family. Then, the second informal interview, the researcher asked doctoral scholars in the department of teacher education from the US the same five questions. The US participants emphasized the importance of freedom and self-expression and personal goals.

For the questions of the second stage, the third informal interview, the researcher asked two of my colleagues from Saudi Arabia who were undergraduate teachers, had master's degrees, and had at least five years of teaching experience in the department of Special education at Umm Al-Qura University. As with the previous questions, responses were consistent with what one might expect based on the research literature. As a result, the researcher believed the questions were easy for interviewees to understand, reflected the issues that were raised by the research literature, and allowed for the collection of responses relative to the stated research questions.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher conducted online interviews synchronously through Zoom software, one of the computer mediated communication tools. Similar to face-to-face interview, Zoom has a video component and record function for later data transcription and analysis (Quartiroli et al., 2017). Zoom was an appropriate tool to use to collect the qualitative data due to its ease of use, downloadable in most devices, data management features, and security option (Mandy et al., 2019). After the IRP approval from the US and Saudi Ministry of Education approval letter, the administrator of the department of special education at Umm Al-Qura University contacted participants electronically. After identifying participants, the researcher contacted each of them individually to set an appropriate date and time for an interview. Each interview took approximately thirty to forty-five minutes.

The study interview protocol was the following. Before the participants responded to the research questions, the consent form was be read to them to obtain their approval verbally.

The consent form was the following:

Thank you for meeting with me; I appreciate your time and participation. This interview will take approximately thirty to forty-five minutes. I will record it and take notes. I am

interested in exploring the alignment between the theoretical assumptions of self-determination theory and the cultural practices and beliefs of special education teachers in Saudi Arabia. I want you to understand that you have the opportunity to ask questions about the study, the information you provided for the study will be treated with confidentiality, your name/voice or any other identity will be anonymous, and some of the information may be quoted.

Then the researcher asked general questions to begin the interview, encouraging them to respond with confidence, to provide more detailed information (i.e., before we begin, tell me a little about yourself). During the interview, essential information and interpretation were recorded on a piece of paper because keeping critical reflection in written documentation was helpful for the data collection and analyzing (Court et al., 2018).

Data Analytic Strategies

The study involved four steps of data analysis for the interviews: reading the transcripts, labeling relevant information, coding data, and connecting the categories (Quartiroli et al., 2017) Computer assisted qualitative data analysis software was used to help manage and organize the analysis but not generating or creating the coding and themes. Atlas.ti software was used since it is a free application, useful for teamwork studies, can be uploaded in Windows and Mac, and most common type software used among researchers.

The coding process consisted of open coding, axial coding, secondary coding, and naming the categories (Patton, & Schwandt, 2015). Open coding is identifying any useful data and the researcher can be open for any possible relevant actions, activities, process, differences, concepts, or opinions. Axial coding or analytical coding is combing the initial opening codes. Some of these initial coding may have dropped and the important coding will be kept for the next

process of data analysis. Secondary coding focused on identifying pattern, relationship, and repeated themes. The codebook included these three processes of coding. The next process was naming the categories or themes. These categories' names come from three sources: the researcher, interviewees' words, and related literature (Saldaña, 2013). This data analysis in qualitative research was non-numeric; however, a numeric data was used to state the number of codes, interrater reliability, and differences between groups (Greener, 2011). Ms. Alansari and Dr. Miller read a half of the statements, randomly selected, to develop the five categories, then individually coded the remaining statements with an estimated agreement of ninety percent with any disagreements resolved through discussion. Each interview question was coded separately. Then, the codes of the first three questions (i.e., regarding the national goals) were combined to identify the themes. Similar procedures were conducted for the educational practices interview questions. Dr. Miller was the external audit to evaluate the accuracy of the coding.

The researcher searched the databases of public school education, Umm Al-Qura University, and special education department. To search for whether preservice special education teachers' understanding of their nation's cultural priorities and educational practices aligned with national documentation from the Minister of Education regarding its expected policies and practices, researcher used the terms "goals OR objective," "value," "expectation(s)," "famil*," "recommendation(s)," "curriculum," "islam*" "communit*" and "plan of study OR syllabus". The researcher recorded and coded the findings.

In sum, the following table summarizes information from the preceding sections regarding the identification of data sources, the collection of data, and its analysis. The following steps allowed for the researcher to evaluate each of the research questions using a variety of data

sources, each of which served to triangulate the data based on the questions raised in the literature review.

Table 1. Matrix for Research Questions and Data Sources

Research Question	Data Source	Analytic Procedure
RQ1: How do special education teachers' understanding of their country's cultural goals align with the theoretical assumptions which guided the development of self-determination theory?	Semi-structured interview	(1) Note taking by the interviewer. (2) Identifying emerging themes from codebook. (3) Comparing notes. (4) Member-checking the data with participants.
RQ1a: How do special education teachers' understanding of their nation's cultural priorities align with a collectivist or individualistic cultural orientations?	Semi-structured interview	(1) Note taking by the interviewer. (2) Identifying emerging themes from codebook. (3) Comparing notes. (4) Member-checking the data with participants.
RQ1b: How do special education teachers' understanding of various educational problems align with a collectivist or individualistic cultural orientations?	Semi-structured interview	(1) Note taking by the interviewer. (2) Identifying emerging themes from codebook. (3) Comparing notes. (4) Member-checking the data with participants.

<p>RQ 2: How do special education teachers' understanding of their country's cultural goals align with national and regional policy statements?</p>	<p>Archival research documents</p>	<p>(1) Note taking by the researcher. (2) Identifying emerging themes from codebook. (3) Comparing notes.</p>
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Validity and Reliability

Having validity and reliability throughout the study enhanced the study result's trustworthiness, particularly in the qualitative research because it was based on the researcher's assumptions (Lincoln et al., 2018; Tracy 2010). The trustworthiness of the study was supported through the systematic procedures of the theoretical perspective of socioculturalism (El Hussein et al., 2014). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggested strategies for promoting validity and reliability. The strategies that carried out through this study were the following: triangulation, member checks/ respondent validation, peer review/examination, and rich/ thick description.

The triangulation data was formed in two ways (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). First, by conducting interviews to answer the first main research question and the two follow up questions. This method of triangulation compares pre-service teachers' perceptions and beliefs regarding two dimensions of their responsibilities as educators. Second, by comparing interview data to national and local policy documents and archival research to address the second main research question (Tracy, 2010). The expectation was that there should be a direct relationship between these two sets of responses. The goal of it was to combine these two perspectives of data sources for providing a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon. The reason for comparing these two sets of data responses was to enhance the validity and reliability of the study result. Stated differently, to the extent cultural expectations match the appropriate research literatures, then there should be alignment between the two sets of interview responses. Within-

method triangulation was applied in this study, which refers to multiple data sources combined in one qualitative study (Flick, 2018).

Member checks were used to establish respondent validation in the qualitative research and enhance study internal validity. Member checks were that the researcher checked the study emerging findings with some of the study participants. In this study, the researcher sent the transcribed interviews and identified themes to the participant emails to check the interpretations' validity (Court et al., 2018). This study was like a peer review article because it included in-depth the input of a committee chair, Dr. Samuel Miller (Merriam, & Tisdell, 2016), who served as the external evaluator (Lincoln, & Guba, 1985). He and I read all of the transcripts while coding the data. The study provided rich and thick descriptions of Saudi Arabia. It discussed sufficient information of study participants, data collection, data analysis, and results which could be transferred to other situations (Merriam, & Tisdell, 2016).

Limitations

This study has potential limitations. The study participants were from only one university in Saudi Arabia. Whether students from other Saudi universities would respond similarly cannot be determined from the results. Future research could address this concern. Additionally, the participants of this study were pre-service teachers whose ages ranged roughly between 20 to 30. Future studies may investigate older people's perspectives. Next, and most importantly, observations of the extent to which beliefs collected during interviews were representative of actual behaviors once participants assume positions as special education teachers can't be ascertained at this point of time.

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the research methodology. In particular, it presented a description of qualitative research. The specific interpretive research design that was adopted for the study was presented and explained. The purpose of this sequential exploratory case investigation was to explore the extent to which there is an alignment between the theoretical assumptions of self-determination theory and the cultural practices and beliefs of special education teachers in Saudi Arabia. Twenty-six preservice special education teachers were interviewed through the Zoom application. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. The researcher translated the interview questions and the transcriptions from Arabic to English. To ensure the accuracy of the translation, the researcher had a doctoral scholar check them.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

In evaluating the responses to interview questions from Saudi preservice special education teachers, it is important to understand the underlying assumptions for this study. Mainly, responses should be evaluated based on the extent to which they support a collectivist or interdependent perspective versus an individualistic or independent view. As stated by Markus and Kitayama (1991), the collectivist or interdependent view places a greater value on a sense of belonging to a greater whole, a consideration of others' thoughts, feelings, and actions whereas the individualistic or independent view privileges an emphasis on discovering and following one's own actions, where the individual does not have to fit into the social context of family or societal norms and expectations. These two orientations represent the relative degree of importance placed by a country on one set of values versus another and serve as guidelines for evaluating the extent to which Saudi preservice special educator teachers' identification of national cultural practices and school expectations fit within this aforementioned criterion.

Identification of Nation's Cultural Values

Each of the Saudi preservice teachers offered three responses to questions related to their identification of their country's national goals for a total of seventy-eight responses, which fell into one of five categories. The first category, Government Support for Religious Practices and Beliefs, included any statements related to their country's cultural goals and included any references about following Islamic values and law; practices such as the recommended treatment of fellow citizens and charity. There were twenty-five responses in this category (32%). The second category is labelled Justice and Equality Through Human Rights and referenced issues related to justice and equality among citizens regardless of gender and social standing. Eleven responses were in this area (13%). The third category related to the Social Practices of Saudi

Cultural Lifestyles and included references pertaining to historical and generational societal or family practices and customs. There were sixteen responses in this area (21%). The fourth category related to Expected Moral Behaviors Regarding the Treatment of Others and referenced statements regarding the treatment and care of others and acts of generosity, courage, honesty, and truthfulness. Seventeen responses fell into this category (22%). The final category, Primacy of Family and National Belonging, included references to the need for citizens to practice and value those behaviors and values that supported the role of the family and the nation. Nine responses fell into this category (12%). The following table provides some evidence related to the five themes.

Table 2. Interview Evidence

Theme	Percent	Evidence
Government Support for Religious Practices and Beliefs	32%	<p>“A conservative, Muslim country that applies Islamic laws. Islam is also applied in daily life. In everything applied the laws of Islam”</p> <p>“Such as the end of murder and retribution in not giving up the oppressed. So are fines for harassment. This is one of the things mentioned in the Holy Quran”</p> <p>“In terms of religion, our country supports all religious activities. We have no suppression. Most of the people are Muslim and fast Ramadan. Most of the country's laws are based on religion”</p>

Justice and Equality Through Human Rights	13%	<p>“Equal treatment between people with special needs and normal people”</p> <p>“A person is able to deliver a certain idea through social media. For example, if there is a video clip of a child being violated by his family, it may reach the community and provide the child the support he needs. the person's voice reaches out to society. Issues or ideas reach people in a fast way. There are organizations and associations that deal with family violence issues”</p> <p>“I mean the assistance that a divorced woman receives from her family or her tribe or her country. They can also provide her with a home”</p>
Social Practices of Saudi Cultural Lifestyles	21%	<p>“Wearing the hijab is widespread and well known in Saudi Arabia”</p> <p>“I think the first value is to preserve the national identity”</p> <p>“Adherence to customs and traditions, as every region of Saudi Arabia has its own traditions. For example, the food, the clothes, the accent of speech differs in different regions of the Kingdom”</p>
Expected Moral Behaviors Regarding the Treatment of Others	22%	<p>“Social leadership, especially Saudi society, is characterized by tolerance and respect from other countries. I mean the good qualities that characterize the Saudi people”</p> <p>“The example of honesty in communication and dealings with others and generosity”</p> <p>“I mean hospitality and generosity”</p>
Primacy of Family and National Belonging	12%	<p>“We are attached to family and relatives. We are also more attached to the family community than any other country”</p> <p>“Family bonding is strong in Saudi Arabia. And also as I mentioned, the relationship of the kinship. Also, focus on family bonding to a large extent”</p> <p>“I mean by it the righteousness of parents. Communicate with them and not leave them for a long time”</p>

Most Saudi preservice teachers, 24 of 26 (92%), offered a response in the first category, Government Support for Religious Practices and Beliefs, making it the most preferred category. Within this category, preservice teachers viewed their responses as related directly to accepted

religious practices. The following statement underscores this emphasis, as one preservice teacher noted, “We are based on an adherence to the Islamic religion. We are the country that most adheres to the Islamic religion, our country's legislation is based on it.” Similarly, others called on the need for government officials to endorse the primacy of Islamic religious activities, identifying fasting during Ramadan, welcoming of pilgrims to holy sites, and obligatory calls to prayer with the need to close restaurants and shops during these periods. They further emphasized the need for the government to emphasize the need for citizens to apply the principles of Islam in their daily lives. They referenced how the personal practice of Islam extends to one’s everyday practices, obligations that must be followed by all citizens as evidence of their faith. These two sets of practices are complementary, mutually supportive, in that they focus on the need for community accountability: government officials and average citizens to adhere to Islamic beliefs and activities.

In the category, Justice and Equality Through Human Rights, the main emphasis was on various populations -- the rights of people with special needs, protection of children from social media and abuse, women's rights, citizen’s voice in social media, and possible acts of racism between Islamic religious sects, Shiites and Sunni. One preservice teacher emphasized the need for equal treatment between special needs individuals and others, noting how, “Each person has qualities that make him different from the other, distinguishing characteristics which must be supported.” Another linked the protection of women’s rights with the benefits of living in her country. She stated, “The Saudi people respect women's rights, also justice and equality. We have more opportunities to earn higher education degrees than are offered in many countries. Education and medical care in Saudi Arabia are free and women are positioned with many opportunities in different fields, which are open to women. The woman's voice is becoming more

and more heard.” Each set of findings in these two categories underscored the need for everyone to be aware of and support the rights of others and points to a different source of accountability, ranging from the Royal Family, appointed officials, individual citizens, and coda regarding the rights of individuals within their society.

Within the category, Social Practices of Saudi Cultural Lifestyles, preservice teachers’ comments focused on community cultural traditions and how the country needed to support them while at the same time recognizing how such practices differed by geographic region. Traditions included everyday activities such as drinking coffee to tolerance for different accents, food, clothes, and recipes. Implicit in each of these identifications was the need for citizens to adhere to and celebrate cultural traditions, many of which have a religious foundation. For example, with coffee, it was not an individual act, but a family daily ritual, to be adhered to and celebrated. This emphasis on community participation brought benefits to individual citizens. This community focus also was obvious within the Expected Moral Behaviors Regarding the Treatment of Others category. For example, one preservice teacher captured the sentiment of others by stating, “I treat people the way I like to be treated. This behavior increases intimacy among community members and affects my country's development. Generosity increases familiarity and love among people, limiting the spread of hatred and hatred among society. Giving and generosity reduces poverty in the country.” Another preservice teacher discussed generosity in Saudi culture as giving away money without announcing the giver’s name, putting others before yourself, and avoiding selfishness. Another teacher provided examples of honesty and truthfulness in conversation with others in Saudi as indirectly based on Islamic belief, “We treat people with good morals as Islam encourages us to do so. I mean, not to talk about other

people's beliefs, to use good words. We must adopt good moral behavior, rather than treating people based on their beliefs.”

In the final category, Primacy of Family and National Belonging category, responses centered on the value of connectedness and the sense of belonging to the family and country with the emphasis on the individual’s relationship to the family and the country. A preservice special education teacher emphasized that the individual is part of his/her family, “We are attached to family and relatives. We are also more attached to the family community than in any other country.” Thus, she added that the person is part of the country as well and how the government treats its citizens financially and emotionally, “ We are in a safe country, and we are ruled by a Royal Family that cares for its people. It treats us as if we are its children and sons.” The government’s care of citizens underscored Saudi pride in their country.”

Common to the responses in each of these five categories was the value placed on the family and community relationships among children, parents, and extended family members. Children, regardless of gender, often live with their parents until they get married. As stated by one respondent, “Loyalty to parents exists in our culture. When a girl grows up, this does not mean that she will separate from her parents. Parents are responsible for children even after the age of 18.” Other participants mentioned the value they place on kinship: daily phone contacts as well as the practice by some families of setting aside a day per week to gather at their grandparents’ house were common traditions. This valuing of kinship and support for related cultural activities and values were central to the preservice teachers’ identification of national values.

In the first two categories in their identification of national cultural goals, in interview questions one through three, preservice teachers looked to the government and other officials as

accountable whereas individual citizens and families were viewed as accountable for the support for practices noted in the other three categories. The activities, values and cultural traditions and activities mentioned by the preservice special education teachers during their interviews were viewed as central to their instructional responsibilities--they should be central to the curriculum and daily instruction. They viewed Islamic values as critical responsibilities because they represented expectations for both individuals and families and sects. The following quotation captures the overall message that was contained in interview responses: "Islamic law, it is our religion and all Saudis are Muslims. Beginning at home, the individual must learn about religion at home and schools. The person must see these habits in schools so that the home is not a different environment from the school or vice versa." Classroom teachers thus serve as role models who need to teach Islamic values and its history.

The responses in each of the five categories support the collectivist of interrelational as opposed to an independent or individualistic orientation. Implicit in the noted responses in the preceding sections is a distinction between activities and practices related to religion and those related to customs. This distinction will become more apparent in those questions related to Saudi preservice teachers' views regarding their expectations for students' development within school settings.

Cultural Classroom Practices

The next set of questions asked Saudi preservice special education teachers to reflect on their future instructional roles and responsibilities within the guiding continuums from the research literature. The first question asked the extent to which teachers should help students to fit in with the cultural norms of their family and community or if they should encourage their students to stand up for what they believe even if it upsets others in their social and family

circles. Given the parameters outlined in the research literature, preservice teachers made a distinction in their responses between those activities related to customs versus religion. That is, while Saudi preservice special education teachers emphasized cultural norms over privileging rights of individual expression, they did believe students should have the right under certain circumstances to express opinions and beliefs. One preservice teacher stated, “The students need to know the cultural norms of a country, then their opinions and insights can be looked at with logical reason. If there is a change that enhances the country’s development, it can be adopted.” Other preservice teachers supported the presence of a limited freedom of expression within the parameters of their country’s cultural standards. Without guidance from teachers regarding these parameters, students could cause ‘frequent arguments’ within the classroom or community. Preservice teachers viewed themselves as the first line of defense against students expressing opinions that were contrary to their Islamic traditions. If they were contrary, then teachers could immediately work to align them with more desirable outcomes. As one participant stated, “content (among community members) is important and anger at anything (for the sake of expressing an opinion) does not lead to a good result.” Another provided further elaboration by stating, “Students should not be an anomaly from society as people will then see him as different from them and he will not be welcomed.” Even though Saudi preservice teachers recognized the need for societies to change based on the expression of one’s opinion or beliefs, they did not welcome its expression if it violated established cultural norms.

This distinction between content and anger underscored Saudi preservice teachers’ identification of those behaviors which would either help their students to become successful in life. Across interviewees, there was a direct relationship between the focus of the two sets of responses. For example, one respondent listed tolerance of others and cooperation as two

positive behaviors and displays of anger and arrogance, drawing a relationship between these linked traits. Anger and arrogance were linked to disrupting community cohesion causing a lack of cooperation and showing a lack of tolerance. Please note, however, as stated in the preceding question, tolerance is earned within the community. Preservice teachers did not expect everyone to display tolerance if behaviors or beliefs did not fall within the expected parameters identified with the national cultural goals. Another preservice teacher listed flexibility and the need to reinforce a students' strengths as traits to be promoted whereas shyness and an unwillingness to try new things were behaviors that should be addressed and changed. Once again, these behaviors are related directly -- students will not try new things and display flexibility if teachers permit their shyness and closed mindedness to prevail. One preservice teachers' comments provided elaboration on these responses: she stated, "Thinking positively ensures success in life and keeps you away from negative people. Gaining new experiences and not being afraid of failure helps because having new experiences in life is a beautiful thing and a person can then learn from his mistakes.

The final question within this category asked Saudi preservice teachers about the extent to which parents should decide on what students' study and their life's occupation. As with the preceding questions in this category, they were purposely asked to favor the need to either fit into the needs of family or go against collectivist norms and expectations. Accordingly, because students needed to study for extended periods to reach their career goals, respondents overall believed that they needed a relatively high degree of freedom to decide on the direction of their studies. Parallels between the freedom to select an area of study in a preferred career were drawn with the need for women to have a veto in arranged marriages. In both instances, customs were changing and the preservice teachers approved of allowing individuals to make these choices. As

stated by one interviewee, “Because times change, some customs and traditions are not the the same over the years.” Consistent with responses, she further explained how such customs should not go against religious dictates: change is progress and should be allowed but change should not violate religion. Another preservice teacher’s statement captured this sentiment by stating, “Customs and traditions are not as important as religion. A person does what he thinks is right. There are positive and negative customs and traditions. We should enhance the good customs and traditions and not the negative ones.”

In the last set of interviews, responses were most similar to what is associated with the individualistic or independent views from Western countries. When making statements to promote the need for individual expression, particularly as they related to making important career and life decisions, Saudi preservice teachers expressed the importance of the personal choice and right to decide on a career. For example, one teacher stated, “The student must follow his desire. Because he is the one who will work and get up every day and go to work or school, so it is best for him to choose what he wants. His desire might not be the same as parents' desire.” Additionally, another preservice teacher stated, “Parental advice is welcomed but it is not mandatory.” While these statements support an individualistic orientation, they need to be viewed within the context of the preservice teachers’ overall interview responses, which strongly supported the collectivist and interdependent orientations.

Archive Data

The first document reviewed listed the public-school goals and Vision 2030. In public school goals section related to education, it includes the following goals: (a) promote family participation in preparing for their children's future; (b) building an integrated educational journey; (c) improving equal access to education; (d) improving basic educational outcomes; (e)

improving the ranking of educational institutions; (f) providing qualitative knowledge for distinguished people in priority areas; and (g) ensuring compatibility between educational outcomes and labor market needs. Vision 2030 states, “The need for the government to help individuals as they pursue careers by developing world class universities and partnerships with various industries. A centralized database will be developed to monitor the progress of this effort.” Each of these documents support the preservice teachers’ statements, particularly the focus on Islamic doctrine and cultural practices.

The second document is from Umm Al-Qura University and called Tamkeen (i.e., enable), it lists the university’s strategic goals at the individual, group, and organizational levels. At the individual level, the emphasis is placed on responsibility, moral behavior and excellence. At the group level, teamwork and cooperation are stressed as different groups within the university develop efficient and effective plans to implement the future vision as listed in the public school’s document. Finally, the organizational level goals focus on an adherence to Islamic doctrine as individuals and groups implement practices to promote continuous development and improvement.

The third document is policy statements of the special education department. The vision of the department is to provide the necessary services to meet the needs of the society as it relates to Saudi Vision 2030. Table 3 illustrates some direct quotes of these three documents. The recommendations related to Saudi collectivist culture included in the policy statements are as the following: students should seek for goals other than jobs to help people, volunteer to work frequently in special education centers, invoke the intention in working with people with special needs because God chose you to service these people and you are able to do that, and do not chose major to just earn money and job because there are no major has no future and trust God in

your future life. Moreover, as the researcher analyzes the plan of study for the undergraduate degree, four cultural courses are taught and each course is worth two credit hours. These courses include information of Islamic and society values.

Table 3. Archival Data Findings Summary

Document	Evidence
Vision 2030	<p>“We have been given the privilege to serve the Two Holy Mosques, the pilgrims and all visitors to the blessed holy sites. In the last decade, the number of Umrah visitors entering the country from abroad has tripled, reaching 8 million people. This is a noble responsibility. It requires us to spare no effort in seeking to offer pilgrims with all they need so we fulfil our duty to provide good hospitality to our brothers and sisters” (p.16)</p> <p>“We take immense pride in the historical and cultural legacy of our Saudi, Arab, and Islamic heritage. Our land was, and continues to be, known for its ancient civilizations and trade routes at the crossroads of global trade” (p. 17)</p> <p>“Families are the key building block of a society, protecting it from social breakdown across generations, and acting as both its children’s sanctuary and the main provider of their needs” (p. 28)</p>
Tamkeen	<p>“Objectives of the vision of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia related to Vision 2030: Promoting Islamic values and national identity, Enable social responsibility, Serving more pilgrims in the fullest manner, Raising the level of citizen’s responsibility to enable companies to contribute socially, Enriching the religious and cultural experience of pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims, and Encouraging volunteer work and strengthening companies’ implementation of their social responsibilities” (p.31)</p>
Policy statements of the special education department	<p>“To become a reference in the Shari`ah and Arabic sciences” (p.1)</p> <p>“To provide excellent learning and well-established scientific research to serve the community and the Hajj and Umrah system and to contribute to the development of the knowledge economy and entrepreneurship. This is to be achieved in a stimulating academic environment and through the formation of effective partnership” (p.1)</p> <p>“To achieve leadership in the field of special education, improve the skills of special education specialists in order to enable them to be competitive, and keep pace with advancement in a scientific environment characterized by high quality, according to the Saudi Vision 2030” (p.2)</p>

In the archival data, the triangulation of the minister of education expectations supported parents', students', and teachers', their general goals, objectives and recommendations. Moreover, the educational outcomes aligned with preservice special education teachers' understanding of the nation's cultural priorities and practices and supported the collectivist culture. The findings of the three reviewed policy documents supported Saudi preservice special education teachers' responses regarding the national cultural goals and cultural classroom practices.

Summary

The underlying assumption of this study is to investigate Saudi pre-service special education teachers' responses based on the extent to which they support a collectivist or interdependent perspective versus an individualistic or independent view. By analyzing the participants' interviews and archival data, Saudi pre-service special education teachers preferred collectivism orientation over individualism. Religion and social practices, human rights, moral behaviors, family belonging, and culture vs. religion activities are commonly found across collected data. The implications of these findings are discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

Saudi preservice teachers in the special education program at the University of Umm Al-Qura University were interviewed regarding their beliefs about their nation's cultural practices and their related expectations for various educational scenarios. The intent of the interviews was to determine the extent to which their responses would support a collectivist or interdependent versus an individual or independent cultural orientation. The reason for this inquiry was to evaluate the extent to which their views aligned with the assumptions for the development of a popular motivational program, self-determination theory (Ryan et al., 2011), which has been adopted in many non-Western countries. This program was developed in the United States and makes assumptions, which other researchers have found to be central to Western cultures (Ryan, & Deci, 2002). Self-determination theory assumes that learners' need to achieve is based on intrinsic motivation and views extrinsic rewards as undermining a learner's autonomy and competence. To promote intrinsic motivation, consistent with an individualistic or independent cultural orientation, educators should allow students to have as much free choice as possible and provide them with challenging tasks while offering supportive feedback. While the preservice teachers' beliefs might advocate the need for challenging tasks and supportive feedback, they did question the value of allowing for free choice given the cultural values of their country.

When evaluating the nature of the preservice teachers' responses regarding choice, one must consider the context within which Saudi students make decisions. When asked to describe this context, regardless of whether their interview responses included references to rights of special needs populations; the protection of children from social media and abuse; women's rights and a citizen's voice; or mundane activities such as drinking coffee with friends and family, religious and cultural values provided the main rationale for how choices were

made. For example, under the coded headings for their interview responses--Government Support for Religious Practices and Beliefs, Justice and Equality Through Human Rights, Social Practices of Saudi Cultural Lifestyles, Expected Moral Behaviors Regarding the Treatment of Others, and Primacy of Family and National Belonging---the emphasis was mainly on the collective as demonstrated mainly through Islamic values. The collective was reflective of the extent to which individuals belong to a community because of their participation in various religious practices or cultural activities: there was no reference to the need for learners to discover unique internal attributes apart from these engagements (Michael, 2016).

Accordingly, within the most frequently selected category of responses, Government Support for Religious Practices and Beliefs, preservice teachers frequently cited how they were governed along Islamic principles. The government was viewed as responsible to support religious practices and beliefs based on the Sharia law and its religious tenets as outlined in the Qur'an (Bradley, 2005). This emphasis makes sense in a country where close to 100% of the population are Muslim and the religion's three main holy sites are located within the country. Every Muslim within the country and across the Arab world is required to make a pilgrimage to these sites during his or her life, called a Hajj, to Makkah, to these sites (The World Factbook, 2020). Without the government's support, this community of religious followers' participation in these functions might not proceed smoothly. Similarly, with the category, Justice and Equality Through Human Rights, preservice teachers again underscored the need for the government to support the rights of everyone within the community as mandated by Islam. The government was held accountable for this support and protection, both of which are based on a study of the prophet Muhammed's speeches and Islamic law. For example, regarding individuals with special needs, the first legislation was mandated in 1987. It defined special education categories and

their defining characteristics and identified intervention programs and diagnostic assessments to determine eligibility. It required public agencies to offer programs of independent living for students with special needs (Alquraini, 2011). All changes were consistent with Islamic principles and preservice teachers viewed government officials as responsible for their implementation.

The next three categories, Social Practices of Saudi Cultural Lifestyles, Expected Moral Behaviors Regarding the Treatment of Others, and Primacy of Family and National Belonging, further defined critical aspects of culture which, in turn, needed to be considered when examining the role of the individual as he or she makes decisions with the Saudi context. Instead of individuals discovering unique internal attributes independently, they make this discovery within certain social and cultural parameters. Findings of Hofstede et al. (2010) and Markus and Kitayama (1991) are consistent with Saudi understanding of social practices, which highlight the importance of the interaction among the community members. Individuals think of themselves as “we” due to living with an extended family, as a universalist community, where everyone follows the same standards, and the community members understand each other without explicitly explaining themselves because the information is culturally understood. Whereas responses in the preceding two categories related directly to religious scriptures, responses in these three categories tended to focus more on cultural traditions and activities, an emphasis which increases when preservice teachers’ expectations for classroom practices are examined (Nasir, 2002). Throughout, regardless of whether the relationship to religion was direct or indirect, as found in the first two and the last three categories, respectively, their responses supported the collectivist or interdependent cultural orientations.

Preservice teachers noted the need for tolerance and respect regarding cultural traditions within and across various geographical areas and religious sects and encouragement for all citizens to be generous to those who are less fortunate. The respect of cultural traditions and activities in the current study aligns with previous research where collectivists tend to place a great value on socialization (Lyon, 1995). For example, missing a relatives' wedding or funeral is culturally not accepted, and inviting all relatives is commonly practiced whereas in Western culture, "My home is my castle," is an emphasized expression, in which the individual has his own rules, such as he or she could invite whoever he or she likes to the wedding (Hofstede et al., 2010). The central focus of Saudi practices and beliefs are based through loyalty to the immediate family, extended kinship, community and then the nation. This sense of connection also extends to the family responsibilities toward their children. Parents are responsible for their children's school supplies, meals during the school day, dropping off and picking up them, and extended learning and education activities, such as providing tutors (Al Gelban, 2009; Algraini, & McIntyre-Mills, 2018; Broberg, 2003; and Hamdan, 2015).

In their responses regarding future classroom expectations, Saudi preservice teachers explained their preferences about the extent to which students should be expected to align their performances with the cultural norms of their family and community versus standing up for their beliefs, regardless of the consequences. They also identified those behaviors which promoted positive versus negative outcomes regarding achieving their career trajectories. Finally, they expressed opinions regarding the extent to which families should determine students' career trajectories. Once again, context played a critical role in how preservice teachers answered these interview questions. Specifically, students were expected to voice their opinions and beliefs, but this expression had to fall within the guidelines of family and community values, which are

based either directly or indirectly on religious doctrine. When identifying negative behaviors, interviewees pointed to expressions of anger, which could ostracize an individual from his community if such expressions caused social unrest. As noted in the research literature, expressions of anger are experienced differently across cultures (Bradley, 2005). Kitayama and colleagues (2015) tested the correlation between the expression of anger and the biological health risk in the United States and Japan. The study findings supported that the correlation between expressions of anger and biological health risk changed by cultural differences. As with this study, her research concluded that expression of anger was experienced differently in various countries, a finding consistent with this study. Differences of opinion were encouraged as long as they were within the established values of the community which, in turn, were based directly or indirectly on religion.

The greatest emphasis on individual choice was found within the preservice teachers' views of parental influence in students' career decisions. Students were expected to make their own decisions regarding careers with parents serving as guides. One caveat, however, was that students were expected to strive for a career and education was the main steppingstone for this accomplishment. Thus, while the greatest emphasis on individual choice was found within this category, it was not a free choice: it had limited options or parameters based on a family's religious and cultural traditions.

Across Saudi preservice teachers' identification of national and cultural goals was the belief that teachers should teach such goals in daily instruction. This belief was collaborated by the archival documents which were reviewed for this study. The government's overall goal was to change the country's economy to adjust to a world where oil is no longer the main source of production. To do so, the government wants to improve the status of its universities and its

connecting feeder schools so that its citizens can be educated in their country and compete for employment in a more technologically based society. To achieve this goal, however, the government wants to follow those national and cultural goals which the preservice teachers identified. For example, according to the document, Saudi Vision 2030, the focus is for the country's organizational goals to be consistent with an adherence to Islamic doctrine and individuals are expected to exhibit moral behavior and excellence that is consistent with the country's religious values. This aligned with Iyengar and Lepper (2000) studies in how religion shaped cultural values. Some religions require its followers to obey particular rules, such as what to wear, what to eat, how to respect parents, or how to pray. In looking at the future, the government wants to be able to compete with the West, but they want to do it in a way that is consistent with their own religious and cultural values.

The need for change to be consistent with national religious and cultural values could easily apply to the adoption of educational practices such as those found in self-determination theories and programs. It is not a question of whether a program should or should not be adopted as much as it is a question of how a program might be modified to fit a particular cultural context. By implication, if the program promoted those goals as documented in policy statements, then its modifications would be appropriate. As stated by Shogren (2011), nations have unique cultural contexts which must be attended to if the implementation of certain educational programs are to be successful. She stated the need for programs to have a flexible framework if they are to be exported to non-Western countries. With regards to self-determination theory and this study's results, any flexible framework within Saudi Arabia should be sensitive to the practices of a collectivist culture. In particular, this sensitively should address religious and family expectations as represented in the preservice teachers' identification of

national and school goals where the individuals' wishes and desires are not the primary motive for behavior. What is meant by free choice differs across Western and middle Eastern cultures. While Saudi students have freest choice when selecting careers, they are still making decisions within a context where religious values and cultural traditions within a family and community context shape their decision making. The cultural practice of leaving home at a certain age is considered an independent action in Western culture. In contrast, this is not an appropriate behavior in Middle Eastern communities. Additionally, while Saudi families of special needs individuals want their children to live independently, although the interpretation of independent living is different across cultures. The Middle Eastern culture wants the child to eat, dress, wash, and support others within the parents' home. On the other hand, families from Western backgrounds want the child to be independent and leave the parenting home. The implication of self-determination should be sensitive to these different interpretations and cultures.

These findings supported previous research regarding self-determination and culture and provided considerations for how to adopt this theory, particularly in the Middle East. Kitayama et al. (2004) stated that an individual evaluated or judged his choice based on either his own thinking or the appraisals of others, such as am I making the right decision vs. how my parents think about my choice. Moreover, Iyengar and Lepper (1999) conducted two experimental studies to examine the connection between the provision of choices and intrinsic motivation. The findings supported that Anglo American showed higher intrinsic motivation in the personal choice condition. In contrast, Asian Americans scored higher intrinsic motivation when choices were made for them by trusted in-group members. This pattern is similar to the results from this dissertation: intrinsic motivation is more likely to happen when placed within Saudi national and cultural goals. Those feelings associated with intrinsic motivation are experienced within and

vary because of a nation's cultural context. Understanding cultural differences is important when adopting behaviors, traveling, or interacting with individuals from other cultures (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Limitations

There are some limitations to this study. First, the Saudi preservice special education teachers interviewed in the research, which limited the generalizability to include larger sample size. The participants also selected based on the certain criteria: they were all preservice special education teachers at a university in western Saudi Arabia, who are in their final year of the undergraduate program. The preservice special education teachers are female, age ranging from twenty-one to twenty-five years. The participants' ethnicity is Saudi and their mother language is Arabic. Anyone who does not meet these criteria will not be invited to participate (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Similarly, the participants were from western region of the country, one of six regions. Educational officials are located in the six regions of the country, each of which has between two and fourteen designated officials. The Minister of Education as well as his regional representatives are appointed by the King and serve as at-will designees (Prokop, 2003). Unlike the United States, none of the regions has the power to set national education policy. Instead, policy decisions are made centrally in the capital, Riyadh, which then dictates its decisions to each area (Hamdan, 2015). Regardless, the replication of these findings with other populations from different regions of the country would add to these findings.

Implications for Future Practice

At a practical level, the main implication is that self-determination theory can be brought to Saudi Arabia but with some modifications. Individuals do not act alone, cultural parameters, particularly as they relate to their family's involvement with their daily lives, can encourage the

three main dimensions of this theory--autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In this case, perhaps the emphasis should be on the relatedness aspects of this theory with less emphasis on the dimensions of autonomy and competence. Overall, the emphasis needs to be in relation to the family communities' religious and cultural values. Autonomy involves the experience of choice. A person is autonomy-oriented when he or she experiences the sense of choice; in other words, a person uses available information to make choices and to pursue goals that are self-selected (Christenson et al., 2012; Ryan, & Deci, 2017). Saudi students have the freest choice when selecting careers, they are still making decisions within a context where religious values and cultural traditions within a family and community context shape their decision making.

Competence is the individual ability to interact with the environment and face the challenge successfully and efficiently (Christenson et al., 2012; Ryan, & Deci, 2017). In this regard, the collected data from Saudi national documents and interviews emphasized the importance of teamwork, organization, and communication as desired behaviors related to the competence component of self-determination theory. Relatedness is the most referenced component of self-determination by participants and national documents, which is the emotional sense of being attached and connected with others (Karaarslan et al., 2013). Adherence to culture and practicing culturally acceptable behaviors and avoiding undesired activities are frequently stated in interview transcription. Saudi national documents confirmed these behaviors and beliefs.

Findings of this study expanded Shogren (2011) synthesis research about culture and self-determination to explore cultural variables that influence self-determination. Six nonempirical and four empirical articles when she searched the following key terms: self-determination, culture, and special education. The synthesis study did not have any middle east country. It

included Dine, Japanese, Taiwanese, Hawaiiin, Hispanic, African, and Korean cultures. She suggested a flexible framework to consider culture. Ohtake and Wehmeyer (2004) subsequently suggested a series of steps for researchers to follow when examining cross-cultural differences and this dissertation emphasized the importance of relatedness in eastern culture. The findings from this study provided a pathway towards reaching this goal.

Extensive books and studies discussed Saudi culture, but no studies examined the extent of Saudi culture as collectivist or individualist orientations. Hofsetede et al. (2010) mentioned a couple examples of Saudi culture but this dissertation provided a richer, more detailed, and descriptive analysis of Saudi cultural practices (Lincoln, & Guba, 1985). This study recognized the importance of understanding the natural culture of Saudi Arabia in order to deal with the question of how to adopt various theories and practices in their schools. Most special education articles do not address cultural views in Saudi Arabia. These studies usually centered on translating the concepts and the views without considering the cultural perspectives (Altamimi, et al., 2015). The study is an initial step to explore the extent to which there is an alignment between the theoretical assumptions of a popular educational theory and the cultural practices and beliefs of special education teachers in Saudi Arabia. Markus's studies have focused mainly on Japan and China and whereas Hofstede's studies involved Middle Eastern countries, Saudi Arabia included, but their findings relate primarily to the business world and not education. The findings of this study extend the literature base for this important question.

Implications for Future Research

The purpose of this study is to explore the extent to which there is an alignment between the theoretical assumptions of self-determination theory and the cultural practices and beliefs of female special education teachers in Umm Al-Qura University, western region of Saudi Arabia.

The cultural practices and beliefs of Saudi preservice special education teachers were compared with national, university, and local school documents to further assess their alignment, allowing the researcher to triangulate data across data sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). More research needs to be conducted on participants from different regions, general education teachers, universities, gender, and outside the educational environment such as parents. Likewise, additional studies should consider the extent to which Western teachers espouse similar views.

Another area of research relates to the development or refinement of a culturally appropriate survey. Wehmeyer and Kelchner developed the ARC survey, a self-determination scale for individuals, whose ages ranged from 12 to 18 years old, to measure the concepts behind self-determination theory (1995). This survey was recently translated into Arabic by Alsuhaibani (2018). When used in a Saudi Arabia's with special education students, over thirty of the items were not answered. Such a high number of deleted items questions the appropriateness of this survey for Middle East nations. Many of its items appear to be, at best, non-theoretical in nature, limiting their interpretation to actual cultural practices. Perhaps this finding of a high number of deleted items is related to the inclusion of special education students in their study. They simply might have not understood the cultural milieu of their nation and how it related to daily cultural and religious practices. Using participants who were university students and future teachers provided a more authentic view of this country's practices (Shogren, 2011).

Another related future study relates to how change occurs within collectivist nations. When reading the relevant research literature for his study, one gets the impression that collectivist based cultures have fixed behaviors and attitudes. The distinction between religious and cultural practices might be a place to study the dynamic nature of change within collectivist nations. For example, over the last twenty-five years, Saudi attitudes towards marriage, driving,

and special education policies and practices are changing. Such changes appear to occur first as culturally sanctioned activities (Al-Abdulkareem, & Ballal, 1998). Preservice teachers' repeated identification of a distinction between culturally and religiously based behaviors and beliefs might serve as a starting point for such a study.

I can use this distinction as a starting point during my university teaching to help students to understand the role of change in our society. Change occurs, but it happens in ways that are very distinct from what I observed in the United States. The goal is not to simply promote the individual but to understand his role within the broader social and cultural contexts given the primacy of the family. My dissertation findings support the need to emphasize this focus as Saudi educators make changes to special education curricular and services. Based on my experiences of teaching in the department of special education, I noticed extensive books, laws, and teaching strategies translated into Arabic. My undergraduate students struggled to understand them. I think translating the main concepts or theory can be adopted but the interpretations and the implications should be culturally appropriate. The interpretations should be sensitive to address religious activities, family expectations and importance, and community guidance.

While completing this dissertation, I more fully understood my cultural beliefs and background. I became more aware of what was only implicit to me before I conducted this study. I believe I can now set up experiences for my students where they more fully examine their cultural background with the focus on more fully understanding the implications of our beliefs and attitudes. Such an examination should help them to determine how we can collaboratively work together to improve the lives of our students with special need.

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