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Survey Article

An Analysis of Anxiety and Homesickness Experienced by Postgraduate and Undergraduate Saudi Students Studying in the UK

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Abstract: The trend of studying abroad is increasing in this highly dynamic world. With the aid of bank loans and other support, many students in underdeveloped or developing countries are pursuing their studies major developed nations like the United Kingdom, USA or Australia. The study has been undertaken on the foreign educational grounds to prove certain social issues related to foreign education. Two groups of students have been analyzed, and the main aim of the study seeks to identify the difference between these two groups. Certainly, the study has found differences of their cultures, their psychology, etc. between the student groups from the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia. The literary analysis reflects the concepts and theories that have a major impact in this context. A large amount of reviewed journals, articles have been discussed here where some interesting and significant facts have been revealed. The articles affirm that students from a country like Saudi Arabia have been facing adjustment problems when they move abroad. To support the study, a primary analysis has been done which reflects a dissimilar result to the initial literature analysis. The literature review reflects the scenario of the past few years and describes many solutions that have been used in recent strategies and systems. The main reason that the two analysis provides two different results, is because the time period differs. However, the literature review ultimately supports the analysis because it says the solutions that were undertaken are working successfully. Recently, the issues are seen to be decreasing which has been proved by the primary data analysis. The result says that there is no difference that exists between the two student groups that have been analyzed here.

Keywords: Anxiety, Homesickness, Abroad, Saudi Arabia.

Introduction

Studying outside of your home country requires mental strength from the individual. Recently it has been observed that young people in this generation are very career-orientated, and a large proportion of them are showing an interest in foreign education. People in developing countries, where the educational system is much poorer than the developed countries, like to pursue their higher studies abroad¹. This makes them more study-oriented and wealthy in terms of knowledge. To study abroad, students need to leave home for at least 2-3 years. Excessive study pressure sometimes makes them feel lonely². Besides, they cannot visit home on a regular basis. At most they can return home for a short visit once a year. This creates mental pressure on the student's mind. As a result anxiety problems arise. Apart from that, an individual from an underdeveloped nation takes time to adjust to the cultures and people in a developed country. The problem of adjustment makes them feel homesick³.

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There are many surveys that have been undertaken in this field and the majority of results are very similar. During 2005, a programme was established in Saudi Arabia in order to sponsor students who are interested in foreign educational and training courses. The programme named KASP (King Abdullah Scholarship Program) was established in order to encourage more students to pursue their career abroad. More than 120,000 students in Saudi Arabia have studied in a number of major developed nations like United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, etc. Many issues have been noticed by conducting several surveys. The University of Toledo, Canada undertook a qualitative study where 121 students were selected. It was concluded that the students face issues like language problems, cultural differences, financial problems, etc⁴.

The main aim of this research is to analyze and evaluate the experiences regarding homesickness and anxiety problems, which have been felt by the students from Saudi Arabia who study in the UK. Based on the research aim, the main objectives of the study are given below. The motive of this study is to fulfill these objectives. These objectives are,

- a) To examine acculturation strategies, homesickness, emigration intentions, anxiety among a particular sample of Saudi Arabian students who have been studying abroad for more than a year.
- b) To evaluate the relationship of homesickness, anxiety with different acculturation strategies, emigration intentions, the thoughts of the students towards the host country, etc.
- c) To investigate the reasons that make students anxious and homesick.
- d) To assess the important differences between the students of Saudi Arabia and the students of United Kingdom.

It is important to develop a few research questions to answer with the help of this study. The research questions of the study are,

- a) What is the impact of acculturation strategies, homesickness, emigration intentions, anxiety among a particular sample of Saudi Arab students who have been studying abroad for more than a year?
- b) How the problems of homesickness, anxiety are related to different acculturation strategies, emigration intentions, the thoughts of the students towards the host country, etc.?
- c) What are the reasons that make students anxious and homesick?
- d) How the impact of these measures can differ between the students of Saudi Arabia and the students of the United Kingdom?

Research Methodology Research Design

- ✓ This research piece strictly follows explanatory research criteria.
- ✓ Survey method has been used in this research as data collecting strategies.

Research methods

The students are used here as respondents because this research is undertaken to evaluate their psychological point of view only. Hence, the quantitative method is most wanted research method here.

Sample Size and questionnaire

The sample size of the study is 194. It clearly clarifies that total 124 respondents have been chosen to participate in this study. Saudi Arabia students (N= 64), the UK students (N= 60) and others (N=4) all participants should be under and postgraduates students who studying abroad more than a year, because the variables are homesickness and anxiety which can effective by studying stress and living away from home.

This is a quantitive study design and online survey. This research has been set up the questionnaire on Qualtrics web and it include all questions and consent form, participants information sheet all include the details which the need, and the participant should agree before the start the survey they

asked to press Yes or No before starting. If they press No they do not want to participate (N=29) in this survey and the browser will close automatically. The others participants who press yes will get directly to the participants information sheet which include all information and detailed.

After that the survey was distributed potential participants via Social media (tweeter, Facebook and email) SONA system. The objective of this survey was explained for the participants and they were approved that taking parts on this project is completely voluntary. If they finish the survey they will find the debrief sheet and thank you page that is the end of this study and it is complete.

Data Analysis Method

The data are important to analyze to reach the goals. In order to fulfill the objectives of the research, the data will be analyzed and considered. There are different tools and techniques through which the data can be analyzed. ANNOVA, Regression, Correlations, Descriptive Status, etc. are the ways through which the data are analyzed. Out of the various software like SPSS, STATA, Eviews, Advance Excel, etc. SPSS has been used here in this analysis.

Data Analysis and Discussion

With the help of collection of the data, the data analysis has been done. Total 40 questions have been included in the questionnaire. Each of them has some specific options.

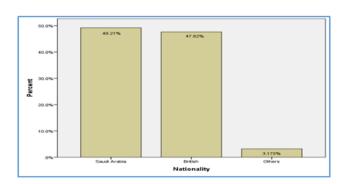
A few informative questions were asked regarding locations and some relevant information. Respondents who were asked the question through interactive software. The responses have been collected and composed with the help of SPSS software.

Quantitative Analysis

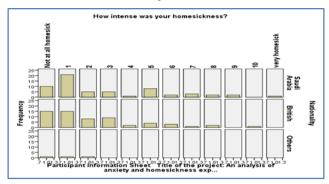
The following analysis shows the statistical representation of the data.

The main objective of this analysis is to identify the difference between the mentalities of the students in Saudi Arabia and the students of United Kingdom. The trend of the homesickness and anxiety problem affects whom, how much and why? This was the main question. So, for meeting the answer of the very initial question of the study this option was included in the questionnaire.

According to the response collected the graph has been made. The graph typically reflects the statistics of the responses. Total 194 students were reached and asked the same questions. 49.21% of the students are from Saudi Arabia and studying in abroad. 42.62% students are from the United Kingdom and their nationality is British. Only 3.175% students are from rest of the world.



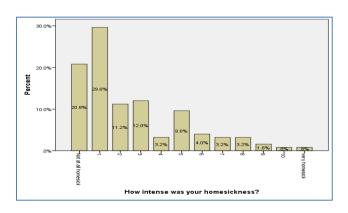
With the help of the histogram, it has been achieved that how many Saudi Arabian students are feeling homesick and how many of the United Kingdom student feels homesick. The majority of Saudi Arabian and British students have informed that they do not feel homesick. Very few students agreed that they feel very homesick. The ratio is very negligible, and the possibility is higher that reason might be different.



The below diagram is a normal statistical representation of how many of the total respondents feel homesick without considering their nationality. The percentage of the respondents are higher who said they do not feel very homesick. Very few of the respondents have declared that they feel anxious and homesick. So it can be said that their homesick problems may come from some other relevant reason such as genetic disorder etc.

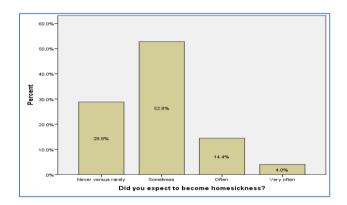
One-Sample Statistics										
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean						
How intense was	125	3.52	2.561	0.229						
your homesickness?										
One-Sample Test										
	Test Value = 0									
	t	Degrees	Sig.	Mean	95%					
		of	(2-tailed)	Difference	Confidence					
		freedom			Interval of the					
					Difference					
					Lower	Upper				
How intense was	15.368	124	0	3.52	3.07	3.97				
your homesickness?										

With the help of a t-test again the hypotheses can be tested easily. The students were asked about the intensity of their homesickness. Let's consider two hypotheses i.e. alternative hypothesis and the null hypothesis. The alternative hypothesis will be their homesickness was not so intense and their null hypothesis will their homesickness will be extremely intense. However, from the above table, the result can be interpreted easily. The p-value is less 0 > .05 indicates an insignificant test result. Hence, in such cases, the null hypothesis generally is considered as rejected. The alternative hypothesis will be accepted. It is proved that the homesick or anxiety feelings of the student are not so intense which strictly contradicts with the result of the literature review. In the literature review, it is noticed that the trend of the issues related to homesickness or anxiety is has recently increased. Some measurements have been incorporated to omit the problems and during the time frame of the survey and, with the help of the analysis, the problems are decreasing day by day.

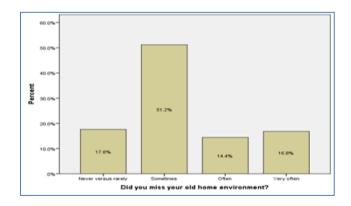


The flow of this research is turning to a point where a contradiction may arise between the literature review and the primary research. With the help of the secondary data, it was concluded that this relocation of students due to their studies had created homesickness and anxiety in their mind. The percentage of students affected by them was also expected non-negligible. This primary data analysis proposes that the percentage of students who feels homesick and anxious can be avoided with ease. The rate is highly negligible. In such a certain point of the study, a contradiction arises. Though homesickness is a illness, sometimes people who stay away from home feel homesick for the time being. Feeling homesick for the time being cannot be considered as a illness. 52.8% of the total respondents have informed they feel homesick sometimes. Only 4% feels homesick very often, and 28.8% feel homesick very rarely.

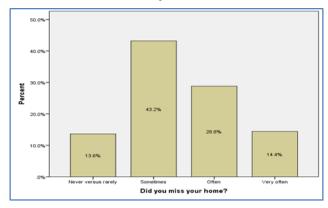
It can be said that the students feel homesick neither a lot or a little. It is only sometimes when they feel homesick. According to the psychological theory, when a student does not have any parties in abroad or no appointments to be met, they feel lonely in their accommodation. This is the time when they badly remember their loved ones and home. This can also not be considered as the illness. It is just a temporary psychological issue.



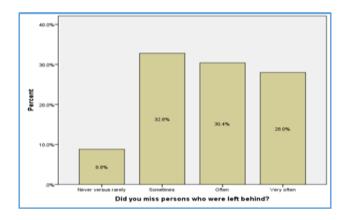
The students have also been asked regarding their old home environment. Basically, the environmental circumstances in Saudi Arabia are much different than in the United Kingdom. In such a fast and happening life as in the UK, it attracts many people. The Saudi Arabia follows different cultures and their values are totally different. The students have claimed that they sometimes miss their home environment. This is a natural phenomenon. No human cannot forget the place from where they come from. The place where an individual was born and brought up is a place to be remembered. So, this result of this part of the picture is literally justified.



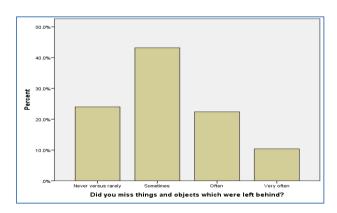
All of these answers are similar to each other. In order to get very specific results, the research had to include this similar questions sequentially. According to the response achieved against this particular question, a majority of the students miss their home sometimes. It is quite impossible that people will not miss their loved one and homes all the time but it is very natural that students miss their home for some of the time.



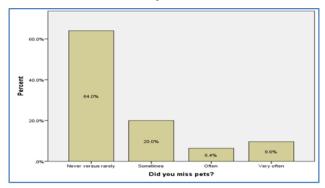
This particular question has provided a quiet dissimilar response than other similar questions. Almost all the options are contradicting each other. 32.8% have informed that they miss their loved ones who have left behind for sometimes whereas 30.4% respondents inform that they miss them often. 28% of them miss their people for very often. This is something which the student cannot deny, the blood relationship or the love or affection which are responsible for bringing them where they are today. This question worth asking because with the help of this particular question mentality can be assumed. The 8.8% respondents who have said that they never miss them are must be suffering from some psychological issues.



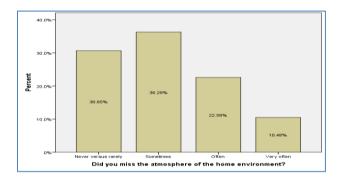
Persons or home country is something which cannot be forgotten with ease, but things and objects are not successfully attracted like others do. So, as usual, maximum respondents have informed that they either never miss them or miss them for some of the times. This result is also considered as justified in respect to another part of the analysis.



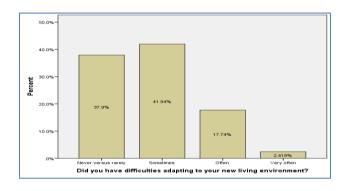
Some people love to have a pet. Some of them take care of their pet, and some of them show negligence towards them. However, in this particular question people, maximum people have informed that they do not miss their pets ever. 64% of them have chosen the first option, and only 20% of them have said they sometimes miss their pets, and 6.4% say they often miss their pets.



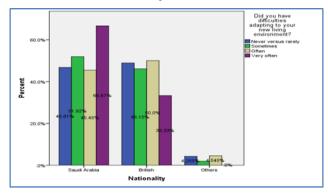
The next one resembles another question that was asked before. In the case of results both of them have provided identical results. Maximum of the respondents has provided negative results that they do not miss their home environment too much. The country where they are living presently consists of more happening and fast life. It is a bit difficult for any people to adjust to this environment at very initial days. Besides it is true that, once they become habituated in this environment, it becomes difficult for them to adjust to their home environment if the home countries are India, Saudi Arabia, etc.



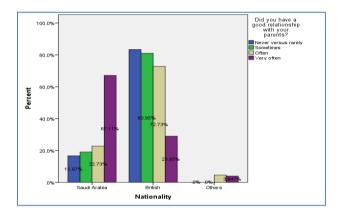
This question and answer series have provided an interesting fact when the respondents have asked if they have faced difficulties in adopting the new environment. The set of answers has different sclaes. Some of them i.e. 37.9% have said they never faced any difficulties where 41.94% of them have sometimes said they have faced certain difficulties which cannot be neglected. Now, let's check how many of Saudi Arabia students have proposed that they have never faced any difficulties.



The following chart shows that how many of the Saudi Arabian students have said that they have never faced difficulties in adjusting to their present environment. The majority of Saudi Arabian student's have said that they have faced difficulties in adjusting to this country. Still Almost the same amount of students have answered proposed that they have faced difficulties for some time. This analysis cannot justify its result because of almost identical percentage of responses. All the responses are very close to each other which implies that this particular factor varies from one student to another student.

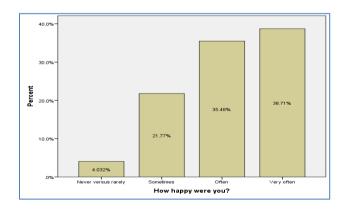


Again the bar chart has shown a comparative study between the two main groups of students i.e. Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom.

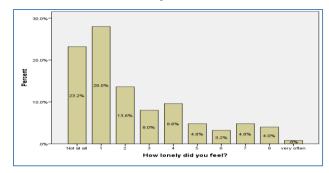


Being in a good relationship with the parents is a cultural aspect in some countries like Saudi Arabia, China, India, Bangladesh, etc. Their cultures are reflected in that way, but this culture is totally different from the United Kingdom's. In the UK, when people reach 18 years of age, they started living separately from their parents. This creates a mental distance between them and their parents, whereas in Saudi Arabia most people remain the family home until they get married or get a job in another city. So, it is quite obvious that Saudi Arabia students have a good relationship with their parents while United Kingdom student does not have the same opinion.

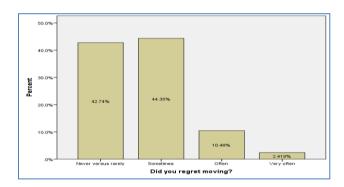
The next analysis is about the happiness that the student has left behind. 38.71% of the student they were very happy in their past life where only 4.03% students have said that they were never happy either. However, it is possible that these low percentage groups might have some psychological problem. No matter if students are from Saudi Arabia or from the United Kingdom neither are less happy now.



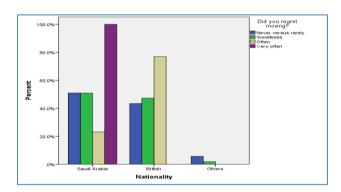
The majority of the respondents have informed that they have never felt lonely. 28% have responded closer to feeling not at all lonely.



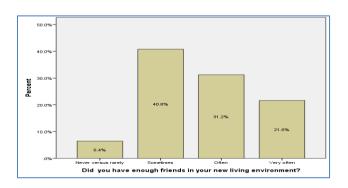
The respondents were asked if they do regretted moving to a new country for their studies. The majority respondents' chose that they sometimes regretted moving to a new country. Now, it is important to check which group regrets moving than the other group.



Now the next chart reveals that it is only the Saudi Arabian students who regret moving to the new country for their studies. The reason may not be the homesickness or anxiety problem, but it is only the Saudi Arabian respondents who have chosen this option.

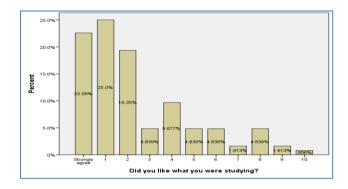


In this case of analysis, no further comparative study is required because a majority of the respondents have informed that they have enough friends in their new living environment. Some of them have said they have friends for not all the time but sometimes. Some of them have said they have some regular friends with whom they often meet, and some of them said they meet every now and then.

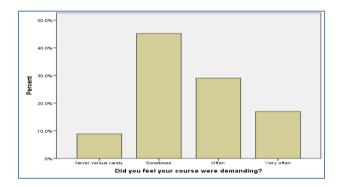


It is a benefit if students are studying their preferred subjects and the majority respondents have agreed that they are studying their favorite subjects. This is a factor which can even omit any other relevant reasons for being depressed.

Only a few students have said that they are not pursuing their career with their preferred subjects.

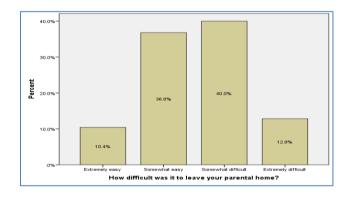


Being a student, it is a bit difficult for them to decide that if their subject demanding or not. Still, they have said they feel it is demanding to some extent. It is only a few people who said never. They confident students have informed that their subject is very demanding.

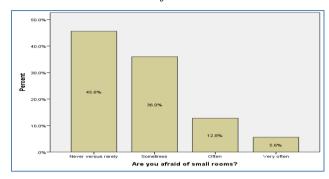


The largest number of the respondents have informed that leaving their home was somewhat easy or somewhat difficult. However, both of the options holds the same weight because the replies are similar.

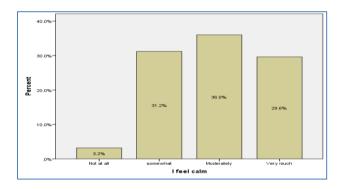
No further comparative study is required because it is clear that for only a few students was it easier to leave their parental home.



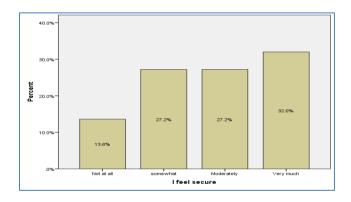
Now, moving into the psychological analysis of the students, some interesting facts have been revealed. It is revealed that for the majority of the students it was not too difficult for them to adjust to living in a small room. 45.6% students have said that. 36% of them have said they feel it difficult rarely.



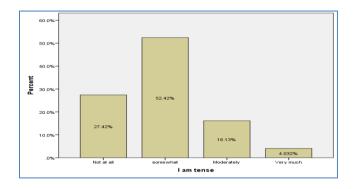
36% respondents have informed they feel calm means their mind is not disturbed at all. 29% of them are moderately calm. Only a few of them are not at all calm can indicate there are no major issues found among them.



Again the largest number of the respondents have informed that they feel very secure, 32%. An equal numbe, 27.2% say they feel moderately and somwhat secure compared to half this figure never feeling secures.

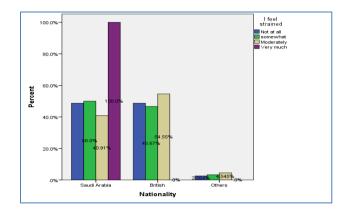


Being somewhat tense is not at all unjustified. Students who live away from home have tensions of their parents, studies, financial aspects, etc. 52.42% of the respondents have said somewhat they feel tense.



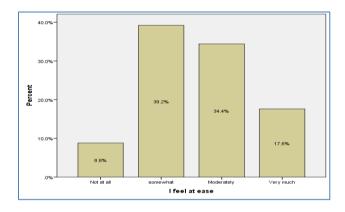
Being a student the main strain for them is their studies. Regular classes, assignment, a new style of the study etc. may create strains.

Higher studies are totally different from the lower levels. So feeling tense for some time for the students is justified. Though Saudi Arabian students feel stressed very much more than UK students.

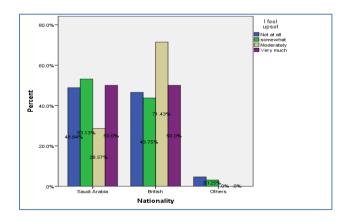


No further comparison study is required because a maximum of the student have proposed that they feel very easy in living there. Some of them feel easy sometimes and uneasy for some time. Some of them feel moderately easy.

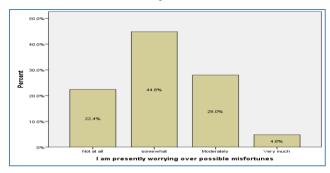
A student who is studying abroad and spending lots of money, so it is natural being somewhat tense.



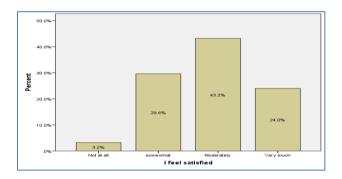
Feeling upset for loved ones are not unjustified. In such a cases, no differences have been found between the Saudi Arabian students and the United Kingdom students. All of the respondents that they very much feel upset.



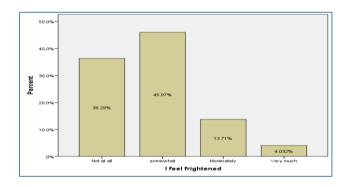
44.8% have informed that they worry about misfortune and their worries sometimes become excessive. 22.4% people have informed they never feel worried for any reason.



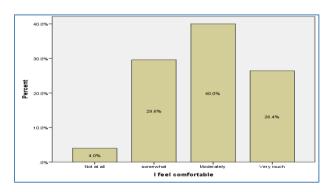
The student is either very satisfied, or moderately satisfied or partially satisfied. 3.2% students have said they are not for all students who are negligible. So it is to be said that students are satisfied in all aspects.



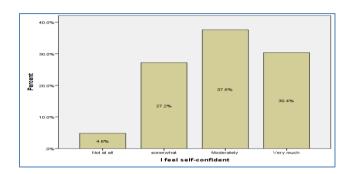
Students feel frightened either for sometimes or for never. Being frightened for the group which called students is bit strange. Yes, they can be tense, strained but frightened may cross all limits. Students who said that they are frightened might be suffering from social, cultural or psychological issues.



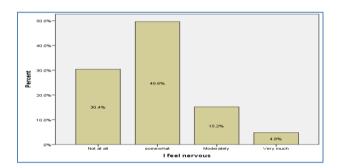
The majority of the student's respondents has informed that they feel comfortable in their new place. No matter the student is from Saudi Arabia or from the United Kingdom, they feel comfortable in their new living place. No further comparative study is required as maximum respondents have said they do not feel uncomfortable in living there.



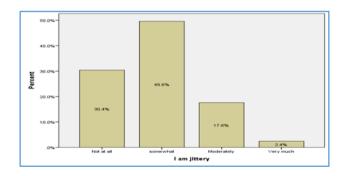
The student's self-confidence is a factor which can imply the mental strength of an individual. The majority of the student's respondents have informed they have enough self-confidence to complete their study in such an unknown place. 30.4% of the students are very overconfident regarding their self-confidence level.



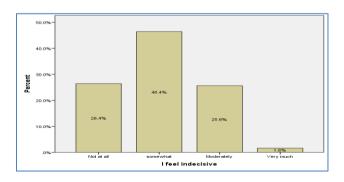
49.6% of the total respondents have informed that they feel nervous sometimes. 30.4% is the percentage of the people who never feel nervous.



Jittery and nervousness are almost the same words. More precisely jittery means unable to relax. People who feel nervous for sometimes, cannot relax for that time being. It is somewhat natural. 49.6% of the total respondents feel jittery when they get nervous.



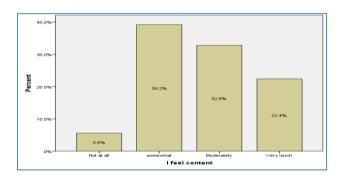
Some of the analysis is not at all particular. In this case, the respondents have informed that they feel indecisive sometimes. They partially feel indecisive. Now, most people in general feel partially indecisive not only students.

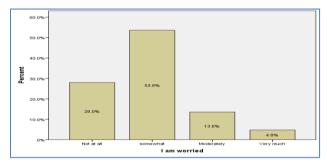


43.25 of the student's respondents have informed that they feel relaxed most of the time. It is very rare when they feel jittery. This analysis is same as the former one where the students were asked about their nervousness.

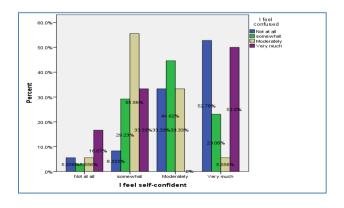
I am relaxed									
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent				
Valid	Not at all	7	3.6	5.6	5.6				
	somewhat	34	17.5	27.2	32.8				
	Moderately	54	27.8	43.2	76				
	Very much	30	15.5	24	100				
	Total	125	64.4	100					
Missing	System	69	35.6						
Total		194	100						

39.2% of the total respondents have informed that they feel content means they are happy. However, according to them, their happiness is partial. They are not always happy but for the some of the time. 32.8% of them are moderately happy i.e. the amount is non-negligible.

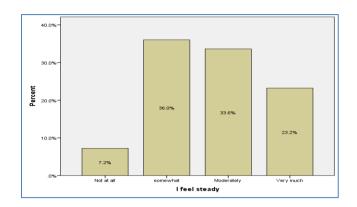




Again the students have said they are partially worried which is not all unjustified. Being worried for some of the time is justified. From the below analysis it is seen that even if some highly self-confident students are feeling confused for some time. Being confused when many options are given, is the nature of the human being so, it is also justified to be confused sometimes.



It is observed that students are more positive than negative. Yes, there are some negativities in them, but those are for time being. In some positive questions, like their self-confidence, relaxed, steadiness, the majority of the student have chosen either moderate or very much. 33.6% of the students are moderately steady, and 36% of them feel steady for the maximum cases.



Discussion

From the above analysis, certain things have become apparent which has required further discussion in this thesis. The theoretical and the analytical framework have provided relatively argumentative results. According to the decision taken after analyzing the literature, it could have been said that Saudi Arabian students are facing the issue in certain places. Also, it was seen that few measurement had been undertaken in order to solve those issues. With the help of those instruments, the society is trying to control the threats related to the problem.

There were some negative questions too which were answered by the respondents. In few questions the majority of the Saudi Arabian students contradicted the theoretical framework. Also from the viewpoint of the analysis, if the hypotheses are considered then also, it can be said that the null hypothesis has been rejected. After evaluating the whole analysis, it can be said, whether the main hypothesis has been rejected or not. Some comparative studies have been undertaken during the analysis. Also a few facts have been revealed.

From the insight of the literature provided by Ye⁵, the cross-cultural studies have created many issues in the study career of the students whilst abroad. When the students were asked on this particular aspect, most answers gave a negative aspect with respect to the context. People have said that they love studying in the UK. They feel relaxed, calm and self-confident.

Rudmin, has explained things very clearly and in a concise way. He claimed that the acculturation strategy has helped in solving adjusting problems abroad. It helps two unknown people to make themselves comfortable in front of each other. It cannot be particularly said that the acculturation strategies are responsible in omitting the problems, but it was invented in 2005. Now the research was undertaken in 2015. It is possible that the acculturation strategies have supported the students in a systematic way. In this analysis, current students have surprisingly showcased that they are overwhelmed by being here. It can be easily evaluated that they are feeling happy in spending their student life abroad, in a place like the United Kingdom⁶.

A surprising fact has been noticed throughout the analysis. In the case of questions pertaining to the psychological analysis, the majority of students have not answered with emphatically. In each of the cases, they have answered 'somewhat.' In most of the cases, no concrete results have been found. It confuses and misguides the analysis in some cases. If they would have answered either 'yes' or in 'no' format then the further comparative analysis would have be done. When 80% of the respondents answer for a particular option and which varies in between 'yes' and 'no,' then there is no justification of going for further analysis². Few questions have been raised which should have been answered through the analysis. From the psychological insight, it can be said that the students are not

experienced due to their young age, so that they could not respond in an efficient way. Certain difficulties have left few quality issues in this report. The questions were asked to both groups of the student but it became harder to interpret which group is responding to what. In order to find that out, a few questions were considered twice. One is for general feedback another has been considered due to comparing the two different groups.

The problem of homesickness and anxiety became very regular studying abroad nowadays that pupils who have settled in different countries due to pursuing higher education think that returning home will be better and ready to leave their studies midway though. Saudi Arabia becomes a major victim of this issue³. From the primary analysis, it has been revealed that no students are interested in leaving the place. Moreover, some of them expressed their interest in settling there for few more months. In this particular case, few students who are genuinely anxious or homesick may suffer from any genetic disorder or any other problem. Secondly, people are enjoying staying in the different country for study reasons. Not only UK students, even Saudi students are enjoying. Thirdly, if they genuinely feel homesick but not for all the time. That cannot be considered as a illness.

Research Limitation

The first limitation is faced due to the shortage of time. Next, the primary data is not collected with ease without facing obstacles⁷. Sometimes, the respondents never reply. So, in order to collect sufficient data the research need to approach respondents until it is sufficient.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It can be concluded that there is basically no difference between these two different groups of students. There are students from Saudi who feel anxious sometimes, and there are UK students who feel homesick sometimes too. They feel so because they are away from home. Psychological differences can be concerned as one of the main reasons instead of the nationality.

Recommendations

In the literature review, some other parameters of the foreign education should have been considered. The methodology section could have been designed in a more efficient way. From the above analysis, it can be seen that it becomes difficult for Saudi Arabian students to adjust to the United Kingdom environment. In that case, the students of Saudi Arabia who have been facing issues like this should take some cultural training before relocating to new places. Many books or guidance are available on the internet on the United Kingdom's culture. Students should study those books to be informed about the lifestyle and culture.

Conflicts of interest

There is no conflict of interest of any kind.

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