Persectives of Academic Staff and Graduate Students on the Effects of Globalisation on Cultural Identity in Saudi Arabia: A case Study

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Abstract

The philosophy and policy of Saudi Arabia, since its establishment, have been based on the ethics of Islam and on the accompanying Islamic values and culture. However, globalisation has led to some changes and has raised many challenges for cultural identity in the country. How can Saudi Arabia face the challenges of globalisation while maintaining the country's core cultural values, founded on Islamic principles? This study explores the changing cultural identity in Saudi Arabia, in relation to globalisation, through the perspectives of academic staff and postgraduate students at the College of Education at 'Qassim Uviersity.

The study adopted the interpretive paradigm. A case study of one higher education institution was undertaken, interviews were used to collect the data (n=18). The study revealed that globalisation seems to have had significant effects on the cultural identity of Saudi society, as can be seen through the increased spread of the English language, which has negatively affected the use of Arabic. Globalisation has played a key role in spreading the Western lifestyle within Saudi society, and within the younger generation in particular. This may be seen as a threat to the society's cultural identity.

Introduction

The Saudi Arabian culture has been influenced by Islam in such a way that its own historical trajectory and traditions became different from those of other cultures. Islam and its teachings constitute the most obvious aspect of the Saudi Arabian cultural identity. Saudi people are proud of being Muslims and of the fact that their land is the birthplace of Islam, embracing the Two Holy Mosques in Mecca and Al-Medina. More than just a religion that calls upon people to worship Allah, Islam encompasses all aspects of life – moral, political, economic and social, to name but a few. In Saudi Arabia, Islamic teachings play a major role in everyday life (Al-Rasheed, 2014). Mead (2000) confirms that the Saudi Arabian people are proud of the fact that their country is the centre of the world's Islamic practice. Ward (2015) adds that power of character is determined differently in Saudi Arabia – not in an individualistic form as in the West but by the ability to do one's best and perform as a group according to Islamic traditions, which are a decisive part of what forms the local culture.

Ather important aspects of the Saudi cultural identity are the Arabic language, fashion, and cultural festivals and events (Ministry of Culture, 2019). It is noteworthy that the English language seems important in Saudi Arabia; it is a compulsory subject in general education from the fourth grade onwards and it is widely used in business. Thus, the spread of English may exert and influence on the local cultural identity.

Globalisation is a theory that explains current events in terms of social, economic, political and cultural influences. It has become the ideological discourse driving changes in response to the new world. These changes relate to the flow of knowledge, the knowledge economy, the removal of national borders, the decreased significance of the role of national governments, free trade worldwide, enhanced technology enabling communication and the increased importance of education in general and higher education in particular (Blackmore & Sachs, 2007).

Cultural identity refers to a common culture among people with a shared history and ancestry. It includes elements of collective self-awareness and shared values, definitions and beliefs, which can be influenced and changed through the activities of the group. However, it is

important to understand that cultural identity not only refers to the common characteristics of a nation but also to an individual's attitude toward his/her culture and its perspectives, as well as his/her role in it (Deng, 2005; Kaul, 2012). Thus, national culture can be evaluated not only in terms of binaries, such as truth–falsehood, good–evil, beauty–ugliness, civilisation–barbarity and nobility–ignobility, but more significantly in terms of ethnocentrism, racism, sameness, belongingness, unity and other tendencies of particular points of view and personal perspectives (Court, 2001; Koç, 2006).

It appears that many aspects of these cultural values have been affected by globalisation, including the use of technology and the spread of the Western lifestyle, for instance, though Western food, hairstyles, clothing and music. Thus, the aim of this study is to explore the effects of globalisation on the cultural identity in Saudi Arabia.

The problem of the study

Saudi Arabia is an Arab and Islamic state, and its constitution was formulated according to Sharia (Islamic law) (Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, 2014). Thus, all regulations – political, economic, social and educational – should follow Islamic teachings. Education in Saudi Arabia has four characteristics: 'a focus on the teaching of Islam; a centralized system of control and educational support; state funding at all levels; [and] a gender segregation policy' (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013, p. 2).

On one hand, globalisation seems to promote the integration of the world and calls for the removal of cultural barriers. However, while it is a vital process aimed at transferring knowledge and education to the world, it is perceived by some to have a negative effect on cultures and civilisations; for instance, the effects of globalisation may threaten Arab-Islamic culture (Moussalli, 2012; Elyas & Al-Sadi, 2013). Thus, globalisation can be viewed as leading to a clash of civilisations in Saudi Arabia due to the fear of cultural dissolution and the supremacy of a foreign culture through the proliferation of mass media, social media and international companies (The Globalist, 2001). On the other hand, it can be viewed as increasing solidarity among cultures and societies, thereby constituting an international culture (Ritzer, 2007).

Thus, cultural identity in Saudi Arabia may not be excluded from globalisation and its effects. Thus, this study came to explore how globalisation has affected the elements of Saudi Arabian cultural identity from the perspectives of academic staff and graduate students.

Aims of the study and research questions

The aim of this study is to explore the effects of globalisation on cultural identity from the perspectives of academic staff and postgraduate students in a School of Education. The main research question was: What are the perceptions of academic staff and students of the effect of globalisation on cultural identity in Saudi Arabia? To answer this main research question, the following two sub-questions were for mulated:

1. Do they perceive that globalisation has affected religious aspects in Saudi Arabia? If so, how?
2. Do they perceive that globalisation has affected Arabic language in Saudi Arabia? If so, how?
3. Do they perceive that globalisation has affected customs and values inSaudi Arabia? If so, how?

Conceptual framework

Held et al. (1999) states that globalisation has led to cross-border connections and interregional flows of activities and practices, which has resulted in the decline of the spatial factor in determining culture. This definition corresponds with that of UNESCO (2001, p. 34), which defines globalisation as 'a set of economic, social, technological, political and cultural structures and process arising from the changing character of the production, consumption and trade of goods and assets that comprise the base of the international political economy'. In line with this thinking, Kumaravadivelu (2008, p. 32) argues that

globalization refers to a dominant and driving force that is shaping a new form of interconnections and flows among nations, economics, and peoples. It results in the transformation of contemporary social life in all its economic, political, cultural, technological, ecological, and individual dimensions.

Beerkens (2003, p. 24) defines globalisation as 'a process in which basic social arrangements within and around the university become disembedded from their national context due to the intensification of transnational flows of people, information and resources'.

The deregulation and liberalisation of markets have greatly contributed to a process called 'deterritorialisation', in which the states with unlimited power influence the economies, identities and networks of the other states. Deterritorialisation may cause cultural imperialism, as the rest of the world's states are transformed in the image of the West, spreading a shallow homogeneity throughout the world. For example, the influence of Western media and entertainment industries, reflecting their values, are seen by some to be destroying many traditions all over the world (Beck, 2000). It is obvious that national and regional cultures have emerged in the global domain. Westernised culture, for example, in the form of pop music and Hollywood blockbusters, gathers persons from different cultures under the umbrella of a single culture. Thus, global culture is directly related to the spread of capitalism (Wunderlich & Warrier, 2010).

Certainly, there are many scholars who argue that the outcome of economic globalisation is negative, largely benefiting the developed world, leading to corporate globalisation (Steger, 2003). For instance, the term 'McDonaldisation', coined by Ritzer (2000), refers to a capitalist model that has dominated the rest of the world even though it is an American concept. The term is also used to indicate other brands, such as Coca-Cola, Disney and Nike, that contribute to capital accumulation (Ritzer, 2000).

However, the fears surrounding a homogenising global culture have been criticised by some as being mainly groundless, instead reflecting an overly simplistic understanding of the process of globalisation seen in binary terms. Wunderlich and Warrier (2010) argue that cultural flows are by no means unidirectional, from West to East and vice versa. As diverse and remote cultures become accessible everywhere, the flows move in both directions. Moreover, Robertson (1992), for instance, states that a close linkage exists between local and global cultures. In this connection, which is referred to as 'glocalisation', it is difficult to determine which dimension is greater than the other.

Linked to this concept, global culture is supported by Western perspectives, and the global culture flows are explained in light of local perspectives and contexts. For example, in the context of this study,

Arabian students adopt the use of a foreign language when they are abroad, while they use the Arabic language in their own countries. Thus, they change their language usage according to certain contexts. Furthermore, the number of Saudi students studying abroad may reflect the desire to develop the education system in general and higher education in particular, as well as eagerness to respond to contemporary changes, suggesting the influence of local perspectives on pursuit of a globalised education. Moreover, there are differing responses to how these issues impact Saudi Arabia's cultural identity, as some people may believe that sending Saudi students to non-Muslim countries can negatively affect their cultural identity and may affect Saudi society as a whole, while others believe it is an important step in the country's development as it strives to become more international in its outlook. It is these potential tensions and nuances that this study aims to explore.

Deterritorialisation is also interpretable in terms of cyberspace, by which is meant a space involving online networks and computers. Cyberspace has become a site in which a culture's values, ideas and interests are protected by the nation-state. Time, in terms of cyberspace, has shifted and transfigured. Most countries have established secure rules to regulate these cyberspaces under the umbrella of law (including the US government's National Strategy to Secure Cyberspace, in February 2003). China and Saudi Arabia have both launched regulations for their peoples using cyberspace (Eisenstein, 1998). Likewise, Egypt has taken great efforts to make its citizens aware of the negative impacts of cyberspace and has made access to it subject to intensive control and regulations (Farouk & Hassan, 2007).

Cultural identity is the common culture of people with a shared history and ancestry, including elements of collective self-awareness and shared values, definitions and beliefs, which can be affected and changed through their activities and include individuals' attitudes toward their culture, its perspectives and their role in this culture (Deng, 2005; Kaul, 2012). National culture can be evaluated not only according to binaries, such as truth–falsehood, good–evil, beauty–ugliness, civilisation–barbarity and nobility–ignobility, but, more significantly, also from the perspectives of ethnocentrism, racism, sameness, belongingness, and unity (Court, 2001; Koç, 2006).

Culture constitutes a vital element of any society, and various definitions of this concept exist. Tylor (1871, p. 1) provides one of the earliest definitions: 'culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by men as a member of the society'. Since then, most anthropologists have agreed that the members of any given society play a vital role in forming and enhancing the culture of the younger generations, showing the younger members how to think and behave, and this interaction results in their social development (Peoples & Bailey, 2011).

According to Shin (2015), cultural identity is a set of cultural traits that characterise a group of people; it is also known as a system composed of many values, customs and traditions that are agreed upon by a group of individuals, reflecting the prevailing culture in the community in which they live. Cultural identity is, moreover, a complex concept consisting of a set of diverse elements, such as a state system, constitution, official language, religion, history and ethnicity. In order to define someone's cultural identity, these factors, as well as factors that distinguish objects from each other and make them unique, should be considered (Court, 2001; Connolly, 2002; Wang, 2007). However, Siljanovska (2014) believes that considering only differences between one culture and others to establish a cultural identity leads to the problematic tendency to think in terms of 'us' versus 'them'.

As noted above, the concept of cultural identity covers the cultural aspects of an individual's identity and the ways by which another person perceives him or her. The early roots of understanding cultural identity began with the publication of Cross's (1978) theory of neuroscience, in which the term identity was perceived as the process of belonging to a group in a given institution or society (Stryker, 1987). In his model, Cross (1978) stated that marginalised individuals are primarily affected by the culture of the society, whether good or bad, in which they live. In addition, he explained that cultural identity evolves in response to life experiences; and factors related to slavery, segregation, exclusion, racial discrimination, sociopolitical incidents can negatively influence identity development with pressure over many coming generations.

Since then, cultural identity has been viewed as being influenced by a range of factors and not necessarily fixed. For example, Ibrahim (1993) proposes that cultural identity is anchored within a person's elementary cultural context; according to Ibrahim, it includes gender, ethnicity, family, and age, and social status, stages of life, financial status, society, community and nation. These elements are affected by the culture, but the extent of the effect differs depending on life experiences and time.

Effects of globalisation on cultural identity

One of the most obvious aspects of cultural globalisation is the spread of the English language. Language forms the key focus of a person's cultural identity, and the linguistic changes that have resulted from globalisation affect a student's cultural identity. For instance, English has become the universal language of international business, diplomacy, the Internet and, to a large extent, culture; the American accent in particular is widespread and has led to the declining importance of one's own language in some African and Arab countries (Gordon & Meunier, 2001). Crystal (2012) states that a high proportion of people all over the world now master the English language and can communicate efficiently with one another in English. Moreover, Mohd-Asraf (2005) points out that the use of the English language has spread globally to the extent that it is difficult to find a state whose citizens do not use the English language, whether for formal or informal matters.

In the Arab world, Islam and the Arabic language are considered the main elements that constitute cultural identity. Arguably, the spread of globalisation through technology, such as the Internet, social media and satellite television, has resulted in both negative and positive cultural changes for Muslims. From a negative perspective, there has been grave concern about the impact of globalisation on Arab cultural heritage and traditions. Globalisation may be seen as presenting a threat and challenges to the Arab-Muslim cultural identity; more specifically, it may be seen as equivalent to Americanisation, which advocates cultural homogenisation that may undermine Islamic morality (Bakkar, 2009). In

a similar vein, globalisation may lead to a standardisation of life throughout the world in such a way that eliminates privacy and compels people to adopt new principles (Banda, 2019). This development may undermine cultural identities, representing a clear challenge to societies in general, and the negative effects of this may plunge the world into crisis (Tomlinson, 2003).

From a positive perspective, globalisation can ensure equal opportunities for developed and advanced countries, especially linked to technological and scientific factors, and this is achieved through establishing a culturally settled world. Globalisation can also help protect human rights; for example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was launched in accordance with its emergence (Banda, 2019). Globalisation also affects cultural identity positively because of the spread of technology and the Internet. It is these tensions between the positive and negative impacts of globalisation on students' and staff members' perceptions of their cultural identity that this study aims to explore.

Global culture theory:

Theories of global culture, based on key work by Lash and Featherstone in the 1990s, propose that recent decades have marked the growth of mass media and the emergence of global village phenomena such as religion in relation to globalisation; tourism and global connections have also been discussed by the cultural theories of globalisation (Robinson, 2007).

Theories of global culture propose three positions. First, homogenisation highlights the rise of world cuisines, world tourism, uniform consumption patterns and cosmopolitanism. Second, heterogeneity refers to local cultural autonomy, cultural resistance to homogenisation, cultural clashes and polarisation. Third, hybridisation considers recent cultural forms and identities. These three positions capture different dimensions of cultural globalisation (Pieterse, 2004).

Cultural elements such as universalism and particularism can be regarded as new themes related to theories of global culture; in this regard, global cultural theory addresses global interactions and how such interactions can lead to conflicts between cultural homogenisation and heterogenisation. To interpret this conflict, global cultural flows generate distinct images, which are referred to as 'scapes', that are perceived from cultural flows. These 'scapes' reflect a distinguishing pattern between economy, culture and politics in the age of globalisation (Appadurai, 1990).

Previous studies

Poggensee (2016) conducted a study to explore the impact of globalisation on the spread of the English language by comparing perspectives on English as a non-native language and its function in Senegal and the United States. The data were collected through a review of the literature, observations and interviews. The interviews were conducted with three students in Senegal and three students in the United States. According to the results, people are motivated to learn English for many reasons: to pursue education and research, to read books, to be able to communicate with others around the world and to get a job. Globalisation has played a role in spreading the English language, which is considered a world language. However, the rapid spread of English has threatened other languages, whether through a forced language shift or a voluntary language shift from using one's mother tongue to using English. The results also reveal that the wide spread of English has led to the insertion of English words into the original language, threatening the purity of the language. However, the usage of this mix in communication may gradually reduce, making it less desirable. The researcher concludes that language is not only for communication purposes; it involves a nation's heritage, identity and social values. Thus, any loss of language poses a threat to cultural identity. Thus, it is important to maintain one's native language while learning English.

Hopkyns's (2014) study examined the effects of the English language on culture and identity in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from the perspective of 35 female undergraduate students and 12 female primary school teachers. Qualitative data were collected through open-response questionnaires. The results reveal that globalisation has played a major role in increasing the use of the English language, which has affected the use of the Arabic language. Further, there have been many changes relating to cultural identity in the UAE, which is seen as an extremely negative effect of globalisation on Emirati cultural identity, for Emirati children in particular, as they may struggle to learn and speak Arabic. Another negative effect can be seen through the changes in clothing and lifestyles, which emulate Western fashion trends. However, the findings also show that globalisation has had some positive effects on people in the UAE; they have become more open-minded and have greater respect for, and acceptance of, other cultures, and this has enhanced the development of the country. Importantly, this study did not examine the effects of globalisation on religious aspects of Emiratis' lives, and religion is considered one of the main elements of their cultural identity, as the UAE is a Muslim country.

Zamil's (2013) study was aimed at examining the attitudes of Saudi college students toward the effects of globalisation through entertainment programmes on TV and the Internet. Online surveys using a 5-point Likert scale were used to collect the data. The sample consisted of 1,355 college students who had registered for a course on Islamic culture at King Abdul Aziz University. The results show that spending considerable time watching entertainment programmes influenced students' attitudes toward parental authority and helped them develop the globalised view that everyone has their own life and should be able to take their own decisions without being controlled by their parents. This may be seen as a positive or negative effect of globalisation on the Saudi culture. Some results indicate that this attitude would give students space to determine their future, such as their academic major and marriage plans. However, the results do not mean that the children are demanding full freedom as in a Western country; calls for full freedom even to choose their own beliefs or religion would be seen as a negative effect of globalisation.

The results of Zamil's (2013) study also reveal that watching entertainment programmes did not change the students' attitudes toward women's rights. However, the meaning of women's rights is not explained. Moreover, the effects of entertainment programmes on Islamic teachings – a main aspect of the Saudi Arabian cultural identity – were not examined in the study. This issue is important and was investigated in the current study. With regard to students' behaviour, the results reveal that there is a strong relationship between watching entertainment programmes and adopting aspects of a Western lifestyle, such as clothing and hairstyles. The results suggest that the Saudi society should accept multicultural ideas and be tolerant of changing fashions and hairstyles, even if they appear strange, as such changes do not pose much of a threat to the local cultural identity.

In addition, the findings reveal that while most students did not indicate any change in their attitude toward marriage – that is, they seemed to accept traditional marriage planned by the parents – there were some calls for dropping the restrictions against contact between men and women before marriage. This may be a clear indication that globalisation has had a deep effect on the traditions and values in Saudi Arabia via attitudes toward segregating males from females – a practice based on Islamic law. With regard to the Arabic language, the study reveals that the use of Arabic has been affected by watching programmes, especially American movies, which have increased the use of English in Saudi Arabia.

Moreover, Al-Amro's (2012) study was aimed at identifying the most negative effects of cultural globalisation and exploring the role of Islamic education in facing the challenges resulting from cultural globalisation in the contemporary Muslim society in Saudi Arabia. The data were obtained from reviewing and descriptively analysing previous studies. According to the results, the most negative effects of cultural globalisation include the restriction of Islamic teachings during worship and their exclusion from other aspects of life; the spread of imitating non-Muslims in beliefs, customs and traditions that contradict Islamic teachings; depictions of Western countries as places of freedom, justice and respect for human rights, which may have negative effects on the

cultural identity of many Muslims, especially the youth; and claims that the application of Sharia (Islamic law) in Muslim societies is not suitable for the modern age and that it opposes human rights.

The results also reveal that globalisation has had negative effects on the Arabic language due to the spread of English and the consideration of English proficiency as a main condition for securing a job, especially in the private sector. In addition, in the age of globalisation, there has been a call to adopt English as the language of teaching in higher education institutions.

Regarding the role of Islamic education in facing the challenges of globalisation, the results of the study emphasise that schools and universities should make every effort to embed the right Islamic faith in the hearts of students and encourage them to be proud of their religion. Thus, as Al-Amro (2012) suggests, it is important to review and develop curricula that respond to the challenges of the contemporary age. Furthermore, educational institutions should adopt a strategic plan for preserving the Arabic language. For example, all applied sciences should be taught in Arabic; Arabisation should be encouraged in order to preserve Arabic and decrease the reliance on foreign books.

Also, Mosadah and Shrafain (2010), conducted their study to clarify the positive and negative effects of cultural globalisation on the Islamic cultural identity. They collected their data by reviewing previous research. Their findings indicate that the negative effects of cultural globalisation can be seen through the appearance of some behaviours that contradict Islamic teachings, such as celebrating Christmas Day, the spread of concepts such as liberalism and secularism and calling for absolute personal freedom. The domination of Western media seems to negatively affect Islamic cultural identity; for example, Islam is often described as a religion that promotes violence and terrorism and calls for the killing of non-Muslims. In addition, the results reveal that globalisation has increased the spread of English and decreased the use of Arabic within the Arab world. Arab families have also been affected by aspects of cultural globalisation; for instance, it has weakened family relationships and enhanced the appearance of personal tendencies.

However, the study emphasises that globalisation has produced some positive effects that can be used to develop Islamic cultural identity, such as the appearance of self-criticism among Muslims aimed at developing themselves and their communities. The age of globalisation has accelerated interactions with the outside world and other cultures; thus, it is crucial that Muslims and Arabs seize opportunities to interact with the world and play a major role in correcting misleading information passed on by biased media.

Regarding the role of Islamic education in responding to globalisation and its related issues, the study emphasises the crucial role of education in general and higher education in particular. However, in order for higher education to play a major role, there is a need to review and develop curricula in order to catch up with new knowledge; it is also important to pay more attention to research and its support. However, exploring the effects of globalisation and examining the role of education in relation to globalisation and its challenges should be investigated through interactions with study participants, as they would present different views, explain whether the effects are negative or positive, provide some suggestions for dealing with globalisation and improve the role of education as a result.

Gordon and Meunier (2001) addressed the influences of globalisation on French cultural identity in their study. Their findings show that globalisation and its means, such as technology and liberalisation of trade and investment, which are supported by GATS, may be seen as breaking down national boundaries and customs. Consequently, the French cultural identity has faced a major threat, resulting in many protests to stop such influences and calls for cultural identity protection. The discussion reveals that globalisation has affected the French cultural identity through the spread of American movies and TV programmes and negatively impacted the lifestyle in France. Moreover, the spread of fast food served by McDonald's restaurants has influenced the French people and their cultural identity. A major effect of globalisation on French cultural identity can be seen through the spread of the English language, which is considered as posing a threat to the French language. The discussion concludes with the assertion that French cultural protection is an urgent need in order to respond to the challenges of globalisation.

Another study by Keefe (2000) investigated the identity of Appalachians, considered 'mountain people', in Bradford County in the western part of North Carolina, USA. Observations as well as focus groups, interviews and questionnaires were used to collect the data. The sample comprised 630 Appalachians. The findings show that a growing addiction to technology has led to the loss of some of the cultural identity among the youth and a shift away from gardening and other traditional skills. The findings suggest that globalisation and materialism have led to the breakdown of the family, loss of cultural continuity and deterioration of traditional practices. Furthermore, the values of economic liberalism, technology, entertainment, consumption and materialism brought by globalisation have negatively affected the cultural identity of the Appalachian youth, leading to deep social changes. Regarding religion, there have been negative effects on worship, church attendance and moral integrity. Moreover, the participants did not regard interacting with the community and helping neighbours as important aspects of their cultural identity. Further, the relationships between parents and their children had broken down; children may have less concern for their parents.

These findings raised several more pertinent questions for this study:

- What are the effects of globalisation on the spread of the English language in terms of its effect on other languages, including Arabic?
- What are people's perceptions of the effects of cultural globalisation on values and culture?
- What are the attitudes of college students toward the effects of globalisation, via entertainment programmes on TV and the Internet?
- What are the negative and positive effects of cultural globalisation on Islamic cultural identity?

Methodology

In educational research, the researcher considers the nature of the research problem and the research questions to determine whether a quantitative or qualitative approach is most appropriate given the study objectives (Creswell, 2012). Once the research approach has been

determined, it informs the researcher about other research processes, such as sampling, data collection procedures and tools, data analysis and the interpretation of the findings (Creswell, 2012). To address the study's research questions, the study adopted the interpretive paradigm. A case study of one higher education institution was undertaken (Creswell, 2014). Interviews were appied to collect the data. The sample of the study were academc staff and graduate dtudents (11academic staff and 7 students) that were purposefully celected. The data obtained were thematically analysed.

Ensuring data quality

Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is 'a set of criteria advocated by some writers for assessing the quality of qualitative research' (Bryman, 2008, p.700). For this study, I ensured that the information obtained was trustworthy by providing detailed information on the data collection process and data analysis. Moreover, I ensured the accuracy of the findings by checking the interview transcripts. I then sent the transcripts back to each interviewee to check their accuracy. After analysing the data, I sent the findings to the interviewees to ensure that they were accurate representations of the information obtained from the participants' original data, and that the findings were interpreted correctly. This is known as member checking (Creswell, 2012). It is noteworthy that the translations were checked in (1) the questionnaire instrument, (2) the responses to the questionnaire, and (3) the qualitative data translations.

The results of the study

In order to understand the effects of globalisation on the components of Saudi cultural identity, the respondents were asked to rate their answers regarding this issue for each example provided, as shown in Table 6.7 and Table 6.8. In addition, the interviewees were asked directly about their perspectives on this issue.

1. Effects on Arabic language

Perspectives of academic staff all interviewed academic staff believed that globalisation has led to a rapid increase in the usage of the English language that has negatively affected that of the Arabic language in most cases. They all expressed their concern about the widespread use of many English words in place of Arabic. For example, they pointed out that Arabic seems to be neglected in certain academic departments and on the facades of shops, replaced instead with English phrases. They believed that this trend has dangerous effects that may lead to neglecting the Arabic language in individuals' daily lives in the long run, whether in their speech or in the media, thereby ultimately turning Saudi society away from its linguistic cultural identity. On this issue, one academic said:

English seems to be the prevailing language in the health centres and hospitals, even though the majority of doctors and employees in those institutions are Arabs. In hotels and shops, bills are often printed in English. This is very unfortunate and underestimates the value of the Arabic language. (Omar)

In addition, three academic staff members pointed out that many Saudi people also use English words in their daily speech. This usage may threaten the Arabic language and its existence, especially among the younger population. Two academic staff members were very concerned that the use of English words has become prevalent not only among the public but also among Saudi intellectuals and educators. For example, English words have been used during university meetings, such as in department and college councils. One of the academic staff members voiced his concern:

I am deeply concerned about the high number of English words creeping into our Arabic language. In our college, it is a fact that you hardly listen to anyone without hearing some English words in his speech. This is a serious trend, especially when intellectuals are unaware of the seriousness of this act. (Khalid)

Four academic staff members expressed their concern about the increasing trend, among many Saudis, to use English words such as menu, OK and bye. These words have become widely used among both old and young people, as well as among both the public and the elite, and can thus be heard throughout everyday life.

However, another issue was raised by four academic staff members, who believed that the interest in using English words may be an attempt to show that the person knows another language and may thus be considered a sign of pride. One academic staff noted:

When some people are interviewed on television or radio, they may involve some English words in their speech. (Sultan)

It appears that technology and the use of social media have played a major role in spreading the English language more quickly, the result of which may have negative effects on the use of the Arabic language. Two academic staff members expressed their concern regarding the use of social media, especially by younger Saudi Arabians. They elaborated that they perceive the Arabic language as being abandoned, often replaced with symbols and numbers during young people's written communication. One of them described this, saying:

Social media has helped in the emergence of a new language among young people, using symbols and terms known only by those who communicate with them in their conversations. Their writings may be a threat to the Arabic language. Some of them write 7 instead of writing the Arabic letter (ح), and 3 instead of writing the Arabic letter (ع). (Aziz)

Moreover, three academic staff members and one student indicated that English substitution may be worsened when people are engaged in and proud of using English language interspersed with speaking Arabic. At the same time, some people who try to use classical Arabic may be ridiculed. This situation has been described as a disaster that could lead to abandoning the Arabic language and destroying the linguistic cultural identity of Saudi society. One of the academic staff members described this, saying:

One of the aspects of destroying the classical Arabic language is exaggerating the importance of the English language and showing much respect for those people who are able to speak foreign languages, especially English. At the same time, people who try to maintain classical Arabic during their speech may face mockery. The situation has become much worse; this trend has been prevalent among some intellectuals and educators, who are supposed to adhere to classical Arabic in their speech and call for maintaining it as models for the public. (Mohammed)

One of the academic staff members was worried and astonished at how some Saudis seem to have contempt for their own linguistic identity, saying:

It is a serious issue when Saudi people use English words to express their opinions. Does this mean that the Arabic language is deficient or incomplete? Even without paying attention to that, the person who does this in his speech is indirectly sending a message that Arabic is not capable of expressing these ideas; therefore, he uses English instead to express his opinions. (Aziz)

Two academics claimed that, for approximately the past fifteen years, English-language communication between parents and their children in Saudi society has become increasingly prevalent, whether at home or outside. Parents may believe that the English language is an urgent requirement for their younger children, as well as a demand of development and modern life. Yet this emphasis on English has also played a major role in weakening the Arabic language among the younger generations in Saudi Arabia and has led some younger individuals to neglect their cultural identity. One academic described his concern about this:

Some parents may feel proud when hearing their children speak English. They think that learning English is more important than Arabic. This may have a major negative effect on the development of their (children's) cultural identity. (Omar)

Three of the academic staff members and one of the students pointed out that the challenge facing linguistic cultural identity, in the age of globalisation, has its roots in exaggerating the importance of English. They pointed out that some people are fascinated by all that is foreign and think that development cannot be achieved without mastering and speaking the English language. To them, this may lead to psychological frustration regarding their own society. This admiration of the West and its civilisation could have serious effects on Saudi cultural identity.

Moreover, three academic staff members highlighted that the Arabic language is not just words and sentences; it is a carrier of the historical heritage of Arabs and Muslims. Therefore, neglecting to maintain and develop this element has a significant negative impact on the cultural identity of the society.

Perspectives of students

all interviewed students pointed out that, in the age of globalisation, the English language has affected the Arabic language, thereby negatively affecting linguistic cultural identity in Saudi Arabia. All students highlighted the increased attention to the English language among Saudi society. They were concerned about this influence and expressed surprise at the increased interest in using English words while speaking Arabic, even in situations in which everyone in the speaker's audience understands Arabic. One of the students said:

It seems that the English language became, for some members of our community, a sign of showing off. It turned from the language of research and science into the language of pride among people. (Bandar)

Another student described the situation, saying:

Although many Saudi people are able to use and understand the English language, there are some people who still consider a person who speaks this language as highly cultured and better than the others. This is a catastrophe, threatening the cultural identity of our society. (Yazeed)

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The effects on customs and values

all interviewed academic staff and students believed that globalisation has played a role in spreading the Western lifestyle, which has affected cultural identity in Saudi Arabia. However, they had different views on this issue. Two sub-themes were revealed by the data: exterior appearance and family bonding. These are discussed below.

1. Exterior appearance

Five of the interviewed academic staff members and three students pointed out that globalisation through the spread of the Western lifestyle has had certain negative effects on the religious aspects of Saudi Arabian culture. One of the academic staff described his observations, saying:

Looking at the Saudi society, especially the younger generation, we can see a big change in their exterior appearance. Almost twenty years ago, it was rare to see Saudi people wearing Western dress. For about ten years, Western clothing has been prevalent among Saudi youths and has become familiar to the community. (Omar)

Another academic staff member described how Saudi society used to adhere to traditional dress, saying:

About fifteen to twenty years ago, Saudi society was very strict with traditional dress. They believed that someone who wore Western dress was perverse, and in some cases, it might be considered as committing a sin or a crime. People might do that as part of maintaining their traditional cultural identity. (Ibrahim)

One of the students also described the changes he observed, saying:

About twenty years ago, traditional dress—thwab and shemagh—was prevalent in Saudi society. It was a shame to wear clothes such as jeans and t-shirts. (Ali)

However, in the age of globalisation, the situation seems to be changing. For example, two academic staff members and one student described the extent of the spread of Western clothes, which have become familiar among Saudi society and can be seen at mosques, schools, and universities. One of the academic staff members described this, saying:

At our mosque, perhaps half the people come with Western clothes, and most of them are Saudis. At my son's elementary school, most if not all students come to school wearing Western clothes, such as jeans or sportswear. (Sultan)

One of the students noted a similar trend among his peers:

At our college, some students come to the classroom wearing jeans and t-shirts. This would not have been acceptable and would not have been seen about ten years ago. (Abdulrhman)

Moreover, two of the academic staff members and one of the students indicated another visible effect of globalisation on Saudi society: the choice to wear bracelets, necklaces, and earrings, especially by young people. The participants in this study, however, were most concerned that imitating Westerners is no longer limited to wearing Western dress but has also extended to the general tastes of people in Saudi society. This effect can be observed through the spread of Western dance and music. One of the academic staff members described his observations of this influence, saying:

Many Saudi youths seem to be fond of Western music. In fact, some of them may not understand the language accompanying the music, but they do this to keep up with fashion. (Mohammed)

One of the students described another phenomenon:

There is an American dog and a French cat, where Saudi youths boast of keeping such animals. Ironically, some young people take care of their dog more than their parents. This is a serious issue, which may drive the youths' interests toward trivial things. (Nayef)

Nevertheless, one of the academic staff members believed that the effects of globalisation on Saudi dress, and on the interests of Saudi youths regarding Western music, should not raise much concern. He pointed out that the cultural identity of Saudi society is entrenched and stems from Islamic teachings. Thus, these core fundamentals would remain stable even if some exterior aspects of society have changed. Along these lines, he said:

What we see in imitating the Western lifestyle, such as hairstyles and interests in Western music, is merely practiced by some teenagers, which will not last for a long time. So, these teenagers will come back to their senses and adhere to their cultural identity soon. (Omar)

Another academic staff member also believed that Saudi society should avoid criticising youths for their dress, manner of speech, and other new habits that may be adopted due to the changing times. He said:

Life has changed, and it may be difficult to impose old traditions on the Saudi youths, in terms of thinking and living like the old generation. Youths today strive to appear according to the latest fashion in dress and simulate development in all forms. They should be free to live as they like, as long as their behaviour does not oppose the teachings of Islam and they do not violate the law of the country. (Saleh)

One of the students also emphasised the above view. He pointed out that the expectation of uniformity in clothing type is a social habit. Thus, he believes that it is normal to experience a change in social customs in modern life. Clothes are not constant like religion or morality. He said:

It is not reasonable, in the modern era, to continue imitating the old generation with regard to dress. Each era has its requirements and variables. (Bandar)

In contrast, three of the academic staff and one of the students argued that fashion and imitating the Western lifestyle would threaten the cultural identity of Saudi society. One of the academic staff described this, saying:

Imitating Western fashion has serious effects on our cultural identity, as the imitation of Western tradition and values may lead to the adoption of their ideas and the reincarnation of their personalities and behaviour. This may lead to weakening the Arab Islamic identity of the Saudi society and the prevalence of the Western culture. (Salem)

The effects on religious aspects

According to the participants interviewed in this research, globalisation has affected Saudi Arabian Islamic cultural identity. However, the interviewees expressed different and varied perspectives about these effects. Some of them believed that globalisation has had moderate or slight effects on the religious aspects of Saudi society. Others believed that globalisation has had profound and negative impacts on these religious aspects. These views are discussed below.

Four of the academic staff and one of the students believed that there is no conflict between the teachings of Islam and the opportunities offered by globalisation. For example, they argue that—throughout the history of Islam—Muslims have interacted with the world and utilised the experiences of other nations to develop their society; that is not shameful or forbidden in the Islamic teachings. One of the academic staff members described this, saying:

While Saudi Arabia, as a conservative Muslim society, has its Islamic foundations that should be maintained and developed, Islam gives Muslims a wide area in which to interact and collaborate with people around the world. (Sultan)

As a result, they believed that there should not be much concern about the negative effects of globalisation on the religious aspects of Saudi society. One academic highlighted this:

There should not be much concern, even in the long term, about the negative effects of globalisation on our cultural identity in terms of religious aspects. As our religion is based on a steady source, the Quran and Sunnah, the effects of globalisation are limited and not profound. (Aziz)

Another academic staff member added:

In fact, I am not concerned about losing or melting the religious aspect of our cultural identity through interacting with the world. Muslim societies have interacted with the world for 14 centuries without losing their religion. (Omar)

On the other hand, three students and two academic staff members believed that globalisation and its means have played a major role in spreading Western concepts such as personal freedom and equality between genders, thereby affecting public opinion in Saudi society, which in some cases contradicts Islamic teaching. Some in Saudi Arabia may call for religious freedom, whereas others may doubt Islam and its teachings. One of the academic staff members expressed this, saying:

Some people in Saudi Arabia may criticise the constraints of Islam, claiming the freedom of expression. (Salem)

Another academic staff member expressed his concern about the spread of liberal ideas and their effects on people's adherence to Islamic teachings:

Some liberals in Saudi Arabia claim that some Islamic teachings should be isolated from people's life, as they may believe that it would not be suitable for the modern age. (Mohammed)

In addition to views expressed by academic staff, one of the students described this aspect of globalisation, saying:

I heard one of the Saudi liberals call for personal freedom in all life aspects. For example, there is a call for considering drinking alcohol as a personal freedom, which should not be prohibited. Some may call for allowing the opening of nightclubs. Others call for women's work in all fields and to be mixed with men in one place. All these issues contradict Islamic teachings and threaten the cultural identity of Saudi society. (Ali)

Another student added:

These calls seem to impact the thoughts of the young generation. One Saudi young man tweeted, on his Twitter account, that he wishes to live in another country away from Saudi Arabia because of the Islamic religion and its restrictions. Some Saudi people may complain of the reality of the community, due to adhering to Islamic teachings. They believe that they would restrict people's personal freedom. These liberal Western ideas, brought by some Saudi liberals, would threaten the religious aspects of cultural identity. (Majed).

Discussion

The findings indicated that globalisation has affected cultural identity in Saudi Arabia and has resulted in some positive and negative effects. These findings support the views of Ritzer (2007), who argues that there is a growing consensus that globalisation poses many challenges to cultural identity, which should be handled with care. As a result, the world will inevitably suffer from its effects and consequences on cultural identities. However, it is also clear that globalisation may involve some advantages which could be used to enhance and develop the cultural identity for any nation. It appears that the key is to find the right balance between global markets and economies and local cultures and customs (Ritzer, 2007).

Arabic language

The findings revealed that at the Case Study institution there has been an increase in the usage of English language at the expense of Arabic language. These findings confirm the point of view of Altbach and Knight (2007) who argue that globalisation has led to the increased usage of English as lingua franca for scientific communication; the growth of information technology and communications; and an international labour market for researchers and research integration. In addition, the findings are in accordance with the views of Gordon and Meunier (2001) and Crystal (2012) who content that English has become the universal language of international business, diplomacy, the internet, and even, to a large extent, culture. Other researchers like Mohd- Asraf (2005) also point out the fact that the use of the English language has spread globally to the extent that it may be hard to find a state whose citizens do not use English language whether in formal or informal matters.

Moreover, the two groups asserted that exaggerating the importance of English language is a way of destroying classical Arabic language. Thus, the findings emphasised that the marginalization of Arabic language, especially in scientific fields such as medicine and engineering, may have an effect on weakening Islamic Arab cultural identity and alienating the new generations from the Arab-Muslim society. However, this does not mean to close the door of openness or of learning other languages, but that the attention paid to other languages should not be at the expense of Arabic and its development.

Viewed through Beck's (2000) ideas that the use of English as the global medium of communication is thought to ensure the global transmission of Western-style consumerism, it can be seen why some of the participants were quite worried about this development. For these people, the influence of Western media and entertainment industries, which are a reflection of their values, is seen as destroying many cultural and social traditions. These findings support the findings of previous

studies done by Hopkyns (2014), Poggensee (2016), Mosadah and Shrafain (2010) and Gordon and Meunier (2001) who all found similar results. These findings once again can be explained by Global Cultural Theory which emphasises the rapid growth of the mass media and the resultant global cultural flows in recent decades which lead to the appearance of a new global cultural pattern and the widespread of English language which can be seen as the new global culture (Robinson, 2007).

Costumes and vules

Another effect of globalisation on Saudi Arabian cultural identity can be seen through the spread of the western lifestyle among Saudi society. The findings revealed a big change among Saudi society, especially the younger generation in their exterior appearance. The two groups explained that almost twenty years ago, it was rare to see Saudi people wearing western dress. However, today western clothing is quite prevalent among Saudi youths and for some this was considered as a threat to their traditional cultural identity. Thus, the findings suggested that for some participants, imitating Western fashion can have serious effects on the Saudi cultural identity, as the imitation of Western tradition and values on campus may lead to the adoption of their ideas and the reincarnation of their personalities and behaviour. These findings are consistent with studies elsewhere which have explored this issue. For instance, Hopkyns (2014) and Zamil (2013) likewise found that globalisation was leading to changes in clothing and lifestyles as people tried to emulate Western fashion. They found that watching entertainment programmes, particularly American movies, has led to an increase in imitating and adopting the Western lifestyle. These findings reflect Global Culture Theory, which highlights the rise of world cuisines, world tourism, and uniform consumption patterns, all leading to the reduction of cultural diversity throughout the globe (Pieterse, 2004).

Globalisation and religion

The findings from this study suggest that participants perceived that there was no conflict between the teachings of Islam and the opportunities offered by globalisation. The two groups explained that Muslims throughout the history of Islam have interacted with the world and utilized the experiences of other nations to develop their society. Thus, they emphasised that this tendency is not shameful or forbidden according to Islamic teachings. Therefore, the findings revealed that while Saudi Arabia, as a conservative Muslim society, has its Islamic foundations that should be maintained and developed, Islam gives Muslims the freedom to interact and collaborate with people around the world regardless of their beliefs and cultural background.

While this may be so, the particpants also perceived globalization to be a possible threat to the country's religion and values system. They perceived that globalisation could lead to significant and negative effects on Saudi Arabian Islamic cultural identity because they felt that some people in Saudi Arabia may criticize the constraints of Islam, claiming their freedom of expression. Also, some liberals in Saudi Arabia may claim that some Islamic teachings should be isolated from people's life, as they may believe that it would not be suitable for the modern age. These results support the view of Bakkar (2009) who argues that globalisation is seen as a series of threats and challenges to Arabs' and Muslims' cultural identity, and that it may be seen as equivalent to Americanization, advocating a cultural homogenization (as proposed by Global Culture Theory) that could undermine Islamic morality. By which it can be inferred that the spread of globalisation through technology, such as the Internet, social media and satellite television, and the use of the English language within these mediums has resulted in creating a more homogenized and single world culture. These findings are also consistent with other research by Mosadah and Shrafain (2010) who found that the spread of some Western concepts—such as liberalism, secularism, and the call for absolute personal freedom—appear to have an influence on Saudi society. Once again such thinking has also been found in studies of other cultures, for example Keefe (2000) who found that globalisation had affected the religious cultural identity of a young generation of Appalachians. This has led to deep social changes, as well as to changes in worship practices; it has led to different patterns of going to church, as well as to different patterns of moral integrity.

Implications and recommendations

8.4 Implications and recommendations

The findings revealed that globalisation has both negatively and positively affected and challenged higher education and its goals, as well as Saudi Arabian cultural identity. The implications of these findings, and the recommendations they highlight, are discussed below.

• The findings revealed that globalisation has affected cultural identity in Saudi Arabia. English language use seems to have spread among Saudi society, which has resulted in a decrease in the usage of the Arabic language. In addition, a Western lifestyle seems to have been adopted among many Saudi youths, which may have a profound effect on their cultural identity. Higher education institutions should play a major role in developing and maintaining the society's cultural identity and responding to the challenges of globalisation. Higher education institutions can make a major contribution and interact with society, through means such as holding workshops and conferences, to discuss how to enhance and develop cultural identity in light of globalisation and rapid changes. In addition, universities have many excellent academic staff and researchers to draw upon. Thus, they should play a role in developing and maintaining the society's cultural identity. For example, they could create television programmes and participate in public discussions and dialogues to raise public awareness of globalisation and its challenges in relation to cultural identity

Limitations of the study

Regardless of how precisely an academic study is designed, researchers need to acknowledge certain limitations (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). As explained through the aims of the study and the research questions, this study is limited to understanding the effects of globalisation on cultural identity from the perceptions of male academic

staff and postgraduate students at a college of education in one regional university in Saudi Arabia. As a result, it must be acknowledged that the results cannot be considered as representing all academic staff and postgraduate students from different colleges and disciplines at this university. For example, academic staff and postgraduate students from such colleges as those of Medicine and of Business and Economics may have different views on these issues. Moreover, the results cannot be considered as representing all academic staff and postgraduate students at all higher education institutions in the country. So, academic staff and students from other higher education institutions in the country may have different views on these issues. In addition, female academic staff and postgraduate students may have different perceptions regarding these issues.

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