

Can they ever feel at home?: Saudi Student Experiences in Residence Halls

Beth Cahill

Advisor: Dr. Nasser Razek

Purpose

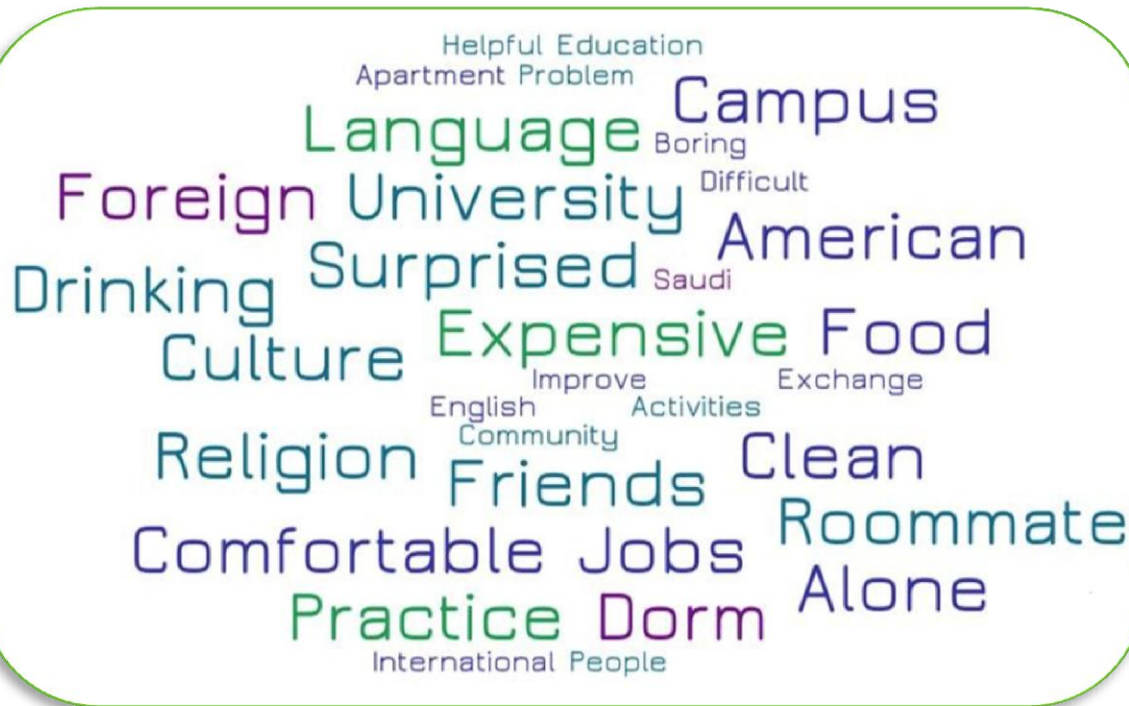
To contribute to the scarce existing literature regarding Saudi students, specifically their experience in American university residence halls.

Method

One-on-one interviews were conducted with Saudi students that have lived in a residence hall within the past year.

Research Questions

1. What is the experience of Saudi students in the residence halls of a private, religiously affiliated institution of higher education?
2. What services/programs can the institution provide to improve or enhance the experience in an effort to retain these students through graduation?



Findings

The main reason Saudi students choose to study in the United States, and live on campus, is to practice the English language and exchange culture with American students. Based on the individual student experiences, recommendations will be made to improve the experience for future Saudi students.

Implications

Further research regarding this topic would better inform other institutions, specifically residence life staff, of how to serve the unique needs of this student population. By restructuring the residence life experience, American students will also benefit by being exposed to a more diverse environment.

In 2012/2013, the number of international students in the U.S. increased 7.2% to a record high of 819,644 students.

Saudi students represent the fourth rank among countries of origin for international students in the United States.

