WALDEN UNIVERSITY
A higher degree. A higher purpose.

Walden University
ScholarWorks

Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies

Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection

2017

Saudi Women's Experiences of Control and Engagement as Employees in Private Universities

Kimberly Dawn Deatherage
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations

 Part of the Social Psychology Commons, and the Women's Studies Commons

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu.

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Kimberly Deatherage

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Robin Friedman, Committee Chairperson, Psychology Faculty
Dr. Kimberley Cox, Committee Member, Psychology Faculty
Dr. Debra Wilson, University Reviewer, Psychology Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2017

Abstract

Saudi Women's Experiences of Control and Engagement as Employees in Private Universities

by

Kimberly D. Deatherage

MS, Northeastern State University, 2001

BA, Northeastern State University, 1998

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Psychology

Walden University

November 2017

Abstract

Saudi women have higher rates of graduation from college than their male counterparts, but are underrepresented as employees in the private higher education sector. Saudi women working in higher education report a lack of involvement in the planning of their work, challenges in balancing family and career, and low wages. Yet, no research has explored how Saudi women in administrative support staff positions in private universities perceive control and how their perceptions of control affect their engagement in the workplace. Therefore, based on locus of control theory, the 2-process model of perceived control, and compensatory control theory, the purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Saudi women administrative support staff working in private universities regarding the phenomena of workplace control and engagement. Ten female administrative support staff were selected using purposive and snowball sampling. Semistructured interviews were used to explore the lived experience of control for Saudi women administrative support staff and how their experiences influence engagement. The data were analyzed using Moustakas's steps to the phenomenological process. Eight core themes emerged from the data, including supervision and guidance, social relationships and connections, time, lack of predictability, adjustment of self to fit the environment, self-development and inner transformations, having a voice, and cultural conditioning of women's social roles. The implications for positive social change include raising awareness among management, human resources, and training specialists in private higher education of Saudi women's perceptions of control and engagement in the workplace.

Saudi Women's Experiences of Control and Engagement as Employees in Private Universities

by

Kimberly D. Deatherage

MS, Northeastern State University, 2001

BA, Northeastern State University 1998

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Psychology

Walden University

November 2017

Dedication

I dedicate this study to my family that has always been my support system. I dedicate this to my parents, Edward Hadley and Charline Brown, who taught me always to stand up when life brought me to my knees. I dedicate this to my sister, Melissa Hadley, who taught me to see the world beyond the confines of a small town. I dedicate this to my husband, Hatem Mominah, who showed me the world and stole my heart for the last 20+ years. I dedicate this to my oldest daughter, Ashton Deatherage-Voth, who has been with me since I was 19 years old and raised me as I raised her. I dedicate this to my three younger daughters, Aaliyah, Jasmine, and Jana Mominah, my miniature Saudi feminist. Lastly, I dedicate this to my infant son, "Mr. Baby" Mohammed Hatem Mominah, who I lost during my Ph.D. journey. In your short time with me, you taught me to treasure each moment, and in your passing taught me that love does not exist only in the physical boundaries of life. You are with me every day.

Acknowledgements

I acknowledge and offer my sincere thanks to Dr. Robin Friedman, for her patience, guidance, and knowledge. Your feedback helped me to learn to accept criticism and to let go of the fear of not being perfect. I thank you for taking on the responsibility of being my committee chair when my first advisor left during my first semester. To my committee member, Dr. Kimberley Cox, thank you for your insights, wisdom, and support during each phase of the journey. To Dr. Debra Rose Wilson, thank you for being an excellent university research reviewer and for the expertise you brought to this project.

To my friends who are my family in Jeddah: Jenifer Dracoulis, Abir Assani, Regina Pizarro, Elizabeth Quilci, Betsy Sanders-Bin Zagr, and Dr. Jannat Al Abassi. You are not only my friends but my sisters. Each of you has stood with me through some of the most trying periods in my life. I love you all and would have never made it to this point without each of you.

Most importantly, to the participants of this study, my heartfelt thank you and gratitude. Your willingness to share your experience and time was invaluable to this study. I am honored that you trusted me to share your stories and experiences.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

How individuals perceive control in their environment is considered a core psychological process that enables them to make connections between events in their environment and develop a worldview in which the world appears orderly and structured (Fiske, 2010). Control is an individual establishing causal relationships between his or her behaviors or external forces and outcomes that provide a roadmap in which he or she can map out a world that appears orderly and predictable (Fiske, 2010; Kay, Gaucher, McGregor, & Nash, 2010). Differences in perceptions of control and how these perceptions affect behavior have been noted cross-culturally, as well as across genders (Cheng, Cheung, Chio, & Chan, 2013; Landau, Kay, & Whitson, 2015; Yamaguchi, Galfan, Ohashi, & Zemba, 2005). The focus of this research study was to explore perceptions of control with Saudi women employed in administrative support staff positions at private universities, and how these perceptions may have influenced their engagement in their work environment.

Many Saudi women have been socialized to believe they should invest themselves exclusively to responsibilities of family and domestic duties, while their male family members have exercised considerable control over the women's lives (Al-Eisa & Al-Sobayel, 2012; Lippman, 2012). While research has examined how Saudi women perceive control related to their health (Al-Eisa & Al-Sobayel, 2012; Alqahtani & Salmon, 2008; Sinky, Cheyney, & Dolcini, 2015), based on the review of the literature, no research studies have investigated how Saudi women perceive control in their work

environment. As more Saudi women start engaging in careers, an understanding of how these women view control in the context of a professional environment is needed to begin to foster environments that meet both the needs of the women, the organizations, and society. Sidani and Feghali's (2014) mixed methodology research examined women's participation in the workforce across the Arab region. The researchers identified a lack of understanding of the cultural differences between different Arab countries and the practice of combining Arab women as one homogenous group as the primary deficiencies of studies related to Arab women in the workforce.

This study resulted in a description of Saudi women's perception of control and how this influences their perception of workplace engagement. The social change implications from this study relate to raising awareness of this issue, which could result in improved support and work environments for Saudi women employees. These social change implications could help organizations by increased productivity in the workplace. The Saudi economy could also benefit if the numbers of Saudi women employed increases, particularly in private higher education.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a brief background of the cultural context of women working in university settings in Saudi Arabia, the problem statement, and the purpose of the study. A summary of the conceptual framework of the study is provided, as well as a discussion of the gap in the literature, the assumptions, delimitations, and scope of the study. The final section of the chapter includes the research questions that I explored, as well as a discussion related to the need for this

research and possible social change implications associated with what is learned from the research.

Background

Saudi Arabia is a country undergoing a rapid evolution regarding technology, population growth, values, and a changing economic structure. In the midst of these changes, Saudi women are beginning to enter the world of work, where formerly only a minority of the female Saudis dared to forge careers in a society that is highly collective, patriarchal, and religious. Traditionally, society has relegated the role of women in Saudi Arabia to domestic duties such as being wives, mothers, and taking care of the home, with few choices outside of their domestic duties (Al-Eisa & Al-Sobayel, 2012; Lippman, 2012).

Saudi Arabia is a society in which women are under the guardianship of male family members throughout their lives. In recent years women have gained some of the rights held by men. These rights include women being able to vote in municipal elections, hold advisory positions on government councils (Almansour & Kempner, 2016; Al-Rasheed, 2013b), work without permission of their guardians, and access health care without the consent of their guardians (Alyaemni, Theobald, Faragher, Jehan, & Tolhurst, 2013). Despite the recent gains in gender equality, women still lack personal control over their lives in many tasks. For example, women are not allowed to drive cars, the government enforces gender segregation in many public spaces, women have limited access to the justice system, and women must obtain permission from guardians to travel outside of the country (Al Eisa & Sobayel, 2012; Al-Rasheed, 2013a; Hamdan, 2012).

The socially acceptable roles of women in Saudi Arabia have begun transforming in recent years following economic downturns that resulted in women starting to enter the workforce. In the past, Saudi Arabia's oil-based economy provided financial resources that enabled Saudi men to receive high salaries and government subsidies that created an economic environment in which women were not encouraged to work (Price, 2015). In the last decade, as oil prices have dropped substantially and the government reduced subsidies, many Saudi families have found it difficult to maintain their standard of living on one income. Also, Saudi women have exceeded men in educational attainment by obtaining more than half of all the undergraduate and graduate degrees granted in Saudi Arabia (Courington & Zubai, 2011; Lippman, 2011; Sidani & Feghali, 2014).

The Saudi government has allowed women to work in the past, but laws, royal decrees, and *fatwas* (religious scholars' interpretations) have limited women to working mostly in the education and medical sectors. While women have worked in these professions as doctors, faculty, administrators, or administrative support staff, the women have mainly chosen employment in the public sectors versus the private sector because of better benefits, higher salaries, and job security (Moussa, 2013a).

The Saudi government has realized since the 1990's that the lack of Saudi men and women working in the private sector and the reliance on government jobs and subsidies posed a problem for the future economic security of the country (Sadi, 2013; Sadi & Al Buraey, 2009). *Saudization* has been a movement to decrease the private sectors practices of hiring expatriate employees and increasing the number of Saudis working in the private sector. The Saudi government implemented the *Nitaqat* program

in 2011, which requires private organizations to employ Saudi nationals and maintain at least 30% Saudi nationals in the organization's workforce (Alshanbri, Khalfan, & Maqsood, 2015; Sadi, 2013). Government policy changes, such as *Nitaqat*, have encouraged the hiring of more Saudi women and men by private companies, private education institutions, and other organizations (Sadi, 2013).

In spite of the policy changes, even in traditionally accepted occupations, such as higher education, Saudi women are still underrepresented in employment. In my review of the literature and by contacting the Ministry of Labor, I could find no statistics of how many Saudi women are employed in private higher education. Ahmed (2016) reported that private universities in Saudi Arabia have favored hiring Saudi women for clerical and administrative support positions to increase their number of Saudi employees to meet the quotas set by the Nitaqat Program. The number of women employees including faculty and administrative support staff working in both public and the private higher education in Saudi Arabia is composed of about 40% women, but only 13% are Saudi women nationals (Hamdan, 2013). The other 27% of women employed in higher education are expatriate women, mostly from Western or other Middle Eastern countries (Hamdan, 2013). Although statistics are not available for the rate of turnover among women in higher education, the employee turnover rate among all Saudi's in their first year of employment is around 70% (Alshanbri et al., 2015).

Examining the concept of control in culturally diverse populations has shown similarities with and differences from non-Western populations (Cheng et al., 2013; Smith, Hume, Zimmerman, & Davis 2011). For example, Calza, Aliane, and Cannavale

(2010) found interregional difference of locus of controls in Algeria compared to other culturally similar Mediterranean countries that affected the performance of employees.

There have been no research studies found in the review of the literature for this study that have examined how Saudi women construct control in work settings. This study is needed to develop an understanding of Saudi women's appraisal of control in a private university setting, and their perceptions of the role control plays on their level of engagement in the workplace. This research study fills a gap in the literature by increasing the understanding of the lived experiences of Saudi women administrative support staff employed in private higher education.

Problem Statement

Saudi women have greater rates of admission and graduation from universities than their Saudi male counterparts, but Saudi women are underrepresented as employees in the higher education sector within Saudi Arabia (Alomair, 2015). Saudi women account for only 13% of individuals employed in both the public and private higher education sector (Hamdan, 2013). Research has identified low wages, lack of involvement in the future planning of curriculum, work overload, and issues related to balancing careers and family obligations as factors influencing the reluctance of Saudi women to maintain employment in private universities (Almansour & Kempner, 2016; Alomair, 2015).

I found no research study that examined how Saudi women administrative support staff working in higher education perceive control in their work environment and how their perceptions of control affect their engagement. Researchers have defined control as

an individual establishing beliefs about how outcomes in their environment are caused by their agency, external forces, or powerful others that provide a worldview of an orderly and stable world (Fiske, 2010; Glass et al., 1973; Kay et al., 2010; Skinner, 1996). I used this definition of control to guide the research study. I used Christian et al. (2011) and Moussa (2013b) definition of employee engagement for the research study, which they described as a state of an employee being able to invest one's self physically, cognitively, and emotionally to complete his or her job tasks.

Employee engagement has been positively correlated with intentions to stay employed in an organization (Christian, Garza & Slaughter, 2011; Moussa, 2013b). Developing an understanding of how Saudi women administrative support staff experience control, and how their perception of control may affect their engagement in the workplace will fill a gap in the research literature. Filling this gap in the literature can provide an understanding of how Saudi women employed in private universities construct control in the work environment and the role they believe it plays in their workplace engagement. This study also offers future opportunities for researchers, higher education management, human resources, and labor policymakers to consider women's viewpoint in future research, management decisions, and policies applied to Saudi women working in higher education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Saudi women administrative support staff working in private universities regarding issues of control and engagement in the workplace. The phenomenon was the women's

lived experience of control and engagement, within the context of working in private universities in Saudi Arabia. Researchers have defined control as an individual establishing beliefs about how outcomes in their environment are caused by their agency, external forces, or powerful others that provide a worldview of an orderly and stable world (Fiske, 2010; Glass et al., 1973; Kay et al., 2010; Skinner, 1996). I used this definition of control to guide the research study.

Research Questions

I developed the following research questions after an extensive review of the current literature on control, engagement, and Saudi women employed in higher education in Saudi Arabia. In Chapter 3, I will provide a more detailed description of the design of the study and an explanation of Moustakas's (1994) phenomenological analysis, which I used for the analysis of data.

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What is the lived experience of control for Saudi Arabian women university employees and how does it influence employee engagement?

Subquestion 1 (SQ1): How do Saudi women employees describe control in their workplace?

Subquestion 2 (SQ2): How do Saudi women university employees describe the influence of control in their workplace?

Subquestion 3 (SQ3): How do Saudi women university employees' perceptions of control play a role in their sense of workplace engagement?

Conceptual Framework

Social scientists have often researched control through the cultural view of the Western tradition, where autonomy and personal control are valued. As our world has continued toward greater intercultural contact, researchers have realized that psychological theories developed in the West do not always apply to social groups that have different experiences and cultural values (Cheng et al., 2013; Spector, Sanchez, Oi Ling Siu, Salgado, & Jianhong Ma, 2004; Yamaguchi, 2001).

Skinner (1996) developed a list of 32 different terms in social psychology that had been used to explain the phenomenon of control. Control has been defined in various forms in psychological research, although a common theme used by researchers is that individuals use interchanging explanations of how control is formed. Individuals view these interchanging explanations as either internal or external forces to provide a framework, so the world appears orderly and stable (Carone & Barone, 2001; Cheng et al., 2012; Inesi, Botti, Dubois, Rucker, & Galinsky, 2011; Kay, Whitson, Gaucher, & Galinsky, 2009).

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Saudi women administrative support staff working in private universities regarding issues of control and engagement in the workplace. Phenomenological research is a method of understanding and knowing a phenomenon as it appears in the conscious reality of those that experience the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Three theories provided a conceptual framework for exploring how the women may construct control. I selected these three theories because each provides a component of how individuals

create perceptions of control, where no one theory by itself fully captures the phenomenon.

The conceptual framework for this study incorporates three theories of control: Rotter's (1966) locus of control, Rothbaum, Weisz, and Snyder's (1982) two process model of perceived control, and Kay and Eibach's (2013) compensatory control theory. Rotter's (1966) locus of control theory has been the main theory used in research involving the Saudi population (Al-Eisa & Al-Sobayel, 2012; Al-Kahtani & Allam, 2013; Kumaran, 2013) and provides the idea that control emanates from either the individual or from external sources. Rothbaum et al.'s (1982) two process model of perceived control is relevant because it is used to examine processes in which people form a perception of control in their environment by adapting to the environment versus the act of controlling the environment. This theory is relevant to Saudi women who have been socialized in a highly collective and patriarchal society, in which society emphasizes conformity to the group. Kay and Eibach's (2013) compensatory control theory has relevance because the theory emphasizes how control is externalized to outside forces such as government or religion when taking personal control is not possible. This theory may be relevant because an absolute monarchy rules Saudi Arabia, and the government retains its legitimacy through the Islamic religion (Harb, 2016). A summary of the three theories follows, with a more detailed explanation and relevant research provided in Chapter 2.

Locus of Control

Rotter (1966) based locus of control theory on the tenants of social learning theory, where an individual builds a worldview of how the world works by

reinforcements they experience during the person's life. The person establishes their perceptions of reinforcement by making connections between the individual's actions and the resulting consequences termed internal locus of control. External locus of control describes the process in which the individual believes that the outcome may have been partly brought about by her/his actions but was also controlled by external forces outside of the person (Cheng et al., 2013; Hamedoğlu, Kantor, & Gülay, 2012; Rotter, 1966).

Two Process Model of Perceived Control

Rothbaum et al. (1982) stated that an external locus of control is not always a form of relinquishing control, but a kind of secondary control in which the individual seeks not to control the environment, but control herself or himself to adapt to the environment. The two principal forms of control are primary control and secondary control. Primary control, which is similar to Rotter's (1966) internal locus of control, consists of the individual taking actions in the person's environment to control the environment. Secondary control involves the individual choosing to transform cognitively to fit the person's environment (Helzer & Jayawickreme, 2015; Rothbaum et al., 1982; Spector et al., 2004).

Compensatory Control Theory

Kay and Eibach (2013) asserted in compensatory control theory (CCT) model that an individual's need for perceived control is established through two forms of control: personal control and compensatory control. In CCT, personal control is defined as an individual's perceptions that events or outcomes are a result of the person's actions, similar to Rotter's (1966) internal locus of control and Rothbaum et al.'s (1982) primary

control in the two process model of perceived control. Compensatory control occurs when factors in an environment make the perception of personal control impossible, in which individuals start to see external cues in the environment in patterns that provide an ideology, or an explanation of forms of external control. The pattern-seeking behaviors are influenced by what the person has been exposed to culturally, often in the forms of religion, government, and institutions (Friesen, Kay, Eibach, & Galinsky, 2014; Kay et al., 2009).

Nature of the Study

In this qualitative study, I used a phenomenological design. Phenomenological researchers focus on understanding a phenomenon through the lived experiences of the participants (Wertz, 2005). Bartholomew and Brown (2012) identified the importance of qualitative data in psychological research when studying non-Western cultural groups, as a way to avoid missing unique processes that may occur within a culture. Cheng et al. (2013) asserted the need for qualitative studies in non-Western populations on the concept of control because of how cultural values, experiences and social norms influence the concept.

In-depth, semistructured interviews provided unique cultural data on how Saudi women employed in private universities construct control in the work environment and the role they believe it plays in their workplace engagement. I recruited participants from private universities in Saudi Arabia. The inclusion criteria for participants were English speaking women Saudi nationals with at least a bachelor's degree who had been

employed for at least 1 year in an administrative support position in a private Saudi university that conducted all activities in English.

I taped and transcribed the semistructured interviews verbatim. I analyzed the data using phenomenological methods as described by Moustakas (1994). I sorted the data into statements that gave meaning and described Saudi women university employees' experience of control and what role they believed their perception of control might have on their workplace engagement. I grouped the sorted statements into nonoverlapping clusters, in which themes emerged. I presented and exemplified the themes by using verbatim quotes from the transcribed data. I created an individual textural description for each participant and asked for each participant to read their description and give feedback on whether the description had described her experience. I combined the individual textural descriptions into a composite description to reflect the meaning of the experience of the collective group. I also combined the individual structural descriptions to form a composite structural description. I once again reviewed the literature review to examine the representation of themes in current literature. My last step involved synthesizing the composite textural descriptions and composite structural description into a rich description that described the essence of the women's experience as suggested by Moustakas (1994).

Definitions

Compensatory control theory: A theory of control in which an individual perceives events or outcomes are a result of his/her actions termed personal control. When factors in an environment make the perception of personal control impossible, the

individuals start to perceive external cues from powerful entities in the environment as patterns. These patterns provide an ideology, or an explanation of forms of external control (Friesen et al., 2014; Kay et al., 2009).

Control: An individual establishing beliefs about how outcomes in the environment are caused by the person's agency, external forces, or powerful others that provide a worldview of an orderly and stable world (Fiske, 2010; Glass et al., 1973; Kay et al., 2010; Skinner, 1996).

Engagement: Describes a state in which an employee exerts a high level of energy in being able to invest physically, cognitively, and emotionally to complete their job tasks, while finding the work meaningful (Christian et al., 2011; Moussa, 2013b).

External locus of control: An individual's perception of control in which the person believes that the consequences of a situation may have been brought about by his/her actions, but was also controlled by external forces (Cheng et al., 2013; Hamedoğlu et al., 2012; Rotter, 1966).

Internal locus of control: An individual establishes perceptions of reinforcement by making connections between the person's actions and the resulting consequences (Rotter, 1966).

Locus of control: A theory of control based on social learning theory that asserts an individual's social environment and way of viewing and interacting with the world is built upon reinforcement and contingencies experienced throughout life, in which the person attributes control to either herself/himself, or to external forces (Rotter, 1966).

Two process model of perceived control: Theory of perceived control in which the individual believes that control in the environment is brought about through the individual's actions or primary control, or through secondary control where the individual transforms to adapt to the environment (Rothbaum et al., 1982).

Assumptions

My first assumption in this study was that the research participants answered the questions with honesty and conveyed their perceptions with truthfulness in how they perceived control within their organizational setting. The participants took part in this study voluntarily and confidentially, with the option of discontinuing their involvement in the study at any time without penalty. Another related assumption was that participants willingly volunteered their time to take part in this study, which suggested they had a certain level of emotional investment in the research outcomes.

My second assumption in this study was that the experiences of the participants were not necessarily factual, but were the participants' subjective interpretations. Patton (2002) described the importance of researchers recognizing that phenomenological research are subjective realities that describe the participants' worldview, but are not based on objective realities. The subjective reality and unique experiences of the participants revealed both similarities as well as differences in how they constructed their view of control in the workplace.

My third assumption in this study was that phenomenological methods were the best methods for this research study because it allowed participants to describe their lived experiences while incorporating cultural relativity regarding how Saudi women working

in higher education have constructed their views of control and how they believed it had affected their workplace engagement. Cheng et al. (2013) suggested using qualitative means to understand cultural differences in perception of control to capture differences that exist in the cultural context of a study.

Scope and Delimitations

I selected 10 Saudi women administrative support staff working in private universities to take part in this research study. These organizations predominately employ women of different nationalities, but the purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Saudi women administrative support staff working in private universities regarding issues of control and engagement in the workplace. Researchers vary on their recommended sample size. For example, Creswell (2013) recommended 5-25 participants, Morse (1994) recommended a minimum of six participants, and Omona (2013) suggested that researchers should not set a sample size, but use an estimate until the researcher has fully explored the phenomenon to the point of saturation. Although the recommendations of sample size vary, a common theme among all recommendations is that the sample size should allow the researcher to explore the phenomenon to the point of saturation (Creswell, 2013; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014; Morse, 1994; Omona, 2013). The women selected to take part in this study had at least obtained a bachelor's degree, held Saudi citizenship, been employed at the university for a minimum of 1 year, held an administrative support staff position, and worked at a private university where English was the primary language used for the operation.

Transferability describes how readers should consider research in context to other situations outside of the study (Morrow, 2005). Transferability allows a reader to contemplate the context of the study and arrive at a decision of how much applicability the study may have to similar situations (Patton, 2002). I provided enough details of the study for readers to make appropriate choices of how the study may be transferable to other settings. The findings of this research may have some applicability to other Saudi women working in other private higher education institutions in the Kingdom.

Limitations

Qualitative research has a history of being criticized for lack of empiricism related to the post-positivist thinking of quantitative research (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001). The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Saudi women administrative support staff working in private universities regarding issues of control and engagement in the workplace. The study is not intended to generalize to a broad sector of the Saudi population. This research cannot be generalized to all Saudi women, as the women who took part in this study represent only a small portion of Saudi women working in private higher education.

I acknowledge how my personal views may have biased my interpretations. Although I hold Saudi citizenship, I have biases that are related to my Western identity. I used Moustakas's (1994) suggested plan for phenomenological analysis that includes the researcher using epoche. Epoche involves the researcher making attempts to set aside their judgments and biases related to the phenomenon. Epoche is a state of consciousness where a researcher is aware of personal biases and preconceptions and strives not to have

these interfere with data collection or analysis (Jertfelt, Blanchin, & Li, 2016; Moustakas, 1994). Although the researcher attempts to control their biases, they also acknowledge it is impossible to reach a state of complete epoche, and thus, acknowledge how their biases may influence their interpretation of the data (Jertfelt et al., 2016). To deal with this issue, I kept a journal to reflect on my thoughts, as well as used my dissertation committee as a resource for clarifying and acknowledging my biases through the process.

Significance

Saudi Arabia is a closed society, in which access to Saudi women for research purposes has been scant (Lipmann, 2012), so this study provided an opportunity to hear the voices of Saudi women in administrative support staff in private universities and understand how the women construct their view of control, and how their perception of control affects their engagement in the workplace. This perspective offers an original contribution to the research literature and provides a foundation for developing future research on the constructs of control and engagement, unique to Saudi women in private higher education in how to best facilitate work engagement. The exploration of this issue is critical in developing an understanding of Saudi women working in higher education to preserve the economic stability of the Kingdom, but also in creating higher education work environments where women employees are engaged and productive in meeting their personal growth, as well as the continued development of the organizations.

The study has application to various entities. Private higher education organizations may benefit from the research by examining how their current practices are detrimental, or useful, in fostering an engaged female workforce that performs at the

expected level. Also, organizations could use the research to pilot orientation, mentoring, and training and development programs to facilitate work environments that are conducive to perceptions of control that are more likely to elicit engagement in employees. Saudi Arabian government agencies, such as the Ministry of Labor and Ministry of Education, may find this information helpful and they can utilize the research findings to develop and implement policies that meet the needs of both employees and private higher education organizations regarding training, education, and labor rules.

Summary

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Saudi women administrative support staff working in private universities regarding issues of control and engagement in the workplace. The phenomenon under study was control and engagement in the workplace. Researchers have defined control as an individual establishing beliefs about how outcomes in their environment are caused by their agency, external forces, or powerful others that provide a worldview of an orderly and stable world (Fiske, 2010; Glass et al., 1973; Kay et al., 2010; Skinner, 1996). I used this definition of control to guide the research study.

In this chapter, I provided a brief review of the cultural position of women in the country with regards to employment, the patriarchal structure, and its effects on women (Al-Eisa & Al-Sobayel, 2012; Lippman, 2012). I presented the conceptual framework, which included Rotter's (1966) locus of control, Rothbaum et al.'s (1982) two process model of perceived control, and Kay and Eibach's (2013) compensatory control theory, along with the rationale for the chosen theoretical orientations to create a lens to explore

the women's construction of control. This study presents an opportunity to fill a gap in the literature by developing an understanding of the lived experience of how Saudi women administrative support staff experience control, in the context of private universities, and how their perception of control may affect their engagement in the workplace. This study provides an opportunity for social change implications by raising awareness of this issue, which could result in improved support and work environments for Saudi women employees. Positive social change may result if management and policymakers use this awareness from the findings of this study to create work environments that support and encourage Saudi women employed in higher education.

In Chapter 2, I have provided a review of the literature related to control and engagement and how this relates to the research study. Also, I have explained the conceptual framework in more detail and presented research about the selected theories. In the third part of Chapter 2, I will focus on unique cultural components that pervade the lives of women in Saudi Arabia and influence their perceptions of control and engagement in the workplace.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

How an individual perceives control in the environment is considered a core psychological process that enables the person to make connections between events in the environment and develop a worldview in which the world appears orderly and structured (Fiske, 2010). The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Saudi women administrative support staff working in private universities regarding issues of control and engagement in the workplace. Researchers have noted cross-cultural differences in the psychological literature in how different cultures perceive control, as well as how the effects of their perception of control affect their behaviors (Cheng et al., 2013). Cross-cultural researchers have suggested that data on control with Western populations do not always align with other cultures that are more collective (Cheng et al., 2013; Spector et al., 2004; Yamaguchi, 2001). Also, social scientists have noted gender differences in how men and women perceive control, and how these perceptions affect their behaviors (Landau et al., 2015; Yamaguchi et al., 2005).

The development of understanding the cultural perspective of how Saudi women perceive control in the context of private universities and the role they believe it plays in their workplace engagement is critical in the future development of research and organizational practices that facilitate an engaged Saudi women workforce that find meaning and purpose in their work. Employee engagement refers to a state of an employee being able to invest his or her energy physically, cognitively, and emotionally

to complete job tasks (Christian et al., 2011; Moussa, 2013b). These components of engagement are coupled with individuals exerting high levels of energy and mental resilience in perceived setbacks, and the perception that their work is meaningful, and they find enjoyment in the act of performing their job (Christian et al., 2011). While a person's engagement in the work environment can fluctuate with factors such as the type of task, work stressors, or personal stressors, most researchers agree that engagement is a state of mind in the individual that is relatively enduring (Christian et al., 2011; Moussa, 2013b). Employee engagement has also been established as a predictor of positive job performance and continued employment (Christian et al., 2011). Al-Iman and Al-Sobayel (2014) described the antithesis of engagement as burnout, in which employees exhibit cynicism, physical and mental exhaustion, and reduced performance in their job role.

The unique cultural factors of Saudi Arabia and the lives of Saudi women are unlike many other countries in the world. While technology has broken down some of the social barriers that have existed in the past, the voices of Saudi women have just begun to emerge uncensored through social media. The concept of control is especially relevant to Saudi women, but understanding how Saudi women construct their view of control has not been explored in any of the literature searched for in this study.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide information about the process of researching, reviewing, and constructing the literature review including keyword searches and databases used in the process. The second part of this chapter includes the conceptual frameworks and a review of the literature. The third part of this chapter will focus on a

review of engagement in the workplace and also the unique cultural components that pervade the lives of women in Saudi Arabia. The concept of how Saudi women experience control and how it may affect their engagement in the workplace cannot be understood without an understanding of the larger cultural influences that permeate the society. The last section of the chapter is a summary of the main points of the chapter.

Literature Research Strategy

The research strategy that I used to identify and obtain the material used for the literature review consisted of using several databases including Google Scholar, EBSCOhost, Elsevier, ProQuest, Sage, Lexis Nexus Academics, Springer, and Taylor and Francis. I used the following keywords in different search combinations to identify articles *locus of control, external control, internal control, compensatory control, two process model of perceived control, primary control, secondary control, engagement, Nitaqat, Saudization, culture, women, collective control, personal control, higher education, feminism, Islamic feminism, control, field dependency, wastah, religion, Islam, culture, Saudi Arabia, primary collective control, proxy control, indirect primary control* and *patriarchal*. Also, I used the articles as a means of providing additional search terms and resources from the reference lists.

Conceptual Framework

Control

Control is considered a core cognitive motive in helping people navigate their social world by forming causal relationships between events in their environment (Fiske, 2010). The causal relationships give individuals a roadmap in which they can experience

a world that appears to be orderly and predictable (Fiske, 2010; Kay et al., 2010). The human need for the perception of an orderly and structured world has been found to be so strong among the human species that individuals prefer negative perceptions of control versus a world that appears chaotic and random (Friesen et al., 2014).

The need for control in human beings is considered an innate tendency, while the process of learning the perception of control is formed through an individual's experiences and interactions in the world (Cheng et al., 2013). The perception of an orderly world has been found a key component in psychological well-being (Cheng et al., 2013) and motivation (Kay et al., 2010). The perception of the world being random and chaotic has been cross-culturally associated with anxiety, depression, and withdrawal from the social world (Cheng et al., 2013; Rothbaum et al., 1982).

Social science researchers through the years have referred to the concept of control and forms of control by various names. Skinner (1996) developed a list of 32 terms in social psychology that researchers had used in the literature and different theoretical ideas related to the concept of control. A few of the terms included were: locus of control, primary control, secondary control, personal control, self-efficacy, cognitive control, agenda control, vicarious control, autonomy, proxy control, explanatory style, self-determination, actual control, and perceived control.

Different researchers who have studied control have used the same label to describe different processes, which has resulted in some confusion in the research literature. For example, Skinner (1996) discussed how *relinquishment of control* was described by Rothbaum et al. (1982) as the perception that a situation was uncontrollable,

and subsequently, an individual loses the motivation to exert control, whereas Burger (1989) described it as yielding control to more competent people. In spite of the confusion in the research, one theme throughout the research is the process of using interchanging explanations of control in which individuals can form a perception of an orderly and stable world (Carone & Barone, 2001; Cheng et al., 2012; Inesi et al., 2011; Kay et al., 2009).

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Saudi women administrative support staff working in private universities regarding issues of control and engagement in the workplace. The perception of personal control varies across time and situations (Rotter, 1966), and working in a predominately female environment might alter these women's construction of control from their daily lives in which a male guardian possess control over them. The general everyday lives of Saudi women are legally under the control of their male guardians. Women under Sharia Law never gain legal control of their lives regardless of their age or mental capacity. In Saudi Arabia, from the time a woman is born until she dies, a family male guardian has legal control over her (Al Eisa & Sobayel, 2012; Al-Rasheed, 2013a; Hamdan, 2012). Practices such as gender segregation, the *abaya* (the black overcoat), the *niqab* (face cover), the male guardian system, and the forbiddance of women driving in the country are cultural traditions that are part of the everyday external control for Saudi women (Al Alhareth, Al Alhareth, & Al Dighrir, 2015; Al-Rasheed, 2013a; Hamdan, 2012).

In situations in which individuals have the perception of a lack of internal or personal control, they may attribute control to external sources such as religion,

supernatural forces, or powerful others in a continued effort to create a world which appears orderly (Kay et al., 2010). Cheng et al. (2013) questioned the appropriateness of a universal definition of control and raised the importance of examining control in a cultural context, in which cultural variations may be found.

Understanding control from the worldview of Saudi women in the context of a private university is important because of the unique culture of Saudi Arabia that affects women. These unique cultural components include the religiosity of the country, gender segregation, and male guardianship system that gives control to men of a woman's movement and career choices, and hampers her ability to make decisions without the consent of her guardian (Al Eisa & Sobayel, 2012; Al-Rasheed, 2013a; Hamdan, 2012). Social scientists have proposed numerous theories on control, in which all agree that control is a process, which gives an individual the perception of stability and predictability in the person's environment, but these theories differ in their explanations of the types of control, and how these mechanisms of control vary cross-culturally.

I chose three theories of control to use in this study: Rotter's (1966) locus of control, Rothbaum et al.'s (1982) two process model of perceived control, and Kay and Eibach's (2013) compensatory control theory. Rotter's (1966) locus of control has been the theoretical orientation used most often in research on control within the Saudi population (Al-Eisa & Al-Sobayel, 2012; Al-Kahtani & Allam, 2013; Kumaran, 2013). Rothbaum et al.'s (1982) two process model of perceived control may be relevant because it examined processes in which people formed perceptions of control in their environment by adapting themselves to the environment versus the act of controlling the

environment. This theory may be relevant to Saudi women who have been socialized in a highly collective and patriarchal society, in which the people emphasize conformity to the group. Kay and Eibach's (2013) compensatory control theory is relevant because of how the theory emphasizes how control is externalized to outside forces such as government or religion when taking personal control is not possible. Compensatory control theory may be relevant in that an absolute monarchy rules Saudi Arabia and the government retains its' legitimacy through the Islamic religion (Harb, 2016).

Locus of Control

When Rotter (1966) published work on locus of control, he established the process of perceived control as a key area of interest in psychological functioning across different domains. Rotter developed the theory from social learning theory, which asserts an individual's social environment and their way of viewing and interacting with the world is built upon reinforcement and contingencies experienced throughout the person's life. The individual establishes perceptions of reinforcement by the person making connections between his/her actions, and the resulting consequences termed internal locus of control. External locus of control describes the process in which the individual believes that the outcome may have been partly brought about by his/her actions but was also controlled by external forces outside of the person (Cheng et al., 2013; Hamedoğlu et al., 2012; Rotter, 1966).

According to Rotter (1966), while an individual's locus of control may vary across different situations and time, people's personalities have a dominant form of perceiving situations as either more internal or external. However, Spector et al. (2004)

asserted that there is a difference between an individual's perceptions in a particular context, such as in the work environment versus a person's personality trait about general control in life. The perceptions in a particular context are different in that they tend to be established through time, regarding a specific target, whereas an individual's belief in fate, luck, religious beliefs, or the control of powerful others guides his/her general beliefs. Al-Eisa and Al-Sobayel (2012) found that Saudi women associated an internal locus of control with better health behaviors. Research by Al-Kahtani and Allam (2013) found that Saudi women employed in the banking sector reported extreme scores on both external and internal locus of control, but their locus of control showed no correlation with their level of job satisfaction. Both of these studies used quantitative measures which may have missed unique cultural components of how they constructed their locus of control, as well as the two studies used different environments to measure the women's perception of control.

Locus of control research has associated positive mental health outcomes and healthy behaviors with individuals having an internal locus of control, and negative outcomes were associated with an external locus of control (Al-Eisa & Al- Sobayel, 2012; Culpin, Stapinski, Miles, Araya, & Joinson, 2015). However, when researchers examined locus of control from a cross-cultural perspective, these outcomes have not always been observed (Cheng et al., 2013; Rana, Bullinger, & Rana, 2015). For example, a meta-analysis by Cheng et al. (2013) across 18 countries examining locus of control and reports of depression and anxiety suggested that the relationship between anxiety and depression and an external locus of control in collective countries was not as predominant

as in more individualistic countries. Rana et al.'s (2015) correlational research found among Pakistani stroke patients that those who reported a more external locus of control were more likely to have healthier coping mechanisms assisting them in their recovery.

Researchers have conducted locus of control research in Saudi Arabia; however, the researchers used quantitative research methods with instruments that were developed with Westernized concepts of control (Al-Eisa & Al-Sobayel, 2012; Al-Kahtani & Allam, 2013; Kumaran, 2013). Al-Eisa and Sobayel (2012) found in their research that Saudi female university students and female university workers reported higher levels of internal control with regards to exercise habits. Habib (2012) indicated that entrepreneur students in Saudi Arabia reported higher levels of internal locus of control than other business majors. Al-Kahtani and Allam (2013) examined the relationship between locus of control and job burnout and job satisfaction, in which they found no relationship existed between locus of control and job burnout and job satisfaction. They also reported no significant difference between men's and women's locus of control. An issue regarding how researchers measured control in all of the quantitative studies mentioned is that they do not adequately explore the cultural nuances that may occur in the construction of control bounded by the positivist tradition in examining how other alternative constructions of control may affect workplace engagement.

Two Process Model of Perceived Control

Rothbaum et al. (1982) developed the two process model of perceived control, which differs from Rotter's (1966) locus of control theory by stating that an external locus of control is not always a form of relinquishing control, but a form of secondary

control in which the individual seeks not to control the environment, but exert control by adapting to the environment. The model was originally composed of two forms of control: primary control and secondary control. Primary control, which is similar to Rotter's (1966) internal locus of control, involves the individual actively taking actions to control the environment. Secondary control involves the person choosing to alter his/her cognition to fit the environment (Helzer & Jayawickreme, 2015; Rothbaum et al., 1982; Spector et al., 2004). The use of secondary control may have relevance to Saudi women that have been socialized in a highly collective society, in which conformity is often necessary for acceptance into their family and social groups. According to Abadeer (2015), Arab women belong to a society in which conforming to the expected behaviors of their family and culture is necessary for survival in their family and community. No research has happened to examine how secondary control may occur in Saudi Arabia.

Rothbaum et al. (1982) described an individual saliently using primary control methods as a first choice in obtaining the perception of control but resorting to secondary control methods under conditions in which the person failed to meet the perception of control. While some research has supported Rothbaum et al.'s (1982) assertion that secondary control is used as a form of compensation when primary control is not possible (Cheng et al., 2012; Daniels, Stewart, Stupnisky, Perry, & LoVerso, 2011; Sawaumi, Yamaguchi, Park, & Robinson, 2015), other researchers challenged this notion by asserting that secondary control is not a compensatory form of control, but a kind of control that is used dependent upon the environmental and culture influences, as well as the desired outcome (Helzer & Jayawickreme, 2015).

Helzer and Jayawickreme (2015) reported that American research participants associated primary and secondary control with different forms of well-being. The participants related primary control with goal striving, while they associated secondary control with making sense of the world, suggesting that both mechanisms are essential components of the perception of control in helping an individual achieve a general feeling of well-being. Morling, Kitayama, and Miyamoto (2002) found in a cross-cultural comparison of Japanese and American college students that the participant's culture regarding individualism and collectivism influenced the frequency and reported feelings associated with the use of primary control and secondary control. Japanese participants were able to recall more situations in which secondary control was used and reported greater feelings of social relatedness than Americans. Dakhli, Dinkha, Matta, and Abol-Hosn's (2013) quantitative research compared the coping strategies between Kuwaiti men and women. They found both used accommodation and religion as a coping mechanism, but women were more likely to use these strategies to conform to situations in which they felt they had no choice. While Kuwaiti women experience greater degrees of control over their lives than Saudi women, in many respects Kuwait is very similar to Saudi Arabia regarding being highly patriarchal, predominately Sunni Muslims, an oil-based economy, and low employment participation rates of women (Price, 2015).

Helzer and Jayawickreme (2015) found in their quantitative research that individuals have an array of mechanisms they use in asserting secondary control such as cognitive restructuring, positive thinking, and acceptance, but secondary control differs

from defensive mechanisms in that the individual actively chooses to adapt to the environment. The concept of choice in consciously choosing to adjust oneself to the environment coincided with other research by Inesi et al.'s (2011) quantitative research. Inesi et al. (2011) asserted that people use power and choice interchangeably to achieve a personal sense of control. The researchers defined power as an individual's perception of control over others or material objects, while they defined choice as the ability to select a path, which included adjusting one's self to the environment. The concepts of power and choice being used interchangeably as a form of secondary control may have relevance to Saudi women who have limited forms of power because of the male guardianship system, gender segregation, and restrictions in moving freely in the society.

Rothbaum et al. (1982) described different types of primary and secondary control. The researchers divided the two forms of control into eight types, which described different attempts to gain the perception of control:

- Predictive primary control involves selecting activities in which the individual is most likely to be successful.
- Predictive secondary control is actions taken to increase one's ability to predict future events. This form of control may involve people taking actions such as purposefully failing, withdrawing, or engaging in tasks that are above one's level to maintain established expectancies of failure.
- Illusory primary control means taking actions to increase the likelihood of success in chance as well as skill situations.

- Illusory secondary control is making attributions to chance and actively seeking out activities that involve luck while avoiding activities that are based on skill. Also, illusory control may include engaging in superstitious behaviors and beliefs.
- Vicarious primary control means imitating the behavior of others or trying to manipulate powerful others and attributing successes to the self.
- Vicarious secondary control is connecting with powerful others as a form of identification in which the individual shares benefits of being associated with the powerful other.
- Interpretive primary control is active attempts to comprehend problems to solve them.
- Interpretive secondary control is an individual's attempts to derive meaning from situations to accept them. Behaviors associated with this type of control include passivity, withdrawal, or submissive behavior.

In subsequent research, Yamaguchi (2001) proposed three other forms of primary control that have relevance to collective societies such as Saudi Arabia that value harmony. These three other forms of primary control included:

- Primary proxy control is the act of influencing an individual that can make changes in an environment.
- Primary indirect control has been defined as a person working to modify the environment but does so in a manner where the person's agency is concealed from others.

- Primary collective control is collective acts as a group to exert change on an environment.

According to Yamaguchi (2001), primary proxy control is important to individuals who do not hold power in a society or organizations. In these situations, the person's voice may not be heard, but by associating with others and influencing those in power, the individual can exert control over the environment. Primary proxy control may be relevant to female university employees who may not have developed their voice because even though the workplace environments are segregated, men still hold most of the key leadership positions in higher education in Saudi Arabia (Alomair, 2015). Furthermore, Kurman, Hui, and Dan (2012) found using quantitative research methods that the use of primary proxy control was more prevalent in a collectivist society (Hong Kong participants) than a Western culture (Israeli participants). In this study, the researchers asked both groups what type of strategies they would use in a difficult situation in an achievement domain. Although both groups used proxy control, the Israeli participants (Western culture) used it less than the Hong Kong participants (collective group).

Primary indirect control is when an individual acts in the environment, but does so in such a way to hide the person's intentions, or agency (Yamaguchi, 2001). Agency refers to an individual's capacity or effort to perform a behavior (Haggard & Eitam, 2015). For example, an individual can enlist another person to carry out a task in efforts to hide his/her agency, or through indirect means such as giving cues to others in the environment in hopes that another individual will make the change (Sawaumi et al.,

2015; Yamaguchi, 2001). Sawaumi et al. (2015) reported in their quantitative research with Japanese college students that primary indirect control methods were the least preferred method of primary control. In qualitative studies focusing on the expressed views of women from India and Saudi Arabia, women revealed that by using methods of hidden agentic behaviors they were able to accomplish developing a voice and being able to affect their social worlds (Guta & Karolak, 2015; Madhoc, 2007). Guta and Karolak (2015) conducted a qualitative study that explored Saudi women's use of social media to adopt anonymous online identities, for expressing their views regarding the condition of women and pushing for social changes within the society. A recurring theme throughout their research emphasized the women's need for concealing their identity not only for the women's protection but more importantly for the protection of their families.

Primary collective control involves working within a group to collaborate in efforts to exert change in the environment (Yamaguchi, 2001). Yamaguchi et al.'s (2005) quantitative study examined the perception of personal control versus collective control in American and Japanese participants' estimated success of being able to complete a puzzle. The research suggested that Japanese men and Japanese and American women estimated higher perceived levels of control when working with a group, which was described as collective control, while American men tended to estimate higher levels of success when they performed the task individually. This research is relevant in how Saudi women perceive control in their environment because Yamaguchi et al.'s (2005) research suggests that women cross-culturally are more likely to engage in primary collective control.

Kurman et al. (2012) added a third type of control, control via self-improvement that does not necessarily fit into the paradigm of primary or secondary control. This form of control involves the individual engaging in the process of self-improvement with the short-term goal of adjusting to the environment, but the long-term goal of the personal change affecting the condition of the environment. Kurman et al. (2012) suggested in their quantitative study that a person uses this type of control in situations where the individual is concerned about face (concern with one's reputation) by trying to exert control in the environment but is not comfortable using secondary methods, and as a result, chooses to use control via self-improvement. The researchers found that people use this form of control in both individualistic and collective societies, but the practice is more prevalent in collective societies like Saudi Arabia, where the issue of face is more common.

In my review of the literature, I found no research that had occurred with the Saudi population using primary control, secondary control, or control via self-improvement. Tavakoli (2012) conducted a quantitative cross-cultural research study that examined decision-making of Iranian and Canadian women and found that Iranian women used more forms of secondary control than primary control in decision-making. The researchers attributed this to the highly collective orientation of Iran, especially in regards to Iranian women having less control over such decisions as their educational paths, marriage, and career paths which are conditions very similar to Saudi Arabia. Kurman et al.'s (2007) quantitative study examined initiation on tasks among Israelis, which they classified as Israeli Jews (Western individualistic) and Israeli Arabs and

Israeli Black Jews (traditional collectivist). The researchers reported that the traditional groups reported higher usage of secondary control, although the two groups did not differ in their use of primary control. Furthermore, the researchers asserted that those participants who reported higher levels of secondary control used lower forms of initiation behaviors.

Compensatory Control Theory

Kay and Eibach's (2013) compensatory control theory (CCT) is a relatively new model that has attempted to explain an individual's need for perceived control of the person's environment through both personal control and compensatory control. CCT was built on the foundations of theories like Rotter's (1966) locus of control, Rothbaum et al.'s (1982) two process model of perceived control, and other social psychology theories such as Lerner's (1980) *just world theory* and Jost and Banaji's (1994) *system justification theory*.

In CCT, personal control is defined as an individual's perceptions that events or outcomes are a result of his/her actions. When factors in an environment make the perception of personal control impossible, people start to perceive external cues in their surroundings in forms of patterns that provide an explanation of forms of external control. People's pattern-seeking behaviors are influenced by what they have been exposed to in their cultural world, in the forms of religion, government, and institutions (Friesen et al., 2014; Kay et al., 2009).

According to Kay et al. (2010), most people relegate external control either to religious or spiritual beliefs, organizations, governments, or a person of power as a form

of compensatory control. Rothbaum et al.'s (1982) vicarious secondary control heavily influenced the definition of external control, in which the individual gains control by being associated with a powerful external force that provides a sense of stability (Kay et al., 2009). CCT may be relevant in how Saudi women perceive control in their lives because of the forms of external control that pervade their lives while living in a monarchy that is based on Sharia laws, and the male guardianship system in which women in Saudi Arabia are never recognized as independent. In Jamjoom's (2010) phenomenological research that focused on the lived experiences of female Saudi teachers in Jeddah private schools, themes related to religion were prominent in how the women described their experiences. The women reported that *fate* and *God's will* played a major component in their path of becoming a teacher. This example illustrates the women's perception of control emanating from a powerful external source determining their career profession.

When a positive or negative event threatens personal control, a person is likely to attribute the event to a form of external control, such as religion, government, or institutions, to relieve anxiety related to the perception of the world being random, and restore a sense of order and stability. Kay et al. (2009) found in their quantitative research that when Canadian university students were asked to recall an event in which they perceived no personal control, they reported stronger beliefs in a controlling God than in situations where researchers had primed personal control. Also, Kay et al. (2009) were able to replicate this relationship across 67 countries in which the participants

reported reliance on government as a form of compensatory control when they perceived their personal control as low.

When a person extends external control to an outside force, that force is often viewed by the individual as having the best interest of a person as one of the force's core principles. Kay et al. (2009) reported in their quantitative research that when researchers primed participants in situations which the government was framed as having the best interest of their citizens as a core motivation, those participants were more likely to see the government as an external form of control. Although when the people regarded the government as having malicious intentions, the participants failed to see the government as a form of external control. Kay et al. (2009) asserted that the perception of benevolence was a moderating factor that determined an individual's likelihood to use external control, but also suggested that other factors such as the individual's view of the competence and ability of the government played a critical role as well. Friesen et al. (2014) found in their research of hierarchical organizations that when people perceived high procedural justice in an organizations, the individuals preferred the procedural justice over egalitarian systems, but when procedural justice was low, the people no longer saw the organization as a form of external control and disengaged with the organization.

The use of personal control and external control are not mutually exclusive processes but occur simultaneously on perceived availability of personal control in a situation (Kay et al., 2009). When external control is threatened a person will transfer their belief of external control to another entity or compensatory personal control (Kay &

Eibach, 2013; Kay et al., 2010). Kay et al. (2010) identified two forms of compensatory personal control: volitional personal control and epistemic personal control. Volitional personal control is the belief that by following certain prescribed behaviors, an individual can control an outcome. For example, an individual that is of the Islamic faith may exert volitional personal control by praying five times daily as a means of exercising control over the likelihood of going to *Jana* (heaven). Mebrouk (2008) conducted a qualitative study among Saudi nurses working in a hospital in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in which the importance of Islam in the caring profession was not only emphasized in their reasons for becoming a nurse but also was embedded in the manner in which they provided care to patients. The nurses described using Islamic principles in dealing with their patients to gain favor through the eyes of God to ensure their chances of going to heaven.

Epistemic personal control is the tendency to strengthen the belief that one's beliefs are true. Epistemic personal control is depicted by latching on to information that reinforces one's belief, or by discounting the opinion or worth of others who may have a different belief system (Kay et al., 2010). Moaddel and De Jong's (2014) population study found that across seven Middle Eastern countries, Saudi Arabian men and women were found to have the least level of interfaith tolerance, but that among Saudis below the age of 40 interfaith tolerance increased with younger generations, suggesting a change in epistemic control. The reported lack of interfaith tolerance in the population could be construed as a form of epistemic personal control.

The three theories of locus of control, two process model of perceived control, and CCT provide a framework for understanding how control is elucidated in a person's

environment to visualize a world that is orderly and stable. CCT is similar to Rotter's (1966) locus of control in that the phenomenon of perceived internal locus of control gives an individual a sense of stability in the environment. Also, CCT is similar to the two process model of perceived control in that both theories do not always see forms of external control as having adverse effects on an individual's behavior. Although CCT and the two process model of perceived control assert that externalizing control to outside forces are mechanisms to restore the perception of an orderly world, the two process model of perceived control states that an individual can attempt to change oneself to fit in with the environment to restore a sense of control (Helzer & Jayawickreme, 2015; Rothbaum et al., 1982; Spector et al., 2004). In contrast, CCT asserts that a cognitive shift occurs in seeking alternative patterns of explaining events in the environment (Landau et al., 2015). These three theories provide a conceptual framework to explore the lived experiences of Saudi women administrative support staff working in private universities regarding issues of control and engagement in the workplace.

Literature Review

Engagement

Employee engagement refers to an employee being able to invest oneself physically, cognitively, and emotionally to complete their job tasks (Christian et al., 2011; Moussa, 2013b). These components are combined with the individual exerting high levels of energy, mental resiliency during perceived setbacks, the belief that the person's work is meaningful, and finding enjoyment in performing one's job (Christian et al., 2011). Although engagement in the work environment can fluctuate within an

individual because of factors such as the type of task, work stressors, or personal stressors, most researchers agree that engagement is a state of mind in the individual that is relatively enduring (Christian et al., 2011; Moussa, 2013b). Employee engagement has also been established as a predictor of positive job performance (Christian et al., 2011).

Al-Iman and Sobayel (2014) described the antithesis of engagement as burnout, in which employees exhibit cynicism, physical and mental exhaustion, and reduced performance in their job role. Depersonalization, a process where individuals detach themselves from the emotions and personal connection with the work, has been associated with burnout or disengagement (Vanbogeart et al., 2017). Pinto, Dawood, and Pinto (2014) found that coworker support and job control have a moderating effect on reducing burnout among employees.

Research into the process of engagement has identified different antecedents that are thought to facilitate the process of worker engagement. Culture has been found to have an influence in which precursors appear to have the greatest affect on employee engagement (Rothmann, 2013). Christian et al. (2011) identified the precursors that affect employee engagement, which included the characteristics of the job in matching the skill set of the worker, leadership styles, supervisor feedback, autonomy in performing job tasks, and the physical surroundings that create a comfortable working environment. Also, researchers have suggested that appropriate, timely, and complete feedback from leaders and managers are factors in the workplace that positively affect employee engagement (Blomme, Kodden, & Beasley-Suffold, 2015; Sparr & Sonnentag, 2008).

Moussa's (2013b) research on engagement in private organizational settings in Saudi Arabia suggested that factors such as the job characteristics matching the skill set of the employee and rewards systems were positively correlated with engagement in Saudi employees. The researcher further suggested that Saudi employees attributed the main reasons for disengagement were because of the lack of encouragement from supervisors and the use of pervasive management strategies, including *wastah,* which employees perceived to be unfair in opportunities for advancement. *Wastah* is a widespread cultural practice in the Middle East of obtaining special favors from one's social connections (Kayad & Hassan, 2012). In contrast, expatriate workers reported higher levels of engagement and viewed management practice as supportive. The findings of the importance of procedural justice to Saudi employees supports research by Friesen et al. (2014) who reported that when perceptions of procedural justice were low, that participants no longer viewed a hierarchal institution as a form of compensatory control in their environment and their levels of self-efficacy became less. Lim (2013) reported that the most important qualities of a work environment reported by Saudis born after 1980, were not related to financial benefits or prestige, but were reported as being recognized for their work, and meaningful work that resulted in personal development and contributing to the society. Ahmad and Aldakhil (2012) found that worker engagement was positively related to open communication in which management valued the opinions of Saudi banks employees.

Wastah

A common cultural practice in the Kingdom is *wastah,* which can be viewed as a form of primary proxy control. *Wastah* is the cultural practice of obtaining favors from one's social connections. A person accesses special benefits from the government, gaining employment in both the private and public sectors, or being promoted not in terms of one's performance or qualifications, but regarding who an individual is related to or knows. The use of *wastah* is a common and acknowledged practice utilized by both men and women. People use *wastah,* either actively or passively by being given opportunities that the individuals may not be entitled to through effort, education, or experience, but because of their social connections (Kayed & Hassan, 2010; Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011).

Saudi Arabia has been classified in Hofstede et al.'s (2012) cultural dimensions as a society that is high power distance where inequality is accepted, and decision-making is given to those at the upper levels of the hierarchy (Cassell & Blake, 2012). In spite of the hierarchal structure of the society, there is growing discontent among Saudis employees, including female administrative university employees, in the use of *wastah* (Alkhanbshi & Al-Kandi, 2014; Al Harbi et al., 2016; Kayed & Hassan 2010; Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011), which might affect how Saudi women construct control.

Moussa (2013b) suggested that engagement in private organizations in Saudi Arabia is dependent on such factors such as the job characteristics matching the skill set of the employee, and rewards systems were positively correlated with engagement in Saudi male and female employees. Also, the researcher suggested that the main reasons

for disengagement among Saudis employees were attributed to the lack of encouragement from supervisors and the use of *wastah* and management strategies that were perceived to be unfair regarding opportunities for advancement.

Feelings of discontent have not only found in employees who have been overlooked for promotions and not given special privileges, but also among those employees who had benefited from *wastah*. For example, employees who were from prominent families or tribes within Saudi Arabia reported being exploited by managers for their connections and receiving performance appraisals based on their tribal/ family affiliation versus their actual performance (Al-Harbi, 2016). Assad (2006) found that women administrative employees in a public university in Jeddah identified the practice of *wastah* as a central factor that negatively affected their level of motivation in the work environment. The practice of *wastah* has relevance in the development of understanding how the use of hierarchal institutions, the perception of control, and employee engagement is viewed in the Kingdom.

Culture and Control

From the beginning, researchers have acknowledged the influence of culture on control in how it affects the perception of control as being perceived as controllable or uncontrollable (Cheng et al., 2013; Rotter, 1966; Spector et al., 2004). For example, Rotter (1966) acknowledged that culture influenced a person's locus of control by labeling situations or acts as either skill based or chance. Although social scientists recognized the role of culture in how control is perceived, the majority of research carried out has occurred within Western populations, which are typically more individualistic

societies and focus on the concept of personal control (Cheng et al., 2013; Spector et al., 2004; Yamaguchi, 2001). Yamaguchi et al. (2005) suggested that the perception of control is not only influenced by culture but found that control is gendered dependent as well. For example, Landau et al.'s (2015) meta-analysis of compensatory control found men reported higher levels of personal control cross-culturally but also tended to use more forms of compensatory control when personal control was not possible. Cheng et al. (2013) used qualitative means to understand cross-cultural differences in control, and proposed that cultural relativity needed to be applied when examining the effects of individualistic versus collective societies on the concept of control. The researchers suggested that the expected outcomes related to having an external locus of control versus an internal locus of control from Western-based research did not necessarily apply. Furthermore, much of the research that has been carried out in non-Western cultures have used instruments that were developed in the West for Western populations (Al-Habib, 2012; Callaghan, 2015; Darwish, 2000; Kumaran, 2013; Nowicki & Duke 2013; Smith et al., 2011).

Individualism and Collectivism

Hofstede's (1984) concept of collective versus individual societies has been used as a classification system to explain cultural worldviews and the social norms, values, and expected behaviors within a society. Examining differences in the perception of control cross-culturally has most often been accomplished by the use of the collective versus individual continuum (Shifrer & Sutton, 2014), although researchers should employ with caution the practice of categorically defining culture as individualistic or

collective (Twenge & Crocker, 2002). Cross-cultural researchers have illustrated that within a culture that individualistic and collective orientations do not serve as one dichotomy that applies to all in the population, but instead should be viewed as two dichotomies that show variance across situation, time, and individuals (Kashima, 2016; Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002; Twenge & Crocker, 2002).

The perception and need for personal control have been found to differ in various cultures and societies (Kay et al., 2008). In Western cultures, autonomy is a cultural value in which personal control is a primary method of achieving feelings of independence. Other societies that have a stronger collectivist orientation have been shown to appreciate the concepts of harmony or connectedness, which may influence their strategies to perceive the world as orderly (Yamaguchi, 2001). Cultural relativity involves researchers examining perceptions of control in the cultural context of the specific groups researched, without imposing ideas from previous research on different cultural groups (Bartholomew & Brown, 2012; Cheng et al., 2013). Cultural relativity is essential in the cultural context of Saudi women administrative support staff working in private universities, in which the influence of a tribal, collective, patriarchal, and highly religious society may affect the women's perceptions of control.

Researchers have reported mixed results regarding cultural differences in the perception of control and how it affects behaviors and performance when researchers make comparisons based on the dichotomy of individualistic and collective cultures (Kang, Chang, Chen, & Greenberger, 2015). Research that suggested there are differences in control orientation includes Ji, Peng, and Nisbett's (2000) quantitative

study who reported that American students performed better and were more confident about their performance on a field dependency task than Asian students under conditions in which the participants had personal control. Kang et al.'s (2015) quantitative research found that adolescents' perceived need for internal locus of control in peer relationships was stronger among American Caucasian students than that of Black, Hispanic, and Asian students that tended to be more collectivist cultural groups. Other research has shown that regardless of a culture's orientation toward control, there are similarities in regards to task performance. For example, Brown, Aoshima, Bolen, Chia, and Kohyama's (2007) quantitative research reported that Asians students showed more external orientations than American students, although the researchers found no differences between the groups in their level of learning and depth of processing material related to locus of control.

Saudi Arabia has been described as a highly collective society, in which patriarchal tribal relations and the use of honor and shame for protecting the collective group is prioritized over individual needs suggesting values of connectedness and collectivism (Uskul, Oyserman, & Schwarz, 2010). Although some researchers have questioned the process and rate of value changes occurring in societies related to collectivism, other research has suggested that Saudis prefer more individualistic ideals (Al Harbi, Thursfield, & Bright 2016; Fischer & Al Issa, 2012). Whiteoak, Crawford, and Mapstone's (2006) research, which used quantitative survey methods to ascertain collective vs. individualistic attitudes, found that working Emirate women under the age of 30 were more individualistic in their responses than those of Emirate men and women

over the age of 30. The Emirates shares many cultural similarities of Saudis in that both are Islamic countries under the rule of monarchies, which have experienced rapid modernization in the last 40 years (Joshi, Bremser, Deshmukh, & Kumar, 2011). The difference between the two countries is that the Emirates government does not enforce gender segregation as Saudi Arabia; instead, segregation is a socially sanctioned practice among Emiratis (Goby & Erogul, 2011).

Cultural Components of Saudi Arabia

Culture is composed of complex interacting factors such as history, social norms, values, social organization, psychological processes, and the people's process of historical evolution to survive both in their natural and social environment (Kashima, 2016; Orozco, 2012). Historical evolution accounts for the changes that a cultural group of people has made for survival. Culture has been identified as a critical component in how individuals perceive control in their environment (Cheng et al., 2013; Rotter, 1966; Spector et al., 2004). Saudi Arabia, a developing country with unique traditions, customs, and societal rules, has been enshrouded in an air of mystery to the outside world. The iconic cultural symbols that the international community has traditionally associated with Saudi Arabia include oil, Islam, deserts, sheiks, princes and princesses, and women cloaked in black. Indeed these are symbols that represent aspects of Saudi Arabia, but these representations do not capture the complex cultural components that order the lives of women and organizations in the Kingdom.

The importance of family, Islam, and nationalistic pride are the foundational pillars of the country, where a collectivist honor and shame pervades the social structure

and behaviors of the citizens (Harb, 2016). Carone and Barone (2001) asserted that religion regardless of culture is a cornerstone of cultural influences, in which the religion provides a sense of control and predictability in the world, but also provides hope. This assertion has relevance to Saudi Arabia because the Islamic religion is embedded in all aspects of the culture and provides rules for social interaction, family interaction, social etiquette, business, language, laws, gender roles, the education system, and contributes to organizational environments (Hamdan, 2012; Kayed & Hassan, 2010; Lippman, 2012).

Cross-culturally, one similarity that has been found in the construction of control is the use of religion as a compensatory control mechanism to provide the perception of an orderly and stable world (Carone & Barone, 2001; Inzlicht, McGregor, Hirsh, & Nash, 2009; Kay et al., 2010; Rana et al., 2015). The role and importance of religion in Saudi Arabia are intertwined in all facets of the culture including the language, the laws, the dress, the rules for social interaction, the prescriptions for living, as well as organizational environments. Inzlicht et al. (2009) found that among undergraduate students with various religious faiths that those who reported stronger religious convictions, were found to have less neural activity in their anterior cingulate cortex than those individuals with less religious beliefs. Increased anxiety has been associated with increased electrical activity in the anterior cingulate cortex, which suggested that religious beliefs play a role in giving individuals a perception of a controlling force outside of themselves that may provide an avenue for the reduction of anxiety associated with perceiving the world as an unpredictable and unstable environment.

In the past decade the widespread access and usage of the internet within Saudi Arabia has exposed the population to the outside world, as well as the outside world has been given a mosaic window to piece together the factors that influence the country (Alsaif, 2013; Simsim, 2011). Also, the Ministry of Education scholarship program, which provided scholarships for many Saudis to study abroad created a sector of the population that has been exposed to different ideas, values, and sources of knowledge (Ahmed, 2015; Hamdan, 2013; Lefdahl-Davis & Perrone-McGovern, 2015). The country has a population of over 30 million people, with over a third of the population comprised of expatriate workers, (Central Department of Statistics and Information, 2015) which have played a role in introducing diverse lifestyles in the Kingdom as well.

All of these factors have played a role in the cultural components of Saudi Arabia, with the culture remaining static and slow to change, but concurrently with a trend toward modernization flowing through the young adult population. The individuals that cling to cultural values of the past pose challenges to the country, which have led to cultural clashes with those that have pushed for values that are not necessarily aligned with the country's history. While Hofstede, Jonker, and Verwaart (2012) contended that cultures tend to be stable and unchanged by technology, others such as Fang (2010) refute this about countries that have experienced rapid modernization and changes in their economic conditions such as Saudi Arabia. Specifically within the scope of this study, understanding the education system, the momentum of Saudization, cultural considerations, and the position of women in the Kingdom is critical to explore the lived

experiences of Saudi women administrative support staff employed in private universities regarding issues of control and engagement in the workplace.

Education and Working in Higher Education

In 1955, Queen Effat established Dar Al Hanan, the first girls' school in Saudi Arabia. Dar Al Hanan is a private school which provided the upper echelon of society a place to send their girls to be educated inside of the country, instead of sending them to boarding schools abroad (Van geel, 2016). The establishment of public education for females began almost a decade later in 1964, with the establishment of the first girls' public school in Saudi Arabia (Aljughaiman & Grigorenko, 2013), while higher education was not made available to females within the Kingdom until the 1970's (Al lily, 2011). Strict interpretations of the Wahhabism form of Islam enforces gender segregation, which includes segregation in the education system. The segregation of the education system has resulted in a girls' curriculum that socializes the students to strive toward embracing domestic roles versus careers. Also, the amount of funding allocated toward male education exceeds that of female education. Although women accounted for 55% of college graduates for 2015 (General Authority for Statistics, 2016), women's higher education receives only 18% of the allocated budget for higher education (Courington & Zubai, 2011). Although the government has allocated greater economic investments toward males' education, there have been efforts in private and public educational sectors to push for new opportunities for women beyond the traditional career paths of education and medicine. (Courington & Zubai, 2011). In spite of the reforms

made in the education sector, 78% of Saudi women with college degrees are not employed (Hamdan, 2012).

Private higher education is a relatively new concept in Saudi Arabia, with the first institution opening in 1999 (Jamjoom, 2016). Since 1999, the number of private universities and colleges has grown to 45 organizations across the country, in which the majorities of them conduct their business and teach courses in English (Profanter, 2016). Private higher education has created more positions for Saudi women, but despite this emerging job market, only 13% of employees in public and private higher education sectors are Saudi women. The 13% includes both faculty and administrative employees (Hamdan, 2013). While women make up 40% of faculty and staff working in higher education, the majority of the women employees are expatriates from Western countries, or other Middle Eastern countries (Hamdan, 2013). Based on my review of the literature, there is no available statistics of a breakdown of the percentage of faculty and administrative workers that are Saudi women.

There have been limited studies into gendered segregated work environments, which almost all of the universities in Saudi Arabia are segregated, and only recently has research started focusing on women working in higher education internationally. Research in Saudi Arabia that focuses on women in higher education has typically concentrated on the few women who have been able to reach leadership positions (Alomair, 2015; Assad 2006). Hamdan (2013) asserted that gender-segregated environments, like higher education, should not be seen as a negative, but an opportunity for Saudi women to excel among their gender. In Assad's (2006) review of research on

women leadership in higher education in Saudi Arabia, she identified numerous obstacles for women in leadership positions. These barriers included a lack of resources for professional development and mentoring, and being prematurely placed in leadership positions before they had the opportunity to develop the competencies necessary for their jobs. Assad (2006) used quantitative survey methods in examining administrative female university employees' perceptions of their managers, as well as their coworkers in a public university in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. This study supported the finding reported by Alomair (2015) by stating that women leaders in higher education failed in giving direction to employees, failed to provide feedback to employees, did not set priorities for employees, nor recognize positive employee performance. The factors found by Assad (2006), and Alomair (2015) are antecedents that have been identified in affecting employment engagement (Christian et al., 2011). In my review of the literature, there have been no studies that examined how women experience control and how this may affect women's engagement in the workforce in Saudi Arabia.

Saudization and Nitaqat

The government of Saudi Arabia has long recognized the problems of citizens' reluctance of obtaining employment in the private sector, and the private sector's preference for employing expatriate workers. The policies of the government have been widely referred to as *Saudization.* These policies aimed to increase the number of Saudis employed and to reduce the country's reliance on expatriates. Government policies through the 1990's and 2000's urged private companies with 20 employees or more, to have at least 30% of their employees Saudi nationals (Sadi, 2013; Sadi & Al Buraey,

2009). In 2011, the government developed the *Nitaqat* program which strategically aimed to enforce the *Saudization* policies by the use of penalties and visa restrictions on companies that were not following the directives of *Saudizing* their employee workforce (Alshanbri et al., 2015; Sadi, 2013).

The *Nitaqat* program translated into English means *ranges*. The government developed this program as an effort to enforce the localization employment policies realistically, but in a manner aligned with the available skills of the Saudi citizen workforce (Sadi, 2013). Private organizations had claimed that the *Saudization* policies that the government issued in the past were unrealistic because of the lack of skilled Saudis available to work in their respective industry sectors. The government was aware that because of deficiencies in the education system that the organizations' claims were legitimate in certain sectors, but these claims were also being abused by organizations to continue hiring expatriates, who were paid lower wages than Saudis (Al-Dosary & Rahman, 2006; Alshanbri et al., 2013). The *Nitaqat* program created 45 categories of industries, in which the government classified organizations, and ranges were established for each industry of the percentages of Saudis to be employed by organizations (Alsheikh, 2015; Saudi Hollandi Group, 2013). The Ministry of Labor determined these ranges by analyzing the following: each industry's current Saudi employment rate, the number of employees of an organization, and Saudi citizens' skill set. All private organizations within Saudi Arabia that employed ten or more individuals were required to register and participate in the program (Alsheikh, 2015).

The government ranks an organization in one of four zones (excellent, green, yellow, or red) by the percentage of Saudis employed by their organization compared to the established quota for their industry. Private organizations that fail to meet the quotas and fall within the yellow or red zone are forced to pay fines, as well as the organizations are not able to renew visas for their currently employed expatriate employees. An organization is only able to request new visas for expatriate employees when it can meet the quotas established to fall within the green zone (Alshanbri et al., 2015; Alsheikh, 2015; Sadi, 2013). This study focused on female administrative support staff working in higher education, in which organizations are expected to have at least 34% of their workforce Saudi nationals to obtain a ranking in the green zone (Saudi Hollandi Group, 2012). Ahmad (2016) stated that a common practice among private universities is the hiring of women administrative support staff in efforts for the institutions to meet their quotas.

While the *Nitaqat* program has resulted in a modest increase of Saudis employed in the private sector (Alshanbri et al., 2015; Alsheikh, 2015), the question remains of the effectiveness of the program. Reports have surfaced of organizations using *ghost employees* to boost their percentages of Saudi employees. A ghost employee, or faked *Saudization*, is the practice of paying Saudi citizens in return for erroneously listing them as an organization's employee. Also, organizations have reported lost productivity in their operations, that they have attributed to low work engagement, poor work ethics, lack of skills, as well as high turnover rates among Saudi employees (Al-Asfour & Khan, 2013; Alshanbri et al., 2015; Alsheikh, 2015). Moussa (2013a) suggested that the

policies geared toward Saudization have created a work environment in which Saudi employees feel secure in their employment, regardless of their performance, due to their nationality. Although in subsequent research, Moussa (2013b) asserted that the high turnover rate among qualified Saudi employees compared to expatriate workers often centered on the lack of supervisor support and poor work environments in the private sector. The high level of turnover among Saudis could also be attributed to Saudi employees having the choice to terminate their employment, whereas expatriates are bound by employment contracts. Expatriates who breach their contract face being deported and paying financial penalties.

Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter, I reviewed the current literature of the conceptual framework for control used in this research study. The conceptual framework includes Rotter's (1966) locus of control, Rothbaum et al.'s (1982) two process model of perceived control, and Kay and Eibach's (2013) compensatory control theory. Rotter's (1966) locus of control asserts an individual establishes perceptions of reinforcement by making connections between the person's actions and the resulting consequences termed internal locus of control. External control describes where an individual believes that external forces control the environment. Rothbaum et al.'s (1982) two process model of perceived control describes how people examine the process of control through transforming themselves to fit the environment versus trying to change the environment. This theory may have relevancy regarding Saudi Arabia being a highly collective society (Uskul et al., 2010), in which conformity is expected (Yamaguchi, 2001). Kay and Eibach's (2013)

compensatory control theory may have relevance because the theory emphasizes how control is externalized to outside forces such as government or religion when taking personal control is not possible.

In the literature review, I covered the current literature related to workplace engagement, control and culture, and unique cultural components of Saudi Arabia that are important to explore the lived experience of Saudi women employed in private universities regarding issues of control and engagement in the workplace. Bartholomew and Brown (2012) identified the importance of qualitative data in psychological research when studying non-Western cultural groups as a way to avoid missing unique processes that may occur within a culture. This study will fill a gap in the research literature in how Saudi women administrative support staff experience control in private higher education and how to best facilitate workplace engagement. The exploration of this issue is critical in developing an understanding of Saudi women working in higher education to preserve the economic stability of the Kingdom, but also in creating higher education work environments where female employees are engaged and productive. In Chapter 3, I will outline the phenomenological methods used to conduct the research study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Saudi women administrative support staff working in private universities regarding issues of control and engagement in their workplace. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of the methodology and design. The first section includes the research design, rationale, and research questions. I clarify my role as the researcher and offer an explanation of how I managed my biases. I present the methodology, which includes a detailed description of participant selection, data collection, and data analysis. Finally, I discuss ethical issues and outline the steps to ensure that the rights of the participants and integrity of the study were preserved.

Research Design and Rationale

Phenomenological research is a method of understanding and knowing a phenomenon as it appears in the conscious reality of those who experience it (Moustakas, 1994). Researchers have defined control as an individual establishing beliefs about how outcomes in their environment are caused by their agency, external forces, or powerful others that provide a worldview of an orderly and stable world (Fiske, 2010; Glass et al., 1973; Kay et al., 2010; Skinner, 1996). I used this definition of control to guide the research study. Engagement refers to a state in which an employee exerts a high level of energy in being able to invest oneself physically, cognitively, and emotionally to complete his or her job tasks while finding work meaningful (Christian et al., 2011; Moussa, 2013b). The research questions explored in this study were:

RQ1: What is the lived experience of control for Saudi Arabian women university employees and how does it influence employee engagement?

SQ1: How do Saudi women employees describe control in their workplace?

SQ2: How do Saudi women university employees describe the influence of control in their workplace?

SQ3: How do Saudi women university employees' perceptions of control play a role in their sense of workplace engagement?

I used a phenomenological design for this study. Phenomenology is especially relevant in qualitative cultural psychology research studies because it provides an opportunity for participants to reflect on their perspective of an event under study, while not having the participants' experience interpreted in terms of Westernized psychology (Bartholomew & Brown, 2012). Qualitative research allows a researcher to go on a journey with participants to describe the process of a phenomenon by asking participants to reflect on their experiences and describe their perceptions of the phenomenon through interviews, journals, or writing (Moustakas, 1994). Researchers craft qualitative methods in such a way that they can fully explore and answer the research questions, while at the same time provide the audience an opportunity to enter the world of the phenomenon being studied (Patton, 2002). Phenomenological researchers focus on understanding a phenomenon through the lived experiences of the participants (Wertz, 2005), in which the researchers can escape the constraints of experimental designs that can impose preconceived ideas about a particular phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Bartholomew and Brown (2012) identified the importance of qualitative data in psychological research when studying non-Western cultural groups, as a way to avoid missing unique processes that may occur within a particular culture. Cheng et al. (2013) asserted the need for qualitative studies in non-Western populations on the concept of control because cultural values, experiences, and social norms influence the concept. Using the *epoche* process, as described by Moustakas (1994), in which a researcher discards preconceived ideas, allowed me to explore the phenomenon of how Saudi women construct control, while not imposing Western ideas related to control. Researchers using phenomenological methods can incorporate both what is tangibly experienced by participants, but also what is imagined by participants through ideation (Moustakas, 1994).

Role of the Researcher

The role of a qualitative researcher is to gather data, analyze, and provide an account of the participant's worldview (Wertz, 2005). Through phenomenological methods, the researcher strives to provide an understanding of the participants' personal experiences through various data collection methods including interviews, journaling, poems, or creative writing (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). My role as a researcher in this study involved the recruitment of participants, conducting interviews, transcribing data, analyzing data, and the development of a description that described the essence of women's experiences with the phenomena of control and engagement.

A qualitative researcher attempts to enter the participants' world by seeing and hearing their stories through the various collection methods that the researcher has

devised (Patton, 2002). In this research study, I investigated participants' experiences through in-depth, semistructured interviews. The participants selected to take part in the research study had no professional relationship with me to minimize any power differentiation and avoid dual relationships, and biased responses.

An essential component of phenomenological studies is the researcher achieving epoche. Epoche is a state of consciousness where a researcher is aware of personal biases and preconceptions and strives not to have these interfere with data collection or analysis (Jertfelt, Blanchin, & Li, 2016; Moustakas, 1994). Although the researcher attempts to control their biases, they also acknowledge it is impossible to reach a state of complete epoche, and thus, acknowledge how their biases may influence their interpretation of the data (Jertfelt et al., 2016).

I am aware of many of my biases that I have formed after living and working in a private university in Saudi Arabia for the last 12 years. Although I hold Saudi citizenship, my Western upbringing and personal feminist views are often in contradiction of Saudi culture. One strategy I used to handle these issues was respondent feedback, where I gained feedback from the participants of the analysis (Maxwell, 2013). Another strategy I used to bring credibility to the study was consultive validation, as suggested by Tracy (2010). I utilized the expertise of my dissertation chair and committee members. I also kept a personal journal to bracket my biases. Bracketing involves a research acknowledging their bias, as well as recognizing what the researcher knows of the research literature and how this affects the person's perception of the data (Morse, Swanson, & Kuzel, 2001).

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

Ten Saudi women administrative support staff working in private universities were selected to take part in this research study. Although the universities employ women of different nationalities in the Kingdom, the purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Saudi women administrative support staff working in private universities regarding issues of control and engagement in their workplace.

Qualitative research focuses on exploring a particular phenomenon in depth, in which the researcher does not prioritize generalizing the result to the population as is done in quantitative studies (Patton, 2002). Expert researchers in phenomenological research vary in their suggestions of appropriate sample sizes to use, which range from five to 30 participants (Emmel, 2013; Patton, 2002).

Qualitative researchers utilize sampling strategies that focus on selecting participants who have the first-hand experience of the phenomenon under study, and who can provide rich information on the phenomenon (Emmel, 2013; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). Seale, Gobo, and Gubrium (2004) recommend that an important aspect of sampling strategies involves establishing specific characteristics that participants should possess to ensure that they have firsthand experience of the phenomenon. Patton (2002) recommended researchers plan on using the minimum number of participants necessary to explore a phenomenon in-depth, although the sample size should allow the researcher to explore the phenomenon to the point of saturation (Miles et al., 2014). Saturation is

reached when no new themes are emerging through the data, and there is redundancy in the themes (Emmel, 2013; Patton, 2002)

I selected 10 Saudi women using purposeful convenience sampling with six of the participants, and I used snowball sampling to find the remaining four participants. I used purposeful convenience sampling by inviting participants to take part in the study because they possessed the inclusion criteria (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Seale et al., 2004). The inclusion criteria for participants were English speaking female Saudi nationals with at least a bachelor's degree who had been employed for at least 1 year in an administrative support position in a private Saudi university that conducted all activities in English.

I posted open invitations via social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter inviting Saudi women who met the stated criteria to participate in the study. I linked the invitation to a Facebook page that allowed individuals to read more about the study (Appendix A). I stated the criteria that participants should possess to take part in the study on the invitation post. My contact information was provided for women to contact me if they were interested in participating in the study, and for any questions they may have had. The Facebook page had a link in which they could contact me privately to protect the confidentiality and identity of participants. Also, during the initial contact, I verified that the potential participant met the stated criteria for participation by asking the participant if she meets each criterion. I used the Facebook page at the conclusion of the study to disseminate the analysis. I was unable to recruit enough participants using purposeful convenience sampling to take part in the research study, so I used snowball

sampling techniques by asking participants to share my contact information with women they knew who met the criteria for participation in the study.

Researcher Developed Instrumentation

I created three researcher-produced instruments to use in aiding in the collection of data from the participant. The questions and prompts used in all three of the tools were guided by information in the literature regarding control and engagement. The first instrument was an interview protocol, which served as a guide in conducting the individual interviews (Appendix B). An interview protocol provided a roadmap for structuring consistent interviews with all participants (Johnson & Weller, 2001). I used the interview protocol as suggested by Johnson and Weller (2001) to guide me during the interview by using a consistent set of open-ended questions, but also provide the flexibility of being able to ask additional probing questions as a means to gain richer data.

I created a journal form (Appendix C) for participants to journal their experiences regarding control for 5 working days after their interview. Participants were asked to email me their completed journal. According to Mariampolski (2001), text analysis of written material such as journals provides complementary data to enrich interview data. The debriefing and follow-up form documented follow-up contacts with participants through email, as a part of the member-checking process. (Appendix D).

Procedures for Recruitment and Data Gathering

I started the recruitment procedures after approval of the study by Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB Approval #03-24-17-0364062). Six participants were recruited using convenience sampling by posting an invitation for

participation on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. The postings had a link to a Facebook page that was created to describe the study briefly and the criteria for participation. The settings of the Facebook page provided my contact information and a private message option for potential participants. Since I was unable to elicit the required number of participants through purposeful convenience sampling, I used snowball sampling techniques by asking the participants to provide my contact information to other women who might be interested in participating.

After I completed the participant selection process and discussed informed consent, I contacted participants by telephone to schedule the individual interviews. For interviews I conducted in person, I once again reviewed informed consent with the participant and obtained her signatures on two informed consent forms before I started the interview. I gave the participant a copy of the informed consent form, and I retained the other copy for my records. For interviews I conducted over the telephone, I obtained electronic signature consent through an email from the participant before carrying out the interview and instructed the participant to save a copy of the informed consent for her records. I assigned each participant a number to identify each participant's data to help ensure her confidentiality.

I planned on using two types of data collection procedures in the research study. I conducted the interviews with participants in either in-person at a private location, such as the participant's home or a library café, or online using Skype. I offered Skype as an alternative because of the cultural restraints women encounter in Saudi Arabia regarding transportation, the lack of public meeting areas, and the social taboo of meeting

unfamiliar people in their home. I experienced connectivity issues with the first participants who I attempted to interview using Skype. The participant and I agreed to complete the rest of the interview over the phone. Subsequent interviews that I could not conduct face-to-face, I completed over the phone. I recorded the interviews that occurred both in person and over the phone with a Sony tape recorder. I stored all recordings in a locked fireproof filing cabinet in my home office, which only I have the key. The interviews were conducted by me and lasted approximately 1 hour using the interview protocol (Appendix B).

The second data source, which I used for data triangulation, was obtained from the journal that participants were asked to write about their experiences regarding control for 5 working days after they finished their interview. I emailed the journal form (Appendix C) to participants after the completion of their interview. The participants were asked to email their completed journal back to me after they completed journal entries for 5 working days.

I emailed participants for a follow-up and debriefing (Appendix D) after I completed the data collection. This debriefing process served four purposes. First to provide an opportunity for me to ask the participant to clarify any of her statements from the interview or journal. Second to allow the participant to add any additional comments or insight she may have gained while participating in the study. Third, the participant was asked to read the individual textual description that I prepared of her data to check for her agreement of my analysis. Her agreement served as a form of credibility for the

research. Fourth, the participant was able to ask any additional questions or comments she may have about the research study. The debriefing took approximately 30 minutes.

Data Analysis Plan

The method I used for data analysis followed Moustakas's (1994) procedures recommended for transcendental phenomenological analysis. Moustakas's (1994) model for conducting phenomenological analysis is carried out by utilizing the principles and steps associated with epoche, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis. A positive attribute of Moustakas's (1994) data analysis procedures is the emphasis of the researcher engaging in the epoche process, where the researcher is cognizant of his or her bias and preconceived judgments of the phenomenon. I approached the data analysis by bracketing my experiences and biases through journaling and feedback from my dissertation chair all through the data collection and data analysis processes.

I implemented the following steps of phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis as prescribed by Moustakas (1994) in the data analysis steps below.

1. I began the data analysis by transcribing all interviews verbatim from the participant interviews. I copied the participants' journal entries into a word document. I read each of the data documents to get an overview and sense of what the participants were communicating.
2. The next step involved horizonalization of the data. Moustakas (1994) described the process of horizonalization as the researcher giving equal importance to all

data statements provided by participants as having meaning to the phenomenon under study. After I completed the initial horizonalization, I reviewed each statement to determine which comments were relevant to the research questions. I removed irrelevant comments and redundant statements. This process of reduction and elimination resulted in the invariant constituents of the process.

3. My next step involved taking the invariant constituents and clustering them into themes and labeling them. I further reduced the identified and labeled invariant constituents in number by combining related and duplicated invariant constituents to identify the themes of the study. In addition, I identified discrepant data. The inclusion of discrepant data is critical in minimizing researcher bias and ensuring that the phenomenon is explained in its entirety in presenting differing viewpoints (Whittemore et al., 2001).
4. The fourth step consisted of validating the core themes against the described experience of the participants to ensure the statements and accompanying themes were consistent with the women's transcribed interview (Moustakas, 1994).
5. In the next step, I organized the clustered themes into a coherent textural description for each participant. The textural description according to Moustakas (1994) should represent the thoughts, emotions, and acts experienced by the participants of the phenomenon under study. I contacted each woman by email to read her description and asked her to give feedback on how accurately it reflected her experience.

6. The next step involved using imaginative variation in which I used free fantasy to uncover the structural qualities that underlie individual textual descriptions. Moustakas (1994) describes structural qualities as the underlying themes of the phenomena that evoke the textual qualities.
7. The final step involved synthesizing the textural description and structural descriptions into a composite description of the lived experiences of Saudi women administrative support staff employed in private universities regarding the phenomena of control and engagement in their workplace.

Issues of Trustworthiness

A researcher carrying out phenomenological research establishes the goals of uncovering the essence of a phenomenon and utilizing methods that authenticate the trustworthiness of the study (Patton, 2002). In the qualitative research paradigm, the researcher establishes the trustworthiness of a study through addressing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability through the design and methods of the research (Morrow, 2005). I addressed each of these issues through the following methods.

Credibility in qualitative research is similar to internal validity in quantitative research (Patton, 2002). Pandey and Patnaik (2014) described credibility as "confidence in the truth of the findings" (p. 5746). Patton (2002) recommends that researchers spend a substantive time in the field developing relationships with research participants, and developing an understanding of the particular environment in which the research is situated. I have lived in Saudi Arabia for 12 years, and I am married to a Saudi. Also, I

previously worked for 8 years as a faculty and administrative member in a private women's university. My life experiences have given me an integral look at this particular environment. A researcher can use more than one form of data for triangulation to strengthen the credibility of a research study by reinforcing recurrent themes, as well as shedding light on conflicting themes (Patton, 2002). I used both interviews and asked participants keep a journal for 5 working days to write daily about their perceptions of control and work engagement to establish credibility through the triangulation of data. Tracy (2010) identified participant feedback as a crucial element in establishing credibility in qualitative studies. I included an opportunity for participants to provide feedback on their individual textural descriptions to ensure that their view was captured.

Transferability describes how readers should consider research findings in context to other situations outside of the study (Morrow, 2005). Generalizability is not a goal of qualitative research, but transferability allows a reader to consider the context of the study and arrive at a decision of how much applicability the study may have to similar situations (Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) has asserted that extrapolation, or speculations of how other similar situations may be applicable, is acceptable, but should be used in moderation and only in cases with similar context. I addressed transferability in this study by providing rich descriptions and using verbatim statements from the participants to allow readers of the study to make decisions regarding the applicability of other situations.

Dependability describes how a researcher conducts a study regarding being consistent and how the data is analyzed (Morrow, 2005). I addressed dependability in my

study by providing a detailed plan of how I conducted the study, and I kept a journal acknowledging any deviations from the plan. Also, I maintained an audit trail as suggested by Morrow (2005) in a locked filing cabinet in my home office. The audit trail was available to my dissertation committee for review in establishing the dependability of the study.

Confirmability or objectivity is critical to determine the trustworthiness of qualitative research (Morrow, 2005; Patton, 2002). Living in Saudi Arabia and being part of a Saudi family has given me an insider's view of understanding the culture, but at the same time, I am aware that my Western upbringing has biased my perceptions. I used journaling to explore my thoughts and biases throughout the research process. In addition, I used reflective conversations with my dissertation chair to acknowledge and become aware of these biases through the research process. Also, I established an audit trail to strengthen the confirmability of the research study.

Ethical Procedures

I obtained IRB approval from Walden University before participant recruitment or data collections began. I checked the National Committee of Bioethics (2010) within Saudi Arabia, and the ethical standards set by Walden University for researchers were set to a higher standard. After approval, I recruited participants using social media through posting open invitations on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. I provided a link to the Facebook page that provided additional information. The Facebook page described the purpose of the study, how participants would take part in the study, and my contact information (Appendix A). Individuals who were interested in participating could

contact me through my Walden email address, private Facebook message, or my cell phone to ask questions regarding the study and to schedule a time for the informed consent procedures and interview. I was the only administrator of the Facebook page.

I selected 10 Saudi women to take part in this study. I initially began my recruitment using convenience sampling in which six participants were invited to take part in the study because they possessed the criterion characteristics and personal experience with the phenomenon under study. I used snowball sampling to procure the other four participants. I covered informed consent procedures with each participant before beginning the interview, and I provided the informed consent form in both English and Arabic. Although the women selected to take part in this study worked in private universities where English was the primary language used in operation, I wanted to ensure the participants understood their rights and the terms of consenting to take part in this study. The informed consent procedures included confidentiality, right to withdraw, sample questions from the study, and my contact information. There were no risks to participants, and I provided no forms of compensation for their participation.

Some women are uncomfortable with their image being video recorded because of Saudi cultural traditions. In consideration of the cultural traditions, I only audio recorded the women's voices. Each participant was assigned a participant code to protect her confidentiality. I secured the data in a fireproof filing cabinet, which I am the only person that possesses a key for the filing cabinet. The data was also stored on my personal home computer that is password protected, and protected by MacAfee security

software. I am the only person with access to the data. I will store the data for 5 years, as required by Walden University, and then all forms of data will be destroyed.

Summary

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Saudi women administrative support staff working in private universities regarding issues of control and engagement in their workplace. My role as a phenomenological researcher, as suggested by Wertz (2005), was to gather data, analyze, and provide an account of the participant's worldview. In this chapter, I have provided the rationale for using a phenomenological research design. I recruited six Saudi women through social media to participate in the study using convenience sampling, while I recruited the remaining four participants through snowball sampling. I conducted in-depth, semistructured interviews with the participants to understand their lived experience regarding issues of control and engagement in their workplace. I followed Moustakas's (1994) steps for data analysis. I have described how I established the trustworthiness of the research study by using data triangulation, participant feedback, and steps to minimize my bias as suggested by Morrow (2005). I have outlined the ethical procedures utilized in the study that complied with the ethical standards set by Walden University and Saudi Arabia's National Committee of Bioethics (2010).

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Saudi women administrative support staff working in private universities regarding issues of control and engagement in the workplace**.** Phenomenological researchers focus on understanding a phenomenon through the lived experiences of the participants (Wertz, 2005).

The following central research question guided the study: What is the lived experience of control for Saudi Arabian women university employees and how does it influence employee engagement? The following subquestions were used to examine the different components of the research question:

RQ1: What is the lived experience of control for Saudi Arabian women university employees and how does it influence employee engagement?

SQ1: How do Saudi women employees describe control in their workplace?

SQ2: How do Saudi women university employees describe the influence of control in their workplace?

SQ3: How do Saudi women university employees' perceptions of control play a role in their sense of workplace engagement?

In this chapter, I will discuss the settings in which I collected the data and address how the environment may have influenced the participants' responses. I will describe the demographic characteristics of the participants along with an explanation of how I collected the data by using semistructured interviews with 10 participants. I will present

my procedures for the data analysis along with evidence of trustworthiness of the research study. I will address the central research question along with the subquestions related to the themes found throughout the interview transcripts and journal entries in the results section of the chapter. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the significant findings of the study.

Setting

I conducted the interviews with seven participants face-to-face, and three interviews occurred via the telephone. I originally planned to carry out interviews with participants who could not meet in person with the Skype application, but after problems with connections during my first Skype interview, the participant and I elected to continue the interview via the phone. I conducted the two subsequent interviews via the phone with participants who could not meet with me face-to-face. During my interview with P2, our meeting was interrupted by her child walking into the room. After she resolved her child's issue, we resumed the interview with no further interruptions. At no time did any participant request to withdraw from the study.

Six of the seven participants who reported stress from their current job attributed part of their stress to it being the end of the academic year, and the last minute royal decree issued by the King of Saudi Arabia, which ended the academic year 3 weeks early. I debriefed all participants after their interviews, as well as followed up with each participant to remind them of the journal requirement, and to inquire if they had experienced any psychological distress from engaging in the interview. No participant reported feeling any emotional distress caused by their participation in the research study.

Demographics

The sample consisted of 10 Saudi Arabian women who were currently employed in administrative support positions in private universities in Saudi Arabia. I determined the potential participant's eligibility to take part in the research study during my initial contact. I asked the women about their demographic information, which I recorded on separate sheets of paper. Demographic data included their age, duration of employment, degree level, and their marital status. The inclusion criteria for participants was that they were English speaking female Saudi nationals with at least a bachelor's degree who had been employed for at least 1 year in an administrative support position in a private Saudi university that conducted all activities in English.

I did not include the names of the participants, the names of the universities, and specific positions of the participants in the study's results to protect their identities. I also used age ranges instead of specific ages to protect the identity of participants. I replaced the women's names with the letter P and subsequent numbers beginning with number 1 for the first participant (P1). I have shown the participants' demographic characteristics at the time of their interviews in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Participant	Age Range (in years)	Marital Status	Years Employed	Education Level
P1	30-40	Divorced	1	Master
P2	30-40	Married	3	Master
P3	30-40	Divorced	1	Master
P4	30-40	Married	2	Master
P5	22-30	Married	3	Master
P6	50-60	Married	13	Master
P7	30-40	Divorced	1.5	Bachelor
P8	30-40	Single	4	Master
P9	30-40	Married	3	Master
P10	40-50	Married	14	Master

Data Collection

Ten Saudi women administrative support staff employed in private universities provided the data for this study. I interviewed all 10 participants using semistructured interviews, in which I used an interview protocol (Appendix B) to ensure consistency across the interviews. Six of the women volunteered to participate in the study after they responded to the invitation to participate through social media (Appendix A). Four of the

participants were recruited using snowball sampling techniques in which I asked current participants to share my contact information with other women who might be interested in taking part in the study. Upon the completion of the interview, participants were emailed a copy of the journal form (Appendix C) and asked to journal their experiences regarding control for 5 working days. Participants were asked to email me their completed journal. Five of the 10 women completed their journals, while the other five did not complete the journal entries. I sent three reminders over a 3 week period to the participants who had not completed the journals, but to avoid coercion, I decided to suspend any further attempts of obtaining the journal documents from the remaining five participants.

During my initial phone contact with all the women, I explained the purpose of the study, requirements for taking part in the study, and the criteria for participation, and I verbally reviewed the informed consent form. Also, I screened participants during the initial contact to ensure they met the stated criteria for taking part in the study. I scheduled the interview dates and times for each participant. I conducted seven of the interviews face-to-face, and conducted three of the interviews via the phone. For the interviews that I conducted face-to-face, I reviewed the informed consent form with participants in English and also gave them time to review the Arabic translation of the informed consent. I then obtained their signature on both the English and the Arabic informed consent forms. I retained a copy, and each participant received a copy of the informed consent form for their records. For the three women I interviewed over the phone, I emailed each participant the informed consent form in both English and Arabic.

I verbally reviewed the informed consent form with them over the phone. The participants electronically consented by sending an email back to me with the words, "I consent."

I conducted the participants' interviews during April and May 2017. All participants consented to the tape recording of their interviews as discussed in the informed consent form. I recorded the interviews with a digital Sony recording device for interviews conducted face-to-face and over the telephone. I conducted the telephone interviews using the speaker mode to be able to record the conversation. I transcribed the interviews verbatim into a Microsoft Word document and saved the data on a password-protected flash drive. I stored the flash drive, along with the saved voice recordings on the Sony recorder, informed consent forms, and my notes and observations in a locked fireproof filing cabinet in my home office. I am the only person with access to the locked filing cabinet. The duration of the interviews with eight of the participants was between 40 to 50 minutes. The interviews with two participants, P2 and P8, lasted 50 to 60 minutes. None of the participants withdrew from the study at any point in the interview process. I interviewed each participant only once.

I received journal entries from five participants through email and copied the text into Word documents and saved the data on my password protected flash drive. I emailed each woman a summarized description of her interview and included the journal data into the summarized description for those women who had submitted their journal. I asked the participants to review their summarized description and to clarify any incorrect interpretations. Also, I emailed the follow-up and debriefing form to participants

(Appendix D). All the women agreed that the content of the individual summaries accurately reflected their experiences.

Data Analysis

The method I used for data analysis followed Moustakas's (1994) procedures recommended for transcendental phenomenological analysis. Moustakas's (1994) model for conducting phenomenological analysis is carried out by using the principles and steps associated with epoché, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis. I approached the data analysis by bracketing my experiences and biases by journaling all through the data collection and data analysis processes. I analyzed the data by using hand coding, and I did not use any computer software programs. Since I was the primary instrument in the analysis process, I first employed epoché to identify and manage my preconceptions, biases, and prejudgments about the phenomenon investigated.

During the transcription process, I repeatedly listened to the audio-recorded interviews of the participants to immerse myself in the words of the women. I began the data analysis by transcribing all interviews verbatim from the participant interviews. After the transcription of each interview, I then replayed the audio recording while reading the transcript to ensure the accuracy of the transcription. Five participants sent their journal entries via email. I read and reread the interview transcripts and journals for each participant to immerse myself in the written words of the participants. I used the journals of the five women who submitted journal entries to examine if their daily

experiences as reported in the journal confirmed their experiences described in their interviews.

The next step involved horizonalization of the data. Moustakas (1994) described the process of horizonalization as the researcher giving equal importance to all data statements provided by participants as having meaning to the phenomenon under study. After I had completed the initial horizonalization, I reviewed each statement to determine which comments were relevant to the research questions. I color-coded statements according to the research question or subquestions that a statement answered. I removed irrelevant comments and redundant statements. This process of reduction and elimination resulted in the invariant constituents of the process.

My third step involved taking the invariant constituents and clustering them into themes and labeling them. I clustered the identified and labeled invariant constituents into 29 initial categories. I combined like categories of invariant constituents into eight themes after identifying and reconciling interrelated or repetitive categories. During this step, I arranged the data into themes that represented the collective essence of the experience. I presented the 29 invariant constituents and the eight clustered themes in Appendix G.

The fourth step consisted of validating the eight core themes against the described experience of the participants to ensure the statements and accompanying themes were consistent with the women's transcribed interview as suggested by Moustakas (1994). During this process, I compared the transcript of each participant with the core themes to establish the theme was either stated by each participant, or the theme was consistent

with the account if not expressed, or was relevant to the participant's lived experience. At least nine of the 10 participants must have had a theme present as part of their experience with the phenomenon to be considered a core theme.

During the fifth step, I organized the clustered themes into a coherent textural description for each participant. The textural description according to Moustakas (1994) should represent the thoughts, emotions, and acts experienced by the participants of the phenomenon under study. I contacted each woman by email and asked her to review her description and asked her to give feedback on how accurately it reflected her experience.

The next step involved using imaginative variation in which I used free fantasy to uncover the structural qualities that underlie the individual textural descriptions. Moustakas (1994) described structural qualities as the underlying themes of the phenomena that evoke the textural qualities. The final step involved synthesizing the textural descriptions and structural descriptions into a composite description that captured the essence of the lived experiences of Saudi women administrative support staff employed in private universities regarding the phenomena of control and engagement in their workplace.

I presented the eight core themes in Table 2 with the participants who identified with each theme.

Table 2

Core Themes by Participant

Core Themes	Participants who Identified Themes
1. Supervision and guidance	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10
2. Social relationships and connections as a form of control	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10
3. Time	P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10
4. Lack of Predictability	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10
5. Adjustment of self to fit the environment	P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10
6. Self-development and inner transformations	P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10
7. Having a voice	P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10
8. Cultural conditioning of women's social roles	P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10

I reviewed the data to ascertain whether there were any discrepant cases or contradictory data. The inclusion of discrepant data is essential in diminishing researcher bias and ensuring that the phenomenon is described thoroughly in presenting divergent viewpoints (Whittemore et al., 2001). I found one discrepant case with P1 who described contradictory findings in comparison to other participants regarding the core themes of time, self-development and inner transformations, adjustment of self to fit the environment, having a voice, and cultural conditioning of women's social roles. I found

another discrepant case with P10 in how she described the influence of cultural conditioning of women's social roles.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

An essential component of a researcher carrying out phenomenological research involves establishing the objectives of uncovering the essence of a phenomenon and concurrently utilizing methods that authenticate the trustworthiness of the study (Patton, 2002). In qualitative research studies, a researcher forms the trustworthiness of a study through addressing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability through the design and methods of the research (Morrow, 2005). I addressed each of these issues through the following methods.

Pandey and Patnaik (2014) asserted that credibility is the process of establishing certainty and accuracy of the findings. I spent a substantive time in the field developing relationships with the research participants and developing an understanding of the environment in which the research is situated as recommended by Patton (2002). I spoke with each woman on the phone before the interviews, thoroughly discussing the purpose of the study, informed consent, and what was expected of the participants to take part in the research study. Also, I answered all questions that the women had regarding the study. In the subsequent interviews, I spent 40-60 minutes with each participant.

I used multiple forms of data for triangulation to strengthen the credibility of the research to uncover recurrent themes, as well as to discover conflicting themes as suggested by Patton (2002). I used interviews and had participants keep a journal for 5 working days to write daily about their perceptions of control and work engagement to

establish credibility through the triangulation of data. Although only five of the 10 participants completed the journal activity, I was able to compare the themes that emerged in the interview with the journal entries. Tracy (2010) identified participant feedback as a crucial element in establishing credibility in qualitative studies. I included an opportunity for the women to provide feedback on their individual descriptions to ensure that their view was captured. I contacted each participant by email to deliver an individual description, and asked her to give feedback on how accurately she believed the description reflected her experience. None of the participants reported inaccuracies on their individual descriptions.

Transferability describes how readers should consider research findings in context to other environments outside of the study (Morrow, 2005). While generalizability is not a goal of qualitative research as is the case in quantitative studies, transferability allows a person to take into account the context of the study and arrive at a decision of how much applicability the study may have to similar situations (Patton, 2002). I addressed transferability in this study by providing rich descriptions and using verbatim statements from the participants to allow readers of the study to make decisions regarding the applicability of other situations.

Dependability describes how a researcher conducts a study regarding consistency and how the data is analyzed (Morrow, 2005). I addressed dependability in my study by providing a detailed plan of how I conducted the study and kept a journal acknowledging any deviations from the plan. In my original data collection plan, I planned to carry out the interviews face-to-face or via Skype, but during my first Skype interview with P6, I

experienced VPN and connectivity issues. The participant and I agreed to conduct the rest of the interview over the phone. The two subsequent interviews in which participants were not able to meet face-to-face, I conducted the interviews over the phone. I made no deviations from my data analysis plan. I kept an audit trail as suggested by Morrow (2005) that I maintained in a locked filing cabinet in my home office. The audit trail was available to my dissertation committee for review in establishing the dependability of the study.

Confirmability or objectivity is critical to determine the trustworthiness of qualitative research (Morrow, 2005; Patton, 2002). I used journaling to explore my thoughts and biases throughout the research process. I journaled my thoughts and impressions before conducting each interview, as well as immediately after each interview. I have lived in Saudi Arabia, and I have been part of a Saudi family, as well as I previously worked as a faculty member in a private university in Saudi Arabia. These experiences gave me an insider's view of understanding the culture, but at the same time, I am aware that my Western upbringing and my experiences have biased my perceptions. I used journaling and creative writing to bracket my preconceptions. There was no deviation from the strategies previously described in Chapter 3 that could affect the confirmability of this study.

Results

In the present research study, an understanding was acquired of not only how the women perceived control, but also how they believed their perceptions of control affected their engagement in the workplace. Eight core themes were identified when nine or more

of the participants expressed a common component of meaning in their interview. The eight themes included (a) supervision and guidance, (b) social relationships and connections as a form of control, (c) time, (d) lack of predictability, (e) adjustment of self to fit the environment, (f) self-development and inner transformations, (g) having a voice, and (h) cultural conditioning of women's social roles. I have presented the textural and structural descriptions of the women's experiences in the next section through verbatim quotes for each theme.

Theme 1: Supervision and Guidance

All 10 participants expressed how their perceptions of supervision and guidance they received from their management affected their perceptions of control and engagement. Nine of the participants described a lack of guidance in directing them in the objectives of the organizations or how to complete a task. The participants associated a lack of guidance with disengagement. P3 stated "The expectations of management are something that controls our behavior and performance. Unclear objectives and expectations make us slaves to ambiguity".

> P1: I want them to tell me "Do this, and this. This is your job." It is like chaos. I can't deal with chaos. I want to know what I was going to do, when I am going to do it, and how I am going to do it. I am not sure if I am going to continue with my job.
>
> P5: I think our office lacks strategic planning. At the first of the year, the big boss develops a strategic plan, and then it is tossed in the trash bin. The boss says

it and we go with the flow. In order to survive there, you just have to go with the flow of it.

In contrast to experiences where the women experienced unclear objectives and chaos, six of the women described experiences in which they were provided with guidance and with the purpose of tasks they were expected to perform. Also, some women were empowered by the managers by being given some level of personal control in how they performed their jobs. In these situations where guidance was provided, and personal control was encouraged, the participants described experiences of greater engagement and motivation toward their work.

P3: No one can make me more happy and more motivated than myself, although I need to know what are the requirements of what I need to be doing. With one project, I was given the freedom to make the decisions about how a project was organized. I felt so excited about my job. I felt like they had given me a canvas to paint on. They gave me the objectives, but I had to the freedom to do it the way I wanted.

P10: Usually direction starts from the leader of the university. She says we want to go this way. Based on this, we have to go down and translate her vision into action plans. In these situations, I feel I have control over everything. I draft strategic plans and then convince people we should do it. As long as it is streaming from the same branch as our leader, I feel that I can do it. I feel like whatever I plan for, it will happen.

Criticism and feedback were an issue that many participants discussed regarding supervision and guidance in the workplace. P4 and P6 described situations in which their supervisor had not provided complete feedback, or had only provided negative feedback about their performance and in an untimely manner. Their narratives of these situations describe an experience in which people did not know what to expect and as a result disengaged in their work environment.

> P4: The director only tells me the bad things after the fact and tells me you should have done this. I told her I didn't know certain things were a requirement. How am I supposed to learn or know what is expected or what to expect if I am not given the whole communication?
>
> P6: People feel unsure of where they stand in terms of the job they are doing. Everyone feels unsure, so we all stand back and just wait and watch because we don't feel secure. We literally just went to the side and let the higher ups do the job.
>
> P9: When someone told me "Wow! You did a great job!" This makes me thru the roof happy and love the work I am doing. I know someone notices all the hard work I am doing. To be honest, I don't hear it that much. Lots of the time, I don't know where I stand in my job, or how other people think I am doing in my job.

Theme 2: Social Relationships and Connections as a Form of Control

The second theme emerged as participants discussed the role of social relationships and connections in their work environment. All 10 participants described

experiences in which social relationships and connections served as a kind of control in their work environment. Three of the 10 participants described *wastah,* a form of primary proxy control, as a factor of control in their work environment. *Wastah* is a cultural practice in the Middle East that involves obtaining special favors from one's social connections (Kayed & Hassan, 2012). P1 described the custom of *wastah* as having a negative impact on her engagement and an adverse effect on the productivity of the organization.

> P1: About 70% *wastah* is a factor in the work place, and about 30% is based on hard work. Most people who are in high positions are not that great, because they know no matter what, they have their job. To get a job at the university I had to use my *wastah*, but hard work should be a factor. I don't have any motivation now".

> P9: You have a lot of women that work together, and there are different relationships and so in these relationships some people may not have high positions, but they have power and control because of who they know. You have to know these relationships and be careful what you say. There are a lot of politics in the university. This is difficult and it makes it sometimes hard to get things done.

Individuals can use primary proxy control as a kind of personal control in which a person uses persuasion with another individual with more power to accomplish a task. Seven of the 10 participants described the use of persuasion as a means of personal control in the work environment. P6 alluded to the importance of having relationships

with people of power in her work environment by stating “Power does not mean you are in control, it means you are at the top, and everybody better listen. Control is about making things run smoothly”.

P2: You have to use social connection to get things done, otherwise it will not get done, and I am still held responsible. If I keep pushing people that are in control of delays, people get upset. Relationships are the most important thing here.

P5: If you know someone else has control, you can make them do your bidding for you. So I have power and I am empowered. I might not have control over a lot of things, but I know how I can get over that. By picking up on who has control, I can still get what I want, and get where I need to be.

P10: I cannot control everything. Most of the things I work with relates with people. I work with different units inside and outside the university. I can’t control these other units, but I can pull strings, I can call people, send emails. I can reach out. Sometimes when I have to go pull a string I get frustrated. I want things to happen, I want to succeed. This is when I have to go through other people to find a solution to make it happen.

P2 described how she used her social contacts to accomplish an objective, but exerted her control through other people so that her agency remained hidden as a way to avoid conflict with her direct supervisor.

P2: I will not go over my boss, but I know she will not push my stuff through, so I have friends at the President’s office that can track things for me. I can just call and ask them “Hey can you check this form”. Because I know my manager

> wouldn't push for an answer. I would call my resources and ask for a personal favor and ask them to check on it and make sure the President has seen what I want approved. They are nice in her office and they understand.

Nine of the 10 participants described situations or mentioned the importance of collaborating with others to accomplish a task by taking control as a collective group. The women emphasized the importance of the collective group by their frequent use of "we" instead of "I" throughout most of the interviews. P8 stated "Surprises. It could be the work, it could be from 8-4, or it might be after 4. Whatever comes that day, I am just ready for it, and my team helps me with it". P7 stated "My colleagues feel what I feel, they also have stress, and they have projects to work on as well. We try to manage it for each other". P6 stated "If you don't have good working relationships with other people, things will never get done".

Theme 3: Time

The third theme emerged as nine out of the 10 participants reported the perception of always being rushed and not having the time to complete their work to standards that they felt satisfied. P2 stated "Chaos is when the event is tomorrow and nothing is ready. I am talking about you need these things and they are not ready. Everything is always rushed, and I just don't do as I would like to". Participants described disengagement with their work when performing under short deadlines.

> P4: It has been overwhelming, it has been crazy. The deadlines are very short and sometimes the tasks can be daunting because it is not possible to get it done in the working day. I have started more late night work and I noticed that it has

begun to start to take a toll on me and my desire to actually wake up and go to work. Sometimes I am like "Yuck! I have to go to work".

P5: When I do something, I don't' want to do, pardon my French, a half ass job. I don't' want to just finish it, I want to do the best I can. If you don't give anything the time it needs, it ends up like not good.

P7: No one likes to work under pressure, having things thrown at them urgently. Sometimes I don't even have the time to check and see if my spelling is ok, or if parts of a file are missing. This is just not comfortable for me.

Theme 4: Lack of Predictability

Predictability has been considered a core component of an individual establishing the perception of an environment being orderly and controlled. All 10 participants expressed a core theme of experiencing a lack of predictability in their work environment, and not knowing on a daily basis what to expect. P8 stated "You are always suspicious of what is going on, and how the day is going to run. Is there an urgent request and is there a crisis waiting for us? You just never know".

Some of the participants attributed the lack of predictability to the perception that they did not possess personal control over all aspects of their work environment. P2 stated "The outcomes of my work are not always predictable. I don't' know what is going to happen. There are a lot of factors of my jobs that are not under my control".

P4: Our job is not routine. We can't control everything. All these different things come that are unexpected. I don't ever feel like my day is going to be the same every day, and I never know what is going to come up. It is like that thing

in the box, where you crank and the clown comes popping out of the box, but you don't know when. A Jack in the box.

Four of the 10 participants described situations in which they had used planning and organization as a form of personal control to give more order and stability to their work environment. They reported frustration when their plans were interrupted because of last minutes tasks assigned to them.

P5: I have my days when I know what I am going to do, and I love it, but on those days when I am going, and I have no idea what they are going to throw my way, it is frustrating. I just look forward to the end of the day.

P9: My boss, top administrators, or whoever decides all of a sudden "Oh we need this." They don't take into consideration that I have other things going on, so I am thrown off schedule. After this, I am working in total chaos. I can't concentrate, I get overwhelmed. I am like "Why am I doing this?" Sometimes I want to walk out of my job on these days.

Theme 5: Adjustment of Self to Fit the Environment

The fifth core theme that nine out of the 10 participants described was how they restructured their cognition to "go with the flow" of the work environment. This process involved the women changing themselves to fit the workplace as a form of control. The words "go with the flow" were words used by six participants to describe their process of adapting to the workplace. All the women mentioned adjusting to the environment as a form of "surviving" and to reduce feelings of stress and the associated physical symptoms associated with the stress in the workplace.

P2: I used to get frustrated. I think I am learning; I am trying to teach myself to tolerate more. The first year was really hard. The second year was better, but still very hard. This year, it is better. I try to be optimistic about my job. I shift the way I think about it. You know just do the work and not take it personal. I had to change myself. I had to convince myself that the work environment was normal. I realize this is how things go here. I cope by being optimistic about my job.

P3: I have to go with the flow. It doesn't make me feel respected with myself because I should be courageous and stand up for what I think, yet I have chosen the easy way that gives me a peace of mind. I have to look like the cooperative person. I am doing what I am supposed to do, but I am not deeply engaged with my work.

P4: Regulate. It helps me regulate my environment. This past year I had to move from my old office and now have a shared office. I had no control over my focusing power, although I learned how to deal with it and it is a lot better. I learned how to control the interruptions and distractions, and you know just to classify these distractions as not my circus, not my monkey.

P5: You have to be a team player and go with the flow. I am not one of those people that say "This is not my job", although I don't think it is fair. Although you might be taking away my 8 hours a day that is not adding anything to me, and you are actually taking away from me and my goals.

P6: I just had to learn to go with it, to go with the flow. It is ok when unexpected things happen, just go with it. A couple of years ago it affected me negatively, but now I am just like "ok".

While some women such as P4 described a process of setting boundaries as a way of adjusting to the environment, comments by other participants suggested they emotionally disengaged from their work. P6 described the process of "letting it go," or "to let the emotional attachment go" with portions of her job like deadlines that were out of her control. She reported in the past that her emotional attachment to deadlines made her physically sick and she came to the point of asking "Why bother?".

Theme 6: Self-development and Inner Transformations

The sixth theme that emerged from the participants' description of their experiences was how self-development and inner transformations was a form of control for the women. Nine of the 10 women described different forms of self-development they engaged in through continued education and training, development of interpersonal skills, or personal growth. P3 Stated "I have control over my skills. I can compare my skills with other peers, and that gives me room to understand where any of my deficiencies exist. I am a kind of person that likes to keep developing myself".

P8: Control comes from within. It is always internal. Environments are the same, people are the same. No one will help you but yourself. People will say this is a screwed up environment, but I believe in the end it is my choice in how I react to it. In the work environment, like I try to add something to it. I try to find positive things going on in people's lives and make sure we celebrate it in the

work environment. I think this gives me control of putting fun in the environment.

P10: Technology is rapidly changing, so for example, if I plan to do something in 2020 I may have to develop something else and change. I always have to read, what is emerging in the field. Also, our partners and companies that we work with are sending us packets of information, links, websites, and inviting us to new things happening in their companies. I visit international conferences so I can gain knowledge of what is happening around me. I like to pass on this information as a consultant to my boss. I feel very engaged when I am helping her on this. This part of my job inspires, I like to feel helpful on these types of issues.

Theme 7: Having a Voice

Nine of the 10 participants described their perceptions of having a voice in their work environment. Having a voice described the impact of being able to express one's opinion or thoughts, while sequentially being listened to by others. Most of the women associated having a voice in the work environment with high levels of engagement. P7 stated "If we allow people to be able to create things and have opinions, and to be listened to, this is something important to women in the workforce for engagement".

P4: In the university, the women are very empowered, and this is what I love about the university. Even though I am not a feminist, I found that when I came to the university, I have to be. Before I didn't feel like I had voice, but not we have been given one.

Four of the participants described situations in which they believed they could not speak out because of fear of retribution, or because their words were not listened to by others in the organization. In the situations where the women did not feel they could speak out, they expressed feeling disengaged with their work.

> P2: I hate everything about my work. I know if I give an excuse why something happened it is probably not a good enough excuse. I try, but I know they are not going to take it into consideration. It is better to say "You are right, I am sorry". I say this even if it is not under my control.
>
> P9: I don't feel like I can tell people because they will get offended. I get frustrated because I can see a better way, but how the place works, we can't step over other people. People get offended, especially if you make someone look bad. They might hold it against you and make it difficult for you in the future. Khallas, I just do what they ask and get angry. Enshallah the anger will pass.

Other participants described finding their voice in the work environment for the first time.

> P8: I can now speak up easily for myself, and it is ok to disagree. I am now like "this is what I think and if you disagree it is ok". Then I started enjoying more what I am doing and trying to get the best out of myself in these situations.
>
> P5: In the beginning, people were telling me what to do, and I didn't feel they were using my time in the right place. So I ended up just taking control and saying "Hey we are going to do it this way". I think after I showed I knew what I was doing, I was given more control. I am more proactive.

Theme 8: Cultural Conditioning of Women's Social Roles

A theme expressed by nine out of the 10 participants was the influence of cultural conditioning of what it meant to be a woman in Saudi Arabia and how this affected their perception of control and engagement in the workplace. The women described taking personal control when possible, but also explained they had learned to accept elements of their environment that were outside of their control.

> P2: I think there are so many things not only in the workplace but the country that we as women can't control. You have to realize that you cannot control what you can't control and focus on those things you can.
>
> P3: Some emotional limits of being female is we think that we cannot take the lead. We cannot propose ideas because we are not used to that. It is limited to certain senior people and certain figures in the university. We are only supposed to listen. This is an emotional limitation we have that controls our development. Once we overcome that, there are miracles that can happen.
>
> P5: I think if women feel responsible for something that this works for them. Boys are given freedom, but less responsibility. Girls have to be responsible here. If you give women responsibility and they make you part of the solution, you feel more responsibility toward that task and feel more engaged to the process of getting things done.
>
> P10: I don't see a difference between Saudi women, and non-Saudi women. I think women are women. Women are more detailed and if they love their job they give it everything. Men take their job easy; they just go to it and go back

> home. I think women are continuous, even when they are back home, they are thinking of things they want to do the next day. We are always looking at ways to improve ourselves and our community. We want to prove that we as women are good. I believe it is not related to your nationality, it is everywhere for women on this.

Discrepant Data

I found a discrepant case that had contradictory findings in comparison to other participants regarding the core themes of time, self-development and inner transformations, adjustment of self to fit the environment, having a voice, and cultural conditioning of women's social roles. P1's description described her experience as not having enough tasks or responsibilities to fill her time, while the other nine participants described experiences in which they experienced work overload. While the other nine participants described their process of adjusting to the work environment in how they perceived control, P1 made no mention of how she adapted or tried to cope with her workplace regarding control. Her comments reflected a sense of passivity in which she reported feeling unneeded and invisible at work, with no sense of responsibility or ownership of tasks. Also, P1 did not mention the importance of social relationships in being able to complete tasks but stated that social relationships had played a part in her obtaining employment. Another discrepant case occurred with P10 regarding the cultural conditioning of women's social roles. While the other participants described the influence that the Saudi culture specifically had on them, P10 asserted that women are

conditioned by social constraints worldwide, and felt it was not only specific to women in Saudi Arabia.

Composite Description

The final step in the data analysis involved developing a composite description. The composite description represents a fusion of the textural and structural description of all participants to present a collective understanding of the essence and meaning of all participants (Moustakas, 1994).

All participants perceived their work environment as lacking predictability in various degrees. The women described unpredictable as the lack of any form of control or stability, in which they faced unexpected tasks, short deadlines, and changing objectives. The participants described situations in which they felt the lack of predictability in the environment undermined their attempts of trying to instill order and control through planning and time management. P7 expressed how working with short deadlines felt "suffocating" and reported wanting "to stop the time to do everything before time kills you".

The women conveyed perceptions of a lack of clear and consistent objectives, in which the goals were unclear or changed without the women receiving communication of the changed direction. The women faced heavy workloads which over time affected how they connected with their job. Last minute tasks and short deadlines created situations in which many of the women experienced constant stress.

All of the participants expressed varying degrees of personal control, external forms of control, and at times an absence of the perception of control in their work

environment as aforementioned. The length of the women's employment may have affected how each participant experienced control. As I examined each women's experience, a collective story emerged, with each woman's story representing an incremental step of the metamorphosis that occurred over time in how the women's perceptions of control formed. The participants employed for less than 1.5 years described limited strategies to construct a perception of control in the work environment. The women employed 2 years or more described the use of strategies that included the use of cognitive restructuring to focus on the positive aspects of the workplace and developing social relationships as a means of completing tasks. These participants described an evolution of how they perceived and adjusted themselves to fit the work environment. "Going with the flow" or "letting things go" were expressions used by seven of the participants describing the metamorphosis they underwent as a form of control. This kind of control represented not actively trying to change the environment, but consciously choosing to change one's self to fit the environment.

All of the participants employed for more than 2 years described how they used continuous self-development as a form of control. The women explained how they continuously tried to develop their professional and interpersonal skills. The women described how they took these skills as a way to improve themselves, with their long-term goal of using these skills to promote positive change in the work environment. All of the participants that described using a dual process of adjustment to the environment and self-development reported higher levels of engagements associated with this portion of their job, versus only adjusting themselves to the environment. Eight of the 10

participants reported being disengaged when they received negative feedback about their performance, although positive feedback, along with criticism of what they needed to improve was reported by many of the participants in which they described a higher level of engagement with their work. The employees described the positive feedback along with criticism as a means to direct their self-development.

All participants viewed social connections and relationship as paramount in the workplace. Nine of the 10 women considered social relationships as a means of control in which they could accomplish tasks more efficiently, and the relationships served as an emotional support system. The participants expressed the "necessity" of social relationships both within the organizations and outside of the organizations in meeting objectives. The women used social relationships to accomplish tasks in situations in which they needed to hide their agency to preserve “face” with those administrators who were in senior staff positions. Almost all of the participants noted that the flow of power and control within the organizations were arranged in a top-down fashion in which they viewed the President of the university as the ultimate holder of control and power.

Almost all of the participants described situations in which social connections and relationships were necessary for accomplishing tasks and served as a support system in the work environment. P1 was a discrepant case in how she described social relationships as a form of wastah in which she had obtained her employment and had relied on wastah for her permanent employment at the university. Her use of relationships was not based on trying to accomplish tasks in the work environment as mentioned by all of the other participants but based on gaining and maintaining employment. *Wastah* is a Middle

Eastern practice in which an individual gains positions, special privileges, or favors based on their family name or social connections in the society. While other participants noted the importance of social connections in accomplishing tasks, none of the other women mentioned personally receiving special favors through *wastah*. The other participants expressed that their use of social relationships increased their engagement with their work, while P1 reported that her use of *wastah* negatively affected how she engaged with her work.

Culturally conditioning of the roles women play, and the acceptable forms of taking personal control of both the work environment and outside of the workplace influenced the employees in how they perceived control and functioned in their workplace environment. The women reported that cultural conditioning of women within Saudi Arabia had been "limiting women in the control they had been socialized to use", although many of the participants described that their employment with the universities had been a source of empowerment in finding a voice and thus had resulted in greater engagement. In contrast, when the women described situations where they had not voiced their opinions they reported feeling disengaged. Some of the participants described how society conditions girls in Saudi Arabia to be more responsible than boys, although society gives boys more freedom. The women saw this sense of responsibility that Saudi women feel could be an asset in the workforce in that when women are given opportunities to contribute to an organization they become fully engaged in their work and community.

Summary

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Saudi women administrative support staff working in private universities regarding issues of control and engagement in the workplace. The 10 Saudi women administrative support employees described their perceptions and experiences through semistructured interviews. I analyzed the data using Moustakas's (1994) seven-step method for phenomenological analysis. The central research question and the three subquestions guided my analysis of the data. Eight core themes emerged from the collective experiences and descriptions provided by the participants. The core themes identified were: (a) supervision and guidance, (b) social relationships and connections as a form of control, (c) time, (d) lack of predictability, (e) adjustment of self to fit the environment, (f) self-development and inner transformation, (g) having a voice, and (h) cultural conditioning of women's social roles.

The participants described a lack of predictability in the workplace because of short deadlines, unclear objectives, unexpected tasks, and heavy workloads. The women associated the lack of predictability with disengagement with their work. Participants associated the factors mentioned above with difficulties in managing their time. The perception of a lack of time led to situations in which the women described becoming disengaged with their work and doing the bare minimum of what management required for the position. Many of the participants described a lack of supervision and guidance which they described as negatively affecting their engagement in the workplace. The

women associated higher levels of engagement with being given objectives and direction, while at the same time being able to include their creative input of how to complete tasks.

I noticed a pattern connected with the length of employment and how this may affect how the women perceived control in the environment. The longer participants reported being employed with their institutions, the more strategies they developed to see their environment as more predictable and controlled. Adjustment of self to the environment involved "going with the flow" and depersonalization to reduce stress. When participants used this strategy alone, they reported reduced levels of engagement. Self-development involved participants using strategies to further develop their professional or interpersonal skills as a means of improving themselves, and a way in which they also hoped to promote positive changes in the work environment. The participants associated higher levels of engagement when they used self-development strategies. The women saw social connections and relationships as important in not only social support but as a necessary form of control to complete tasks in the "political" and "bureaucratic" work environments.

The participants reported the influence of culturally conditioned roles for women in Saudi Arabia. Most of the women described situations in which cultural expectations had shaped them to be more responsible, but at the same limited their belief that they should lead or take control. The women described situations in which they felt uncomfortable speaking or felt unheard, but they also provided examples which they spoke out and felt others listened. The participants associated having a voice with greater

engagement, while the women associated not having a voice with withdrawal and disengagement.

In Chapter 5, I will present the purpose and nature of the study based on the need to understand the perceptions of control and engagement of Saudi women administrative support staff employed in private universities. Next, I will discuss an interpretation of the meanings and findings of the data in comparison to the existing body of peer-reviewed literature presented in Chapter 2. Finally, I will discuss the limitations of the study, implications of the study including social change, and recommendations for future research related to the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Saudi women administrative support staff working in private universities regarding issues of control and engagement in the workplace. Previous research studies identified low wages, lack of involvement in the future planning of curriculum, work overload, and issues related to balancing careers and family obligations as factors that had influenced the reluctance of Saudi women to maintain employment in private universities (Almansour & Kempner, 2016; Alomair, 2015). The problem was that no research studies had explored how Saudi women administrative support staff working in higher education perceived control in their work environment and how their perceptions of control affected their workplace engagement. The goal of this study was to fill this gap in the literature and develop an understanding of how Saudi women in administrative support staff positions experienced control, and the role they believed their control played in their workplace engagement.

I collected data for this phenomenological study through semistructured, in-depth interviews. I used purposeful sampling and snowball sampling to recruit 10 participants who identified themselves as Saudi national women who were currently employed as administrative support staff at a private university. I performed my analysis of the data by using the 7-step research analysis process established by Moustakas (1994). Eight core themes emerged based on the central research question and subquestions that directed the study. The eight core themes included: (a) supervision and guidance, (b)

social relationships and connections as a form of control, (c) time, (d) lack of predictability, (e) adjustment of self to fit the environment, (f) self-development and inner transformations, (g) having a voice, and (h) cultural conditioning of women's social roles.

Findings from this phenomenological study outlined the perceptions of the participants about how they viewed control and how they believe it affected their engagement in the workplace. The findings from this study described the participants' experience from a cultural standpoint in how they viewed and experienced control and engagement. Moreover, the results revealed the process women went through over time to develop strategies to increase the perception of predictability in the environment. The results indicated how the women's perceptions of control and the strategies they used affected their engagement in the workplace.

Interpretation of the Findings

Overall, the findings of the study validated the peer-reviewed literature of Rotter's (1966) locus of control and Rothbaum et al.'s (1982) two process model of perceived control, but offered limited support for Kay and Eibach's (2013) compensatory control theory. All 10 participants expressed that they perceived a lack of predictability in their work environment at times, as well as reporting periods in which they perceived predictability that was a result of personal control and external forces of control. How an individual perceives control in the environment is considered a core psychological process that enables the person to make connections between events in the environment

and develop a worldview in which the world appears orderly and structured (Fiske, 2010).

As I examined the data in comparison with the length of employment of the women, I observed a possible pattern where through time the women developed strategies to form a worldview that was more stable and predictable. The women described their experiences and their perception of control and how they believed this affected their level of engagement in the work environment.

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of Saudi women administrative support staff working in private universities regarding issues of control and engagement in the workplace. In this chapter, I will review and describe the study's findings and how they are connected to the literature review in Chapter 2. I will also interpret the findings of the study to compare them to the literature review to determine whether they confirm, disconfirm, or extend knowledge of how Saudi women perceive control, and how they believe their control affects their workplace engagement.

Theme 1: Supervision and Guidance

All 10 participants expressed how their perceptions of supervision and guidance they received affected their perceptions of control and engagement. The perception of an orderly world has been found a key component in psychological well-being (Cheng et al., 2013) and motivation (Kay et al., 2010). Nine of the participants described a lack of guidance in directing them in the objectives of the organizations or how to complete a task, which created an environment of uncertainty and chaos. Cross-cultural researchers have shown that when people perceive conditions as random and chaotic, such as in a

situation where guidance was absent, individuals withdraw and experience anxiety (Cheng et al., 2013; Rothbaum et al., 1982).

The women's perception of a lack of guidance is consistent with previous research on leadership and management in higher education in Saudi Arabia that found that university employees reported a lack of direction and guidance and a lack of feedback as issues with supervision employees received (Alomair, 2015; Assad, 2006). A lack of supervision and guidance were identified by Christian et al. (2011) as antecedents of employee disengagement. The participants in this study described becoming disengaged with their work because of unclear objectives and a lack of guidance from their managers.

In contrast, six women also recalled experiences in which they received guidance and clear goals. In these situations, the women described how managers gave them some level of personal control and autonomy over the planning and the process of completing the objectives. The women reported increased engagement because of the increased personal control and creative input in their work process. The women reported a difference in their engagement level that was dependent on the type of guidance and level of autonomy is consistent with research that found engagement can fluctuate with such factors as supervision and autonomy (Christian et al. 2011; Gagné & Bhave, 2011; Moussa, 2013b). Autonomy is considered a crucial aspect of personal control within the work environment, where the individual is given a level of decision-making or choice in their job environment (Gagné & Bhave, 2011).

While these situations described by the women are not within their complete personal control, there was a balance of control between external forces (guidance) and their own control. Research by Al-Kahtani and Allam (2013) found that Saudi women employed in the banking sector reported extreme scores on both external and internal locus of control, but found no relationship with their locus of control and level of job satisfaction. The findings of the current study indicate that while the participants wanted guidance, they felt more engaged and satisfied with their work when they felt they possessed personal control with their tasks.

The influence of supervisors' criticism and feedback were an issue that many participants discussed in affecting their perception of control and engagement. The participants described situations in which they felt their supervisors had not provided feedback or had only provided criticism with no suggestions on how they could improve their performance. In these cases, the women described feeling a lack of control in their work environment, as well as disengaged with their work. The participants' experience is consistent with researching findings by Moussa (2013b) who found that Saudi employees in the private sector listed the lack of encouragement and feedback from supervisors as the main reason for disengagement in the workplace.

Some of the women in the current study described situations in which their supervisors provided positive feedback along with suggestions on how the employees needed to improve their job performance. In these cases, the women reported increased levels of engagement as well as increased personal control. The participants' description is consistent with other research that suggested that appropriate, timely, and complete

feedback from leaders and managers have been found to be factors in the workplace that positively affect employee engagement (Blomme et al., 2015; Sparr & Sonnentag, 2008).

Theme 2: Social Relationships and Connections as a Form of Control

All participants mentioned social relationships and connections as a form of control in the workplace. According to Yamaguchi (2001), societies that possess a strong collectivist orientation such as Saudi Arabia, strive toward the concepts of harmony and social connectedness, which can influence the strategies used to perceive the world as orderly. Nine of the 10 participants expressed that having social relationships and connections were of utmost importance in being able to complete their tasks, but also for emotional support. Research by Kang et al. (2015) supports the importance of relationships in collective societies in which they found that among peer groups that collectively oriented groups need for an internal locus of control was less than individualistic groups. The importance of social relationships reported by the women is consistent with research reported by Pinto et al. (2014) in which coworker support and job control were found to have a moderating effect of reducing burnout among employees.

Although all the participants mentioned the use of *wastah* in completing job tasks, or alluded to other people having *wastah*, only P1 stated using the cultural practice to gain personal favors for herself. *Wastah* is a pervasive cultural practice in the Middle East that is the act of obtaining special favors through one's social connections (Kayed & Hassan, 2012). P1 mentioned using *wastah* to gain employment, and also reported she would have to use the cultural practice to maintain permanent employment. She

indicated that using *wastah* had left her feeling unmotivated and unengaged. Her experience was consistent with research by Moussa (2013b) and Assad (2006) who found *wastah* had been associated with disengagement by not only employees who benefitted from using *wastah*, but also by other employers who did not gain from the practice and regarded it as unfair. The women's mention of the use of *wastah* is consistent with other researchers who have asserted that in spite of the hierarchal structure of the society, there is growing discontent among Saudis employees, including female administrative university employees, in the use of *wastah* (Alkhanbshi & Al-Kandi, 2014; Al Harbi et al., 2016; Kayed & Hassan, 2010; Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011).

Theme 3: Time

The third theme expressed by the participants was the perception of never having enough time to complete tasks to a standard that they felt satisfied with their performance. Some of the participants described their environment as chaotic and crazy when describing how they perceived time deadlines. Abu-Rahma and Jaleel (2017) found that when there is a high level of uncertainty about the future in Emirate organizations, management teams tended to stray from strategic planning, which undermined the use of time management strategies. Their findings may provide an explanation of the phenomenon described by the women, in which they reported a lack of strategic planning, unclear objectives, and short deadlines, which lead to a perception of never having enough time to complete their work.

Participants described disengagement with their work when working under short deadlines and having limited control over their time to complete tasks. Al-Iman and Al-

Sobayel (2014) described disengagement as burnout, in which employees exhibit cynicism, physical and mental exhaustion, and reduced performance in their job role. The women reported the symptoms associated with disengagement when they frequently were faced working under short deadlines. The participants' descriptions and experiences had no discrepancies with information provided in the literature review.

Theme 4: Lack of Predictability

Predictability has been considered a core component of an individual establishing the perception of an environment being orderly and controlled. All 10 participants expressed a core theme of experiencing a lack of predictability in their work environment at times, and not knowing on a daily basis what to expect. Nine of the participants reported unpredictability as a regular occurrence, while one of the participants described a lack of predictability occurring in her work environment occasionally. Eight of the participants attributed the lack of predictability to external forces such as management, the Ministry of Education, and other outside forces, although they did not attribute these sources as providing a stable environment. Researchers have contended that the innate tendency for the perception of an orderly and structured world is so intense among people, that individuals prefer negative perceptions of control versus a world that appears chaotic and random (Cheng et al., 2013; Friesen et al., 2014).

The participants reported the work environment was unpredictable, but the majority of the women provided different mechanisms they used to obtain a sense of orderliness and control in the workplace. The women used such tools as planning,

adjusting themselves to the environment, or self-development to establish a sense of control.

Religion is intertwined in all facets of the culture in Saudi Arabia including the language, the laws, the dress, the rules for social interaction, the prescriptions for living, as well as organizational environments. Although two of the women mentioned religion, they did not see it as a force that gave predictability to the workplace. These findings are inconsistent with Inzlicht et al.'s (2009) research that suggested that people who reported stronger religious convictions are more likely to view religion as a controlling force that provides an avenue for the reduction of stress associated with unpredictable environments.

Theme 5: Adjustment of Self to Fit the Environment

The fifth core theme participants described was how they adjusted their cognitions to adapt to the environment. Participants explained how they restructured their cognition to "go with the flow" of the workplace. This process involved the women changing themselves to fit the workplace as a form of control and reduce feelings of stress and the associated physical symptoms. The women's mechanism of adjusting themselves to the environment is consistent with depersonalization, a form of disengagement, where an individual detaches themselves from the emotional and the personal connection with the work (Vanbogeart et al., 2017).

Saudi Arabia has been classified as a highly collective society that is heavily influenced by tribal patriarchal values and traditions (Uskul et al., 2010). Hofstede's (1984) concept of collective versus individual societies has been used as a classification

system to explain cultural worldviews and the social norms, values, and expected behaviors within a society. Despite Saudi Arabia being classified as a collective society, the women's description of adjusting themselves to fit the environment was not described as changing to match the collective group, but was explained by the women as a means to reduce their stress because of their lack of personal control over the workplace. Examining differences in the perception of control cross-culturally has most often been accomplished by the use of the collective versus individual continuum (Shifrer & Sutton, 2014), although categorically defining culture as individualistic or collective should be employed with caution (Twenge & Crocker, 2002) in making assumptions about a group dependent upon their cultural orientation.

Theme 6: Self-development and Inner Transformations

The participants described how they used self-development and inner transformations as a form of control in their work environment. Most of the women described developing themselves through continued education and training, development of interpersonal skills, or through behaviors that promoted personal growth. The women reported embarking in the self-development independent of the organization. In Assad's (2006) review of research on women leadership in higher education in Saudi Arabia, she identified numerous obstacles reported by women that included a lack of resources offered through their organizations for professional development and mentoring. Lim (2013) found the importance of self-development as one of the most important qualities of a work environment to Saudis born after 1980.

According to past research, private organizations have claimed that the *Saudization* policies, in which private organizations were required to hire a certain amount of Saudi employees were unrealistic because of the lack of skilled Saudis or because of the lack of motivation of Saudi employees. The government realized that in certain specialized sectors that deficiencies in the education system that the organizations' claims were legitimate, but these claims were also being abused by organizations to continue hiring expatriates, who were paid lower wages than Saudis (Al-Dosary & Rahman, 2006; Alshanbri et al., 2013). The assertions of Saudi employees being unmotivated and lacking skills are not aligned with the reported experience of the participants in the current study who described seeking out experiences to continuously develop their abilities to enhance themselves and improve their performance in the workplace.

Theme 7: Having a Voice

Nine of the participants described their perceptions of having a voice in their work environment. The women described the positive impact of being able to express their thoughts and opinions, and the importance of being listened to by others in the workplace. The women who reported having a voice in the work environment described high levels of engagement with their work. The women's experience is consistent with findings by Ahmad and Aldakhil (2012) who found worker engagement was positively related to open communication in which management valued the opinions of Saudi bank employees.

The women not only expressed the importance of having a voice in the work environment, but some of them also expressed how their job in private universities had helped them develop a voice. P4 described how her employment in the university made her feel as though she had developed a "feminist" voice. She also mentioned how the predominate women work environment had encouraged her to develop her voice, and how in situations where she had to deal with men she found herself not speaking out. Hamdan (2013) asserted that gender-segregated environments, like higher education, should not be seen as a negative, but an opportunity for Saudi women to excel among their gender. Alomair (2015) reported that men hold most of the key leadership positions in higher education in Saudi, but the participants in the current study described environments where women occupied key leadership positions. P8 expressed how her job helped her to develop a voice by learning that having different opinions from others was acceptable, and helped her to be less judgmental of others with different views.

Four of the participants described situations in which they believed they did not have a voice because of either fear of retribution from powerful individuals in their organization, or because they believed others did not listen to their words. In these situations, the women described feeling frustrated, as well as disengaged with their work. Moussa (2013a) suggested that the policies geared toward Saudization have created a work environment in which Saudi employees feel secure in their employment, regardless of their performance, due to their nationality. Moussa's (2013a) suggestion is inconsistent with the experience described by the women in the current study which they expressed fear of speaking, and job security was a concern among half of the participants

as well. Although in subsequent research, Moussa (2013b) asserted that the high turnover rate among qualified Saudi employees often centered on the lack of supervisor support and poor work environments in the private sector. This assertion is more consistent with the reported experience of the participants in which they described supervisor support, feeling trusted, and being heard were factors that affected their engagement. An individual's perception of procedural justice within an organization has been shown to have an impact on a person's level of commitment to organizations, motivation, and organizational citizenship behavior, as well as their perception of control (Fischer, 2013). Researchers have defined procedural justice as the level of fairness perceived by employees of the procedures used within an organization (Fischer, 2013; Moussa, 2013a). Moussa (2013a) found that Saudi employees that identified procedural justice as low in their organizations reported lower levels of commitment. The women's description of feelings disengaged and frustrated when they perceived inequality in their work environment is inconsistent with findings by Cassell and Blake (2012) who asserted that Saudis in the workplace accepted inequality because of Saudi being a higher power distance culture.

Theme 8: Cultural Conditioning of Women's Social Roles

A theme expressed by nine of the women was the influence of cultural conditioning of what it meant to be a woman in Saudi Arabia and how this affected their perception of control and engagement in the workplace. Culture has been found to have an influence in which antecedents appear to have the greatest effect on employee engagement (Rothmann, 2013) Saudi women have been socialized in a highly collective

and patriarchal society, in which conformity to the group is emphasized (Abadeer, 2015). The women described taking personal control when possible, but also explained they had learned through experiences to accept elements of their environment that were outside of their control.

According to Cheng et al. (2013), individuals learn their perceptions of control through their experiences and interactions in the world which is influenced by the individual's culture. Although there are rapid changes taking place in Saudi Arabia regarding the legal rights of Saudi women, most Saudi women have lived in an environment in which their everyday lives have been legally under the control of their male guardians(Al Eisa & Sobayel, 2012; Al-Rasheed, 2013a; Hamdan, 2012). While past researchers have asserted that the unique cultural components of the country affect women in their perceptions of control, including the religiosity of the country, gender segregation, and the male guardianship system that gives control to men of a woman's movement and career choices (Al Eisa & Sobayel, 2012; Al-Rasheed, 2013a; Hamdan, 2012), these were not issues that the women described as factors in their perception of control. Despite the restrictions the women may have experienced in their lives outside of the work environment, the majority of the women reported feeling a level of personal control within their work environment when they were able to contribute to the process in terms of having a voice and contributing to the progression of the tasks they performed. Spector et al. (2004) asserted that there is a difference between an individual's perceptions in a particular context, such as in the work environment versus a person's general personality trait about control in life. An individual's perceptions in a particular

context are different because they are established through time, regarding a specific target, whereas the general beliefs are guided by an individual's belief in fate, luck, religious beliefs, or the control of powerful others.

Conceptual Framework and Findings Interpretations

The results of this study in many ways validated the conceptual framework on which this study was built as well as provided an understanding of the emerging themes. I constructed the central components of this study's conceptual framework upon the work of Rotter's (1966) locus of control, Rothbaum et al.'s (1982) two process model of perceived control, and Kay and Eibach's (2013) compensatory control theory. The discussion that follows discusses how these three theories related to the experiences of the women. Each participant described various perceptions of control and different mechanisms she used in assorted situations to try to establish the perception of an orderly and predictable environment.

Across cultures, the human need for the perception of an orderly and predictable environment is considered an innate tendency (Cheng et al., 2013; Fiske, 2010; Friesen et al., 2014). At the same time, while this inherent propensity exists across different cultures, there are differences in how individuals perceive control and the mechanisms they use to maintain the perception of balance and control in the environment (Cheng et al. 2013). All of the women described unpredictable experiences to varying degrees at different times. The participants' perception of a lack of predictability revolved around short deadlines, unexpected tasks, and unclear objectives. The lack of predictability in one's world has been associated with increased anxiety, depression, and withdrawal from

the social world (Cheng et al., 2013; Rothbaum et al., 1982), while predictability has been correlated with increased psychological well-being and increased motivation (Cheng et al., 2013; Kay et al., 2010). Most of the participants described feelings of being disengaged, stressed, and withdrawn when they perceived a lack of predictability in their environment.

A majority of the participants described attempts of using their personal control, such as time management techniques, lists, and planning as a way to restore a sense of stability in their environment. All three theories incorporated the concept of personal control, but labeled it as internal locus of control, primary control, and personal control, respectively. Saudi Arabia is a collective society (Uskul et al., 2010). Previous research has suggested that the perception of personal control may not be as crucial to an individual's sense of well-being in collectivist societies as found in individualistic societies (Cheng et al., 2013, Rana et al., 2015). For example, Cheng et al. (2013) found in collectivist societies that an external locus of control and the occurrence of depression and anxiety still occurred, but to a lesser degree than individualistic cultures. While the women valued a certain level of personal control in the process of completing their task, they still expressed a need for guidance from others.

Rotter's Locus of Control

Rotter (1966) developed locus of control from social learning theory that asserts a person builds their way of viewing and interacting with their social world through reinforcement and contingencies experienced throughout the individual's life. The participants in this study illustrated how the length of their employment in their

workplace established their views through the reinforcement and contingencies they experienced in the work environment. The women who had shorter lengths of employment tended to see the workplace as more chaotic and less predictable, while women employed longer had made connections among events and hence had developed mechanisms to cope with their work environment. A person establishes his or her perceptions of reinforcement by making connections between the individual's actions and the resulting consequences termed internal locus of control. External locus of control is the process in which the individual believes that the outcome may have been partly brought about by his or her actions, but was also controlled by external forces outside of the person (Cheng et al., 2013; Hamedoğlu et al., 2012; Rotter, 1966). All of the women identified both internal and external locus of control. The women described internal locus of control in terms of how they interacted with others in the work environment, how they reacted to situations they encountered, planning, and time management. External sources of control included managements' practices, policies of organizations, government ministries; two of the women also mentioned fate and luck.

Locus of control research has typically associated positive mental health outcomes and healthful behaviors with individuals having an internal locus of control, and negative outcomes associated with individuals having an external locus of control (Al-Eisa & Al- Sobayel, 2012; Culpin et al., 2015). However, when researchers examined locus of control across different cultures, the same outcomes have not always been observed (Cheng et al., 2013; Rana et al., 2015). The women in the current study reported that they felt more engaged and motivated in their work when they had a certain

level of internal locus of control in the tasks they performed. Previous research in Saudi Arabia with Saudi women found an internal locus of control was associated with better health behaviors (Al-Eisa, & Al-Sobayel, 2012), while research by Al-Kahtani and Allam (2013) found that locus of control showed no relationship with job satisfaction. In the current study, nine of the 10 participants described that "chaos" in their workplace undermined their attempts of trying to instill order and control through their planning and time management. These findings suggest that having an internal locus of control over portions of their work was an important feature for these women, but external control as a form of guidance was also an important aspect of their workplace.

Two Process Model of Perceived Control

Rothbaum et al.'s (1982) two process model of perceived control was built on the foundations of Rotter's (1966) locus of control theory, but differs by asserting that an external locus of control is not always a form of relinquishing control, but a kind of secondary control in which the individual seeks not to control the environment, but exert a type of control by adapting to the environment. The model was originally composed of two main forms of control: primary control and secondary control. Primary control is similar to Rotter's (1966) internal locus of control, which means the individual actively takes actions to control the environment. Secondary control means the person chooses to alter his or her cognition to fit the environment (Helzer & Jayawickreme, 2015; Rothbaum et al., 1982; Spector et al., 2004).

Most of the women described using various forms of both primary and secondary control in their work environment. Abadeer (2015) described the practice of conforming

to the environment in patriarchal collectivist societies such as Saudi Arabia as a necessity for survival. Rothbaum et al. (1982) asserted that individuals saliently use primary control methods as their first option to obtain the perception of control. They resort to secondary control in situations where they failed to meet the perception of control (Cheng et al., 2012; Daniels et al., 2011; Sawaumi et al., 2015). Other research has suggested that secondary control is not a compensatory form of control, but a kind of control that people use dependent upon the environmental and cultural influences, and the desired outcome (Helzer & Jayawickreme, 2015). The participants in the current study described processes that suggested that secondary control was predominately used as an ancillary mechanism in which when they used primary control unsuccessfully, and then resorted to secondary methods of control. Helzer and Jayawickreme (2015) found that individuals used secondary control consciously through such mechanisms as cognitive restructuring, positive thinking, and acceptance, which were methods described by all the participants.

Most of the participants described situations in which they used secondary control as a compensatory process in trying to achieve the perception of control. In these cases, the women typically described initially using a form of primary control in which they used tactics like planning and organizing as a way of exerting control in the environment. In these situations in which their attempts to impose control through primary methods were not successful, they reported using forms of secondary control in which they consciously adjusted their thinking to adapt to the environment. The women described feelings less engaged and used depersonalization with their work when they used secondary control as a compensatory mechanism. Depersonalization is a process in

which an individual detaches from the emotions and personal connections with his/her work (Vanbogeart et al., 2017).

The concept of choice in consciously choosing to adjust oneself to the environment coincided with other research by Inesi et al. (2011) which asserted that individuals use power and choice interchangeably to achieve a personal sense of control. The concept of power and choice used interchangeably was mentioned by four of the participants as they discussed how they had choices in their reactions to situations, social relationships, and challenging circumstances in which they could not exert forms of primary control. Women using accommodation and adaptation to the environment were reported by Dakhli et al.'s (2013) research that found Kuwaitis women were more likely to use accommodation strategies to conform to situations in which they felt they had no choice. Kuwait's culture is similar to Saudi Arabia regarding being highly patriarchal, predominately Sunni Muslims, an oil-based economy, and low employment participation rates of women (Price, 2015).

Although the majority of the participants reported disengaging from the work when using secondary control, they also expressed how their relationships with others employees served as a support system because other employees were experiencing the same phenomenon and understood their experiences. These feelings of being connected with their co-workers are consistent with research on other collective societies such as Japan in which Morling et al. (2002) found participants recalled more situations in which secondary control was used and reported greater feelings of social relatedness than Americans.

Helzer and Jayawickreme (2015) found that American research participants associated primary and secondary control with different forms of well-being. The American participants related primary control with goal striving, while they linked secondary control with making sense of the world, suggesting that both mechanisms are essential components of the perception of control in helping an individual achieve a general feeling of well-being. Some of the participants described the use of interpretive secondary control as a reflective process of their world. This description supports research findings by Helzer and Jayawickreme (2015). Interpretive secondary control is an individual's attempts to derive meaning from situations to accept them, but the associated behaviors include passivity, withdrawal, or submissive behavior. P8 specifically mentioned in situations where she was unable to exert her personal control, that these had become opportunities for personal growth as she looked for lessons in the situation trying to make sense of her world. The women that described using interpretive secondary control reported becoming more passive and did the bare minimum of what was required of a task.

Social connections and social relationships were a prominent theme expressed by all of the participants in not only how they perceived control, but also the role these relationships played in their engagement in the workplace. Saudi Arabia is considered a collective society where social relationships, connections, and harmony are valued over individualistic pursuits (Cassell & Blake, 2012; Uskul et al., 2010). The participants described their use of social relationships in forming a perception of control in different manners. P1 described her use of *wastah* as the way she obtained employment through

her powerful social connections. *Wastah* can be classified as a form of vicarious secondary control. Vicarious secondary control is connecting with powerful others as a kind of identification in which the individual shares benefits of being associated with the powerful other (Rothbaum et al., 1982).

Yamaguchi (2001) proposed three forms of primary control that were specifically related to forms of personal control that have relevance to collective societies such as Saudi Arabia that value harmony and social relationships: primary proxy control, primary indirect control, and primary collective control. Primary proxy control is the act of influencing an individual that can make changes in an environment (Yamaguchi, 2001). Most of the participants reported using primary proxy control. The participants utilized primary proxy control to accomplish tasks but also to facilitate achieving personal goals within the workplace. The women communicated that primary proxy control was particularly pertinent in trying to accomplish tasks because of the "centralized" and "bureaucratic" structure of organizations that often made it difficult in obtaining needed approvals to pursue work promptly. According to Yamaguchi (2001), primary proxy control is important to individuals who do not hold power in a society or organizations and administrative support staff typically have a limited amount of power in an organization. Participants expressed the importance of understanding the social relationships among the various players in an institution who hold power were critical in accomplishing tasks.

Primary indirect control has been defined as a person working to modify the environment but does so in a manner where they conceal their agency from others

(Yamaguchi, 2001). Agency refers to an individual's capacity or effort to perform a behavior (Haggard & Eitam, 2015). The participants mentioned using primary indirect control as a way to preserve face. Face deals with the social concerns found in collectivist societies where one is concerned about how others perceive them (Kurman et al., 2012). In the situations participants mentioned using primary indirect control, they used the control as a way to avoid offending those in the organization who had more power such as their managers. The women's use of primary indirect control was consistent with other research studies that found that women from India and Saudi Arabia used methods of hidden agentic behaviors to accomplish developing a voice and being able to affect their social worlds without offending others (Guta & Karolak, 2015; Madhoc, 2007). Also, Guta and Karolak's (2015) research study reported that women used social media to keep their agency hidden, and identity protected but pushed for change in the society.

Primary collective control is collective acts of a group to exert change in an environment (Yamaguchi, 2001). Most of the participants recalled events or spoke of the importance of collaboration in completing the work. Cultivating and maintaining relationships was seen as one of the most critical components in the work environment. The usage of primary collective control was associated not only as a mechanism that helped the participants accomplish a task, but also a mechanism that provided emotional support. In these situations, the person's voice may not be heard, but by associating with others and influencing those in power, the individual exerted control over the environment. These findings are consistent with research by Kurman et al. (2012), who

found that the use of primary proxy control was more prevalent in collectivist societies than individualistic cultures. Furthermore, Yamaguchi et al. (2005) found that the use of primary collective control was more common among women worldwide. The participants frequently illustrated the importance of the collective group through the frequent use of "we" instead of using "I" throughout the interviews. Na and Choi (2009) found culture heavily influences people's use of pronouns. P10 reported that she felt that women worldwide experienced perceptions of control similarly and that culture did not necessarily mitigate the experiences that women around the world encountered in the workplace.

Rothbaum et al. (1982) described predictive primary control as the practice of individuals selecting activities in which he/she are most likely to be successful. Many of the participants expressed a preference for doing the types of work in which they used their skill sets as a means of being successful in their tasks. The women's inclination is consistent with Moussa's (2013b) research on engagement in private organizational settings in Saudi Arabia which suggested that employees who performed job tasks that matched their skill set were more likely to express being engaged with their work.

Kurman et al. (2012) added a third type of control, control via self-improvement. This form of control involves the individual engaging in the process of self-improvement with the short-term goal of adjusting to the environment, but the long-term objective of the personal change affecting the condition of the environment. Kurman et al. (2012) study suggested that people use this type of control in situations where the individual is concerned about face. While preserving face was not directly stated by participants in

relation to their pursuits of self-development, it was mentioned as a factor in keeping their identity hidden in certain situations in which they may offend others with more power. Nine of the 10 women described ways in which they continuously tried to develop themselves as a form of control in their workplace. The women saw these forms of self-development as not directly affecting the work environment, but by using their gained skills, they would be able to influence the environment positively. The women associated self-development with higher levels of engagement.

Compensatory Control Theory

Kay and Eibach (2013) asserted in compensatory control theory that an individual achieves the need for perceived control of their environment through both personal control and compensatory control. CCT was built on the foundations of both Rotter's (1966) locus of control and Rothbaum et al.'s (1982) two process model of perceived control, and other social psychology theories such as Lerner's (1980) *just world theory* and Jost and Banaji's (1994) *system justification theory*. Personal control in CCT is defined as an individual's perceptions that events or outcomes are a result of his/her actions (Friesen et al., 2014; Kay et al., 2009). Personal control is analogous to Rotter's (1966) internal locus of control, and Rothbaum et al. (1982) two process model of perceived control's primary control. The participants reported various forms of personal control in their work environment, in which they reported greater engagement as was discussed in the previous sections.

Kay and Eibach's (2013) CCT stated that when factors in an environment make the perception of personal control impossible, people start to perceive external cues in

their surroundings in forms of patterns that explain forms of external control. The external forms of control are called compensatory control which is influenced by what people have been exposed to in their cultural world, in the forms of religion, government, and institutions (Friesen et al., 2014; Kay et al., 2009). Eight of the participants attributed the lack of predictability to external forces such as management, the Ministry of Education, and other outside forces, although they did not attribute these sources as providing a stable environment. This is concordance with Kay and Eibach's (2013) CCT that asserts when positive or negative events threaten an individual's personal control, a person is likely to attribute the event to a form of external control, such as a government to relieve anxiety related to the perception of a random world. While the participants mentioned the influence of the Ministry of Education in the tasks and schedules, the women did not see the government as a dominant form of direct control within the work environment. Also, although Saudi Arabia is an Islamic country, the few women who mentioned religion in the workplace, explained that religion was a value system to follow, but did not view it as a form of control within the work environment. Furthermore, while many of the participants mentioned leaders within the university that they admired for their visionary leadership, they did not necessarily see them as a source of control in their day to day work lives.

Limitations of the Study

This study contributed to the literature on understanding how Saudi women administrative support staff experienced control, and the role they believed it played in their workplace engagement. However, it is imperative to document how I addressed

limitations to the trustworthiness of the study. This phenomenological research was limited to a sample size of 10 Saudi women employed in administrative support staff positions in private universities. The recommended sample size to be used in phenomenological research varies, but researchers agree that the sample size should allow the researcher to explore the phenomenon to the point of saturation (Creswell, 2013; Miles et al., 2014; Morse, 1994; Omona, 2013). Saturation was reached by the ninth participant to mitigate this limitation. Furthermore, the findings of this study are not generalizable to all women in Saudi Arabia, but other women who have similar situations to the participants may recognize their experiences in those of the participant. I provided rich, thick descriptions of the participants' experience, as well as provided the specific inclusion criteria to minimize this limitation. It is the responsibility of the researcher to provide enough details of the study for readers to be able to make appropriate choices of how the study may be transferable to other settings.

I acknowledge how my personal views and experiences at times biased my interpretations related to my Western identity and my experiences of living in Saudi Arabia. I used Moustakas's (1994) suggested plan for phenomenological analysis that involved me using epoche. Epoche entails the researcher making attempts to set aside their judgments and biases related to the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). I used journaling of my thoughts throughout the research process, both before and after interviews, and throughout the analysis process to bracket my biases. Also, when needed, I spoke with my research supervisor about how these biases had affected my interpretations.

Recommendations

I conducted this study to address the identified gap in the literature that examined how Saudi women administrative support staff working in private higher education perceived control in their work environment and how their perceptions of control affected their engagement. The study consisted of a sample size of 10 women who were English speaking female Saudi nationals with at least a bachelor's degree who have been employed for at least 1 year in an administrative support position in a private Saudi university that conducts all activities in English. The 10 participants provided valuable insights into their perceptions of control in their workplace, and how they believed their perceptions of control affected their engagement in the workplace.

This research was open only to Saudi women administrative support staff who worked in private higher education. Therefore, the results of the study may not apply to women of other nationalities, men, non-administrative positions, or public higher education. Hence, further research could be conducted to address the limitation of this study by examining the perceptions of control and how participants believe it affected their engagement with these other populations. Future studies could also be conducted to concentrate on different sectors of employment in Saudi Arabia.

Also, due to the nature of qualitative data, there was no control for variables. Therefore, a quantitative study could be conducted to determine how the various forms of control experienced by the participants affected their engagement. Furthermore, quantitative studies could be done to examine how forms of control correlated with employee's performance feedback from their supervisors.

Implications

Implications for Positive Social Change

This perspective offers an original contribution to the research literature and provides a foundation for developing future research on the constructs of control and engagement, unique to Saudi women in private higher education in how to best facilitate work engagement. As more Saudi women have begun to enter the workplace, an understanding of how these women view control in the context of a professional environment is needed to start to foster workplaces that meet both the needs of the women, the organizations, and the society. The participants in this study expressed how they believed cultural conditioning had affected their views of control in the workplace. Organizations could use the finding of this research study to identify how their current management practices are aligned with the women's perceptions.

In the present study, the women expressed their needs for supervision, in which they liked to be guided by goals and objectives, but at the same time allowed the personal control to contribute to the process of completing tasks. Also, almost all participants reporting working with short deadlines, in which they were unable to complete tasks efficiently. Findings from this study could promote positive social change by providing managers and supervisors enhanced knowledge of the need to balance tasks with direction, the time to complete tasks, as well as the flexibility of employees to personally contribute to the process with their creative ideas and suggestions.

The exploration of this issue was critical in developing an understanding of Saudi women working in higher education to preserve the economic stability of the Kingdom

by keeping women employed in the private higher education sector. This study could also facilitate future research and practices in creating higher education work environments where female employees are engaged and productive in meeting their need for continued self-development, as well as the continued development of the organizations. Self-development was a major theme expressed by the women in this study. These findings provide an opportunity for organizations, and education systems to maximize the potential benefits of this form of control through the development of training and development programs in their institutions to facilitate engagement of their employees as well as fill a void of needed skills their organizations need.

Methodological Implications

Saudi Arabia has been a closed society, in which access to Saudi women for research purposes has been scant (Lipmann, 2012). There have been limited studies on the lived experiences of Saudi women employed in private higher. According to Sidani and Feghali (2014), a central problem in research has been a lack of understanding of the cultural differences between different Arab countries and the practice of combining Arab women as one homogenous group as the primary deficiencies of studies related to Arab women in the workforce. The constructive methodological implication of using Moustakas's (1994) 7-step data analysis procedure for this research study is that it allowed me to focus and deliver an in-depth description of the lived experiences exclusively of Saudi women employees employed as administrative support staff in private higher education.

Theoretical Implications

Researchers have noted differences in the psychological literature in how different cultures perceived control, as well as how the effects of their perception of control, affected their behaviors (Cheng et al., 2013, Spector et al., 2004; Yamaguchi, 2001). Rotter's (1966) locus of control has been the theoretical orientation used most often in research on control within the Saudi population (Al-Eisa & Al-Sobayel, 2012; Al-Kahtani & Allam, 2013; Kumaran, 2013). The current research provided the opportunity to examine how other theories of control may have relevance in explaining the cultural nuances of the perceptions of control and engagement with Saudi women. Rothbaum et al. (1982) two process model of perceived control demonstrated many of the perceptions of control and engagement that the participants described. Hence further research is needed in the future to explore control through this theoretical orientation.

Recommendations for Practice

The participants in this study provided an informative understanding into how Saudi women working as administrative support staff perceive control and how they believe their perceptions of control affect their engagement in the workplace. The insight from these women may provide managers, supervisors, training and development programs, and human resources with knowledge as to how the work environment influences Saudi women's perception of control and how this affects the employees' engagement. Accordingly, implications of this study for positive social change include an increased understanding of the women's perceived control and the mechanisms the participants used as strategies to achieve a workplace environment that appeared

predictable. Future research could focus on how organizations could use education and training programs as a helpful tool to increase engagement. Also, because the women described the importance of relationships and connections in the workplace, future research could focus on the development of employee orientation programs and mentoring pairings to evaluate the effectiveness of these type of programs in increasing employees' perception of control and increasing engagement in the workplace.

Conclusion

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Saudi women administrative support staff working in private universities regarding issues of control and engagement in the workplace. The study filled a gap in the research literature by describing the lived experience of how Saudi women administrative support staff experienced control, in the context of private universities, and how their perception of control affected their engagement in the workplace. A majority of the findings were consistent with previous empirical information from the literature review in how the perception of control affects engagement, how control was formed and used in collective societies, and how factors such as guidance, criticism, and feedback affected Saudi employees employed in various sectors. The participants provided valuable descriptions into how Saudi women administrative support staff working in private higher education perceived control and how they believed it affected their engagement.

The participants provided significant information on how they associated short deadlines, unclear objectives, unexpected tasks, and heavy workloads with a lack of predictability in the workplace. Many of the participants cited examples of times in

which they felt a lack of supervision and guidance had led to disengagement in the workplace. The women associated higher levels of engagement with being given objectives and direction, while at the same time being able to include their creative input of how to complete tasks.

The women saw social connections and relationships as an important form of control in the work environment. The importance of relationships is in alignment with the cultural tradition of Saudi Arabia which is a highly collective society, in which tribal and family relationships, as well as the use of honor and shame for protecting the collective group, is prioritized over individual needs (Uskul et al., 2010). Societies that possess a strong collectivist orientation such as Saudi Arabia can influence the strategies used to perceive the world as orderly (Yamaguchi, 2001). The women denoted the importance of relationships as a kind of control in the workplace for accomplishing tasks through identification with powerful others, exerting influence through collective efforts, and as a way to hide their agency.

The women developed strategies to develop a perception of control and predictability in their workplace. Adjustment of self to the environment involved going with the flow and depersonalization to reduce stress. Rothbaum et al. (1982) stated that adjusting to one's environment is not always a form of relinquishing control, but secondary control in which the individual exerts control by adapting to the environment. When participants used this strategy alone, they reported reduced levels of engagement.

Another approach utilized by the women was control through self-development in which the participants' aimed to enhance their professional or interpersonal skills as a

means of improving themselves and eventually promote positive changes in the work environment through these acquired skills. The participants associated higher levels of engagement when they used self-development strategies. This form of control was explained by Kurman et al. (2012) as a third form of control in the two process model of perceived control that is more prevalent in collective societies like Saudi Arabia.

The women explained the influence of culturally conditioned roles for women in Saudi Arabia. Most of the women described situations in which cultural expectations had shaped them to be more responsible, but at the same limited their belief that they should lead or take control. Despite the cultural conditioning many of the participants had described examples which they spoke out and felt others listened to them. In these situations, the participants reported feeling greater engagement with their work

The purpose of this study was effectively accomplished by providing the 10 Saudi women administrative support staff employed in private universities a voice to describe their perceptions of control and engagement in the workplace. It is hoped that the knowledge presented by the participants will offer an original contribution to the research literature and provide a foundation for developing future research on the constructs of control and engagement unique to Saudi women in private higher education. The implications of this study for positive social change include an increased understanding of the perceptions of control and engagement of employees by management, supervisors, human resources, and training and development in private higher education. Future research could focus on how organizations could use education and training as an effective tool for increased engagement. Also, because the women described the

importance of relationships and connections in the workplace, future research could focus on the development of employee orientation programs and mentoring pairings to evaluate the effectiveness of these type of programs in increasing employees' perception of predictability and increasing engagement in the workplace.

References

Abadeer, A. S. (2015). *Norms and gender discrimination in the Arab world*. United States: Palgrave Macmillan. doi:10.1057/9781137395283

Abu-Rahma A. & Jaleel, B. (2017). Influence of managers' time orientation on strategic practices in the UAE: The moderating role of environmental uncertainty. *International Journal of Emerging Markets, 12*(2), 219-237. doi:10.1108/IJoEM-01-2015-0011

Ahmad, A., & Aldakhil, A. M. (2012). Employee engagement and strategic communication in Saudi Arabian banks. *IBIMA Business Review*, 2012, 13-21. doi: 10.5171/2012.383929

Ahmed, M. A. (2015). Outward mobility of Saudi students: An overview. *International Higher Education, 83*, 19-20. Retrieved from http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ihe/article/view/9084

Ahmed, M. A. (2016). The effects of Saudization on the universities. Localization in Saudi Arabia. *International Higher Education, 86*, 25-27. Retrieved from: http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ihe/article/view/9373

Al-Asfour, A., & Khan, S. (2013). Workforce localization in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Issues and challenges. *Human Resource Development International, 17*(2), 245-253. doi:10.1080/13678868.2013.836783

Al-Dosary, A. S., Rahman, S., & Aina, Y. (2006). A communicative planning approach to combat graduate unemployment in Saudi Arabia. *Human Resource Development International, 9*(3), 397-414. doi:10.1080/13678860600893581

Al-Eisa, E. S., & Al-Sobayel, H. I. (2012). Physical activity and health beliefs among Saudi women. *Journal of Nutrition & Metabolism*, 2012, 1-6. doi:10.1155/2012/642187

Al-Habib, M. (2012).Identifying the traits of entrepreneurs in a university setting: An empirical examination of Saudi Arabian university students. *International Business & Economics Research Journal, 11*(9), 1019-1028. Retrieved from http://www.cluteinstitute.com/ojs/index.php/IBER/issue/view/784

Al Harbi, S. A., Thursfield, D., & Bright, D. (2016). Culture, wasta and perceptions of performance appraisal in Saudi Arabia. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management,* 1-19. Advance online publication. doi:10.1080/09585192.2016.1138987

Al Alhareth, Y., Al Alhareth, Y., & Al Dighrir, I. (2015). Review of Women and Society in Saudi Arabia. *American Journal of Educational Research, 3*(2), 121-125. doi:10.12691/education-3-2-3

Al-Imam, D. M., & Al-Sobayel, H. I. (2014). The prevalence and severity of burnout among physiotherapists in an Arabian setting and the influence of organizational factors: An observational study. *Journal of Physical Therapy Science*, *26*(8), 1193–1198. doi:10.1589/jpts.26.1193

Aljughaiman, A. M., & Grigorenko, E. L. (2013). Growing up under pressure the cultural and religious context of the Saudi System of gifted education. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, *36*(3), 307-322. doi:10.1177/0162353213493153

Al-Kahtani, N., & Allam, Z. (2013). A comparative study of job burnout, job

involvement, locus of control and job satisfaction among banking employees of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *Life Sciences Journal, 10*(4), 2135-2144. Retrieved from http://www.lifesciencesite.com./

Alkhanbshi, A. S., & Al-Kandi, I. G. (2014). The religious values and job attitudes among female Saudi bank employees: A qualitative study. *Journal of WEI Business and Economics, 3*(1), 28-44. Retrieved from http://www.westeastinstitute.com/journals/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/4Aisha-and-Ibrahim-JWEIBE.pdf

Al Lily, A. (2011). On line and under veil: Technology facilitated communication and Saudi female experience within academia. *Technology in Society, 33*(1-2), 119-127. doi:10.1016/j.techsoc.2011.03.005

Almansour, S., & Kempner, K. (2016). The role of Arab women faculty in the public sphere. *Studies in Higher Education, 41*(5), 874-886. doi:10.1080/03075079.2016.1147723

Alomair, M.O. (2015). Female leadership capacity and effectiveness: A critical analysis of the literature on higher education in Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of Higher Education, 4*(4), 81-93. doi:10.5430/ijhe.v4n4p81

Alqahtani, M., & Salmon, P. (2008). Cultural influences in the etiological beliefs of Saudi Arabian primary care patients about their symptoms: The association of religious and psychological beliefs. *Journal of Religion & Health, 47*(3), 302-313. doi:1007/s10943-008-9163-4

Al-Rasheed, M. (2013a). *A most masculine state: Gender, politics and religion in Saudi*

Arabia (Vol. 43). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139015363

Al-Rasheed, M. (2013b). Saudi Arabia: local and regional challenges. *Contemporary Arab Affairs, 6*(1), 28-40, doi: 10.1080/17550912.2012.753797

Alsaif, T. (2013). Relationship between state and religion in Saudi Arabia: The role of Wahhabism in governance. *Contemporary Arab Affairs, 6*(3), 376-403. doi:10.1080/17550912.2013.822721

Alshanbri, N., Khalfan, M., & Maqsood, T. (2015). Localization barriers and the case of Nitaqat program in Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Economics, Business and Management, 3*(9), 898-903. doi:10.7763/JOEBM.2015.v3.305

Alsheikh, H. (2015). Current progress in the nationalization programmes in Saudi Arabia (Research Report No. 2/2015). Retrieved from Gulf Labour Market and Migration Programme of the Migration Policy Center and the Gulf Research Center website: Retrieved from http://gulfmigration.eu/publications/

Alyaemni, A., Theobald, S., Faragher, B., Jehan, K., & Tolhurst, R. (2013). Gender inequities in health: An exploratory qualitative study of Saudi women's perceptions. *Women & Health, 53*(7), 741-759. doi:10.1080/03630242.2013.829169

Assad, S. W. (2006). Supervision and role models among Saudi female workers. *King Abdul Aziz University: Arts and Humanities, 14*, 3-19. Retrieved from http://www.kau.edu.sa/Files/320/Researches/51242_21433.pdf

Bartholomew, T. T., & Brown, J. R. (2012). Mixed methods, culture, and psychology: A

review of mixed methods in culture-specific psychological research. *International Perspectives in Psychology: Research, Practice, Consultation*, *1*(3), 177-190. doi:10.1037/a002921

Blomme, R. J., Kodden, B., & Beasley-Suffolk, A. (2015). Leadership theories and the concept of work engagement: Creating a conceptual framework for management implications and research. *Journal of Management & Organization, 21*(02), 125–144. doi:10.1017/jmo.2014.71

Brown, M.B., Aoshima, M., Bolen, L.M., Chia, R., & Kohyama. (2007). Cross-cultural learning approaches in students from the USA, Japan, and Taiwan. *School Psychology International, 28*(5), 592-604. doi:10.1177/0143034307085660

Burger, J. M. (1989). Negative reactions to increases in perceived personal control. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 56*(2), 246-256. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.56.2.246

Callaghan, C. (2015). Intrinsic antecedents of academic research productivity of a large South African university. *Southern African Business Review, 19*(1), 170-193. Retrieved from http://www.ajol.info/index.php/sabr/article/viewFile/116956/106524

Calza, F., Aliane, N., & Cannavale, C. (2010). Cross-cultural differences and Italian Firms' internalization in Algeria: Exploring assertiveness and performance orientation. *European Business Review, 22*(2), 246-272. doi10.11080955341011023551

Carone, D., & Barone, D. (2001). A social cognitive perspective on religious beliefs:

Their functions and impact on coping and psychotherapy. *Clinical Psychology Review, 21*(7), 989-1003. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0272-7358(00)00078-7

Cassell, M. A., & Blake, R. J. (2012). Analysis of Hofstede's 5-D model: The implications of conducting business in Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of Management & Information Systems (Online), 16*(2), 151-160. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.19030/ijmis.v16i2.6914

Central Department of Statistics and Information. (2015). Estimates of population by sex and nationality. Retrieved from http://www.cdsi.gov.sa/english/index.php?option=com_docman&Itemid=160

Cheng, C., Chan, N., Chio, J. H., Chan, P., Chan, A. O., & Hui, W. (2012). Being active or flexible? Role of control coping on quality of life among patients with gastrointestinal cancer. *Psycho-Oncology, 21*(2), 211-218. doi:10.1002/pon.1892

Cheng, C., Cheung, S., Chio, J., & Chan, M. (2013). Cultural meaning of perceived control: A meta-analysis of locus of control and psychological symptoms across 18 cultural regions. *Psychological Bulletin, 139*(1), 152-188. doi:10.1037/a002859

Christian, M. S., Garza, A. S., & Slaughter, J. E. (2011). Work engagement: A quantitative review and test of its relations with task and contextual performance. *Personnel Psychology, 64*(1), 89-136. doi:10.1111/j.1744-6570.2010.01203.x

Courington, K., & Zuabi, V. (2011). Calls for reform. *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, 12*(2), 137-144. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/docview/1317116725?accounti

d=14872

Creswell, J. (2013*). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches (3rd ed.)*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Culpin, I., Stapinski, L., Miles, Ö. B., Araya, R., & Joinson, C. (2015). Exposure to socioeconomic adversity in early life and risk of depression at 18 years: The mediating role of locus of control. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 183,* 269-278. doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2015.05.030

Dakhli, M., Dinkha, J., Matta, M., & Aboul-Hasn. (2013). The effects of gender and culture on coping strategies: An extension study. *International Journal of Social Sciences, 8*(1), 87. Retrieved from http://tijoss.com/8th%20Volume/Matta.pdf

Daniels, L. M., Stewart, T. L., Stupnisky, R. H., Perry, R. P., & LoVerso, T. (2011). Relieving career anxiety and indecision: The role of undergraduate students' perceived control and faculty affiliations. *Social Psychology of Education, 14*(3), 409-426. doi:10.1007/s11218-010-9151-x

Emmel, N. (2013). Sample size. *In Sampling and choosing cases in qualitative research: A realist approach* (pp. 137-156). London, England: SAGE Publications Ltd. doi:10.4135/9781473913882.n9

Fang, T. (2010). Asian management research needs more self-confidence: Reflection on Hofstede (2007) and beyond. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management, 27*(1), 155-170. doi:10.1007/s10490-009-9134-7

Fischer, R. (2013). Belonging, status, or self-protection? Examining justice motives in a three-level cultural meta-analysis of organizational justice effects. *Cross-Cultural*

Research, 47(1), 3-41. doi: 10.1177/1069397112470424

Fischer, O., & Al-Issa, A. (2012). In for a surprise piloting the Arab version of the VSM 94. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 36*(5), 737-742. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2012.04.007

Fiske, S. (2010). Social *beings: Core motives in social psychology* (2nd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons Publishers.

Friesen, J. P., Kay, A. C., Eibach, R. P., & Galinsky, A. D. (2014). Seeking structure in social organization: Compensatory control and the psychological advantages of hierarchy. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 106*(4), 590-609. doi:10.1037/a0035620

Gagné, M., & Bhave, D. (2011). Autonomy in the workplace: An essential ingredient to employee engagement and well-being in every culture. In V. Chirkov, R. Ryan, & K. Sheldon (Eds.). *Human autonomy in cross-cultural context (pp. 163-187).* Netherlands: Springer. doi:10.1007/978-90-481-9667-8

General Authority for Statistics Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. (2016). Statistical summary of higher education students. *Statistical Yearbook of 2015*. Retrieved from cdsi.gov.sa/en/5218

Glass, D. C., Singer, J. E., Leonard, H. S., Krantz, D., Cohen, S., & Cummings, H. (1973). Perceived control of aversive stimulation and the reduction of stress responses. *Journal Of Personality, 41*(4), 577-595. doi:10.1111/j.1467-6494.1973.tb00112.x

Goby, V. P., & Erogul, M. S. (2011). Female entrepreneurship in the United Arab

Emirates: Legislative encouragements and cultural constraints. *Women's Studies International Forum, 34*(4), 329-334. doi:10.1016/j.wsif.2011.04.006

Guta, H., & Karolak, M. (2015). Veiling and blogging: Social media as sites of identity negotiation and expression among Saudi women. *Journal of International Women's Studies, 16*(2), 115. Retrieved from http://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol16/iss2/7

Haggard, P., & Eitam, B. (Eds.). (2015). *The sense of agency*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. doi:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190267278.001.0001

Hamedoğlu, M. A., Kantor, J., & Gülay, E. (2012). The effect of locus of control and culture on leader preferences. *International Journal of Online Educational Sciences, 4*(2), 319-324. Retrieved from http://www.iojes.net/userfiles/Article/IOJES_942.pdf

Hamdan, A. (2012). The role of authentic Islam: The way forward for women in Saudi Arabia. *Hawwa, 10*(3), 200-220. doi: 10.1163/15692086-12341237

Hamdan, A. (2013). An exploration into" private" higher education in Saudi Arabia: Improving quality and accessibility? *ACPET Journal for Private Higher Education, 2*(2), 33-44. Retrieved from http://www.acpet.edu.au/uploads/files/ACPET-HEJournal-DEC13-WEB.pdf

Harb, C. (2016). Cultures, values, and identity. In M. Amer & G. Awad, (Eds). *Handbook of Arab American Psychology*. New York, NY: Routledge. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.sa/books?hl=en&lr=&id=CXL4CgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT35&dq=%22Honor+culture%22+and+%22Saudi+Arabia%22&ots=CIYxR

uKsW2&sig=Nca1oj7tOB8DEqqWcN3On7zA_7c&safe=on&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false

Helzer, E.G. & Jayawickreme, E. (2015). Control and the ‘‘good life’’: Primary and secondary control as distinct indicators of well-being. *Social Psychological and Personality Science, 6*(6), 653-660. doi:10.1177/1948550615576210

Hofstede, G. (1984). The cultural relativity of the quality of life concept. *The Academy Of Management Review, 9*(3), 389-398. doi:10.2307/258280

Hofstede, G. J., Jonker, C. M., & Verwaart, T. (2012). Cultural differentiation of negotiating agents. *Group Decision and Negotiation, 21*(1), 79-98. doi:10.1007/s10726-010-9190-x

Inesi, M. E., Botti, S., Dubois, D., Rucker, D. D., & Galinsky, A. D. (2011). Power and choice: Their dynamic interplay in quenching the thirst for personal control. *Psychological Science, 22*(8), 1042–1048. doi:10.1177/0956797611413936

Inzlicht, M., McGregor, I., Hirsh, J. B., & Nash, K. (2009). Neural markers of religious conviction. *Psychological Science, 20*(3), 385-392. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9280.2009.02305.x

Jamjoom, M. I. (2010). Female Islamic studies teachers in Saudi Arabia: A phenomenological study. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 26*(3), 547-558. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2009.06.019

Jamjoom, Y. (2016). Private higher education and graduate employability in Saudi Arabia. F.F. Padró & C.S. Nair, C. S. (Eds.). *A Global Perspective on Private Higher Education*, (pp. 169-183). Cambridge, MA: Chandos Publishing.

Retrieved from https://books.google.com.sa/books?hl=en&lr=&id=4TWOCgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA313&dq=%22private+higher+education%22+and+%22Saudi+Arabia%22+and+%22women%22&ots=21ZnYYaLU-&sig=Qlf7PfsfG0xujkTESZwKhzJT3Zw&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=%22private%20higher%20education%22%20and%20%22Saudi%20Arabia%22%20and%20%22women%22&f=false

Jertfelt, I. H. G., Blanchin, A., & Li, S. (2016). Cultural perspective in open-ended interviews–The importance of being adaptable. *Culture & Psychology*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1177/1354067X16650809

Ji, L., Peng, K., & Nisbett, R. E. (2000). Culture, control, and perception of relationships in the environment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 78*(5), 943-955. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.78.5.943

Johnson, J. & Weller, S. (2001). Elicitation techniques for interviewing. In Gubrium, J. F. & Holstein, J. A. *Handbook of interview research* (pp. 491-514). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications. doi:10.4135/9781412973588.n30

Joshi, P. L., Bremser, W. G., Deshmukh, A., & Kumar, R. (2011). Diffusion of management accounting practices in gulf cooperation council countries. *Accounting Perspectives, 10*(1), 23-53. doi:10.1111/j.1911-3838.2011.00018.x

Jost, J. T., Banaji, M. R., & Nosek, B. A. (2004). A decade of system justification theory: Accumulated evidence of conscious and unconscious bolstering of the status quo. *Political Psychology, 25*(6), 881-919. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9221.2004.00402.x

Kang, H. S., Chang, K. E., Chen, C., & Greenberger, E. (2015). Locus of control and peer relationships among Caucasian, Hispanic, Asian, and African American adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 44(1),* 184-194. doi:10.1007/s10964-013-0083-6

Kashima, Y. (2016). Culture and psychology in the 21st Century: Conceptions of culture and person for psychology revisited. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 47*(1), 4-20. doi:10.1177/0022022115599445

Kay, A. C., & Eibach, R. P. (2013). Compensatory control and its implications for ideological extremism. *Journal of Social Issues, 69*(3), 564-585. doi:10.1111/josi.12029

Kay, A., Gaucher, D., McGregor, I., & Nash, K. (2010). Religious belief as compensatory control. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 14*(1), 37-48. doi:10.1177/1088868309353750

Kay, A. C., Gaucher, D., Napier, J. L., Callan, M. J., & Laurin, K. (2008). God and the government: Testing a compensatory control mechanism for the support of external systems. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 95*(1), 18-35. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.95.1.18

Kay, A. C., Whitson, J. A., Gaucher, D., & Galinsky, A. D. (2009). Compensatory control: Achieving order through the mind, our institutions, and the heavens. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 18*(5), 264-268. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8721.2009.01649.x

Kayed, R. N., & Hassan, M. K. (2010). Islamic entrepreneurship: A case study of Saudi

Arabia. *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship, 15*(04), 379-413. doi:10.1142/S1084946710001634

Kumaran, S. (2013). Impact of personal epistemology, heuristics, and personal attributes on investment decisions. *International Journal of Financial Research, 4*(3), 62-69. doi:10.5430/ijfr.v4n3p62

Kurman, J. & Dan, O. (2007). Unpackaging cross-cultural differences in initiation between Israeli subgroups tradition and control orientations as mediating factors. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 38*(5), 581-594. doi:10.1177/0022022107305240

Kurman, J., Hui, C. M., & Dan, O. (2012). Changing the world through changing the self: Understanding a new control strategy through self-reported coping plans in two cultures. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 43*(1), 15-22. doi:10.1177/0022022110388568

Landau, M. J., Kay, A. C., & Whitson, J. A. (2015). Compensatory control and the appeal of a structured world. *Psychological Bulletin, 141*(3), 694-722. doi:org/10.1037/a0038703

Lefdahl-Davis, E. M., & Perrone-McGovern, K. M. (2015). The cultural adjustment of Saudi women international students: A qualitative examination. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 46*(3), 406-434. doi:10.1177/0022022114566680

Lerner, M. (1980). *The belief in a just world.* New York, NY: Springer. doi:10.1007/978-1-4899-0448-5

Lim, H. L. (2013). Work motivators of Saudi and Emirati Generation Y: A pilot study.

International Journal of Economy, Management and Social Sciences, 2(5), 185-194. Accessed from http://waprogramming.com/papers/517a33f67e09e1.34971342.pdf

Lippman, T. W. (2012*). Saudi Arabia on the edge*. Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, Inc. Accessed from https://books.google.com.sa/books?hl=en&lr=&id=bmJsfmqb-j0C&oi=fnd&pg=PP2&dq=%22+the+edge%22+and+%22Lippman%22&ots=d9SeNP9wZc&sig=k2Tz8moAs6oC_gzJO5n3HR9TJXI&safe=on#v=onepage&q=%22%20the%20edge%22%20and%20%22Lippman%22&f=false

Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., & Leiter, M. P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *52*, 397–422. doi:10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.397

Mariampolski, H. (2001). Varieties of qualitative research. In *Qualitative market research* (pp. 46-54). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd. doi:10.4135/9781412985529.n16

Maxwell, J. (2013). Qualitative research designs: An interactive approach (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage publications.

Mebrouk, J. (2008). Perception of nursing care: Views of Saudi Arabian female nurses. *Contemporary Nurse*, *28*(1-2), 149-161. doi:10.5172/conu.673.28.1-2.149

Miles, M.B., Huberman, A.M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook (3rd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Moaddel, M., & de Jong, J. (2014). *The Middle Eastern youth and the Arab Spring: cross-national variation and trends in values*. (PSC Report 14-828). Retrieved

from University of Michigan, Population Studies Centers website: http://www.wageningenportals.nl/sites/default/files/resource/rr14-828.pdf

Morling, B., Kitayama, S., & Miyamoto, Y. (2002). Cultural practices emphasize influence in the United States and adjustment in Japan. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 28*(3), 311-323. doi:10.1177/0146167202286003

Morrow, S. (2005). Quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research in counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling, 52*(2), 250–260. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.250

Morse, J. M. (1994). Designing funded qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.). *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 220-235). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Morse, J. M., Swanson, J. M., & Kuzel, A. J. (2001). Constructing evidence within the qualitative project. In J.M. Morse, J.M. Swanson, & A.J. Kuzel. *The nature of qualitative evidence* (pp. 188-202). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd. doi: 10.4135/9781412986236.n8

Moussa, M. N. (2013a). Effects of perceived procedural justice and exchange ideology on employees' affective commitment: Evidence from Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of Business and Management, 8*(15), 81-89. doi:10.5539/ijbm.v8n15p81

Moussa, M. N. (2013b). Investigating the high turnover of Saudi nationals versus non-nationals in private sector companies using selected antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. *International Journal of Business and Management, 8*(18), 41-52. doi:10.5539/ijbm.v8n18p41

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.4135/9781412995658

Na, J., & Choi, I. (2009). Culture and first-person pronouns. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 35*(11), 1492-1499. doi:10.1177/0146167209343810

National Committee of Bioethics. (2010). *King Abdul Aziz City for Science and Technology National Committee of Bio Ethics. Implementing regulations of the law of ethics of research on living things* (Royal Decree No. M/59). Retrieved from http://www.kfsh.med.sa/KFSH_Website/usersuploadedfiles%5CNCBE%20Regulations%20ENGLISH.pdf

Nowicki Jr, S., & Duke, M. P. (2013). The Nowicki-Strickland life-span locus of control scales: Construct validation. In H. Lefcourt, (Eds.), *Research with the locus of control construct: Volume 2 developments and social problems* (pp. 9-50). New York, NY: Academic Press. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-443202-4.50006-4

Omona, J. (2013). Sampling in Qualitative Research: Improving the Quality of Research Outcomes in Higher Education. *Makerere Journal of Higher Education, 4*(2), 169-185. doi:10.4314/majohe.v4i2.4

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Leech, N. L. (2007). A call for qualitative power analyses. *Quality & Quantity, 41*(1), 105-121. doi:10.1007/s11135-005-1098-1

Orozco, E. (2012). Defining culture and its impact on practice. *Migrant Health Newsline,*

29(1), 3-5. Retrieved from http://www.weebly.com/editor/uploads/3/8/6/8/38685499/custom_themes/919123595410423472/files/Issue1_2012.pdf

Oyserman, D., Coon, H. M., & Kemmelmeier, M. (2002). Rethinking individualism and collectivism: Evaluation of theoretical assumptions and meta-analyses. *Psychological Bulletin, 128*(1), 3-72. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.128.1.3

Pandey, S., & Patnaik, S. (2014). Establishing reliability and validity in qualitative inquiry: A critical examination. *Jharkhand Journal of Development and Management Studies, 12*(1), 5743-5753. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Satyendra_Pandey2/publication/266676584_ESTABLISHING_RELIABILITY_AND_VALIDITY_IN_QUALITATIVE_INQUIRY_A_CRITICAL_EXAMINATION/links/543779b40cf2dc341db4d7fb.pdfPatton, M. (2002).

Pinto, J. K., Dawood, S., & Pinto, M. B. (2014). Project management and burnout: Implications of the Demand–Control–Support model on project-based work. *International Journal of Project Management, 32*(4), 578-589. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2013.09.003

Price, A. (2015). How national structures shape attitudes toward women's right to employment in the Middle East. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology, 56*(6), 408-432. doi:10.1177/0020715216635358

Profanter, A. (2016). University is a private matter: Higher education in Saudi Arabia. In D. Cantini (Eds.). *Rethinking private higher education: Ethnographic*

perspectives, (pp. 158-192). Leiden, Netherlands: Brill Publishing. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.sa/books?hl=en&lr=&id=g9M6DQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA158&dq=%22private+higher+education%22+and+%22Saudi+Arabia%22+and+%22women%22&ots=AxBQM7L2hv&sig=sbXhhpawdEbHroxdnCa_EPeYopk&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=%22private%20higher%20education%22%20and%20%22Saudi%20Arabia%22%20and%20%22women%22&f=false

Rana, M., Bullinger, M., & Rana, M. (2015). Coping with stroke: A prospective comparative cross-cultural research. *Journal of Religion & Health, 54*(1), 173-186. doi:10.1007/s10943-013-9797-8

Rothbaum, F., Weisz, J. R., & Snyder, S. S. (1982). Changing the world and changing the self: A two-process model of perceived control. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 42*(1), 5-37. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.42.1.5

Rothmann, S. (2013). Employee engagement in a cultural context. C. Truss, R. Delbridge, E. Soane, K. Alfes, & A. Shantz (Eds.) in *Employee engagement in theory and practice* (pp. 161-172) London: Routledge. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.sa/books?hl=en&lr=&id=dU7hAQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA163&dq=%22Employee+engagement%22+and+%22Saudi+Arabia%22&ots=bI2ri5eqq_&sig=6v9BaWTX439i-Z6_x1nVRiNRQ34&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=%22Employee%20engagement%22%20and%20%22Saudi%20Arabia%22&f=false

Rotter, J. B. (1966). Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of

reinforcement. *Psychological Monographs: General and Applied*, *80*(1), 1– 28. doi:10.1037/h0092976

Sadi, M. A. (2013). The implementation process of nationalization of workforce in Saudi Arabian private sector: A review of "Nitaqat Scheme". *American Journal of Business and Management, 2*(1), 37-45. doi:10.11634/216796061302294

Sadi, M. & Al-Buraey. (2009). A framework for the implemental process: The case of Saudization. *International Management Review*, *5*(1), 70-84. Retrieved from www.usimr.org/IMR-1-2009/v5n109-art6.pdf

Saudi Hollandi Group. (2012). *Labor and the Nitaqat program: Effect on the Saudi Arabian economy*. Retrieved from http://shc.com.sa/en/PDF/RESEARCH/Labor%20and%20The%20Nitaqat%20Program.pdf

Sawaumi, T., Yamaguchi, S., Park, J., & Robinson, A. R. (2015). Japanese control strategies regulated by urgency and interpersonal harmony evidence based on extended conceptual framework. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *46*(2), 252-268. doi:10.1177/0022022114563749

Seale, C., Gobo, G. & Gubrium, J. F. (2004). Sampling, representativeness and generalizability. In C. Seale, G. Gobo, & J.F Gubrium (Eds.), *Qualitative research practice* (pp. 405-426). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd. doi:10.4135/9781848608191.d34

Shifrer, D., & Sutton, A. (2014). Region-urbanicity differences in locus of control: Social disadvantage, structure, or cultural exceptionalism? *Sociological inquiry, 84*(4),

570-600. doi:10.1111/soin.12046

Sidani, Y. & Feghali, T. (2014). Female labour participation and pay equity in Arab countries: Commonalities and differences. *Contemporary Arab Affairs, 7*(4), 526-543, doi:10.1080/17550912.2014.948313

Simsim, M. (2011). Internet usage and user preferences in Saudi Arabia. *Journal of King Saud University - Engineering Sciences, 23*(2), 101-107. doi:10.1016/j.jksues.2011.03.006

Sinky, T. H., Cheyney, M., & Dolcini, M. M. (2015). “If it is written by Allah, There is nothing that can stop it": Saudi women's breast cancer narratives. *Health, Culture and Society, 8*(2), 60-74. doi:10.5195/hcs.2015.196

Skinner, E. A. (1996). A guide to constructs of control. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 71*(3), 549-570. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.71.3.549

Smith, A., Hume, E. C., Zimmermann, R., & Davis, A. (2011). The global significance of locus of control in ethical decision making: A multi-country examination of University students. *Journal of College Teaching & Learning, 4*(2), 7-12. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.19030/tlc.v4i2.1625

Sparr, J. L., & Sonnentag, S. (2008). Feedback environment and well-being at work: The mediating role of personal control and feelings of helplessness. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 17*(3), 388–412. doi:10.1080/13594320802077146

Spector, P. E., Sanchez, J. I., Oi Ling Siu, J. I., Salgado, J., & Jianhong Ma, J. (2004). Eastern versus Western control beliefs at work: An investigation of secondary

control, socioinstrumental control, and work locus of control in China and the US. *Applied Psychology: An International Review, 53*(1), 38-60. doi:10.1111/j.1464-0597.2004.00160.x

Tavakoli, M. (2012). Do Iranian and Canadian females make different personal decisions? *Sociology Mind, 2*(1), 127-132. doi:10.4236/sm.2012.21016

Tlaiss, H., & Kauser, S. (2011). The importance of wasta in the career success of Middle Eastern managers. *Journal of European Industrial Training, 35*(5), 467-486. doi:10.1108/03090591111138026

Tracy, S. (2014). Qualitative quality: "Big-tent" criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 16*(10), 837-851. doi.10/1177/1077800410383232

Twenge, J. M., & Crocker, J. (2002). Race and self-esteem: Meta-analyses comparing Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and American Indians and comment on Gray-Little and Hafdahl (2000). *Psychological Bulletin, 128*(3), 371-408. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.128.3.371

Uskul, A. K., Oyserman, D., & Schwarz, N. (2010). Cultural emphasis on honor, modesty, or self-enhancement: Implications for the survey response process. In M. Braun, B. Edwards, J., Harkness, T. Johnson, L. Lyberg, P. Mohler, B.E. Pennell, & T.W. Smith. (Eds.) *Survey methods in multinational, multiregional and multicultural context.* NJ, USA: John Wiley and Sons. doi: 10.1002/9780470609927.ch11

Van Bogaert, P., Peremans, L., Van Heusden, D., Verspuy, M., Kureckova, V., Van de Cruys, Z., & Franck, E. (2017). Predictors of burnout, work engagement and

nurse reported job outcomes and quality of care: A mixed method study. *BMC Nursing, 16*(5), 1-14. doi:10.1186/s12912-016-0200-4

van Geel, A. (2016). Separate or together? Women-only public spaces and participation of Saudi women in the public domain in Saudi Arabia. *Contemporary Islam, 10*(3), 1-22. doi:10.1007/s11562-015-0350-2

Wertz, F. J. (2005). Phenomenological research methods for counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(2), 167-177. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.167

Whiteoak, J. W., Crawford, N. G., & Mapstone, R. H. (2006). Impact of gender and generational differences in work values and attitudes in an Arab culture. *Thunderbird International Business Review, 48*(1), 77-91. doi:10.1002/tie.20086

Whittemore, R., Chase, S., & Mandle, C. (2001). Validity in qualitative Research. *Qualitative Health Research 11*(4), 522-537. doi:10.1177/104973201129119299

Yamaguchi, S. (2001). Culture and control orientation. In D. Matsumoto (Eds.). *The handbook of culture and psychology* (pp. 223-244). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Retrieved from http://www.indigenouspsych.org/Interest%20Group/Yamaguchi/Yamaguchi.ControlOrientation.Handbook.2001.pdf

Yamaguchi, S., Gelfand, M., Ohashi, M. M., & Zemba, Y. (2005). The cultural psychology of control illusions of personal versus collective control in the United States and Japan. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 36*(6), 750-761. doi:10.1177/0022022105280513

Appendix A: Social Media Invitation Post

Invitation for Saudi Women to Participate in a Research Study

- Are you a Saudi female who is fluent in English?
- Have you obtained at least a bachelor's degree?
- Have you been employed for at least 1 year in an administrative position in a private Saudi university?
- Does your university employer conduct all activities in English?

If you answered Yes to all of these questions, you are invited to take part in a research study to understand how Saudi women in private university administrative support staff positions experience control and engagement in their workplace. This research study is being conducted by Kimberly Deatherage-Mominah, M.S., a doctoral candidate in Social Psychology at Walden University.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Engage in an individual interview, which will last about 1 hour.
- Keep a journal for 5 working days describing how you experience control in your work environment and your perception of how control affects your performance at work that day. (This will take about 15 minutes per day).

Your name will not be used to protect your identity.

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Hello, my name is Kimberly Deatherage-Mominah and I am a social psychology Ph.D. candidate from Walden University. I have lived in Jeddah for the last 12 years and am interested in issues of women in the workforce.

The purpose of my study is to explore the lived experiences of Saudi women administrative support employees working in private universities; specifically, their perceptions of control and engagement in the workplace. When I talk about control in this study, I am talking about how you understand what gives order and stability to your workplace. The control may come from you, or it may come from a source of power that is outside of you.

I am going to ask you some questions that pertain to your work environment. I want to emphasize that there is no wrong or right answers to these questions. These questions relate to how you see the world. I also want to remind you that your participation in this study is voluntary and that I will do the best to my ability to assure that your confidentiality in this research is maintained. Do you have any questions before we start?

1. Can you tell me about your job position? What do you do?
2. Can you tell me about what control you have in your workplace?
    a. Can you describe to me how you feel about the personal control you have in your workplace?
3. Can you describe any factors of control, if any, over your actions and work performance? Are there certain individuals in your workplace who are in positions of control?
    a. Can you describe to me how you feel about the control these other individuals have over you in your workplace?
4. What other factors of control, if any, do you experience in your workplace?
    a. Can you describe to me how you feel about these other factors that control you in your workplace?

I now want to talk to you about how you perceive your engagement as an employee in your work environment. Employee engagement refers to how a person invests herself in the work environment. This includes how much effort you put into your work by doing the work that needs to be done, how much you think about your work, and how important your work is to you. With this in mind:

5. On most mornings when you are going to work, how do you feel about the work you are going to do?
6. What parts of your job do you get excited about performing?
    a. Who or what has control over these parts of your job?
7. What parts of your job do you not enjoy performing?
    a. Who or what has control over these parts of your job?
8. Tell me about a time you felt really engaged in your work. Describe to me what engagement felt like to you.
9. Tell me about a time you felt unengaged in your work. Describe to me how this felt.
10. Can you describe to me how your personal control at work relates to your sense of engagement
11. Can you describe to me how outside sources of control at work relate to your sense of engagement?

Appendix C: Journal Entry

Dear Participant:

You are being asked to keep a journal for 5 working days to give a daily account about how you perceive control in your work environment, and how you believe your perceptions of control play a role in your workplace engagement.

Please remember, control for this study is defined as how you understand what gives order and stability to your workplace. This sense of control may come from you, others who impose control on you, or other factors in your work environment. Employee engagement refers to how a person invests herself in her work environment.

For each journal entry, think of the job tasks you performed that day. Then, consider these questions as a guide for your entry. What sources of control helped you perform your job? What sources of control made your job harder? In what job tasks did you feel most engaged in your work? Did you, someone else, other factors, or a combination of sources have control over this task?

Appendix D: Debriefing and follow up

I would like to thank you for collaborating with me in this study. I appreciate the time and effort you have made during the interviews and journals in helping me better understand how Saudi women administrative support staff experience control and engagement in the workplace. I am hoping that this research will provide a description for government and private universities to better understand the experiences of women working in private universities and help to develop policies that are aligned with how Saudi women experience their world of work. This last conversation is a chance for us to clarify our past interview and posts in your journal, for you to express any thoughts and feelings you may have, and for you to ask any questions or concerns you may have about the research study.

1. I sent you the summary of our interview and your journals entries. Did you have time to review them? Do you have any additions or changes that you think need to be made to your interview summary? To your journal entries?

2. Can you tell me about any insights about this topic you may have gained after taking part in this study?

Appendix E: Invariant constituents and emerging themes

THEMES	INVARIANT CONSTITUENTS
Supervision and guidance on perceptions of control and engagement	a. Need for guidance on what needs to be done and how to perform tasks (P1, P3,P4) b. Perception of lack of strategic plans of objectives to guide work (P5, P10) c. Feelings of insecurity about expectations of job which affects engagement (P6) d. Acknowledgement of job well done, and feedback affect engagement (P9)
Social relationships and connections as a form of control	a. Wastah is a form of control in obtaining positions (P1) b. Social connections are necessary to accomplish tasks and are important (P2, P6, P10) c. Obtaining control through primary proxy control, or influencing others with power to meet objectives (P5)
Time	a. The perception of being rushed in performing jobs create the feeling of chaos (P2) b. Short deadlines in completing tasks and completing work outside of work hours are associated with burn out (P4) c. The perception of having short deadlines diminishes performance on

	task (P5, P7)
Lack of Predictability	a. External control factors gives a lack of predictability of work outcomes (P2, P8, P10) b. Perception of lack of routine tasks and unexpected job tasks equivalent to a "jack in the box" (P4) a. Self-planning and organization is associated with engagement, while unpredictable days are associated with disengagement (P5, P9)
Adjustment of self to fit the environment	a. Adjustment of thinking not to personalize experience and realize "this is how it goes here" (P2) b. Learning to "go with the flow" to appear like a cooperative person (P3, P5, P6) c. Withdrawing from previous activities as a form of coping and regulating the environment (P4)
Self-development / inner transformation	a. Transforming self to adjust to the environment (P2) b. Continuous developments of career skills (P3, P10) c. Developing emotional regulation skills as a form of control in the environment (P5) d. Transforming internally to not fit into the environment (P8)
Having a voice	a. Feels explanations are not listened to and she says sorry for situations whether or not they are here

	responsibility (P2) b. Conditioned not to speak as a way to avoid conflict (P3, P9) c. Feels the work environment of the university has empowered women and has helped her develop a voice (P4) d. Speaking up made her take control of the situation (P5) e. Allowing people to have opinions and be creative creates situations were women are more engaged (P7, P8, P10)
Cultural conditioning of women's social roles	a. Conditioned to believe that women should not take control of situations and be passive(P3) b. Women are limited not only in the country, but also the workplace where control is not possible, focus on those things that one can control (P2) c. Women when given responsibility are more likely to take personal control and engage in their environments (P5) d. Saudi women experience the same obstacles, but also have the same traits as women worldwide (10)